デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲

愛七ひろ

Hiro Ainana

Illustration・shri

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Death Marching to the Parallel World Rhapsody

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Synopsis :

Suzuki, an adult programmer, suddenly notice that he's thrown into another world wearing a casual clothes at level 1. He gained high level and treasures after using the 3-times-disposable-magic, Meteor Shower, once. After that he intend to do another world "sightseeing tours"?

Meeting 3 beast girls, beautiful purple and black haired sisters and an eccentric blond haired elf girl along with various people during his trip. Although occasionally fighting demon and demon lord, this is a heartwarming fantasy story at heart.

These covers are from Light Novel version but the translator is doing the Web Novel one since it's way further!

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Intermissions :

(NOTE: Intermissions always happen at the end of the corresponding chapter)

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(NOTE: These covers are from Light Novel version but I'm doing the Web Novel one since it's way further)

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1-1. Cataclysm Begin Through Death March

Stars wander

Great numbers of them

Sometimes glimpsing a shooting star

When people see such fleeting moments, each recite a wish in their heart.

But isn't the sky divided by the falling meteorites?

Accompanied with thunderous roar, the mass falls upon the earth with overwhelming speed.

There might be people who enjoy seeing them on TV or a video site... but no one would want to see this downpour in close proximity.

Yes, right now hundreds of meteorites are falling down in front of my eyes.

Nay.

I shouldn't say it like it's other people's business. This disaster is unmistakeably caused by me.

Due to my thoughtless choice about 10 minutes ago, now meteorites gouge the earth.

Striking dozens of kilometers away, trampling down the [enemies] there. From the corner of my viewpoint, the red dots on the radar are disappearing along with their lives.

And then, a while after most of the meteorites disappear into the earth the slightly delayed sounds reach with a bit of ground tremor.

Before the wave of dust crawling on the ground...

Suddenly, I'm struck with acute pain, like it's some sort of divine punishment

My head feels like it's splitting.

As if my body is being torn apart and scattered away.

Immediately after my consciousness parted from the pain, my body is swept away by the dust wave.

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Let's rewind the time a bit.

I'm working on holiday to meet a certain much-delayed project deadline. The so called smartphone and PC browser game from major company who dispatched outsourced subcontractor programmer to complete it.

Even black company doesn't normally commission one person for two project. However the junior programmer disappeared on the verge of release, leaving lots of bug and specification change! Deplorable!

Working in a place with high turnover rate, the only programmer around is the junior and me. Having no means to anticipate the situation, I'm forced to not only manage my own project, but also stuck with my junior's doomed project.

"Alright, completed all the classes, I/O and comment entries, the rest is auto documenter from source code, relation diagram and seriously squashing the bugs.

I let my neck loose for a bit.

Surveying my surrounding, the office is full house on holiday like always. My neighbour, an outsourced person responsible for debugging, is grumbling while working, but no one shift their focus. There is no room for that. The surrounding designers and planners work silently with hollow, dead fish-like eyes.

When I returned from getting some coffee, the monitor already finished displaying the output material needed for debugging.

Even so, with no documentary to work with I can't get fired up.

It can't be helped if the junior who was thrown into OJT right away to complains like he's dying. Among the 4 programmers who were present when the junior entered the company half a year ago, only I remain, I'm not even sure how many is it in the whole company.

"Sa... Suzuki-san, the client claim that difficulty of WW is too hard for beginner, what do we do?"

You almost said Satou damn you. We've been in the team for half a year, stop getting it wrong!

The overweight director and planner turn his head over here with his usual troubled face.

Moreover, even though such troublesome thing arise, he somehow looks happy. Why are there so many M's among developers?

WW is an abbreviation of the smartphone and PC browser game [War World]. It's an orthodox strategy game with a bit of social aspect in it.

"Didn't they say that the main target market won't play it if we lower the difficulty any more ?"

Yes, the current difficulty level was decided after great many meeting with the clients. Those time-wasters were really a waste eh. Miserable.

"Why don't we use the canceled bonus for the first timer, the show all enemy on map and the 3 time map annihilation bomb? And give the skilled guy who doesn't use it a rare title or such as a present for clear condition?

"Since there's no time, let's go with that~. I'm counting on you for the implementation Suzuki-san."

Mr. Overweight said it as carefree as ever.

"Waitaminute. I'm still debugging the smartphone MMORPG right now, just give the OK to the client for now. There's no time to fix it if it gets rejected due to poor implementation."

"OK. Will immediately tell them on the phone~"

The gigantic figure of Mr. Overweight disappear into the smoking area with phone in hand.

I continue to work while silently muttering to myself.

The GO sign on Mr. overweight's office lit up, he's out eating junk food on late night.

After correcting numerous superficial errors left behind by my junior, I leave the rest to the debug team.

That remind me, what was the name again? It didn't usually come out since I always call it MMO or Roleplay. Oh yeah, it's [Freedom Fantasy World]. Because it's easy to mix up with WW's former name, [Fantasy War World], no one called it with the proper name. When I think back on it, the documentary marked it as FFW. Since we removed the [Fantasy] from WW, nowadays it's not ambiguous though.

While the modification for WW goes on for a while, I'm sending the bug I discovered from FFW to the debug team... All-nighter again today huh.

The checking continues until the next morning, Miraculously the client program of the MMO-RPG is delivered.

Of course, probably there are still some bugs remaining, but since the super weapon called [Update Patch] exists for net distributed programs, there's no need to worry. I feel like I can hear booing from users but I'm sleepy. While the debug team is working, I forwarded the modified exe package of WW to Mr. overweight via intra-company mail, then I retreated to the safe haven under my desk to sleep for the first time in 30 hours.

Ah, bliss. The funtime of a corporate slave. For now, sleep is justice!

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Do you know what lucid dream is?

Being aware that you're inside your dream.

Right now, I'm in wilderness.

I'll stop since it looks like a line from Pol-san <TLN: I have no idea who>

Yep, wilderness. I guess it's okay to liken it with the American Grand Canyon.

Why do I know that it's a dream?

One, because I remember sleeping under my desk. Another is because I can see [Icon] for 4 on the lower right and [Menu] written on the upper-right of my vision.

It looks like the thing on WW I worked on earlier.

However! This is the first time that I'm dreaming about the thing I worked on during a debugging Death March. Though I'm not sure why it's wilderness instead of my work room...

Was it because the room was dry, I'm feeling that's the reason.

Somehow the menu opens when I tap it with my finger. A transparent window often used for near-future stuff appears in my vision... I have poor imagination if I say myself, I'll never be a planner or designer.

The menu is divided into tabs for [INFO], [MAP], [Unit Management], [Storage], [Exchange], and [Log], as well as [Status], [Equipment], [Magic] and [Skill] menus that don't exist in WW.

Did it get mixed up during the FFW debug last night?

Well, you can't really expect consistency in dream though.

When I check Status, level is 1, HP, MP, Strength and all other attribute are 10. This is the basic status that hasn't been assigned with bonus points. Come to think of it, the last check was character creation.

Hmm? There's also Job Type and Reward & Punishment parameters that don't exist in FFW? Where did it get mixed in from?

Age, 15 years old... Did I want to have mentality of a student again?

[Job Type: Management], but I don't even have one subordinate!

Even so, [Affiliation: None], is it a sign that I want to change job...

The content truly has hidden meaning in it... Ah, I want a vacation.

The peculiar ability of [Unit Creation] or [Unit Arrangement] probably mixed in from WW, but is there any need for the peculiar ability field to be written in the menu?

Furthermore what is with the last ability being [Immortal]? What a strange dream.

I'm wearing a Polo shirt, chinos pant and sneakers. Hey, this is my attire just now. In the storage, there is my wallet, mobile phone and a yellow box with impressive nutritional balance food inside, 1 box. Come to think of it, I left it on the desk with the intention of eating but I lost to the drowsiness in the end.

[Magic] and [Skill] are blank.

There are 10 skill points but sadly there are no skills to allocate them into.

Opening [Setting], I add map and radar on basic indicator. Map displays a wide area and my own position. Radar is almost the same as map but it searches for enemies on the area, and adds color-coding to enemies and neutral units.

I'm shown on radar as a small white point. The surrounding 100 meter is shown in gray, indicating unexplored region.

"Umu, I cannot see any enemies. It's free time. If only this was grassland I could indulge myself in lying around inactive."

I'm not interested in lying down on a rough ground.

I inadvertently stare at the icon "4" on the lower right corner. [All Map Exploration] is 1, [Meteor Shower] is 3. These are the measures for newbies from the arrangement with Mr. overweight.

[All Map Exploration] is just like the name suggests, search all the region in range. It also makes it possible to view detailed information, including the weak point of all units.

I thought that the scope of information was too much with no practical use for it, but Mr. overweight pushed for it to be included in the package.

I tried tapping it like on a smartphone.

The radar searched for all enemy and countless red dot appear. I lower magnification on the radar to display wider area.

Red dots filled half the map... Aren't the enemies too many?

I choose to keep them company with my own army using [Unit]

I'm getting fired up on having a small army defeating large one!

◇

...There was an era when I thought such thing.

[Unit Creation]... Possibility to make unit, none.

[Unit Arrangement]... Can't arrange nonexistent unit.

"Attacking with a level 1 character lololol"

Truly a dream. Even absurd things are unreasonable.

I glanced at the [Meteor Shower] icon on the lower right.

This is [Meteor Shower], the celestial annihilation.

[Meteor Shower] is set with high tension parameters; it could destroy everything, beside the campaign scenario last hidden boss, in a single blow.

It's a message for beginner that says "Bulldoze the map you can't clear with this".

Would you push?

>Yes

YES

Heil Braiking! <TLN: Thanks for the context!>

The last one seems to be a bit different.

Maybe the effects the from all-nighter still remain, I tap the icon while thinking such thing.

...The silence hurts.

I expected something amazing but there's nothing happening is it?

I was sad for a moment and proceed to lie down. My back hurt from the rough ground.

Then I turn my face toward the sky, something comes into the view...

Thank you for waiting.

We're finally back to the opening scene.

Real name, Suzuki Ichiro. Character name, Satou's life in different world begin this way.

1-2. Dreamer Write as Ephemeral Read

Hello, Suzuki here.

Having weak presence, I've been called Satou since my school days for some reason, this is Suzuki.

Even though you don't feel pain in a dream, you can still feel the signs of pain when you dream of dental caries.

No?

Well, that's good too.

<TLN: This is how a chapter begin whenever it feature Satou's perspective, it usually don't have anything to do with the actual plot at all. Just some random musing, so don't think too much of it>

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I seem to have fainted for two hours following the severe pain after the Meteor Shower receded.

Time is displayed on the menu. Convenient.

My body is half buried in the ground.

Huh? I can't get up...

Feels like when you can't get up off the bed during winter.

My hands seems to move but menu operation is troublesome since it feels heavy.

If only I had ESP to operate the menu and check the log.

When I imagined such thing, it really happened. Truly a dream. It's unrestricted in strange places.

When I see the log while thinking that, the message [Satou Level Up] showed up and harassment-like [Chararacchara~] famous level up SFX rang when I scroll through the log.

Continuing for a while, I finally found a different message log.

> Skill [Summoning Magic: Foreign World] Acquired.

> Summoning Magic [Meteor Shower] Acquired.

<TLN:Whoops, was also skill earlier. Edited>

[Meteor Shower] is that meteorite summoning magic, right?

A magic that does not exist in FFW. Summoning magic is only supposed to summon spirits or golems. Though the world part bugs me. There is no [Foreign World] in either FFW or WW. It bothers me even for a dream.

The [Level Up] messages continue on.

Since there's a time stamp, the order of message can't be wrong. In order it's [Skill Acquired] [Magic that belongs to the Skill Acquired] [Level up]

In other words, this is the kind of RPG that does not let you automatically learn skill and magic as your level rise! <TLN: They work independently, you can learn skill or magic regardless of level when you meet the required condition>

"No no, why am I doing analysis inside my dream..."

Apparently my habit of analyzing thing from gamer era surfaced.

But it's alright, even if it's embarrassing inside a dream, let's continue the analysis.

Even in this situation, my real body is properly taking a rest anyway!

I close the log and decided to check the magic and skill tabs.

"But, before that."

I set the [Log] to open by default from [Setting].

It's troublesome to switch every time.

The magic are [Meteor Shower] and [All Map Exploration].

The skills are [Summoning Magic : Foreign World][Magic Art : Foreign World].

Seems that [All Map Exploration] belongs to the Art category.

Are usable magic and skills registered?

But I can't use it if I don't remember it anyway, this time the exclusive use of initial bonus seems to be an irregular pattern. As a programmer I immediately deny the notion.

My status has changed considerably. After all, my level has been raised to 310 from 1. The limit in FFW should have been 50 at the time I went to sleep. Though we raised it to infinity when we ran stress tests for the server, so the memory from that time might've affected this dream.

Experience point is lined up to astronomical 9 digit number I don't feel like reading it. I want to have a comma splice for every three digits. Let's propose it for the next update.

Strength (STR) and Intelligence (INT) attribute values are 99. FFW client stopped the value at 99 but there is no actual upper limit. During the time when we lift off level restriction the attribute value also rises accordingly... In other word, the actual value might be higher here too?

Endurance (HP) and MP (Magic Power), and Stamina (SP) became 3100 harmoniously. These were set to rise by a fixed 10 for each level. There are many approaches to reduce consumption by various skills.

It's made this way since, according to the Planner, the adjustment is troublesome if we raise each one differently.

In addition, availale skill points are also 3100.

Did it decrease from the acquired skill earlier?

When I properly look at the skill column, both skills just now are greyed out. [Magic Art : Foreign World Lv0] shows up when I tap it. Tapping the Lv text shows [Please Allocate Point (1-10)] confirmation dialogue, so I tried to put 10.

Without any SFX the text becomes white and changes to [Magic Art: Foreign World Lv10]. Skill points become 3090. 1 level = 1 skill point. Easy to understand. When I try to tap on it again, [Maximum Level] message shows up.

On the magic column, [All Map Exploration] text is white while [Meteor Shower] remains in grey.

It seems that you can't meet the condition to use magic if you don't allocate points to the skill level. So I also put 10 point to [Summoning

Magic: Foreign World Lv0].

There are also many things added to title column.

First [Monster Slayer]. Yep, I understand this. Then [Scale Tribe Slayer][Scale Tribe Calamity][Scale Tribe Natural Enemy] I'm not sure what scale tribe mean but they're probably reptile monsters. Furthermore, [Wyvern Slayer][Dragon Slayer[Lower]][Dragon Slayer[Infant]][Dragon Slayer[Adult]][Dragon Slayer[Ancient]], and other [Dragon Slayer] with [] inside continue endlessly.

Well, with this many dragons I can understand why such an impossible level-up to the 300 range happened. The map was dyed red before the attack earlier.

Then, just like the title for Scale Tribe, [Dragon Tribe Natural Enemy] appeared and the last title is [God Slayer].

Do you believe in god?

"Wait, when did I kill one?"

I tap the log and search for [God].

>Defeated the Dragon God AkonKagura!

There, the cause for god slayer. I see, the meteor shower also killed the god.

I see, I killed it...

Only 2 remain, god slaying technique!!

No no, why would I kill them?

However, the log doesn't show damage so I don't know how powerful it was. In FFW and WW, the last blows damage should have been displayed but... I guess there's no point questioning a dream.

Since it's become easier to move, I raise my body.

I turned off the display icon for [Meteor Shower] in [Setting] since I don't want to become the enemy of humanity by carelessly clicking it.

Oh right, I haven't used the the magic column yet.

I switched to the tab with [All Map Exploration] and [Meteor Shower] in it. Now then, how do I use it. I wonder if tapping it normally work.

There is no particular change when I try to use [All Map Exploration].

When I check the log there's [Magic: All Map Exploration used] message. MP become 3090 in the status. Seems like it uses 10 MP. I added HP and MP to the basic indicator since it's annoying to check it every time.

There's nothing reflected in the radar besides myself.

It's nice that there's no enemy but mass killing like this is not funny. No, wait, it's normal for a game.

Since there are no victims I guess it's okay? I slowly tap on [Meteor Shower]. It feels like something is greatly pulling out my vigor. I saw my MP continue to decrease. It stopped after consuming exactly 1000 points.

It didn't feel like this the first time I use it, guess it wasn't using my own magic power back then.

I look up at the sky. There's no meteorite yet. Considering before, it should be soon.

And then groups of meteorites tore apart the cloud.

Huge. What the heck is that.

It's 100 times bigger than the earlier meteorites.

I instinctively run before thinking.

Of course toward the opposite side of the drop zone.

I run as fast as I can with the continuous huge meteorite impact sound in the background.

As if running through water, the air resistance is too strong. It normally feels sluggish when you run in dream, is it just me?

I rolled over to the other side of a table-like small wall of rocks. Even though I said small, it's about 100 meter in radius so it will do fine as a shield.

A tsunami of dust sweeps apart just right after I went into the shelter. People-sized rock occasionally roll through the dust cloud, my spine becomes a bit cold.

I wonder how long it will elapse. When the dust cloud settled I climb the rock wall to see at the fall.

Since the slope is pretty steep I tried jumping over 50 cm height.

Pon. I fly 5 meter feeling like hearing such SFX.

Landing on the ledge of a rock with slight panic.

"This status rise, what a joke~"

I tried to deceive my trembling body by speaking to myself.

"That giant meteorite earlier is probably thanks to INT increase too~"

I run up the wall by alternatively kicking through various ledges and rock edges like some kind of ninja in games and manga. How convenient. Even in a dream, I have pretty high adaptability if I may say so myself.

I can see the collapse of a mushroom cloud in the distance. Most likely, it's sediment that got caught up on the fall. This would create crop failure and health damage disaster if this was the real world, due to reduction of sunshine.

"It's a dream anyway, there's no helping it even if I think about it."

I think it's bad that it's too real.

TL Note: I changed Spirit World to Foreign World since I realized that it's actually about summoning the meteorite and don't want to confuse it with Seirei which also translate to Spirit. I'm sorry for people who have read it early.

1-3. The Start of Wandering Life!

"Hello, Suzuki here. My character name is Satou, but I'm Suzuki."

I want to talk with somebody instead of doing this monologue!

Since the dream continued with no sign of it being over, I decided to look for human habitation.

Thankfully at the edge of the wide map, there looks to be some kind of highway.

Three days since then. I've been been walking day and night yet am still only halfway there.

Stamina gradually decreases, but it's still 2800/3100. It decreased about 100 each day.

If this was a game, I should be okay for 28 days, more but I'm at my limit already.

I'm not sure if it's because of my stat or dream, but I don't feel tired. I did get sleepy but I endured it.

Right now I'm walking, even if I run the stamina decrease rate isn't really different. If I jump around the stamina decreases faster than running but honestly, it's still within margin of error.

Then why am I walking now? That's because I'm free.

You don't understand?

Yeah.

At the start I was singing a one man karaoke while running.

Originally my repertoire is small. I ran out of song immediately.

The surrounding scenery is magnificent but unfortunately it rarely changes.

Then, I decided to read the long log.

I'm not a text mania but since it's painful to silently walk an aimless road I began reading the log from the very first entry.

Of course, it's hard to read text while running, so the I began to walk. Absorbed with reading the log, I forgot my original purpose of getting onto the highway.

The log started with [Magic Art: All Map Exploration is used], then [Defeated~] messages for defeating Lizardmen and Dragonewts until the Dragon God.

Afterwards there's [Defeated All Enemies on the Map] and lastly [Source: Conquered Dragon God Valley]. Source? What's that? Mystery words pop out.

Then the log continue with loot and level up record.

The loot records occupy 80% of the log. Common gold and equipment. Then various dragon materials like horns, fangs and scales. Up to this I can understand the quantity and quality of the loot, but in contrast the remaining ones are strange.

Lizardmen and Dragonewts corpses are stored in the storage. Is it for Necromancer's use?

The rest are probably daily goods used by the scale tribe like food and fuel. I can't lay out such items though... furthermore, they're all named with [Broken~] as prefix, aren't these garbage?

As one would expect, reading through tens of thousands detail would be troublesome.

Thankfully, WW storage window allow you to search and classify by item type and user tag.

I designed them as a common interface to decrease working steps needed. I'm a bit proud making it on the same level as the latest OS filer.

Of course there's also optional folder functionality, but when you tap the stored item inside the bag, the the sub-type will expand and you can take it out without confirming.

<TLN: The run-on in this sentences is absolutely crazy, I'll appreciate help on this one. The trivia is not that important for the plot though so you can just interpret this whole geeky paragraph as : "It's awesome">.

Of course you can also take out the item by dragging it too. In addition, you can also put user registered items on custom tab. This was added because it's annoying to input search word every time on a smartphone.

Well, the story wandered off for a bit. I can't blabber on program scheme too long.

I open two storage windows to begin organizing items. First, I create folder for each general type. Then I will create sub-folder for sub-types inside.

In the setting screen I enabled the [Automatically Stack Identical Item

Type] option.

Without this enabled, the total number of item would be too much.

By the way, we call overlapping position like this as stacking in FFW and WW. The term exists in most RPG's so I will omit the explanation. I wonder if the etymology comes from piling pieces in the old simulation board game?

Anyhow

Gold loot is mostly money.

The most numerous one is [Ancient Empire Gold Coin]. It's 1.001.2000, wow. I tried taking out one, it's quite big and heavy. It's about as big as a 500 Yen coin and as heavy as five 100 Yen coins. If I remember right, it's about 30 grams. Since in real world money, the coin is about 4-7 grams, this one is too big and heavy. If we calculate, the total is 303 Tons... an absurd weight. In the real world, about 2500 Tons of gold is mined a year. Hoarding so much gold like this, is very Dragon-ish.

The next numerous one is [Saga Empire Gold Coin] of about 40K. I'm interested whether there are many empires or if it was a new empire built after the former one was destroyed by dragon. I tried taking out this one too, it's a bit smaller than 500 Yen coin but the weight is only about 7 grams.

And the third, Crimson Treasure 30K. Fantasy-like money appears! Taking it out, it's about half as heavy as the ancient gold coin with ruby-like appearance. Sometimes it let out a flash of light from inside creating cyber (chick?) feeling. A bit mysterious.

The rest are 10K of [Ancient Empire] silver and copper coin. [Saga Empire] and [Shiga Kingdom] silver, small silver, big copper, copper, pennies. [Drag Holy Kingdom] big silver, silver, copper, and various money with [~Kingdom] suffix. These are all in total 7000. For now, I sort it by country.

Still, WW and FFW didn't have sets of money... In WW it was called Wol, and in FFW it's Kaane, there's no other currency beside it.

These various currencies may come from the quiz show I saw during my break, impacting this dream.

There are also jewelry, ornaments and works of art besides money. A simple silver ring, emerald fist, ornamental crown, life-sized gold figure, decorative short sword, and many valuable looking things numbered about 300K.

Most are just expensive looking normal items, however there are magic items mixed in around 5% of the total.

The detailed information for the magic items are long so I skimped on reading it. Think of it like reading internet slang that you don't understand the meaning of on a bulletin board. There was no mounted jewelry in WW and FFW. <TLN: Okay this is so abrupt, I'm not sure what's what. This guy need an editor.>

Understanding some of the explanations, there are some things that catch my attention. Able to produce 100 litres of water a day, [Hell Water Jug (Water Bottle)].

I took out the [Hell Water Jug (Water Bottle)] when I found it and drank the water. I wanted to wash my face and hair with it but gave up since the dust from the meteor shower is still floating around.

Other things are; able to keep 1000 sheets of money, [Magic Wallet], stacking 30 varied types of up to 30 items, [30 Holding Bag]. I put those 3 things on favorite.

Since I have infinite storage, there's no point in a magic bag, but I like seeing a long sword slide in and out of the bag.

The second day ended with such feelings after organizing treasury.

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Moving on with this and that on the third day. The clock has crossed 0. I'm not sure if it's really the third day since I slip off the clock every 4 hours.

Since I'd get tired if I sleep on this wastelands rough ground, I keep walking instead. There's a full moon tonight so there's no problem with visibility.

Having principle of saving the best dish the last, it's time to check for the weapons and armors.

I sort the type to show materials and corpses. According to the log There are only a few lizardmen and dragonewt corpses. This is most likely because of the meteorite, having received the full blow, there won't be many remains. However, there are a lot of dragon's corpse. Defeated Log shows that there are 2-3 times as many. This place become like a dragon version of an elephant's graveyard.

Most are materials from body parts, but there are also iron ingots, medicinal plants, timber, and stone. They're probably from the things crushed by the meteorites. Random body parts and scales are many. Regardless of type, there are 7.9600K of them. Even an old dragon skin mold and husk exist.

"Huge, if the scale is this big, wonder how huge is the body."

Losing to curiosity, I took out an adult dragon's scale, it's about 50 cm. While I'm at it, I took out lower dragon's scale to check, it's palm size.

[Broken] item are put in specific folder. I was thinking of throwing it away but stopped since it could become a literal mountain of garbage.

Finally, it's equipment.

There are around 30K things. The Scale tribe's spears are especially abundant, things which begin with [Scale Tribe's~] are around 20K. Neither are magic items, they're all normal items made of copper or iron. There are only few strange armors.

I tried taking out a scale tribe's spear. 2 meter long wooden handle with sharpened bone tip comes out. It can't pierce when I tried it out so it probably isn't a war spear.

The magic items are such like [Dragon Skin Armor] or [Dragon Scale Armor], seems like items blessed by the dominant tribe are around 100. Those are probably scale tribe armor.

The remaining 10K of half are [Dragon] based large swords, spears and bows. These are probably legacy from the (scale tribe) people who beat dragons.

The special effects kind are jewelry, but I don't understand the effects so let's put it off for now.

There are several interesting things, especially [Holy Sword] and [Divine Sword]

My long lost Chuuni heart is stimulated.

Why are these [Holy Sword]'s are named [Excalibur], [Durandal] and such?

There are also katana's named [Muramasa] and [Kotetsu]

"Tension up~"

I enjoy wielding Excalibur. It should be quite heavy but I swing it carelessly. Beautiful traces of light come out. However for physical weapons isn't sword disadvantageous? But it's popular in flashy games.

Oh yeah, there is no specific name for the Divine Blade.

I expected to get sword skill when I wielded the sword, but it didn't happen. It will likely come out if I defeat an enemy with a sword.

Unusual things also exist. Cannons and ballistas That are usually placed on fort to counter flying enemy on the sky. Skimming the descriptions, it seems that it seems that it doesn't use gunpowder, but magic power instead.

Another one, it's gun!

Handgun 100, Rifle 50. Magic powered gun 12. Just for the record, there are no guns in FFW. There are cannons in WW though.

I take out the smallest magic gun.

It's a Derringer sized gun with excessive ornaments. The trigger guard is attached.

In the real world, guns have safety locks, over here it's a switch with 0, 1, 3, 10 scale. I set the scale to 1.

I aim at a rock nearby with one hand and pull the trigger.

A psshh sound comes out, yet no trace of the shot could be seen.

When I confirm the rock, a hole about as big as a 10 yen coin penetrated it. It's a 2 meter thick hard rock. MP consumption is 1. There is no recoil, it's a laser gun like feeling. This is totally SF instead of fantasy.

With scale set at 10, the rock completely crushed. This would kill Ogre level demons in one shoot. MP consumption is 10.

"It's way too efficient."

It's an item that would totally break balance of a game. No one would want to use magic.

After that, I played around with the gun while moving for 1 hour.

◇

Finished checking items in general, I began thinking something that bugged me before.

"What is Source anyway?"

I mutter to myself.

It's about the [Source: Conquered Dragon God Valley] from the log.

...this is probably not related to tax withholding. <TLN: Source=Gensen, gensenchoushuu=tax withholding at the source>

Besides on the log, there's no mention of [Source: Conquered Dragon God Valley] anywhere else.

Usually I would have said "It's a dream anyway" but something is bugging me.

Having a change of pace by thinking while running, I feel like coming up with something, I'm immersed in running while feeling good, I feel like anything's good.

I'm incoherent if I do so say myself.

Spending many days without any conversation is no good after all. I'm not suited for that.

I've walked for 1 day before I knew it, and finally almost reached the highway.

There is no human habitation according to map. I can see the highway leading to west on the north west.

By the way there's no presence beside me displayed on the map.

I wonder if they ran away in fear of that catastrophe aka meteorite shower with thunderous roaring and earthquakes.

I stopped the half-baked running and began walking.

"I want to take a bath~"

As expected, not having one in 3 days make my head itchy.

It's not possible to boil water, but there is water. Thankfully the dust cloud has lessened, it's possible to wash off the dirt.

I store my clothes and shoes into storage, find a suitable rock and pour water down from the top of my head.

"It's a bit cold, but I've come back to life."

Feeling relieved, I took out clean clothes from the loot and wipe off the water.

In order to take a refreshing nap, I take out a suitable bed with canopy from the loot and put it on the ground.

That day I slept for the first time after 3 days.

The next morning, I noticed that I could hang laundry on the canopy so I wash my clothes with bucket from storage and hang them up, side by side.

After that I lazed around on the bed while eating jerky for half a day.

I'm expecting that someone will pass on the highway, but there's no change in radar, even untill afternoon.

"If this was a light novel or manga, I would have met a princess being attacked by thief~"

I like template ay.

"The service in my dream is so bad."

I turn a blind eye to the fact that I easily get treasures and significant level up, cursing my luck.

A flag would occur if this was a dream or tale, but nothing happened.

After changing into the dry clothes, I began walking toward the highway.

TLN: A chapter with a lot of geeky and trivia exposition. Please bear with me for a while.

1-4. Abandoned Village, Skill and Lost Child

"Hello, Suzuki's here. It's so lonely, I may die of loneliness."

I truly, genuinely want a companion.

After reaching the highway, I got lost on the route; it's been 7 days since then and I still haven't reached a human habitat.

Speaking of which, somehow I got these skills : [Sprint], [3 Dimensional Maneuver], [Jump], [Sing], [Camping] and [Washing].

However, those skills remain grey because I haven't allocated any points to them.

I seemed to have learned [Sprint][3D Maneuver] and [Jump] after the second meteor shower, but overlooked it due to the confusion.

When I was playing around with the gun, the map got in the way so I changed it and the log to icon view, then I noticed something. From the log it's written as place with bed and canopy but...

Isn't that a camping ground? I retorted myself.

◇

Onto 8th day, I finally found a village-like place on the wide area map.

I sprinted to the village. However there's no presence of people according to the map. I wonder if they're taking refuge or got destroyed. No, they should've gone back if they were taking refuge, since it's been one week.

Before long I reached the junction road heading to the village.

There stood a crude guidepost on the roadside. A 1.5 meter commonly made stick nailed to the ground. The destination is written with something like ink.

"I can't read it..."

Something is written there, but I can't read it at all. At least, it's different from all the languages I recognize from the real world. In fact it looks like some sort of fictional writing from a game.

I keep the map on maximum magnification, showing wide area.

While feeling slightly irritated for not being able to read the long awaited clue, I hit the junction on the map. There's no actual meaning to this action, but this time it seems to be a bull's eye.

"'Welcome to Enikei Village','Seryu City 32Km','Until Kazo Kingdom 105Km'; I can read it! ...Or rather, it's in Japanese!"

Pop up displays pile up above the map, each written in Japanese. Is this an effect of All Map Exploration? Cheers for opportunism.

For the time being, Seryuu City seems to be the closest from here, but it's too plain.

After all this time, let's go to the village first. I know that there's no one there, but I feel like I'm losing if I head straight on!

There might be some hidden quests there! If this is my dream, there must be one!!!

The village comes into view on the other side of the field in just about 5 minutes. Between the narrow street extends fields that looks like they have been abandoned for about a year. It's a world of weeds.

Even from a distance, I can distinguish that many house look burnt down. Every house has one thing in common; the roof is completely burned down.

Judging from the position it seems to be a "Village Abandoned by the Attack of the Dragons".

There are no bones lying around, but many things like harvest baskets, wooden hoes and various farming tools are scattered around as if they were left behind in hurry.

As I stared at the tools lying around, though it's too exaggerated to call it a revelation, I got a little idea.

"If I got washing skill from doing laundry. Maybe I'll get something if I dig some farm land?"

I took the hoe and dug the farmland with it.

>[Cultivation Skill Acquired]

>[Farming Skill Acquired]

It appeared on the log as expected. Though I didn't expect cultivation to pop up.

In order to get better, I'll try many other things.

Suddenly, I pluck what appears to be a vegetable peeping out between the weeds.

>[Harvest Skill Acquired]

It's a bit fun.

Even so, it's easy mode, eh?

Come to think of it, what is this vegetable? Is it spinach, komatsuna? <TLN: Wiki it :p>

I stared at it and AR message saying "Hisaya Grass, leaf vegetables. It's seldom eaten raw, usually processed as condiment or pickles." popped up on over the vegetables.

Yep, it's convenient alright. Seems like this is a different function than the map search.

Incidentally, I tried pulling out weeds.

>[Weeding Skill Acquired]

I didn't cut it, I just pulled it.

I went into something that looks like a windbreak, I take out an ax and chop down a suitable tree.

>[Lumbering Skill Acquired]

I wonder what next? I feel like trying some ideas.

I write a mathematical formula on the ground with the hoe.

『1+1=2』, there.

>[Arithmetic Skill Acquired]

Fumu, if this is OK then 『$E=mc^2$』

>[Lost Knowledge Skill Acquired]

The famous theory of relativity is a lost knowledge?

I'd rather get a flying skill or some such...

This time I'm writing some random characters in Japanese. <TLN: henohenomoheji, google it :P>

>[Painting Skill Acquired]

Painter-san would be mad.

Next I wrote ○× alternatively which made it looks like a children's play.

>[Game Skill Acquired]

Is anything fine?

I begin trying one thing after another.

I tried shaving the burned wood on the back of a house with knife in the shape of a stick.

>[Carpenter Skill Acquired]

>[Weapon Creation Skill Acquired]

In addition, I wrap the stick with a leather I took out of the storage.

>[Leather Craft Skill Acquired]

Making a makeshift broom I sweep it under my foot.

>[Cleaning Skill Acquired]

I'm running out of material. When I tried to find more I discovered a cemetery with a native god shrine.

Since I grew up in the countryside, I inadvertently join hands as if praying for my grandmother.

I offered some jerky and poured some sake cup.

＞[Prayer Skill Acquired]

＞[Title: Devout Believer Acquired]

Umu, I didn't intend to get a skill but...

The material is dry already, I began to get tired of the skill acquiring, let's get out of the village.

It's sunset just as I depart on the highway.

I'm walking toward Seryuu City, according to the guidepost. After accustoming my eyes under the moonlight, in the dark, I sprint down the highway.

When it's near dawn, the wide area map showed the whole Seryuu City. Of course, unlike Enikei Village it has a lot of people.

<TLN: Wut, it's only 30 Km away and you have enhanced speed...>

"Finally, finally civilization~~~"

I cry while trembling with expectation of finally talking with people.

....This is such a long dream. Don't you think so?

1-5. Fortress City Life Begin!

I finally got to Seryuu city.

Let's strip it naked with [All Map Exploration]!

The population is around 120,000. It's a remote region within Shiga Kingdom ruled by an earl. 95% are from the human tribes, the other 5% are beast tribes, scale tribes and fairy tribes. Average level is 2-3. Highest level is an old man magician who is 48. The knights range from 5-20 with most of them on 8-12. Normal soldiers are around 5-7. There are a lot of bows as a dragon countermeasure. Male to female ratio is 5:6 with lots of females. It's unknown whether it's because of difference in birth rate or because of a high male mortality rate.

Unexpectedly, townspeople only have a few skills. Most of them have 1-3 skills, some even none. Having 20 or so skills may be the exception rather than the rule.

Only a few magicians exist. There are only around 2000 people with magic skills. 90% of them have Livelihood magic while the remaining 10% seem to belong to the country's army.

It's as expected in a way, but level 310 is truly extraordinary. In addition, I got carried away and learned a lot of useless skills which would make me conspicuous.

The map could show the name of the streets and merchant's houses to some degree. Even though it could not tell you what kind of item they're selling or their reputation, it's still quite useful for a first look of the town.

Unfortunately, the search function only works for people, I could not find shops with it.

Seen from reduced scale, the town is shaped like a 6 Km diameter oval, along with two 3 Km long [くの] shaped, bowing daruma-like objects attached on each side.

I enlarge the map and confirm each area...

First, closest to the gate, there seems to be a general residential area. Beside the gate are stables and inns. Joining them, the local lord's castle is located in the center of the neighborhood. Something like a temple or magic-something is at the center of the city. Far from the gate, the lord's mansion stands. And a cafeteria that looks too small for city use, but too big as an exclusive for the local lord.

When I tried to search for people with [Adventurer] as job, I got nothing. There was no [Librarian] either, which probably mean there's no library. However, there were some [Slaves]...

After checking so many things, I've arrived at the front of the gate. Showing up together with the sun in the horizon, perfect timing! Though the gate is closed at this time.

I thought that there would be other people in front of the gate but there was actually no one.

It would be nice if there are some villagers who are going to sell their vegetables in the morning.

Is it only in my dream that stores don't open until 10 in the morning?!

Wearing a polo shirt and chinos pant might be too noticeable. I searched the storage, found several robes and took out the only non worn-out dark green robe to wear. The remaining robes are magic tools but they're too worn-out, I can't bring myself to wear them. This robe smells a bit like mold.

My body looks like the time when I was 15 with its small stature. The robe is too long and is dragging a little on the floor. Thanks to that, the sneakers are hidden. My mustache didn't even grow after one week. I was so happy and showed it off when it grew during the freshman period of university life. Though, I shaved it immediately when I got a girlfriend...

While having a recollection of the past, I continue to wait for the gate to open.

◇

「●●！　●●●●●●　●●●●●●●●●！！」

When I got near the gate an uncle soldier came out while saying some unknown words.

The long awaited conversation featuring a mysterious language!!

＞Shiga Language Skill Acquired!

I love Easy Mode!

God hasn’t forsaken me!!

I operated the menu and acquired the Shiga language skills extremely fast! Overenthusiastically allocated 10 skill points with glee.

"What's wrong kiddo? Do you have a stomachache?"

A bearded soldier follows suit. I don't think calling a man in the latter half of his twenty, "kiddo", is right... Oh that's right, my outer appearance is that of 15 years old.

"Good morning. Yes, I'm fine."

I replied amiably with a vague smile, trademark of Japanese people. Even if the partner is a middle aged uncle, it's a human after a long time. A smile is only 0 Yen!

The heavy gate opened behind us during the conversation.

"Kiddo, show me your identification per the rules. If you don't have one, pay the 1 copper coin tax."

What--! ID in a dream!

I thought of showing the driver license from my wallet but it looked like it'd be troublesome so I stopped.

"I'm sorry, I don't have an ID card."

I honestly say it. If I got refused then I could just stealthily go in, if I got caught then I'd just run. I'm seriously acting self-important inside this dream! Yes, a dream! This is a dream!

"Did you lose it? We could issue a new one but that'd be 1 silver coin, ya okay with that?"

Oi oi, can you so easily issue a new one?

There are some Shiga silver coins in the storage if I'm not mistaken.

"Please allow me to get a new one! My horse, surprised by the loud roar 8 days ago, escaped while carrying my luggage. If I haven't got beef jerky in my pocket and didn't find some spring water on the way here, I would have been dead!

I'm a smooth talker if I do say myself~ I may truly have a talent for swindling.

As if responding to my inner monologue :

>[Excuse Skill Acquired]

>[Deception Skill Acquired]

>[Negotiation Skill Acquired]

Cheap skills!!!

"Come here kiddo!"

Uncle soldier beckon me to the guard station located besides the gate.

Even after telling excuses with great pain, uncle soldier just ignored it. His ignorability power-level is too high!

"Just in case, you're not on some wanted list or a thief, right?"

"Yes, of course."

I'm a member of general public unrelated to crime~

"Then, put both of your hands on top of this Yamato stone and speak your name."

Uncle guided me to the place with a 20" wide LCD display inside the guard station. Where in Yamato this Yamato stone can take me? Can it goes to space?

<TLN: Yamato in yamato, not sure what the heck he's talking about here beside the reference to Space Battleship Yamato series.>

For name, it should be character name right~

"Satou."

Right after I spoke my character name. The lithograph started to dimly shine with blue light, and some words appeared.

It's the same letter as the one on the guidepost earlier. I could properly read it thanks to Shiga language skill. I want an English language skill!

"Kiddo, it's fine to release your hand now."

On the lithograph, [Race: Human],[Level: 1],[Class: Commoner], [Affiliation: None],[Occupation Type: Management],[Title: None],[Skill:None],[Reward and Punishment: None] are written.

Eh, isn't the level different?

Leaving me puzzled, uncle soldier smoothly wrote the displayed writing from the lithograph onto a paper using a quill. Finally, he stamped the entry form, [Person Approving: Retainer of Earl Souryuu, Knight Soun], with his ring on the place where his name is written.

"Here, don't lose it next time."

Uncle soldier passes me the certificate while I give him a silver coin and one big copper coin taken from my pocket.

"What, you can properly put money on pocket. Aren't you quite watchful! Keep your ID safe from now on."

"Also, don't forget this. Residence permit is only for 10 days. If you want to stay longer, apply your request here or at the ward in the town hall. Wherever it is, the procedure costs 3 copper coin."

"If you're caught in town with an expired permit during homeless hunt, the penalty will be 1 silver coin. If you can't pay it, you'll be forced to become a slave."

The explanation flowed smoothly, as if he's always doing it.

Let's be careful not to forget it.

Falling from vagrant to slave is severe! I wonder if it's the same with homeless hunting during Edo period?

"Thank you very much."

"Ou, you're welcome to the guard station for consultation if there's any trouble. Don't mind about the fee."

I've heard something good. Thank you, knight Soun.

I go out of the guard station with a polite farewell.

I took quite a bit of time inside the station, that the main road from before to inside the gate is now filled with people with an exotic feel.

◇

There's a semicircular space with a radius of about 20m between the gate and the town. Whether it is there to prevent confusion or for war, I don't know.

The certificate is made with material resembling Japanese paper. Even though the cityscape is in western style, the parchment is... Is it the limit of a dream?

I fold it carefully into my pocket. Of course, I put it directly into the Favorite folder inside my pocket.

Let's look for a change of clothes while strolling the main street for now! Even after many washings, it's painful to only wear one set of clothes.

"I want to take a bath before changing clothes..."

I tried to search for a bathhouse attendant, but it was not applicable. I'm wondering if I got the occupation name wrong or if there are no bathhouses in the first place. If it's the latter then I have no choice but to get hot water and take a bath inside my room in the inn later.

"You there! If you haven't decided on an inn then come to ours! I'll give you some service~!"

"Wh-What..."

"It's fine, it's fine, it's cheaper than all the others-- Not, but it is filled with a devotion to delicious food and clean bedding!"

When I was thinking about how to get into a bath, someone suddenly pulled my arm and my consciousness came back. A random high tension girl embraced my arm while pulling it. I wonder if she's a barker, it's a scene you usually see in a campus festival in modern Japan.

I'm dragged to a store that looks like a bar while thoroughly enjoying the soft feeling wrapped around my arm. Because I entered from the main street it feels dim.

"Mom! Mom! I brought a guest!"

Out of consideration for the softness transmitted to my arm, I have no more hesitation in deciding to stay in this inn. Yep, poyopoyo is justice!

"It's the first customer since the stars fell, isn't it... Hm? He doesn't have any luggage, is he really a guest?"

An aunty with a big body came out of the bars counter-like place. Contrary to her figure, she's a beautiful woman with a face filled with dignity. I think she's about 30? I'm sorry for calling you aunty.

However, even though these mother-daughter pair are natural beauties, why are they fat! Lose 10, no 20 Kg, and they would be in my strike zone!!

Though I'm out if she's a married woman. An affair will only make everyone involved unhappy!

"Because of that, er, starfall? My luggage ran out with my horse due to the uproar... Fortunately my wallet is safe, and I somehow got into this city~"

"That's a disaster. Our inn charges 1 big copper coin for one night. If you're fine with sleeping together with other guests in a big room then it'd be 2 copper coin. Meal is served at this bar for one serving. It's the limited service for an accommodation."

Fumu, I don't know the market price, so let's investigate the value of big copper coin and silver coin by paying for 10 days.

The landlady has arithmetic and cleaning skill so there won't be any mistake with calculation.

"Then, it's for 10 days please."

"Okay, it's exactly 2 silver coins then."

I take out 2 silver coins and pass it to the landlady.

It seems that 5 big copper coins equal 1 silver. It doesn't seem like she miscalculated either.

"Landlady, could I have my meal now? If possible a light one."

"If it's something like oatmeal, black bread, or vegetables then I could get it out right now. And I'm sorry but meat hasn't appeared in the market, so there's none of that."

"Then black bread and a stew please."

"Okay, I'll bring it immediately, so just sit there. Martha, write the guest book for our customer here."

The landlady goes to a place that looks like a kitchen, and in her place, a poster girl who looks like a head clerk from a historical drama holding a notebook tied up with string, Martha-chan, skips here.

She's cute but she looks around a high schooler's age? A bit too young for me.

"Ye~s, I'm writing for you so can you give me your name?"

"It's Satou."

"Okay Satou. Your occupation and age please."

I almost said 29 year old programmer. According to Status screen, it should be 15 years old.

"A peddler, 15 years old."

Martha-chan smoothly fills the notebook. It looks to use yellow papers like the one used on Japanese calligraphy.

When Martha attempted to chat after writing the inn registry, the landlady came out and told her to clean the 2nd floor.

The crystal clear stew with consomme-like soup, cabbage and carrot-like vegetables, and as announced before, without meat, is more delicious than I expected. There are 3 slices of about 2 cm thick black bread. It's harder than what I've heard, but feels about as hard as senbei. It looks like it would fill your stomach. I bite it full of curiosity. It feels like a meal full of strange SFX.

Feeling satisfied for a meal after a long while, I pay the price. 1 copper coin. Usually it's prepaid.

Come to think of it, Martha and the landlady use loanwords like service and oatmeal normally, but when I observed their lips, I know that they're speaking different words. I wonder if it's an appropriation of the Shiga language words.

>[Lip Reading Skill Acquired]

...Ya~y, I can become a spy or a detective~ orz.

Or rather,

"Landlady-san, I intend to buy some groceries and a change of clothes, do you know any good places?"

Although I know stores location from the map, there are too many of them, I don't feel like going around all of them.

"If you want something with high quality material, then the tailor on the city center would be the best. For something reasonable then the east is good, and if you want it cheap then the west. If you have money in excess then you could tailor it on the high class shop at the inner wall, but you'd need gold coin. General good stores usually open near clothing stores, so please plan your budget carefully."

"Thank you very much. I'll go to the east street since tailoring seems that it would take some time."

"Okay, although there's Chian on the east, be careful of pickpockets. Since sometimes there are migrant workers from the west there."

"Yes, I will be careful."

I leave the inn while thanking the landlady for the advice.

It's starting to get hard to say that this is a dream. But I will work hard!

TLN: Since the next few chapters are quite slow paced, I will hold off on releasing a chapter a day and will release only after I've finished translating up to chapter 8. Please understand. ;)

Edited by : Fate Trooper

1-6. The Marketplace, the Princess and the Slave Trade

Satou's here. It's Suzuki but I'm Satou. This is a dream right? Please say that this is a dream, Johny.

◇

A slight unrest began to arise inside my mind, when I went shopping on the earl's territory metropolitan, Seryuu city.

It's a few minutes walk to the east of Martha's mother inn.

Come to think of it, I haven't heard the name of the inn, the map says Monzen Inn; is that it?

Immediately after entering a series of food stalls, I smell something good.

Eh? Isn't this the smell of soy sauce?

Okonomiyaki and crepes are being baked on an iron plate. The seasoning seems to be soy sauce. Just as I thought, it's fine to call this a dream. There's no way soy sauce exists in a fantasy!

Even though I've just had a meal, I buy one of them.

"Yep, it's delicious."

I want pork cutlet sauce rather than soy sauce. The other stalls seems to be frying something that looks like croquettes. What a high food culture for a fantasy!

I'm going around various stalls, trying various foods.

"How much is this gabo for 3 serving?"

"It's 2 Pennies."

"Expensive, isn't it 1 penny?"

"young maam, like that, we couldn't eat then; How about 2 pennies for 4 then?"

"Give me 5 for 2."

"It can't be helped, since young maam's a beauty, I'll give in."

I listened to some interesting conversation between an aunty and a food stall owner. Haggling basic eh? Since I'm accustomed with just buying what's written on the price tag, it looks difficult.

>[Eavesdropping Skill Acquired]

"Anything I can help, young man?"

Fumu, from the conversation earlier a gabo seems to be about 0.4-0.5 pennies a pop. Since this uncle has arithmetic skill, he should've been able to calculate the minimum amount.

"I want to buy 2 gabo, is it alright with 1 penny?"

"You've heard the conversation just now eh? It's alright then. Young man have arithmetic skill too right. You're pretty good for such young man."

It's just a normal mental arithmetic though...

I got 2 gabo fruit for 1 penny. Gabo is actually a fist-sized red pumpkin fruit. Incidentally, penny is an oblong shaped coin weighing about 1 gram, it's a yellow-ish copper coin with high impurity.

>[Estimation Skill Acquired]

>[Haggling Skill Acquired]

But I didn't haggle it?

Is it because I saw the earlier haggle by the aunty?

While wondering what to do with the gabo fruit I looked around me. The stalls are all around the size of half a tatami yet there are many of them. Furthermore they're lively.

While looking around the stalls I raised [Estimation], [Haggling], [Arithmetic], [Negotiation], and [Scamming] skills to the max level.

After strolling around for 10 minutes, I finally found my goal.

I choose a large shoulder bag from one of the stall. The price is displayed over the bag thanks to the estimation skill. Handy.

It seems that I'd get hated if I suddenly bought it on market price. I understood the knack after 3 stores. I could get it to half the market price if I try to bargain for 3-4 times... but honestly, it's annoying.

The spoils from the stalls... [Large Shoulder Bag], [A Bit Stylish Bag], [Commoner's Underwear for Top and Bottom + 10 set], [Hand Towel in Various Size, and Handkerchief]. The towel is just two piece of clothes stacked together, I'm a bit dissatisfied.

Also, even though I can't sew, [2 Meter Hemp Cord - 5 Bundles], [Cotton

Thread - 1 Roll], [Sewing Needle - 5], [Sewing Scissors], [Cotton Cloth], somehow there's a lot of them. Since I have the storage, there's no problem even if a lot of them end up unused.

In all it's 4 silver coins. Unexpectedly, clothing is more expensive than foods.

I don't think I need to say this, but the first thing I bought, the shoulder bag, is a dummy. I will put things I bought into the bag and directly send it to the storage without being seen. I put some commoner's clothes inside the bag so that it doesn't look flat.

I wanted to buy some some robes or cloaks but, only worn-out or cheap looking things were available so I didn't.

That's right, I want to confirm heat retention of the storage. I'll buy some properly hot things and put it inside.

Shopping is fun~

"Now then, I wonder what else?"

Chair lined up ahead of the stalls and there are a lot of old mans are drinking sake since morning.

"Drinking in daytime... Oh yea, tableware!"

There should've been a shop that sells them among the one I've visited so far.

That's right, shoes! I forgot about shoes.

I want a reminder~. There's a memo field inside the [Exchange] tab of the Menu, let's put the shopping list there.

It's been a while since I saw the Exchange tab, over there I found the reason why I was level 1 when I entered the city.

Those status was the same as the one written in this page. The upper limit for each attributes are chosen from the drop down box here. Even the skills and title can be chosen as [None].

I could give false info however I want, huh...

I buy a pair of shoes suitable for rough journey, and a robe matching the shoes, also a sandal for each foot.

I thought of buying everything since I have the storage but I can't find shoes with correct size. I'll just order it on the main street's shoes store later.

Hungry after a second round trip, I set my eyes on a store selling something that looks like shoyu ramen and went into it. Although the noodles are different, it's a proper ramen.

Other was kneaded flour coiled in a stick varnished with miso-like substance then baked. It felt like a mismatch, but it was properly delicious.

I also bought cups, pots, tableware that caught my attention, I bought them all. Also, a kitchen knife, hot pot and frying pan. Somehow there were no cutting boards, do people here don't use them?

I casually bought a bathtub made of metal. As one would expect, the tub is too big to place into the bag so I brought it quietly to the back of an alley and put it into the storage. And since it would look unnatural if I went back into the east avenue, I decided to exit onto the the main street.

◇

At the east street stalls overflow, making the street there squeezed on the center. Here, the main street is about 6 meter width, horse carriage and human-powered cart are going back and forth on it.

Just like the street earlier, different from what I imagined of a fantasy, the street here are very clean. There are no body of dead animals lying around. There are also no bum on the alleyway.

The stalls are sparse here unlike on the east street, in exchange there are a lot of stores instead. There are many people with good attire walking around the street.

"Are collars popular?"

The people who are pulling carts generally wear collar. When I search for it, they're slaves. Mysteriously, all the slaves wear collars, reason unknown.

A carriage coming from the downtown drop its speed to match the walking speed of the pedestrians.

The carriage passes in front of me. There are around 10 woman slaves inside.

My eyes are glued to one of them. A girl befitting to be called Yamato Nadeshiko featuring black hair and black eye, although she looks like she's been in a long journey. Since the great majority of people looks like northern European, this is probably the first time I've seen Asian face.

The girl set her eyes downcast, our eyes met when she lift it up and even though there's no dramatic development, somehow the little girl featuring orthodox northern European face with light violet wavy hair standing next to her looked very surprised when she saw me. No well, It's troubling when you stare so hard at me... I'm not into loli.

When I took a long look at the little girl, a pop up with her name and level appeared next to her.

Arisa. Level 10. Her level is high for a little girl.

Further informations appear.

11 years old.

Title: [Witch of the Lost Kingdom][Mad Princess]

Skill: Unknown

The carriage disappear toward the west street.

Frankly, those were some trouble inviting titles... No no, I won't approach it okay? Absolutely!

◇

Let's go back to my original purpose.

I searched the map for tailor or shoemaker, and found them gathered near the side street, so I went there. Most of them had young women clerks which isn't fit for an old man, so I went into the shop with a kindhearted looking middle-aged couple.

"Pardon me, Do you have a solid merchant-like robe with calm color?"

"Welcome, please come over here, we will bring you sample cloths. There were 5 ready made goods on the rack there, but it's been selling well recently."

The husband guide me to the lounge and take out the samples from the interior. In harmony, the wife bring out tea-like drink. It's an elegant cup.

"Since it'll be cold from now on, how about this thick fabric? If you're going on a journey then we can also prepare a matching waterproof cloak, how about it sir?"

These are excellent goods. Maybe. These are the types that the largest clothing store buy a lot with a lot of color variety, The 5 variety of the well selling goods probably also have cloak order accompanying them <TLN: I'm sorry, this sentences is total gibberish for me too in the raw>.

The tailoring will need 5 days to finish. If I only buy one then it's only 3 days.

5 gold is quite a large sum, but it's a money needed for necessary

things.

However, I want at least 1 change of robe before the day is over. I feel like I don't know the TPO if I go the inner wall with this battered robe I'm wearing.

"Master, since this shop is only for tailoring, do you know shops selling ready made goods? As you can see the robe I'm wearing is battered from the journey, I want to buy temporary clothes before the tailoring is done."

<TLN: Not sure why Satou call the shopkeeper goshujin>

"For ready clothes, I recommend Poel Clothing on the Teputa street. Although it's my stupid son's clothes, I can assure his cloth-making skill. It's quite famous among the commoner so it's quite enough for temporary clothes."

Promoting his son's shop eh... I politely refuse when he's offering to draw a map, it's enough with oral instruction so I get out of the shop. I almost forgot to take the deposit receipt until I was called by the Mrs. Shopkeeper in hurry.

I bought two robes, one is a calming dark brown color and the other is a gaudy red with yellow stripes. The former is as said before, and the latter, let's omit the story behind it. My line of vision went into the valley of the female clerk...

Of course I also order shoes on the tailor. 1 for walking in the city, 2 boots for journey.

When I came back to the Martha's inn after shopping, the sun was already sinking for the day.

1-7. Open Air Bath, Objective and Sightseeing

"Satou's here. The petty one who doesn't want to get involved with the dangerous looking slave, Satou."

It's a dream! My self-suggestion is reaching the limit.

It's another world that's most likely a dream, become my compromise. Yes, however small the possibility is, I won't give up.

◇

My heart broke when Martha said that a bathroom is not available except at the lord's castle. Since the food and sanitation culture of the town were pretty high, I thought that bathrooms also mattered.

I thought of bathing in the room with the tub, but since it'd get the room moldy due to the moisture, I was told to do it in the backyard since it also has a well.

The backyard is about 6 tatami wide. The well is not that far from the back door, it's not equipped with a pump and is the type that uses buckets to draw water, usually used in older days. I'm using one of the two wooden tubs available.

I thought that I would struggle but thanks to my high (STR) status, it was easy.

Thought they said backyard, the fences are only around my waist high. Even though there are only few pedestrians traffic, there are still some. It's already dim during the dusk but if I take a bath in place like this, isn't this like an exhibition?

When I look around, there's a partitioning screen near the back door.

I see, am I meant to use this?

After I put up the screen, I started bathing with the cold water.

Though it's only about as high as my waist, it's enough for shielding the view.

...Dang, I forgot to buy soap!

There's probably no shampoo, but if it's just soap it should be available. Let's look for it tomorrow.

A woman comes out of the back door. It's a blond beauty on later half of her 20. How do I say this, this town has a lot of beautiful woman.

Our eyes match.

Iya~n.

...Disgusting. I'm disgusted with myself.

After the woman finished drawing the water into the tub, she started bathing after putting the screen.

There's a screen between us, it is, but!

Whenever she moves a little, the upper body is!

Well, I estimate it to be D cup, purunpurun, it's asserting itself!

She did cover it by hand, but it got unexposed occasionally...

No, no, I'm not a DT, I summon all my strength to avert my gaze and go back to wash my body. Restrain yourself my healthy lower body!

I glanced at the female's face, she's wearing an expression full of deliberate composure!

As I thought, adult women are nice!!

I wipe my clean body with the towel... Wonder where I should put the water.

There is no drainage.

"It's okay to sprinkle the water on the garden plants. There's a drainage below the plants."

I wonder if I looked pathetic since the woman teach me. I thanked her and went back to the inn after throwing the water.

I want you to overlook my glance during my way back.

>[Surveillance Skill Acquired]

>[Poker Face Skill Acquired]

◇

I changed into the new robe after bathing, feeling refreshed.

The dinner was still mainly vegetables, but the taste really came out, it was delicious. Though I prefer it to be a tad thicker.

The service was raw salad. I'd be happier if it were meat...

I feel that the protein was a bit insufficient, so I took out jerky from my pocket and gnaw on it.

I wanted to drink sake, but the customers around me drink an unrefined looking local sake, causing my craving to stop. I want to drink some cold beer~

After the meal, there is no light when I come back to my room. Not even light from magic. Work harder, Fantasy!

When I ask the landlady who's struggling with drunken people, "It's 1 copper coin if you want a lamp", so she says. By the way, the lamp has to be returned later. It seems that the guys who are awake stay in the bar to drink the night away, only the guys who want to sleep go back to their room. <TLN:duh!>

The toilet is shared together, scooping styled. When I think about it, doing it on the outdoor like I always did until yesterday is better than this. There's a bundle of straw that looks like a wiping cloth. Since it seem that I'd get hemorrhoid if use that, I cut a handkerchief in suitable size and use it. This isn't eco-friendly, but I don't want to save for this kind of thing!

I come back to the room after finishing the business.

The light from the lamp is dim. There's probably some magic items able to be used as illumination among the loots, but I'm afraid that the inn could be half destroyed if I take out the wrong item.

The rented room is 8 tatami wide with a single sized wooden bed, there are also chair and desk. The chair having no roller legs is a matter of course, but even the desk doesn't have a drawer.

The window is small enough that when you put your face to look outside it feels cramped. I wonder if it's for ventilation, the landlady warned me to close it before I sleep to prevent crime.

Fortunately, I can still see the menu screen even in the dark.

◇

From now on, let's fill the memo column in the menu with objectives.

Act 1. Let's really think about whether this is a dream or reality.

For the time being, as to not have anything that I'd regret later if this was really a real another world, let's temporary recognize that this is really another world. Yes, temporarily. I can't give up in that regard!

Act 2. Let's be wary of the surroundings.

Even though I could escape from danger thanks to my high level, I should not act too antisocial that it would hinder me from touring another world. Also, although I don't know how strong they are, there are gods here; let's not be overconfident of my own ability and act careless.

Act 3. Let's obtain means for self-defense.

I want to obtain a method to neutralize opponents, or skills and magic to weather through a troublesome situation. I want to refrain from raining meteors every time there's trouble.

Act 4. I want to find a way back to reality.

If it's a dream then a way to wake up, if it's thrown into another world situation then let's find a way to go back. I don't intend to act too positive though.

Act 5. Might as well enjoy the exotic atmosphere.

With how real this all feel, sightseeing is enjoyable. My budget is plentiful anyway.

Let's ask Mr. knight if there's do-it-all person who's willing to guide me for a tour.

Are these all?

I added soap in the postscript before I slept.

◇

"This is the first time I've been asked to be a tour guide."

So she says, the 20 years old jack-of-all-trades, Nadi-san, while laughing bashfully. She's not a beauty, but she's full of cute gestures. She must be plainly popular.

Normally she's a contractor for miscellaneous job from the worker guild, apparently, hired to become a tour guide is quite unusual.

Since walking is a pain, I borrow a roofless horse-drawn carriage to tour the town.

"The west street is not too prosperous so the citizen not only deal with the front store, but also various slightly gray goods in the back."

"For example?"

"Well, something like love potion on the alchemist and pawn shop, moneylender, even brothels exist. The slave company is also located on the same street."

I reacted to "slave" word. I don't want to meet that little girl~ I can only feel trouble from her.

"Oh? Do you have an interest for slaves? Guard job is impossible, but they can be made to carry your load or chore during your journey. Most peddlers usually employ them."

"Recently they closed after the stars fell before, but they're going to resume. They will open 3 days after the day after tomorrow."

It seems that the slaves that the slave company buy are leftovers from the slave market or in training, there's usually a slave auction held once a month.

"If you want to hire guards for the journey, then there are a lot of them gathered in the bar. Since it's hard to find trusty ones, in case the need arise, do ask [Jack-of-All-Trades] by all means!”

<TLN: Not sure if she's talking about herself or the worker guild>

The carriage proceed along the inner wall of the west street.

"Around here is the craftsmen's block. Woodwork, blacksmithing, leather craft and many other craftsmen are here. Most of them don't have an actual store. Generally they open small store or stall and directly sell their products to the customer in person."

Can they repair weapon and armor over here?

"If you have a craftsman acquaintance there then there's no problem but generally to prevent trouble, one usually go to the arms shop as an intermediate. There are high class arms shops within the inner wall for knights, and shops for soldiers and general public on the Biso street in the eastern town. Hunters like to go to the western town since there are a lot of meat processing stores, there along with an arms shop."

Let's just roughly look at each store on the street. It probably won't end in one day.

Come to think of it, isn't the lord's mansion located in the north?

"You're well informed. Do you want to look inside the inner wall for a bit? Though there's only harvest work to be seen there."

Well, I'd hate to be mistaken as a food thief if I walk there on foot.

The carriage proceed along the western inner wall, toward the narrow street between the inner and outer wall.

After advancing for a while we got to the open gate, the soldiers guarding the gate are present too. The driver nods to the guard and continue to enter the northern district.

There's a vast farm land over there. The carriage continue on the farm road. The farmers are harvesting Gabo, the same fruit I bought yesterday.

I don't know if it's normal, but there are a lot of kids around elementary school age helping.

"Those children are probably from the orphanage, since it's currently harvest season, the children from the town might be coming here to work."

Even children work? No more neet?!

My face became strange for a little while.

"If they're not from wealthy family, then children around that age normally work."

Don't they go to school? WHO please, support Seryuu City!

"School? If they're nobles or come from wealthy family then they usually study in private, but schools only exist in the royal capital."

"Furthermore, the Gabo fruits those children harvest are actually staple foods for people with light wallets."

Hmm? But the inn serves bread and thin rice porridge, sometimes even stew right?

"No well, Monzen inn is relatively high level so they don't serve Gabo fruit. On the west street, most stalls are selling flat bread, gruel, and pickled vegetables. It has strong smell, bitter, and hard to chew so the wealthy rarely ever eat it. Since you can eat cheap things until your stomach full, they're not only eaten by the orphanage children but also by about half of the general populace too."

If it's like that, won't normal potatoes suffice?

"The quantity of the yearly harvest differ. Although the harvest area becomes smaller, they could be harvested in one month period and rarely fail. Furthermore it has a property that enable it to fertilize fallow. Thanks to Gabo fruit, the number of orphanages has increased dramatically."

What a convenient fantasy fruit. Even opportunism has limit.

Even so, Nadi-san is quite knowledgeable... she looks like a literary woman graduated from the royal capital school.

"I wasn't raised in the manor inside the wall, the food situation in rural area was pretty terrible."

She grew up outside eh, I wonder if the lord has a monopoly. It's a subtle mystery.

"It's goblin's favorite food. If it's not a place surrounded by wall like this, goblins would come in a blink of an eye and devour them greedily."

"Back in the day, there was an explosive increase of goblins in the northern part of the kingdom, the scholar who investigated the cause concluded that it's related to Gabo fruit. In those days, if someone found a Gabo tree they would burn it down, then it began to be used as a food source and now it has become the staple food of the lower strata people. However, even now, if someone finds a Gabo tree, they would burn it down."

The wall around the farm is quite a bit lower than the town's wall. Is it around 2 meter and a half?

I wonder what that tower standing tall 1 kilometer away is? It's been in my mind since before I entered the farm. It's around 20 meter tall and look surprisingly rugged.

"That's a self defense mechanism built to repulse Wyvern attacks. The one in the castle is for the castle's defense, the one here is used when the attacks come to the farm."

"About 40 years ago when the black dragon attacked, it played a very big role. Back then, although a tower half as tall as this was brought down, the records depicting the successful repelling remain."

Repel... Did it escape through the sky?

"Leaving aside the Wyvern, as expected, defeating true dragon is impossible. Only someone like the ancestor king, Yamato who was a great magician or Saga empire's hero are able to do something like that."

...Hero, eh?

"Saga empire has this hero's summoning great magic. Since the compensation is enormous, except when the 66 year Demon King's resurrection cycle begin, it's not performed. Yamato-sama and Saga Empire's founder were also heroes who were summoned when the world was in crisis back in the day. It's so dreamy."

As I thought, these Yamato and Saga-san... I can slightly see through why the holy swords were named Excalibur and such.

When the story was finished, the one lap tour around the farm was also finished. The carriage went back towards the inner wall.

1-8. The Demon, the Knight and the Magician

Satou's here. Dumbfounded because the long awaited route abruptly closed.

◇

An existence that can only be expressed as a demon descended.

Having horns like a ram, dark red glowing eyes, and a jet black gleaming body. Four arms, bat wings, and a split stinger tail. Truly a demon.

The demon mowed down the knights effortlessly.

The plaza became full of toppled carriages and dead bodies scattered around...

It suddenly appeared in the middle of a peaceful afternoon.

◇

The inner wall is mostly occupied by mansions of the nobles and the wealthy, while the shops are only located on the side of the main street leading to the castle.

When we arrived at the inner wall, we got off the carriage and started taking a stroll around the luxury shops guided by Nadi-san.

"This is the shop who sells the high class armor for the knights. The shop doesn't only have metal armor. Sometimes they have magic armor available. You'd need dozens of gold coin for that~"

"This one here is the largest jewelry shop around. Especially their service for ruby and sapphire is the best in the kingdom. As for commoners, I recommend Liz jewelry across the street."

"If you want robes tailored, then this shop is good. Although it had been on the wane for a bit; last year, after the son who come back from the royal capital succeeded the shop, it became awfully popular. Since 1 article cost around 2-3 gold coin, commoners don't come here but it may be a good idea for merchants who just got a big job to order here to increase their prestige."

Nadi-san is so wiki-certified knowledgeable. As expected of a jack-of-all-trades?

Although luxurious looking horse-carriages come and go from the castle to the plaza, the traffic is relatively sparse for our carriage to stop on the road.

I wonder if Nadi-san is thirsty after that much talking?

"This is the most popular open terrace shop for sweets and tea among women in Seryuu city."

Nadi-san's eyes are sparkling. It doesn't seem like a plea, just pure longing.

"Nadi-san, my throat has dried up, since we're here already let's take a break there."

"Yes, I understand. Please go ahead, I will wait here."

...hmm?

Suddenly, a lonely decision?!

"You don't want to enter, Nadi-san?"

"I'm sorry, since this is a high class tea shop..."

"Please tell me stories about the castle and the plaza while we drink. Of course, I will pay for the tea and sweets."

Nadi-san's eyes are shining... but it quickly become cloudy. Is it that expensive?

Let's be forceful here!

"Let's go."

I tenderly led her hand inside the shop.

◇

I was a bit prepared for it, but a set of tea and sweets are only 1 silver coin. Isn't that cheap? That was what I thought, but considering that amount will let you stay for 5 days in a high class inn, it's probably quite expensive for the general public.

Even though it's an open terrace cafe, they put stylish marble tables there. The teacup and the pot look expensive too.

The tea tastes like an Assam tea. It doesn't seem like they put sugar and milk though.

In exchange, they serve it along with sweet baked cookies. It seems that you eat it with cottage cheese or jam spread.

Is this that desirable? When I look at the girls in the surroundings, everyone is eating something that looks like hotcakes full of honey cream.

So I called the waiter and asked for two serving of the hotcakes. It's 3 silver coin.

"Delicious~~~"

It's certainly delicious... Particularly the charming happy expression from Nadi-san's face!

Even while enjoying the sweets, Nadi-san didn't forget her professional duty, she talked about the land reclamation of the Seryuu city castle and various other things.

Such peaceful afternoon tea time did not last long...

Initially, a big shadow passes through the plaza.

Followed by deep bass screams.

Crossing the plaza, a gigantic fireball pierces into the castle.

One spire crumbles forward.

After the cloud of dust and the sound from the collapsed spire expire, the people who were frozen in the plaza restarted. Screams arise, soldiers urge them to take shelter in angry voice.

The four armed demon float in the plaza while spreading his black wings.

"Is there a custom for a demon to come play in the afternoon in this town?"

"There is no such thing! Quickly, let's escape!"

>[Nonchalant Skill Acquired]

I said something foolish. Nadi-san pulled my arm to urge me to escape but maybe her waist lost its strength, she can't get up.

Though it's shameful, I look at the situation around me to incite me to act. Somehow I can't digest the acquired information very well. As if my body is moving separately from my head.

When the second fireball crosses through the rampart to the castle wall, a semi-transparent blue barrier stretched in the sky, and the fireball stopped.

Just before the barrier set, groups of knights and magicians come out of the castle wall.

Besiege him! Why don't you guys utilize the castle's defense?

For someone so pathetic he can't even get up off his chair, I cursed at the knights. Even though I got knowledge about battle only from manga and games...

The demon lands on a flower bed in the center of the plaza. He deliberately choose to fight on the ground instead of in the sky with its advantage.

The heavy infantries in the back let loose a rain of arrows. Sounding like violent rainfall, the plaza is pierced. Unfortunately every arrow that hit the black body of the demon is repelled.

3 cavalry knights holding lances on their left hand line up to assault the demon together. The demon exhales purple breath from his mouth toward the knights. Is that a poisonous breath? The face of the knights and the horse who got direct hits look pretty terrible. The knights who lose their vigor fell off their mounts and got kicked by the demon, flying to their companions.

From the opposite side of those knights, another 3 cavalry rush forward!

Although the first two knights got mowed down by the demon's tail, the other one who was late successfully impaled the demon's body with their lance.

The knights who got mowed down by the tail stand up, and strike the demon with their swords.

The demon parries the knights' attack with his claws and roars!

Debris and little rocks rise and swirl around the center of the demon's jet black body, the swirling speed gradually increase...

A chilling premonition crawls up my spine!

I lift my body off the chair. I thought of escaping but Nadi-san, who's still weak in her waist and can't get up, entered my vision.

There is no time. Escape is impossible.

I pulled down Nadi-san from the chair, and direct the thick marble desk toward the demon as a shield.

I couldn't see it from my position, but at this time, the demon unleash shockwaves of vacuum blades in all directions.

It was close but I managed to hold Nadi-san behind the marble desk.

Heavy impact shock the desk. Part of the marble was blown off from the vacuum blade. The view from the open terrace becomes tragic.

The shops surrounding the plaza are either partially or completely destroyed. One is even struck with a small carriage terribly.

I took a sidelong glance at the demon who began to walk toward the soldiers who were struck with the shockwave, and carry the unconscious Nadi-san to leave the plaza.

I run like the wind toward the main street while carrying Nadi-san.

The people who are evacuating are hustling to the inner wall, it's a dangerous situation.

I turn down a side street before arriving at a packed crowd. Since both my hands are occupied, I operated the menu with thought and raise the [3D Maneuver] and [Jump] skill to level 10.

Approaching the inner wall, I found a big building. Jumping while alternating between the inner wall and the building's wall like a ninja in manga, I cross over the inner wall.

>[Retreat Skill Acquired]

When I check the map, it seems that here is the verge of the east town.

I forcibly stop a carriage that happen to pass by and ask the driver to escort Nadi-san to the worker's guild. The coachman is reluctant at first but he cheerfully undertook the job when I shove him a gold coin.

>[Persuasion Skill Acquired]

>[Bribing Skill Acquired]

This is not the time to scrimp on money.

I rely on the memory from yesterday, and take out a certain item from the storage while running.

1-9. Let's Dance with the Demon! [First Part]

Satou's here. Finding out my incompetence, Satou.

Real demon is way too scary.

Especially that roar!

Please do try hearing a lion's roar while standing close to the cage in a zoo. No matter how safe you know you actually are, if your heart isn't prepared, scary thing is scary.

◇

I came to the rooftop of a building where the plaza can be seen.

From there I could see the demon and dozens of soldiers encircling it. Furthermore, the soldiers from the gate are protecting magicians behind them.

Maybe the knights are seeing a chance for assault, the cavalries joined into formation with the soldiers in the back.

The demon became the victim of the spear thrusts and arrows by the soldiers from the back.

Apparently the demon is playing around.

The assaults didn't do anything, he catches the soldiers who attack him and seems to enjoy breaking their bones.

If the demon is the same existence as the ancient one, the soldiers probably taste terrifying fear and anger from seeing their friends killed.

"Now then, it's good that I'm back, but there is no room to intervene in close combat."

My appearance differs from what I wore earlier, now donning a worn-out cloak with a hood. Since I know that it'll get dirty anyway, I don't wear the expensive one.

I take out the magic gun from my bosom. It's not the handgun type, but the one that resemble rifle with big scope.

The demon moves around 300 meter away, so it's hard to take aim.

Right at the time when the soldiers pull away, the magicians cast magic that buries the lower half of the demon's body in the ground.

I pull the trigger on this good opportunity while the demon is unable to move.

And missed.

Apparently I was too tense when I pulled the trigger the line of fire came down a bit.

Fortunately I did not accidentally shoot the soldier.

The demon continuously got hit by fire and lightning magic, but encircled by a barrier, he doesn't seem to take any damage.

The moment the demon stopped moving I rapidly fire the magic gun, set at the lowest setting.

The third shot finally hit! Beside the demon a gauge appeared and decreased by a little bit.

"What is this, a game?"

＞[Shooting Skill Acquired]

＞[Aiming Skill Acquired]

＞[Sniping Skill Acquired]

In the corner of my view, the small log window displays messages for acquiring skill.

Looking away was a bad move. Without any time to avoid, a lightning bolt sent by the demon hit me. After hitting me hard the lightning struck the foothold I'm on. The roof of the building got destroyed.

＞[Lightning Magic: Demon Skill Acquired]

＞[Lightning Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Paralyze Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Pain Tolerance Skill Acquired]

"Ouch ouch, my hands and feet are tingling."

If I had to say, it feels like the numbness you got after doing seiza. When I look at my own HP gauge, I've received 5 point of damage.

Come to think of it, I haven't checked the level of the demon...

I lament for a moment.

"How temperamental is that thing?"

For the time being, let's quickly look at the important things. Demon tribe, level 62, [Lightning Magic: Demon], [Wind Magic: Demon], [Darkness Magic: Demon], [Fighting], [Flight] skills.

I push aside the building's wreckage. It doesn't seem like I'm being pursued.

>[Self-Healing Skill Acquired]

When I see my HP bar, before I noticed, it has been recovered. Natural healing huh?

I move toward other building from the back alley.

I assigned skill point for [Pain Tolerance], [Lightning Resistance], [Paralyze Resistance], [Shooting] and [Self-Healing] while moving.

I found a 3 story building 100 meters away from the earlier one. I jump over the wall and onto the roof.

Since the soldiers surrounding the demon has decreased to less than half, the methods to attack the demon increased for me.

I take out bow & arrow from the storage and aim at the demon. I have never used a bow until now, but thanks to the sniping and shooting skills earlier, I somehow understand the aim.

"Aim and shoot!"

I take a good aim, the moment when the demon stopped... shoot.

And missed.

The hand which pulled the bowstring hurt.

After that, no matter how many I shoot, none hit. Even though I understand how to shoot the bow, there is no result.

The enclosing soldiers have become considerably sparse.

I discovered a route where I could get close to the demon discreetly, after marking the map I drop down from the roof.

I equipped the scale tribe's spear.

If I knew this would happen I'd have gotten leather armor tailored.

Holding the spear with both hands, I hide in the shadows.

＞[Spy Skill Acquired]

Since I got a skill that looks useful, I immediately allocate skill points to it.

There are several overturned big carriages on the way to the demon. I head there.

When I invoke the spy skill, my footsteps disappear. Maybe it's just my imagination.

The demon's roar can be heard and the knights got hit by lightning.

That roar seems to be a spellcasting procedure.

When the demon's attention wanders off, I shorten the distance and thrust the spear from behind!

Stab! With that kind of unpleasant sound, the sensation of tearing real flesh is transferred to my hand.

Me being a chicken, unintentionally separate my hand from the spear.

My hands and legs are trembling.

The demon's tail strikes the unmoving me from a blind spot, sending me flying 3 meters away. I stopped at the carriage wreckages after rolling on the ground.

＞[Surprise Attack Skill Acquired]

＞[Spear Skill Acquired]

＞[Shock Resistance Skill Acquired]

My HP is only reduced by 1 point. However, I don't know whether this is because of excitement or fear from my first close quarter combat, my trembling limbs don't stop.

Fortunately the demon turned his attention to the knights who restarted their assault, I take a deep breath many times.

The trembling subside for a little.

>[Fear Resistance Skill Acquired]

>[Reckless Courage Skill Acquired]

I equip a small sword and shield made from bronze in the shadow of the wreckages. I left the sword in the scabbard and put it on my waist belt. Usually one would use metal fixture or special belt to hold it but it can't be helped since I don't have it. Let's buy it later.

I also prepare a small bow with an arrow. It's an arrow with a bone arrowhead. The demon is only a little over 10 meters away but I still don't think I'd hit.

The demon lifted an attacking soldier and threw him at the knights.

I match the timing to his throwing and dash closer. Shooting the arrow at zero distance unnoticed.

>[Bow Skill Acquired]

I discard the bow immediately, and slash the demon the moment I unsheathed the sword.

The small sword broke. To break bronze in one hit...

>[Iai Skill Acquired]

>[One-Handed Sword Skill Acquired]

「▼▼ ▼▼▼▼ ▼▼▼▼▼▼▼！！」

While cursing with incomprehensible words the demon attacked with poisonous claws.

I promptly decide to receive the attack with the shield but it's also coming from the other side, the judgment come in the spur of the moment, using the broken sword to guard.

Of course, such thing can't defend the attack and breaks in a single blow from the poisonous claw.

>[Demon Language Skill Acquired]

>[Poison Resistance Skill Acquired]

I wanted to immediately enable the poison resistance skill, but there is no leeway to operate the menu in battlefield.

I prevent the poisonous claw coming from the opposite side with the shield, and throw the grip I have in my hand to the demon.

>[Shield Skill Acquired]

>[Throwing Skill Acquired]

While trying to take out a weapon from the shadow of my mantle, I neglected my guard, tumbled by the demon's tail I rolled over.

Furthermore his foot tramples in pursuit.

Fumu! Fumu! Fumu! 3 waves of stomping consecutively come, my body finally breaks away from the loop on the 4th attack.

＞[Evasion Skill Acquired]

Kicking the ground with strange posture I take a distance from the demon.

Finally gaining time, I allocated skill points to [Evasion], [Shield], [Poison Resistance], [Shock Resistance] one by one.

Covered by the mantle, I retrieve a dagger and a firewood club from the storage. I slip the dagger on my belt, and hold the club.

Somehow I got the feeling that a look of ridicule is floated on the face of the demon.

I wonder if demon has self-healing ability, his HP is recovering. There is no such skill in his skill column, is it a specific race characteristic?

From the corner of my view I saw the knights readying for the next assault.

I carefully measure the distance while preparing the club.

Ignoring the knights assault, the demon keep his attention here.

I leap and strike the club at the demon's bust. It break when it contact the black body of the demon.

I defend from the demon's poisonous claws with the shield, avoid the tail sweep with minimum movement and jump.

I slash with the dagger. The demon couldn't avoid it but is somehow able to parry with his claws.

>[One-Handed Staff Skill Acquired]

>[Dagger Skill Acquired]

>[Parry Skill Acquired]

The knights begin to run towards us, when they reach the middle of the plaza, I stagger the demon by ramming my shield into it.

<TLN: Now this one is tricky, since subject can be missing in Japanese I'm not sure if it's the knights or Satou who's shield bashing, I'm opting Satou given the next few lines>I jump backward by using the recoil. Leaping over the horses and their riders.

>[Shield Bash Skill Acquired]

The knights attack once then withdraw, then another one does the same, thrusting his lance and withdrawing.

>[Cooperation Skill Acquired]

From the 3 man formation, the last one fails to withdraw due to the demon's tail attack. Both the horse and the man topple over.

I kicked at the demon who tried to finish the knight from the flank!

＞[Kicking Skill Acquired]

I picked up a spear with broken tip near my foot fallen from the soldier and put back the dagger in the scabbard. As expected, a dagger's reach is too short so it's easy to parry, it's troublesome.

I elude the demon by using the spear with a broken tip to gain time so that the knights and soldiers who have fallen from their horses can withdraw.

While parrying I also strike some part of the demon's feet, sometime hitting the arms carefully as not to make this into unilateral defensive battle.

＞[Two-Handed Staff Skill Acquired]

The spear finally broke after becoming a prey of the poisonous claws.

The demon's eyes are shining!

Because I have a bad feeling about that I raised the shield and put my whole body in the shadow of my mantle. It's probably some kind of evil gaze attack. Is it charm, paralyze or petrification?

The mantle and the shields turned into stone!

...I endured it somehow, only the mantle and shield got sacrificed.

It might have been dangerous if I moved a bit later.

>[Petrification Resistance Skill Acquired]

Since nearing the demon might mean getting petrified, before he comes I allocate skill points to [Parry], [Petrification Resistance].

Petrification attacks might not be exclusive to demons alone...

1-10. Let's Dance With the Demon! [Final Part]

"Greetings from the battlefield, the commentator Suzuki Ichirou, will be sent off by me, Satou."

Expect getting even more skills with increasing tension, Satou's here.

While pretending to be dead behind the mantle, I activate many skills but...

I didn't expect for it to cause a situation like that!

Well then, let's start "Let's Dance With the Demon [Final Part]"!

◇

I take out a two-handed sword from the shadow of my mantle.

At the same time, the magicians begin their counterattack, after waiting behind their formation.

Fireball, Firestorm, Wind Blade, Lightning. 3 systematic magics assault the demon one after another, and it also lands on me who is seemingly petrified near the demon.

Furthermore, more attacks come after a bit. Stone Bullet, Sandstorm, Water Ball, Snowstorm.

The last one to arrive is simply a pillar of light piercing through heaven.

＞[Fire Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Wind Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Lightning Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Fire Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Wind Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Earth Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Water Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Ice Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Earth Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Water Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Ice Resistance Skill Acquired]

＞[Light Magic Skill Acquired]

＞[Light Resistance Skill Acquired]

The log flowed at a great speed.

Maybe because of my level the damage isn't much, but unpleasant things are unpleasant.

The demon seems to think the same, and returned lightning magic to the magicians lot.

Probably predicting it, the magicians defended with a barrier before the lightning hit.

Already breaking apart from the magic earlier, I shatter the petrified mantle and shield.

Being a bit away from the demon, I stand up and immediately jump to close the distance. Aiming at the demon's head I swing the two-handed sword.

Since the demon tilted his head, the full attack did not connect, but I succeeded in cutting one of his horn.

＞[Two-Handed Sword Skill Acquired]

＞[Helm Splitter Skill Acquired]

＞[Air Battle Skill Acquired]

＞[Weapon Destruction Skill Acquired]

The soldiers are looking over here while saying something.

They're probably surprised that someone who just got shot by barrages of magic could calmly fight.

With my disheveled long blond hair swaying on the back and the silver mask reflecting the sunlight, I face the demon.

I thought that a hooded mantle would suffice, but it was a good decision to prepare additional disguises as an insurance.

After receiving that much concentrated fire the demon finally suffered about 20% damage.

I bear the two-handed sword to on my shoulder. I have no problem wielding it, but it's hard to balance my body due to the weight. It's good that I become younger and all, but since my body also became lighter it might be a minus in a battle.

For now, the demon is too close to the magicians' base. If I don't somehow lead it away from the plaza...

I don't want you to misunderstand me, this is not because some sort of heroism of not wanting any victims. The reason is quite selfish; they do damage the demon, however small it is, so it's troubling if they're all annihilated.

The demon attacks during the gap where my thoughts derailed. Dashing on the ground, the poisonous claws rushed towards me!

Even if tried to shake the demon off with the two-handed sword, it boldly closed the distance not letting me get away.

I throw the two-handed sword at the demon to elude the poisonous claws, taking out a hatchet from the mantle and use it to cut the demon.

Because the hatchet stuck deeper than I thought, I left it there and avoided the demon's counter.

>[One-Handed Axe Skill Acquired]

While empty-handed, I'm exchanging blow with the demon while retreating.

Sometimes, I pick up weapons dropped by the soldiers on the ground to add onto the attack. Since I haven't activate physical attack related skills, the damage I'm doing is small.

Should I break the deadlock soon?

Most knights have wounds all over the body, only a few of them are unhurt. There aren't any useless shots from the magicians either, seems that they ran out of magic power.

Seemingly, it's not only me who thinks so, from the castle gate several horses come out pulling a cannon.

I position myself to divert the demon's attention from the gate until the cannon finished setting up.

When I get near the wreckages I draw the demon's attention, behind the wreckages, I switch my weapon. I put a blacksmith's hammer onto my waist, and wield a two-handed axe and a sledgehammer in each hand.

It's not really practical but thanks to my maxed STR, I can wield it just fine. Maybe because I look ferocious, the demon's expression become unpleasant.

I jump from behind the carriage. First let's strike with the sledgehammer!

The demon guarded to the right with both hands but without minding it I slashed from the opposite side with the two-handed axe.

The axe cut through, and the arm fell!

...I remember, from some manga, about an episode of an arm that had been separated from the body attacking independently. Let's pay attention to that arm...

＞[Two-Handed Axe Skill Acquired]

＞[Two-Handed Hammer Skill Acquired]

＞[Dual Wielding Skill Acquired]

＞[Herculean Strength Skill Acquired]

Though it's a different story with a surprise attack, after all fighting using a sledgehammer with one hand is difficult, I fight single mindedly with the two-handed axe.

The cannon still isn't prepared yet.

The demon inhale greatly.

Magic!

I close the distance. But, that was a bad move.

The demon let out an acid breath!

Even though I've seen it once! I completely forgot that it has this kind of attack!

I guarded with the axe which immediately broke, the wig and the robe got terribly burnt.

"Ouch, ouch, ouch!"

I go to the nearest cover, throw off the robe behind the bronze statue, and wear a new mantle. I wore commoner clothes underneath the robe yet there's also a large hole in it too.

If the surface area of the axe wasn't big, my face would have burned...

＞[Decay Resistance Skill Acquired]
＞[Quick Dressing Skill Acquired]

I allocate [Decay Resistance] and [Quick Dressing] with skill points.

I wonder what the variety for skills are, I want a wiki.

Since the axe is no longer usable as a weapon, I throw it away; I try to strike once with the blacksmith hammer from my waist. Since it didn't seem very effective, I put it back when I got the skill.

＞[One-Handed Hammer Skill Acquired]
＞[Blacksmith Skill Acquired]

I think blacksmithing is quite different to this...

Meanwhile, the cannon installation is complete, but it seems that it will require some time before it could fire.

I pick up the sledgehammer which I discarded earlier.

Of course the demon doesn't let up his attacks, but whether it's because of the avoid skill, or because I'm getting used to fighting, I've reached the point where I have some margins in this fight.

I should end this soon...

I allocate skill points to [One-Handed Sword].

The cannon seems to be ready to fire. Magicians on both side of the cannon begin to to cast spells.

The demon seems to be really worried about the cannon. Its putting up an air.

The demon charges toward the cannon during the gap when I avoided its tail attack!

I discard the heavy sledgehammer, and pick up a sword lying on the way while chasing the demon.

The demon, with agility belying that huge body, jumps over multiple soldiers who block the way.

The light soldier with spears immediately cover but they become prey to the poisonous claw.

But the demon stopped.

Just like the demon, I jump over the soldiers and cut one wing off the demon, then I pierce the sword to its leg and stitch it to the ground. After getting the sword skill, I could understand the principle of swordsmanship. The demon only has 30% remaining on its HP gauge.

Furthermore, I pull the only remaining arm of the demon to the ground.

I intersect the demon's arm to its leg, and with my free hand pick a spear left by the killed soldiers earlier to use it to crucify the demon on the ground.

>[Fighting Skill Acquired]

>[Capture Skill Acquired]

I look at the a person who looks like a commander besides the cannon who's measuring the timing to shoot the cannon.

I fix the demon with another spear, and nodded there.

The commander swing down his arm, at the same time, I jump off from the line of fire.

The cannon shoots out a buckshot and innumerable wound appear on the demon's. Moreover, as a final blow, a magic combo like earlier struck.

I wonder if the cannon can’t shoot multiple rounds, it didn't finish the dying demon. The magicians probably don't have enough magic power either, only three people cast spells.

I could end it if I run there with the sword but let's give the honor of ending the demon's life to those guys. Like I said earlier, this is not out of goodwill; even if the opponent is a demon, I don't like killing with my own hand. It's really stupid, but I'm from society unrelated to violence since a long time ago... Even though I eat meat and fish, I shirk on killing.

Putting that aside...

The demon used the tattered hand freed from the stitch to lift up its body from the ground, raised a roar and destroyed the cannon with lightning magic. Is there no one who could use a barrier anymore?!

Then the slightly late magicians use magic to shave the little of the demon's strength (HP).

Furthermore, the knights get off their horses and sidle up to the demon with their long swords ready.

...It'll end after the encircling completely, huh. Amen~

The end can already be seen, but the demon hasn't given up yet.

The hand which has been restrained by the knights is thrust into its own chest, pulling out a dark red heart. The pulled heart is fast begin to pulse harder. Matching the violent movement, light overflow.

The knights hurriedly try to destroy the heart, but they don't make it in time.

With loud bursting sound, the heart breaks apart!

When the light subsided, several magicians who set up barriers have become corpses in a heap. Only the lower half remaining of the demon's dead body. The ground is gouged in a fan shaped form following the demon's direction toward the castle gate, the gate itself has been partially destroyed.

The demon's corpse falls apart and becomes black dust.

I slip into the alley during the clamor and hide myself.

>Title [Combat-Ready] Acquired

>Title [Skilled Warrior] Acquired

>Title [One Who Dances With Demons] Acquired

>Title [Hero] Acquired

...I wonder if the last one is sarcasm.

2-1. Disaster Relief and the Shrine Maiden

Satou's here. Feeling like a veteran warrior, but after all I'm just an average citizen, Satou.

Although it's hard to call this a victory, for once, the battle is over.

Hereafter is the battle of lifesaving and rebuilding.

It's about time for a harem candidate to appear, right?

◇

I take off the robe and mantle in a desolate back-alley. Overlapping with all map exploration magic to check for human sign, I also took off my disguise.

Well it's just a wig and a mask though...

I put the disguise set and the robe in the forbidden folder inside the storage.

Which robe should I use now?

I take out a uselessly gaudy robe.

This one should be okay.

I decide to return to the street after changing to the gaudy robe. Of course, using a different route.

There's a soldier's corpse stuck on the tree branch along the way. To be flown to this place.... I join my hands to pray for it.

For now let's return to the plaza after performing an obligatory prayer.

"Err... The gaudy person over there~."

...Somehow there's a voice coming down from the tree.

Confirming on the radar, the corpse earlier isn't a corpse at all, somehow it's quite alive.

I look up.

"I'm sorry, could you call some soldiers? It's okay to do it after the battle in the plaza is over."

The first impression is quite favorable due to the absence of "help me".

However even though the soldier is caught in the tree's branches... The hands and feet aren't turned toward strange directions.

Now then, is there any scaffolding to help the soldier?

...Guess I'll just kick that window and land on the other branch.

I fly to branch near the soldier. In consideration for possible fracture, I land while trying not to shake the branch.

"Well then, I'll carry you down so please don't move."

"Eh, how did you get here? Please don't push yourself and just call the other soldiers!"

I silently carry the soldier in my arms.

If the soldier has fractured bones then landing on the ground could be dangerous... Since there are at least 4 meter until the ground.

Thus, I jump to the slightly higher roof next to the branch.

"Though I jumped while taking care not to jolt you as much as possible, are you all right?"

"Yes, that surprised me but I'm fine."

I move from roof to roof in search of a house with an exit from atop the roof.

There is a lot of unaired laundry, it probably got left behind after the demon came.

After checking for people on the radar, I get out of the house to the alleyway.

I carry the soldier in princess hug to the plaza.

"Hey, I have a little question..."

"Yes, what is it?"

"Even if you were blown away by the demon, isn't it too far?"

This isn't a gag manga. From the plaza to here is more than 10 meter apart.

"I got blown away by the attack of that demon, since I would have died at that rate, I used magic to decelerate my falling speed. Although I was already running out of magic power. I was at loss when I got caught on that branch."

Magic seems to be usable even if one isn't a magician...

There is a temporary relief station in the plaza.

A bit away from the relief station, mats are placed and several 'people' are lined up there... It's not for the injured but for corpses huh...

"People who were rescued from the wreckages, please gather over here."

A woman in white coat shout for injured people to assemble over there, so I head there.

"For people who are holding the patient, please keep a little distance away from their body."

So she says, I stretch my arm to make a gap on my chest.

"I will cleanse the dirts, it may be surprising, so please don't drop them."

"■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■ Soft Wash."

I got drenched along with the soldier. Certainly the dust and the blood (from the soldier who died first earlier) on the robe are gone.

>[Life Magic Acquired]

It's certainly a very useful magic. If there is this kind of magic then I wonder if bathing isn't needed?

"I will dry it immediately."

"■■■ ■■■■■ Dry."

"It's complete. Well then, please wait inside the circle drawn with chalks over there. That's the place where we gather injured people."

The white coat head toward the next person.

This is the first time I heard magic chant in close proximity but rather than word, I heard irregular sound instead. I guess it feels like the musical notes from a DTM software?

Though it's not life-threatening the people who have broken bones are gathered there. It's full right after we got in. I don't have any injury, I'm here in order to learn new skills.

Two girls with priestess-like clothes and kind atmospheres quietly approach, each accompanied with their attendants.

"Now the Parion shrine maiden will grant you their miracle. Everyone, please be silent."

The attendant with big build shouted so to the injured peoples. And out of nowhere, the attendant with small build tells the tense people, "Please relax your body~".

After the injured people calmed down, the shrine maiden begin the magic chant.

「■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■」

「■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■」

(Omitted... It's too long, priestess-san.)

「■■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ Area Heal.」

>Holy Magic: Parion Belief Acquired

Most people seems to be healed by the magic just now.

The two attendants go around to give additional healing for people who need them.

The big attendant said, "Since it's a bone fracture, please rest quietly later", while giving first aid to the soldier I carried.

Oh yes, this isn't a BL okay? Even though the soldier is still physically growing, she is an actual woman.

◇

Now then, I've learned various magic but I don't know their chant, there are magic shop and bookstore that sell magic books in the plaza, but the stores were destroyed so they're probably closed now...

"The good you do for others is the good you do for yourself."

<TLN: A Japanese idiom>

Let's make myself popular with the bookstore and the magic shop by helping them with selfish reasons in mind.

A carriage is half buried under the magic shop.

After confirming that there are no survivor near the carriage, I pull it out.

...When I think about it, I'm standing out by doing this, aren’t I?

There's a corpse in terrible condition stuck on the carriage, nausea is swelling up inside me... I'm weak with gore so please pardon me.

The inside of the magic shop has been destroyed but it seems that the people inside are fine because of a back door. Since I see people's figure on the radar beyond the back door, thinking that they're fine I head toward the bookstore.

The front wall of the bookstore is destroyed, it looks like it'll collapse any minute now. When I peek inside, numerous bookshelves have been toppled and books are scattered around.

From the map, it seems that there are two people squashed under the bookshelves.

The bookshelves is lined up edge to edge, thanks to them being made with dense ebony, they're very heavy.

I raise the bookshelves ⇒ I cram the book between the shelves ⇒ Whenever I raise a bookshelf the leftovers books get in the way and then I can't raise the next bookshelf so the work take quite some time. Also partly because I'm afraid that the shelf will break if I try to forcefully raise it.

1 hour after the work begin, I finally able to rescue a person.

It's a boy of around 10 years old. He's unconscious but he's breathing. The HP is about half, I stop working and bring him to the relief station. I didn't forget to tell them that the boy was rescued from the bookstore.

It's not the priestess from earlier, but a person that looks like a magician who heals people with water magic. Huh, healing magic can be done with many elements.

There are more priests now but they all dress differently, I wonder if there are different sects.

Now then let's stop procrastinating and get back to work. Because the one left who need rescuing is certainly the storekeeper!

I continue the mundane work of raising the bookshelves and stowing away the books, until finally I was able to help the old man storekeeper buried in the books.

He didn't get crushed under the bookshelves but he seemed to be squashed by the fallen books, his HP is quite low. He's conscious though.

"Thank you very much for helping me."

It's an austere voice quite fit to be a seiyuu. What a romantic gray haired old man, he must've been quite popular back in the day.

Outside the store, the old woman and the daughter have come back. It seems that they went shopping to the west gate which was closed until just now.

I carry the old man to the relief station. The old woman also follows. The daughter remains in the store to clean things up.

In the relief station, the injured people who have come have increased even more. As expected the healer can't catch up. The two healer priestess attendants from earlier run out of MP and are sitting on the couch.

I search through the storage... there.

I take out 3 MP recovery medicine from my pocket and give it to the two attendants. It's a service for the skill I got earlier.

At first the big attendant was suspicious but after he knew that it was MP recovery medicine he thanked me.

...but, please stop drinking it in one gulp while having one hand in hip. You look like an old man.

The priestess is silent with a pale face looking down. I wonder if she's tired from using too much magic.

I leave the storekeepers to the relief station and head back to the store to help with the clean up.

I had forgotten the important matter.

The daughter of the bookstore. Her name is Semone-san. She's actually the granddaughter, and big-breasted! It's hidden by the clothes, but it's unmistakably E cup! With a long blond hair and a pair of blue eyes, she's about the same age as Nadi-san!

I'm correcting the bookshelf positioning while having a calm idle talk with her, I'm enjoying the work while placing the books which lost their binding in a box.

I love organizing books~

I mark all the interesting book during the placements.

Arrow marks can be seen in plenty through AR.

When the day is about to become dark the storekeepers come back.

I politely refuse the invitation for dinner, I purchase 3 books that catch my attention and go home. They wanted to give it as a thanks, but I compromise with just having slight discounts.

"Royal Capital Tourist Guide","Introductory Book for Life Magic", and "Life Magic Book" which should be 2 gold coin and 3 silver coin become 2 gold coin with the discount.

...Unfortunately, the bookstore daughter is married. The husband is a magician...

>Title [One Who Prays for the Dead] Acquired

>Title [Rescuer] Acquired

>Title [One Who Protects Books] Acquired

2-2. Let's Learn Life Magic!

Satou's here, even though there are many encounter, too bad that it immediately end, Satou.

Is it the face! It's the face isn't it!

◇

Because there were various things happening yesterday, I was fast asleep right after dinner.

Today is a reading day!

...Is what I thought, but the room is dark. There is a window for light to get through but it's still not enough to make books readable, it's too dim.

If I'm not mistaken there's an open terrace cafe neighboring this inn.

Let's eat a breakfast special on the coffee shop. I dunno if it exist but...

The tavern in first floor of the inn is crowded with people who are taking breakfast. It seems that the customers has increased a bit compared to yesterday.

I give the key to the landlady since I'm going out. Martha-chan happily greets me when I come out of the inn. This old man is dazzled by your morning radiance.

The gate also looks remarkably busier than the day before yesterday. Lots of big carriage are going in and out pulled by peasant-looking people. Do they not use cows or horses to pull it?

I immediately find the coffee shop when I look around outside. It's slightly farther away than what I remember.

It seems that the coffee shop use the indoor for meal while the open terrace is for tea time. When I naturally ask the waitress, it doesn't seem that it's the owner's decision to do that. Because the inside of the shop is a bit dark, I secure a seat on the open terrace for easy reading.

For breakfast, I order a fruit and sandwiches. The sandwich has ham, vegetables and cheese sandwiched between the malt bread. The fruit juice is similar with Citrus. It tastes a bit richer than orange. The cup isn't made of glass but copper but since it's cold, it's still quite delicious. I wonder if it's cooled using life magic? My motivation to learn the magic increases~ ♪

Oh, yeah, there are 3 waitresses. A 20 year old plump red head, a 16 year old slender chestnut-colored hair with an impressive teardrop mole, and the last one is a girl who looks younger than 12 with a long black hair.

Everyone is working cheerfully.

While enjoying these sights, I read the introductory book for life magic.

Life magic is a magic not classified in any of the four main element of magic, it's a collection of magic useful for daily life. It's a magic incomparably weak compared to the elemental one. In exchange the required magic power is not much, at the level where people who can't use attack magic can use it. Nevertheless, even with so many convenient spells, most magicians look down upon life magic. They call magicians who can only use life magic, spell-users, and rather than as magicians, these people are treated as town handymen. Because of this prejudice there are only a few magicians who learn life magic. There are even lamentations regarding this written in the book.

"Good morning, Satou-san!"

I was greeted from outside the terrace. It's Nadi-san.

I thought that she's still in shock from yesterday's event but she looks surprisingly energetic. She's strong even for an energetic archetype!

"Good morning. How is your condition, Nadi-san?"

"Thank you very much for your help yesterday. Not only did you help me get away from a dangerous location, you even sent me with a horse carriage."

"It's fine, it wasn't much."

Since she's here, I offered her a chair.

"Is that a book on life magic?"

"Yes, I bought it yesterday hoping to at least be able to use the basics."

Since my life magic skill is level 10, the only thing remaining is the chants though.

"For life magic, I recommend to practice Water Spring or Dry, depending on your main element. Most books usually recommend Ignition but if you cause fire in the town, it could be dangerous."

Certainly, it's just as she said.

"If it's Water Spring then you can store the water in a bucket, but please don't use the metal cup beside you since it's easy to scratch."

Do I draw the water from vapor?

"If it's Dry then you can practice using wet clothes placed on a hanger."

It's quite a scientific talk. Even though it's fantasy.

"That's right, Does Satou-san not use a cane? You can't use magic if you don't equip a cane."

What! There's such restriction.

Come to think of it, the magicians from before did have it, the life magic user was also using a cane.

Wait, how about that soldier? And the priestess didn't have one too.

"Do you mean Parion priestess? If so then they have holy mark in place of a cane. The soldier probably had other kind invocation tools or maybe a backup short cane?"

"Nadi-san, what is invocation tool? Is it different from a cane?"

"Invocation tool is something like ring or the likes of accessory, functioning like a cane, it's an item used to assist the activation of magic.

The effect is lower than a cane, but it's expensive so there are few magicians who have one. Although for a job like magic swordsman where it's not possible to use a cane then it's a necessity."

As expected of the live Wiki. The one woman encyclopedia, Nadi-san.

Cane huh... There are various type of magic wand in the Storage. But the effect is too strong, it's scary. If possible, I'd like to practice with cheap things first.

But the magic shops in the town center won't be in operation for a while, I wonder where I could get one?

"Nadi-san, Do you know anywhere I can buy a short cane?"

"Then the magic shop in the central... But as expected, it's closed because of yesterday, right? I think you can buy one from the alchemy shop in the west town."

I make a note of the way to the alchemist shop from Nadi-san.

Then after telling me the important points to note in the west area, Nadi-san went back to her work.

Now that it's lunch time in the open terrace, the customers have increased.

◇

I finished reading the introductory book just as I finished eating pasta for lunch.

...Why is this fantasy town very peculiar about taste!

10 minutes after I've entered the western area, the content of the dummy purse I've hanged on my waist is gone. The bottom of the purse is cut and the content is no more, though there were only pennies inside.

From looking at the log, it was not a pickpocket. It's really a game-like function.

I've passed through the area where they're selling daily necessities, and suspicious looking shops began to increase in number. Sexy women and evil looking old men can be seen wandering around.

There's a square in the center of the west area. The alchemy shop is further ahead.

Street stalls are lined up in the square, selling birds, cattle and the like competing with each other.

On the entrance of the square, a merchant is announcing something about slave market. It seems that it'll be open for 3 days from tomorrow night.

When I look at it carefully there are boys and girls with slave collars on their neck standing in line with cattle. Half of them seems to be hurt. Every one of those slaves have dead eyes. The cattle look healthier than them.

I had the urge to buy them all, but it's only for self-satisfaction so I stopped. It's not the end even after they're released after all. ...Isn't this just an excuse?

Coming out of the square, brothels lined the streetside. I subtly feel like this is a period drama.

Still, lewd professional older woman are the best, right? Rather than an unwilling slave, a pro well versed in sexual culture is better.

Tonight, let's go to a shop with beautiful older women! I wonder if there are cabaret? I'd love to have a lewd conversation over a bubble bath but...

The main topic has been grandly derailed.

The alchemy shop seems to be located in the middle of this brothel street. There's probably a high demand for drugs~

I wonder if it's thanks to Nadi-san's advice of only walking on the center of the road, I've arrived at the alchemy shop without being dragged to an alleyway. No wait, there was that pickpocket so it wasn't entirely safe...

"Good afternoon. Are you open for business?"

There's a dwarf on the counter inside the shop. Let me say this, it's not cute at all. It's a small old man about 1 meter tall. Is he a gnome? Or a hobbit?

The AR indicate that he's of a fairy race. When I look better the "Earth Fairy (Gnome)" indication come up.

"If you're window-shopping, Go away."

Aw, how cold.

...This isn't a pun okay?

<TLN: Not sure where's the pun, my moonrune isn't advanced enough for this, I guess it's the 冷?>

"I'd like to buy a short cane, do you have any in stock?"

"Spell-user eh? There are cheap, expensive, and really expensive one, which one do you want?"

So rough~

"Please show me the cheap and the expensive one."

The shopkeeper take a wooden and a copper short canes out. The short canes look like something a certain famous British boy had, it's a simple wand. If you don't understand, then please imagine an orchestra conductor's baton but a bit thicker.

I stare at each of the canes and their performances are displayed on the AR. The wooden one has [Magic Activation Support + 3][Magic Effect Expansion -2], and 2 big copper coins market price, then the copper one beside it has [Magic Activation Support +3],[Magic Focus Support + 2], [Magic Effect Expansion +2], with 3 silver coins quoted as the market price.

To be frank, even if I can see the performance I don't understand where the difference is.

The copper cane seems to have better performance, but the wooden one looks something that a magician would have, so I buy that one.

The shopkeeper looks displeased since I choose the cheaper one.

I might as well buy some medicines here.

That's right, if you're talking about alchemy then it's potion.

"Are there manual and tools for compounding?"

The shopkeeper grins while laughing. He probably think that I'm an easy mark.

[Introductory Book for Medicine Compounding, Practical Writing],[Book of Poison and Antidote][Book of Illness and Treatment], 5 compound tools set with extravagance cases, medicinal plant harvesting set tools, and chemical mixtures for beginner set. "These are all!" So he said after piling them all up.

...Hmm? Am I being tested?

The magic imbuing tools have a [Magic Imbuing Type Fake] status. The others are genuine.

"Is there no other one for this magic imbuing tool? It's not to my liking."

I openly point out the fake. It's how an adult interact.

"Fumu, it's a tool used to nitpick amateur who doesn't understand a thing."

He somehow looks happy. It's not only reflected on his face but the atmosphere has also softened a bit.

This time he takes out 3 imbuing tools.

One is decorated with high-class looking ornament, another is a tool that looks like it has been used a lot, and the last one is a cheap-looking and obviously fake tool. The high class one is especially equipped with magic, when I hold it up and move my hand, it emit a weak green light. It goes without saying that the expensive one is a fake.

"Then, I choose this one."

Of course I picked the well used one.

The market price is 15 gold coins eh. At any rate, does a beginner spell-user who comes to buy a cheap short cane look like someone who has money?

"I see, so you choose that one... If you have this one, then you won't need another, beside raw materials, even after you've become a veteran alchemist.

"How much is it?"

"10 gold coins."

Eh, isn't it much cheaper than the market price?

The shopkeeper grins when he see my face.

"Just as I thought, you have the appraisal skill."

The shopkeeper looks proud with his guess. I don't have such a skill.

>[Appraisal Skill Acquired]

Let's not argue back...

"Is it really okay with 10 gold coins?"

"Yeah, I'm saved if someone as capable as you studies alchemy."

When I think about it, isn't this thanks to haggling skill?

I pay the price and receive the books among other things. As one expect, my bag doesn't fit.

I decided to return to the hotel while holding the books in both hands.

I leave the shop after thanking the shopkeeper.

The things I need to do increase again.

I will learn alchemy after I've learned life magic!

2-3. The Chant, the Soldier and the Noisy Afternoon

Satou's here. Waving the short cane, rather than a magician I feel like a conductor.

Conductor skill doesn't appear. I'm a bit disappointed Satou.

The harem flag seems to be still so far away.

◇

After I returned to the hotel, I put away the alchemy sets.

I wanted to put it inside the <<Thirty Holding Bag>>, but from what I've heard from Nadi-san during the tour, the item was popular for the wealthy back in the era of the ancestor king Yamato, however, nowadays it's only attainable for the army, higher-ranking nobles, or a very prosperous merchant.

Since it's like that, I can't use it casually. It's not a problem if some thieves caught their eyes on it, but if it was a noble then it could become impossible to continue touring this city.

Following the instruction from Nadi-san yesterday, I fill a bucket full of water from the Hell Water Jug. I dip a cloth to the water and squeeze it. I take out a pot I bought yesterday and put the cloth there.

All right, preparation complete!

It's time for the chant for Dry!

"Lu lula la li lu... la?"

Even though I can read the word, I can't pronounce it! Do I need to read 100 character in one minute fast?

What kind of impossible game is this?

Then, I continued to practice chanting while feeling discouraged but I wasn't able to in the end. Cloth will get dry even if I don't use magic but I'm not happy about this at all.

"Okay! Let's ask for some help!!"

I get up clenching my hand!

When in trouble it's Nadi-san! Let's ask for some advices from Nadi-san.

"Nadiemo~n, please help me~."

Even while feeling like clinging to a straw, I'm heading to the Worker's Guild.

...But unfortunately, Nadi-san is absent.

◇

Since Nadi-san doesn't come back even until evening, I'm going to the bookstore in the central district. There should be other books about Life magic beside the ones I bought.

On the way there, I was called to the clothing store. Apparently, my order has been completed early.

I wonder if the shopkeeper remember when I said that I didn't have change of clothes, so he hurried the order.

Let's receive it after that much trouble.

"It really suits you well."

"Yes, you look like a heir of a big company or a noble."

The shopkeeper and his wife praise me highly.

To confirm the size I take a pose in front of a full-length floor mirror.

However isn't this better than the sample back then? No, it's not a self-praise.

"Indeed, and it's better than the sample."

"That's right! Since it's a rush order, I asked a different tailor than the usual, but this fine lines and sewing are well done, truly splendid! Really~ thanks to the customer, I found a nice tailor."

How do I say it, I feel like apologizing.

After this much, let's just wrap my cloth earlier and wear this new one now.

◇

When I get to the gate I was asked to present the ID card. According to the gate soldier, it seems that some thieves got in after the disturbance, so it's now required to present your identification.

In the plaza, most stores along the main road are open. Because most of the fight happened in front of the castle gate, beside few unlucky shops most are unscathed.

I bought tea leaves in a specialist shop facing the plaza shown by Nadi-san yesterday, I also bought some spices from a spice shop.

On the luxury food store I bought rice, miso, soy sauce. Like I said, why is this fantasy-(abbreviated)?

In front of a tavern in the plaza, a bard is singing a poem about the yesterday's demon and the knights with a full sense of reality.

...Isn't the mysterious silver mask a bastard child of the earl? Such songs are sung. The mask was actually tin but it has been promoted to silver.

Since I relatively enjoyed it, I gave him a silver coin. ...I was a bit ashamed though!

How many detours could it be just to go to a bookstore.

◇

"Satou-san, thank you very much for yesterday!"

Semone-san greets me with smile inside the bookstore. Apparently, today is her turn to look after the store.

"Hello Semone-san. How is the old man's condition?"

"Yes, he was healed with magic, but since he's of age, my grandmother is watching after him to rest for 2-3 days."

Old man, you've got a good grandchild, I'm envious.

I'm gossiping some miscellaneous things to cushion for the real talk.

"You're searching for books regarding the way to practice chanting of life magic?"

"Yes, I was able to understand the explanation on the book I bought before, but I'm struggling to actually chant it..."

"Umm, Satou-san, Life magic skill is relatively easy to remember, but normally you'd need 3-5 years of training to master it. Moreover, even with that much training, 80% people usually end up in failure."

But I got the skill after receiving the life magic once? It's a cheat after all...

"Umm, even if you already have Life magic skill from the beginning, people who can remember the chants are..."

Let's hear it since I have nothing to lose anyway.

"A person who has a gift? Right, There are people who come from long heritage of magician family having magic skill right from birth, but a person like that usually has family members who can use magic..."

There is no need to learn from textbooks... is what she wanted to say, eh.

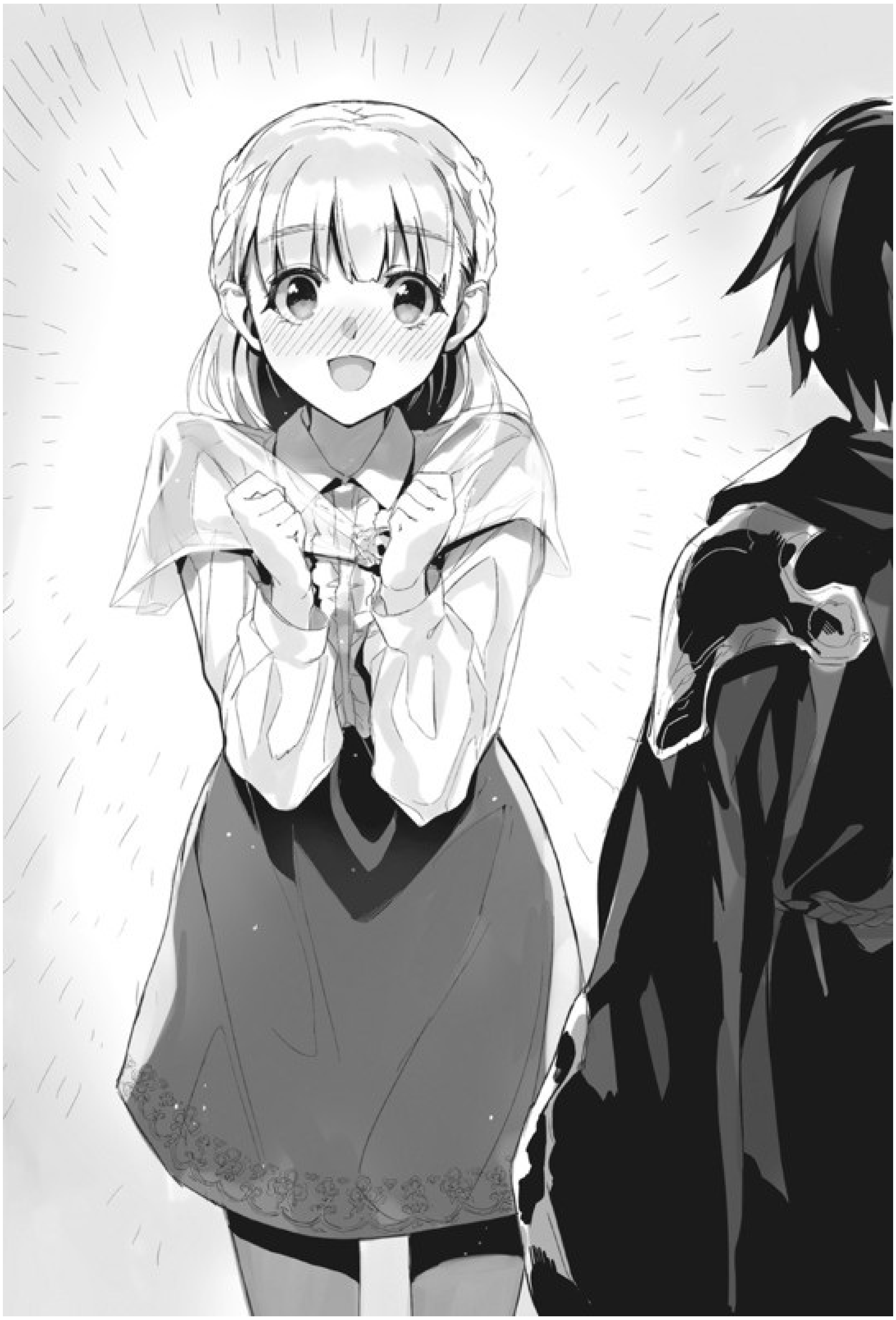
It can't be helped, I'm just gonna buy vocal training and acting related books.
Let's start improving my flow of speech.

◇

The magic shop facing the main street is covered with something that looks like a tarpaulin. It's closed just as I thought.

"Hello, nimble onii-san."

Turning my head, there, a girl wearing a plain yet elegant one piece tilts her body forward while looking at me with upturned eyes. With a slender body and long straight bob hair, she's a charmingly beautiful girl.



"Hello soldier-san, you're wearing a lovely dress today."

>[Lip Service Skill Acquired]

Please don't interrupt my talk...

"Ehehe~, since we seldom have rest, there aren't many chances to wear this~"

"About yesterday, have your bone fractures healed?"

"Yes! I want to say that, but the place where it break still occasionally hurt so I thought of going to the temple."

Just to make sure, she's the soldier I saved from a tree yesterday.

"Can you not heal yourself?"

"There is no healing method in wind magic you know."

I see, each element has their own forte.

"Ah~ Zena is boy hunting~~!!"

"Oh, it's true, Putting aside the face, he's well dressed, furthermore, he's younger! You're good, Zena."

"You girls, please don't make fun of her. Even though she's a late bloomer, that girl works hard, let's just watch over her warmly."

I wonder if they're soldier-san's friend, some noisy girls are standing in front of a shop's entrance while whispering to each other closely. There's a subtle insult mixed in oi.

Soldier-san's name is Zena eh, it's a good nutritious sounding name.

Zena-san is opening and closing her mouth silently with a red face. This kind of reaction is cute~

"Y, you're mistaken. I'm just thanking him for saving me yesterday."

The three girls harden a bit after hearing that.

"By saving you, don't tell me!!"

"That silver masked hero-sama?!"

"It can't be! He was brandishing a sledgehammer and a two-handed axe together you know? This delicate looking boy can't possibly do that."

"No... that's not it."

Zena-san's word doesn't reach the three girls.

"But isn't his height match?"

"Isn't the color of the hair different? That gentleman was blond."

"And he's not using a mask."

"Mou, please hear me!"

Zena-san shouts with her whole body!

The three girls finally pay her an attention.

"This man carried me who wasn't able to move due to injury to the relief station yesterday!"

"Ah, you mean that kind of [[helped me]]."

"But then, that's a golden opportunity in a way!"

"Don't liken her with you, Zena doesn't have such resourcefulness in her."

Yep, it's noisy. This is for Zena-san to meddle with. The three of them feel like they're cheering for her with no malice or sarcasm, they probably cherish her.

I wonder if it's a good time to interrupt them.

"Pleased to meet you, I'm Satou, a peddler. I'm planning to stay in this city for a while, pleased to make your acquaintance."

"Onii-san, you're really not Zena-cchi's boyfriend?"

"I just met her yesterday. Furthermore, I only knew her name after everyone here called her such."

"But but, for Zena to wear a skirt and go on a date!"

"It is not a date." (Zena) <TLN: Since there are sometimes nuance's words impossible to translate in English to indicate who the speaker is in Japanese, I'm just going to do this every time I feel it's ambiguous. Although it's not actually needed here because of the paragraph below.>

"But you never wore a skirt, even on holidays before."

Zena-san and the three girls who looks like the same age as her are lively exchanging words.

"I'd love for you to go on a date with Zena-san. This girl, even with her age, never takes a walk with an opposite sex, let alone a boyfriend."

"Yep, even if she's a fallen noble with no gold or status, she's a good girl. She's flat-chested but she's an adept wind user with promising future as a soldier."

The remaining two also recommend Zena-san.

I like her personality. In five years, after she becomes a bit well-rounded, I'd like to make an advance~

Zena-san stop her quarrel and goes back here.

"We're not fallen!! My little brother properly inherited the rank. Although it's true that we don't have gold or status in government..."

So Zena-san is a lower noble.

...She didn't object about the flat-chest.

"Let's stop playing around with Zena-san and go back to the castle. If we're late for the shift, the commander's special training awaits."

"La~ter~ then, Zena-cchi. Let's hear about various things thoroughly later~"

"Zena, push through with sex appeal and defenselessness! Show your guts!"

The three girls reluctantly return to the castle.

Zena-san is relieved while looking a bit ashamed.

Hmm? One girl went back here in a trot and gave Zena-san something.

Zena-san initially has a blank look, but after she understand what the handed over thing is, her face turn bright red. Probably expecting this reaction, the girl is going back to her friends while saying "Good luck~".

Zena-san secretly puts the thing she got in her pocket, and I don't intend to pursue it.

Because I'm an adult, yep.

2-4. The Afternoon Date with Soldier-san

Satou's here. Rather than a hero, I want to be a magician.

Chanting (aka DTM), such impossible game broke my heart.

I was healed a bit after the girl's talk with Zena-san and her friends.

◇

"I'm sorry for all the fuss. They're not bad girls, it's just that it was unusual that I'm with a man..."

She's coming with upturned eyes. It doesn't feel mischievous like in the beginning, this time it really looks timid.

"They look like fun people. I don't particularly dislike it."

"I'm happy if you think that way. That remind me, you looked troubled in front of the magic shop earlier, is something the matter?"

"Yes, I hit a roadblock in my magic chanting training. I was wondering if they have books concerning chanting practices, but as you see they're closed."

"Satou-san, you're, ummm is it fine to call you Satou-san?"

"Of course it's' fine."

I'm already calling you Zena-san without permission.

"Is Satou-san not only a nimble peddler but also a magician in training? That remind me, today you're not wearing gaudy clothes~, I think this one match you better."

So fixated on nimble part, this person is.

"I want to be able to use Life magic so I'm training on it, but I just can't get the chanting part right..."

"Let's see, for wind magic, people usually start with ■■■■ but if they tries to forcefully chant it, it usually come out like, lyu~lia la~lule li la~o. If it's just memorization, then most people can do it."

Zena-san is tilting her head with "I wonder how I should explain this"-look on her face.

"Rhythm. Yes, please try to slowly recite the chanting and remember the rhythm. Then while keeping the rhythm gradually increase the chanting speed so it become ■■■■!"

I see~, however, even if what she said isn't exactly a secret, isn't it still something that shouldn't be easily taught to other people?

"Rhythm huh... I understand, thank you very much professor. I'll practice hard in that direction."

"Yes, I'm happy that I can help you."

Zena-san smiles.

I should give her something as thanks.

◇

I've decided to go together with Zena-san halfway to the Parion temple in the west district.

"Speaking of which, how long did Zena-san practice to be able to use wind magic?"

"The real training was 3 years, but in hindsight, I've done various things during everyday life in preparation to become a magician~"

I wonder what kind of things? ...I hope it's nothing serious.

"In order to learn the history of magicians, from when I was a child, I was made to read aloud picture books for children, poem singing, practice to read lines smoothly, abdominal breathing... Toys for detecting the flow of magic. Even the children's plays were for the sake of training to become a magician."

Zena-san looks a bit gloomy for a second.

"It's not like I bear ill will toward my parents for raising me like that you know? Learning magic is fun anyway, and I have an objective to fly in the sky someday."

But there is no other road to choose from the beginning...

"Satou-san. Why does Satou-san want to learn life magic? Is it because it's useful for business?"

"No, since there is no bath in the inn, I was thinking if I have magic then I wouldn't have to take a bath outside..."

Ah, she's amazed.

She looks me in the eyes directly, and bursts a laughter.

Is it that interesting?

"Ahahahaha! Th, this is the first time I've seen a person who has such reason for wanting to become a magician."

Seemingly hitting the spot, Zena-san's laughter doesn't stop.

"Is it that strange?"

I think that it's relatively proper reason though. Don't you want to make inconvenient thing easier?

"It is strange!"

An immediate answer.

"Because if you have the drive and the fund to learn life magic, isn't it faster to just build a bath in your house? And you can just buy slaves for the job of boiling the bath."

It's like that huh~

I will do things I could do myself! I'd like to think like that, but even over here, it's normal to hire people to work, since the labor costs seems to be cheap.

◇

"Mister, please buy some flowers."

When we got to the west street, a little girl carrying a small knitted bag filled with flowers immediately stops us.

The little girl stops while holding out a flower. I've catch sights on her various time before but this is the first time she calls out to me.

I wonder if people accompanied by woman are easier sells?

She's well thought out even though she's just a little girl.

"Okay, how much is it?"

"A penny for a bundle."

I receive the flowers in exchange for a penny. The little girl happily thank me and go toward the next customer candidate.

I present the flower to Zena-san.

Zena-san looks surprised.

No well, there is no other choice than this isn't it?

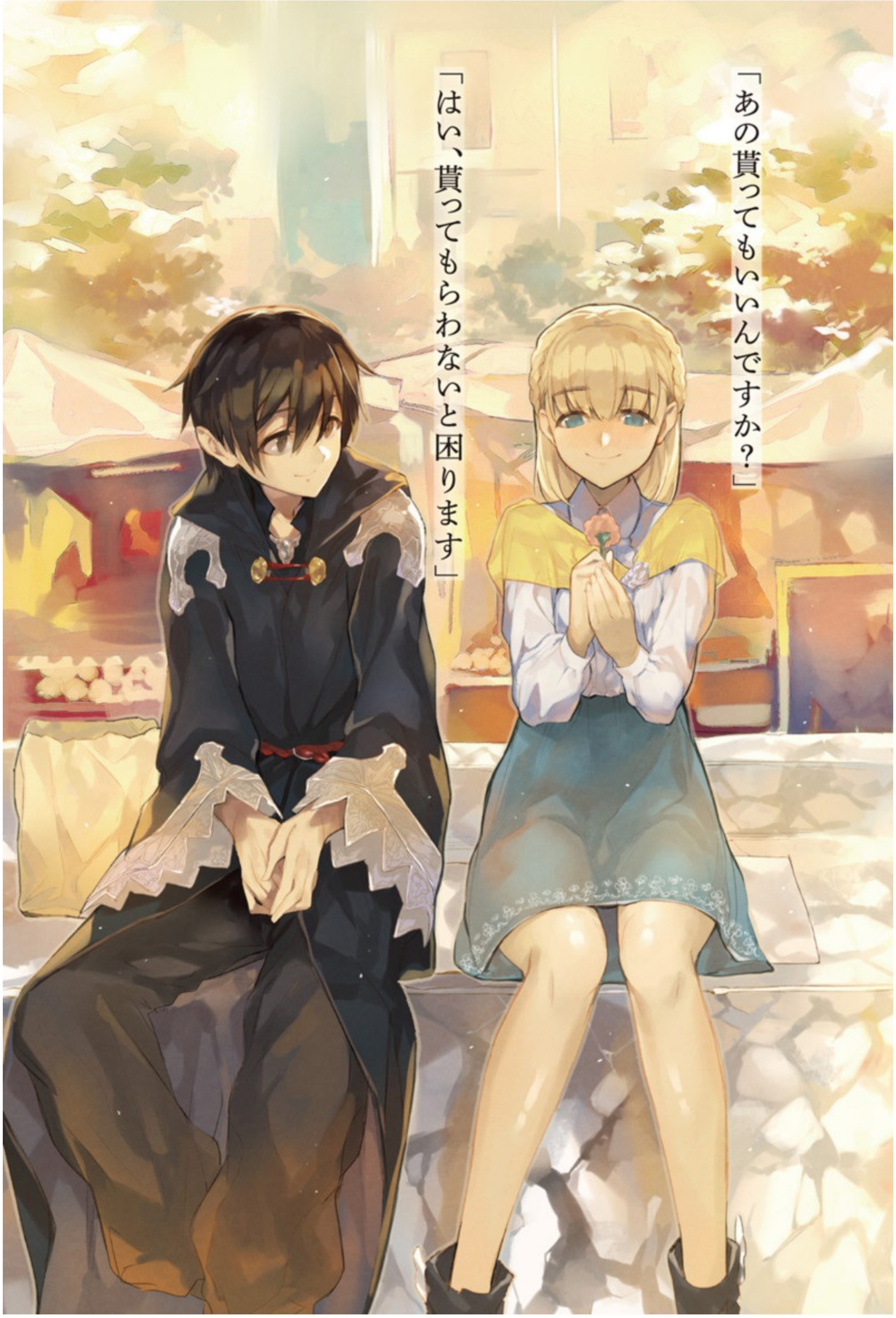
"Umm, is it fine to take it?"

"Yes, I'd be troubled if you don't receive it."

Since I can't throw it away.

Zena-san bites her lip while looking very happy.

Huh? Is it something to be so happy about?


「あの貰ってもいいんですか？」
「はい、貰ってもらわないと困ります」

...Well, I guess it's fine as long as she's pleased.

"That's right, Satou-san. Do you have any business after this?"

"No, after chanting practice I have noting in particular "

...There's alchemy, but I can do that anytime.

"Th, then, why don't we go to the street stalls on the way to the temple?"

"Yes, I'm fine with that. If possible, I'd like you to tell me the specialties of this town."

Zena-san probably never had experience of inviting someone herself, her face turns bright red halfway during the suggestion. Since it's just me, you don't have to be so tense you're fumbling words.

That remind me, when was it decided for me to go along until the temple? She did me a favor regarding the secret of chanting, and I shouldn't complain since it's a date with a girl.

"Specialties is it? Leave it to me!"

She's full of confidence. I could expect something, maybe.

◇

"This is made from sweet potatoes, steamed sweet potatoes are filtered to become jams which then kneaded together to make breads. It's a Seryuu city's specialty from long ago."

Something that looks like sweet potato kneaded for bread huh. Quite a subtle presence...

"These are deep fried bat wings spread with black miso."

It seems that Zena-san doesn't know the cuisine's name either. The shopkeeper who couldn't stand shutting his mouth any longer tells us. ...It's Dragon Wing Fries.

It seems to be foods said to bring luck.

"And then these are things I'm taught by Lilio. Ah, Lilio is the smallest girl from the trio earlier."

Putting aside the girl's name.

The thing that Zena-san recommends is ...light brown? ...I wonder what is it?

For the time being I bought two serving for two pennies from the stall's uncle seller.

I guzzle the brown liquid using the straw plugged into it handed by the uncle seller.

It's a starch syrup!

"Starch syrup huh. It's nostalgic~"

"You knew about it~"

She looks a bit disappointed. I should have been surprised ...I'm sorry.

"The starch syrup that I know is colorless and transparent, I didn't know what this was."

"Noble-sama, the colorless transparent syrups are high-class items made using expensive grains and sugars, this one is intended for commoners and uses sweet potatoes, gabo fruits and malts so it's light brown."

The uncle seller interrupted with overreaction.

Who's a noble? He didn't say it to Zena-san only.

"Mister, I am commoner you know. I got to drink the colorless and transparent syrup from an acquaintance long ago. I didn't know that it's a luxury."

I mean, it's 200 yen a pop on the festival.

Afterwards, we enjoy ourselves by going around various stalls while plodding the crowds. It's a good afternoon.

2-5. The Temple, the Beastkin Girls and the Stone Throwing Afternoon

Satou's here. "Every cloud has a silver lining", I'm contemplating such phrase.

The peaceful afternoon I enjoyed yesterday completely changed.

Well then, the afternoon series, troubles arc will begin...

◇

A little distance away from the street stalls, there's a Parion temple.

In the east street, there are only street stalls in the main street.

There are some people gathered in front of the temple.

"I wonder what happen?"

"Let's check it for a bit."

Zena-san rushes over there. Seeing this quick change of pace, she's really a soldier.

Zena-san asks what happen to the the big priestess' attendant from yesterday.

Zena-san is flapping her hand it around. She seems to be grateful about something.

I wonder what they're talking about?

When I got closer as I walked I only heard the latter half of the story.

By the way, the conversation that I've heard,

"...then how about the Garleon temple on the east street. The temple there also has military contact so medical treatment shouldn't be a problem. It's on east street but you're accompanied by a man so strange fellows probably won't approach you."

"Yes, even like this, I'm a magician soldier. I'd beat playboys who try to pick me up no matter how many of them come."

From Zena-san, it seem that the priestess are in the middle of meeting with envoys from the royal capital temple. Moreover, since the priestess are only able to use magic for healing injury, light poison and illness, we're forced to go to the other referred temple.

...He's just passing the buck!!

◇

In the end, we're going to the Garleon temple on the east street.

It's not like I'm dissatisfied you know?

Even if I got used to it, walking the European-style city together with a plainly cute girl like this, it's quite enjoyable!

Along the way, about 100 meter away, a public park is there.

I thought that it was just a lawn with weeds, but it's cut short and in the square, some old couples carrying baby are resting, and around 10 young people are practicing martial arts.

"Zena-san, what kind of training is in military?"

I want to hear it somehow.

"That's right~, I think it's the same training as soldiers everywhere, but for magic soldiers it's concerning preservation of magic power. We take care to maintain the state where we can use magic at its best."

Variation in training huh?

Certainly, MP-less magicians are useless.

"Magic soldiers and magicians each assigned different roles in accordance with their element. I can only speak from the viewpoint of military, but except for fire element, we don't usually use other elements for attacking."

Certainly something like torturing by fire is certainly suitable for attack. But you can also use it to heat bath you know?

"As for my wind, it's used for protection from arrows, <<Wind Protection>>, defending a castle from castlebreaker hammer with (Air Cushion), or transmitting instruction with (Whisper), various useful things like those. If we use (Fly) then scouting will be easy, but the Earl doesn't have anyone who can use it."

That remind me, Zena-san's goal was to fly through the sky isn't it?

"If you manage to fly, then it'd be nice to have a date in the sky~"

I was joking, but Zena-san turns red to her neck and says "P, please leave it to me" while fumbling her words.

It's cute, but I'm worried if she's ever going to be deceived by a bad man~

◇

In the shades of the roadside trees several cats are curling around. Come to think of it, this is the first time I've seen wild cats since I come here.

"That cat is cute~."

Zena-san looks like she'll run there if left alone.

I'm of cat's faction too, that's why I can't let cats' afternoon nap to be disturbed!!

So I bring up this talk.

"That remind me, there are no wild dogs in this city."

"There's a rumor that wild dogs, if seen, will become meals for the people of the slum..."

"It's a lie, isn't it?"

"Yes, it's a lie.

But a rumor like that do exist, it seems that ripe gabo fruits eaten with dog are quite addicting. So, ever since that fruit began to be consumed, wild dogs disappeared."

Gabo fruits appear again. Have some restrain!

People catching sights of hunters going to the meat processing plant in the east street with their dog partners seems to be the root of that rumor.

◇

"Punishment for the demon's kin! Receive blessing by striking the demon with these holy stoooones!"

Halfway into the east street, we're hearing a faint voice verging on falsetto like it's coming from an old man. There are also voices of a lot of people.

On the square from the alley turn, there's a fat middle-aged man priest standing in an expensive looking pedestal.

With bloodshot eyes, bubbles fly from his mouth.

"O people with virtue! Do you remember the divine punishment also known as Star Fall from the other day!"

"""Oooo!"""

"""We remember!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

Isn't about half of the shouting people are faking it?

"Furthermore! FurtherMORE! Yesterday, the Earl's castle had been hit by an attack of the demon lord's executive!"

"""Oh Gods!"""

"""Please save us, hero-sama!!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

Shouting is a good way to relieve stress huh.

"This is a sign of the dimming of the god's divine protection! Acquire blessings! O people with virtue! Those who gain blessings will be protected from disaster!"

"""Priest-sama! Please save us!!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

"""Blessings!!!"""

Such cheap people.

"Acquires blessing! Do you understand people! Blessings!"

"""Blessings!!!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

"""Please teach us!"""

This town's people would be easily deceived by fraudulent calls or shady pyramid scheme.

"Look at those fellows!"

The fat priest point at the back of the square.

"Those fellows are demi-human, the washout of the demon, no, the kin of the demon lord! Give divine punishment to those fellows and receive blessings!"

"""Oooooo!"""

"""KILL!!!"""

Oi oi agitator.

"Wait! People of virtue! Murder is prohibited by the law of the kingdom. Wait!"

"""What should we do, priest-sama!!"""

"""KILL!!!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

There are a lot of people who are just clamoring.

"Killing is prohibited! With these holy stones hit the demon's kin and receive blessings."

"""Priest-sama!"""
"""Give us the stones~!"""
""Oooooo!"""

I look at the direction the fat priest points to. 3 beastkin girls are there.

"But it's not free! Receive the blessings using your own money!!"

"""Oooooo!"""
"""Blessings!!!"""

Dog, Cat, and Lizard beastkin girls are huddling together.

"The holy stones are 1 copper coin each! For this special occasion, you can get 6 stones for one big copper coin!"

Ah, the voices from the people stop. What a calculating populace~

"What's wrong! Pious men and women! There's a limit on these holy stones! Those who receive blessings are those who act fast!"

"""We'll buy it!"""

"""Please sell it to me!!!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

They sure are weak with limited edition.

"Buy it from my disciples here!　Line up!　If you don't properly line up, you won't get the blessings!"

"""Oooooo!"""

"""Line up!"""

Fat priest, did you just use mind manipulation magic?

People who have bought the holy stones unreservedly throw it at the beast girls. They don't hesitate there.

Eh~~~? Are you serious?

"I cannot watch this!"

Zena-san pushes her way through the crowds running to the fat priest's place.

I was taken aback and late to respond.

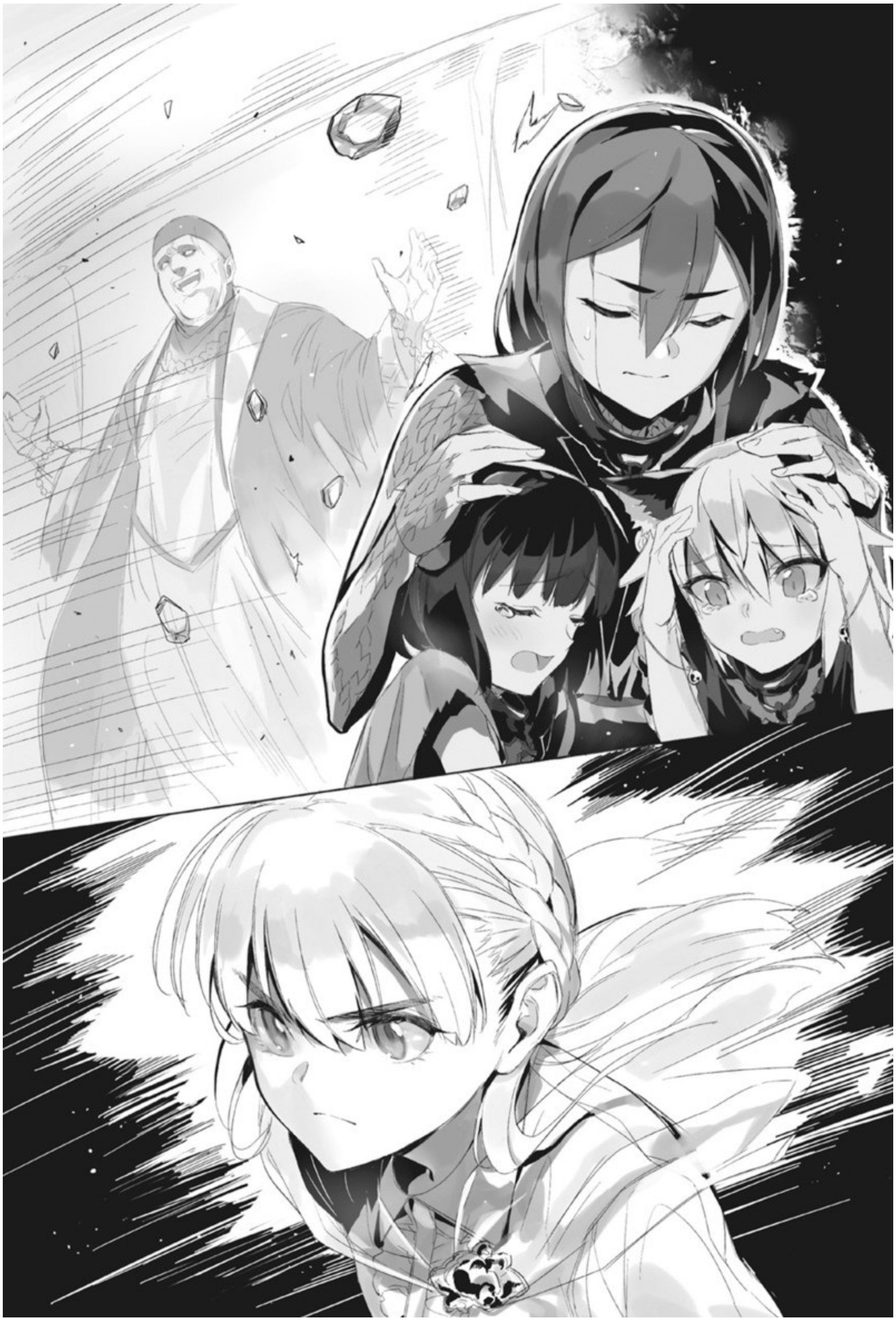
"""Kill the demi-human!!"""

"""Oooooo!"""

"""Punishment for the demon kin!!!"""

The people are heating up and sporadically hit the beast kin girls with the stones.

The lizard girl are protecting the smaller dog and cat girls.



Now then, it's easy to interrupt this from the front, but if the same thing happen again later then there is no meaning to it.

Detailed information from the AR come up like usual when I look at the beast kin girls.

This is!

I quickly chew through the information I've found.

Then, it should be somewhere.

There!

I investigate the guy's information and is convinced.

With this, I should manage somehow!

I whip my gray brain cells to explore the best solution...

2-6. Arguments and the Extermination of the Hidden Evildoer Afternoon

Satou's here. "In any ages, agitators never disappear.", such phrase exist, but let alone in ages, even in different world they don't disappear.

Well then, let's settle this.

Adding another page to the history of Seryuu city...

◇

Staring at the 3 beast kin girls, I found the name of the master of the girls.

It's not the name of the fat priest.

Then, where is the master of the girls?

Thinking the possibilities, either the master is not here, or he can't go against the fat priest... or he's a partner of the fat priest.

Right now, since we can't find the information with just AR, I use the special ability of All Map Exploration.
I search the name of the master.

There, on the edge of the square. It's a small man with fox-like eyes, grinning at the commotion in the square while sitting atop of a wooden box.

I inspect the information displayed on the AR.

The small man's name is Uusu. 39 years old. His skills are [Fraud], [Persuasion] and [Intimidation]. Owned slaves are [Cat kin],[Dog kin], [Lizard kin]。

....Hmm? Do slaves only display their kin's type with no name?

No, those kind of things don't matter.

I need more information.

It's still not enough.

Affiliation [Seryu City, Lower Class Citizen]. Guild [Brown Rat].

This is it, guild [Brown Rat]. Begin Search!

Members are 52 people. Including the 10 people in this square. Excluding Uusu and the bodyguard-like big man behind him, 8 men are fake demonstrators in the square.

I mark all people, including the one not present in this place.

Now then, let's begin the action!

>[Inference Skill Acquired]

>[Behind the Scene Skill Acquired]

...But the beast kin girls are probably very shaken with those abuses. I had overlooked an important information. I can't turn back the time, but right now, if I delay the first step the result might be different...

◇

Zena-san arrives before the fat priest.

"Pleas stop this inhuman conduct!"

"What's this little girl! Are you an ally of the demon?"

Before one become aware, his followers have disappeared. Moreover, since he can't refute back, the agitators' butt in for him.

"""Allies of the demon are demons too!"""

"""Ooooooo!"""

In the space of the time Zena-san gained, first I have to do something about the fakers in the crowd.

"Please do not be deceived! Does Zaikuon temple intend to break the law of the kingdom!"

"What's wrong with beating the demon with holy stones?"

What a disengaged conversation. No, the priest understand, he's just shifting the point.

I activate [Spy] and slip into the crowd. While moving through the crowd, I also activate [Evasion] and [Fighting].

"""Oooooo!"""

"That's right! Let's throw stones at that little girl!!!"

"""Oooooo!"""

Zena-san use <<Wind Protection>> not only to herself but also to defend the beast kin girls. As expected of a magic soldier of the army.

Now then, while they're still dumbfounded let's put this crowd into order. Even for Zena-san, if a lot people rush together it would be dangerous.

I move beside the (Brown Rat) man who's still trying to incite stone throwing. I wonder if it's the effect of the skill, I was able to choose what kind of attack to neutralize him, and even while being hidden to the surrounding doing it.

I neutralize the (Brown Rat) man with just one attack. And just like that, I throw him to the alley. Because time is precious, I don't have time to restrain him.

>[Abduction Skill Acquired]

>[Assassination Skill Acquired]

Abduction skill seems to be usable, I raise it to maximum. I don't take the Assassination skill. I won't take it you know?

In the center of the square, a priest with different clothing is helping Zena-san. It's a blue-collar worker handsome middle-aged man.

"Equating demi-human with demon, rather than Zaikuon temple, Isn't it just you who say such thing?"

"Hum, the philanthropist priest from the Garleon temple huh? If you like beasts that much then after this beating, use them as you like, from the front, the back, whichever."

Uwa, he's the worst sexual harasser. Zena-san is turning red... or not. Did she not understand the meaning. Par exellence.

"Kill the demi-human!"

""Oooooo!!""

"Punishment for the demon!"

I'll leave the dispute on the stage to Zena-san and her reinforcement, and proceed to exterminate the harmful pests (Brown Rat) here. I successfully knock 2, 3 people unconscious and leave them on a suitable alley. Sake bottles are falling around nearby but I don't have time to spare.

"Do you understand! If you keep fueling anxiety on people, it could end up in revolt! Zaikuon temple will be blamed as the mastermind behind it!"

"Foolish lizard who borrows the skin of dragon! Don't kill the demon you say? Aren't you the traitor here!"

"Kill the demon!!"

""Oooooo!""

"Maybe that little girl is a demon in disguise?!"

The extermination is half complete. The crowd's shouting has become considerably less too... There's a particular guy with an awfully loud voice. Though he doesn't seem to be a part of Brown Rat. Let's mark him for now. Let's get in contact after the extermination is complete.

"Everyone from the east street! Everyone else is also anxious just like you! But that's not an excuse to torture the weak like cowards!"

"Did you hear that everyone! Garleon temple deem you as evils! He said that everyone here, eager to receiving blessings, as evils!"

"Kill the demon!!"

""Oooooo!""

"You damn fake priest!"

Good, only 2 more remaining.

I bring them down and roll them to the alley.

Before I set up the stages with Uusu, I got into contact with the loud-voice-kun to prepare for the event.

>[Conspiracy Skill Acquired]

"Please stop this already. No matter how many of you throw the stones, I will prevent it!"

"You bastard, do you intend to interfere this holy conduct! Foolish one who goes against God!"

The fat priest shout to the point bubbles fly from his mouth, but people who support him are sparse. Even those voices are disappearing 1 by 1 now.

I tap on the shoulder of Uusu.

"It's your turn now."

"Wh, who are you bastard! Oi, Banze! Crush this bastard!"

While surprised, Uusu ordered the big man behind. But he fell into confusion when he look back and couldn't find the man from earlier.

"Banze? Where's that halfwit gone to!"

"That big man (Banze) has gone somewhere with a woman."

In truth, he's currently fainted in the alley though.

I twist the arm of Uusu and take him along up to the stage.

"Everyone, please disband here. If you keep this up, the army will really come! If you are anxious then go to the temple, I'll listen to your worries no matter how much!"

"You bastard, do you intend to interfere this holy conduct! Foolish one who goes against God!"

<TLN: Yes, he said the same exact things as earlier>

Aren't you both priests?

I throw Uusu in the middle of them.

"Oh, Uusu-dono! You bastard! What have you done to this pious person who provided the demi-human for this holy conduct!   You apostate!"

"Zena-san, please use magic to isolate voices from outside for the slaves."

Before Uusu get up to command the slaves, Zena-san has completed the spell.

"Dog, Cat, Lizard! Beat these guys up!"

Since command didn't reach the slaves, they're tilting their necks looking puzzled.

For once, I pick up a holy stone (lol), and throw it at the solar plexus of the man. Oh, he faints in agony.

"Zena-san, thanks for waiting. Thank you for your hard work too, handsome middle-aged priest (the priest over there)-san. This guy is the ringleader."

"As expected of Satou-san. You're not just nimble!"

"Who are you"

Your praise vector is a bit strange, Zena-san.

"Zena-san, if you still have some magic left, could you cast a spell to make our voices heard throughout the square?"

"Okay! ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■ ■■■ Whisper Wind."

I raise the fainted Uusu with both hand to make him visible.

I plan to use the handsome middle-aged priest as cover to make me look inconspicuous.

Wa, don't move priest-san.

"Everyone, can you see him? This man is the culprit! This man lent his slaves to this Zaikuon temple's priest, agitated your worries and sold common stones to steal your precious money!"

>[Condemnation Skill Acquired]

"'GIVE OUR MONEY BACK------!'"

An especially loud voice comes out from the crowd. Fueled by that voice, series of, "Give our money back", shouts begin.

"Furthermore, these guys have other goal! To gain small profit and to use the Zaikuon temple for their true purpose! They want to incite everyone's here and start a revolt on the Earl! They are actually worshipers of the demon!"

Scammer skill at its peak! orz.

The small profit part is probably true though. The remaining two were just something I made up.

In fact, even until now I don't understand the purpose of this man so I'm shaking his up to spit it out.

＞[False Charge Skill Acquired]

If his purpose is to sell holy stones, even if 100 stones are sold, that's 4 silver coins. It does not match the price of 3 demi-human slaves. From Market skill's judgment, the three are worth for about 6 silver coins. If they had continued the throwing just before, the slaves would undoubtedly be dead.

See? The calculation doesn't fit.

"'That guy is being manipulated by the demon from the shadow, is it.....!'"

That guy, I did ask him to put the priest in disadvantageous position, but read the air. This could become another riot.

"I will deliver this man to the lord for attempted revolt. Fat priest (Zaikuon Temple), you were being deceived by this man isn't it?"

The priest's eyes are swimming.

"Ye, Yes, I was deceived. So he was a demon worshiper!　I, I'm not in the wrong... noble-sama! I was deceived. That's why I don't have the slightest bit of revolting against the Earl..."

"Yeah, that would be right. Then please give the money back to the people. That will surely give you better treatment."

Of course, it's an empty promise. Scammer skill is scary. Words are coming out fluently...

The fat priest is unwillingly gives the disciples instruction to give the money back. Group of two or three people are leaving the square. Later, a quarrel between people who didn't buy the stones and the disciples break out.

Kukukukuku.

Uusu who got his feet trampled down and can't move laughs creepily.

Did he go crazy, or does he have some kind of plan?

He wouldn't convince anyone with arguments full of holes. He looks like someone who loves to use violence anyway.

But, it was different than what I expected. Even while lying face down and completely unable to move, an attack from a swing of black hand came out.

I was able to dodge by a hairbreadth but the poison claws teared through the fat priest.

2-7. Demon Return

Satou's here. "I must pay attention to his arms", even after I murmured so, I completely forgot about it halfway through.

However, it's just an arm. Let's just crush it and end it soon.

◇

"What the heck is that arm?!"

The fat priest who got his internal organs torn by the sharp claw dies instantly.

And, Uusu who wields that poisonous claw looks like he doesn't understand what's happening....

"T, that arm!"

"From yesterday, isn't it?"

Zena-san nods.

"Do you know something?"

"It's the arm of the higher ranking demon who attacked the lord's castle yesterday."

Zena-san dutifully answered the handsome middle-aged priest's question.

...What kind of situation is this.

Uusu doesn't look like he's a demon from the beginning.

Then, he's probably a host of a demonic parasite, although I don't know the why or how.

Let's check Uusu's information once again.

...There, [Abnormal Status: Demonic Possession]. If only I saw it earlier!

Even though I have cheat, if I don't use it skillfully then it's meaningless... I should reflect on it.

The problem is how to defeat it.

"If I try to pull it out by force, that man is probably going to die, what should we do?"

"We don't have the leisure for such things, let's call for reinforcement immediately!"

"I will try to confine it! ■■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ ■■■■■■..."

The priest's chant is too long.

"Zena-san, please call for reinforcement. It's probably the fastest to call the central with the help of wind magic."

For now, let's keep Zena-san in the safe zone.

After hesitating for a bit, Zena-san runs while saying "I'll be back asap".

The poisonous claw tried to attack here, but Uusu couldn't get up so it didn't reach.

The arm grow from the area around the chest of Uusu.

In the beginning, the arm was about 1 meter long but it continues to grow longer little by little.

Is it growing?

A stone thrown from the crowd hit the side of the head of Uusu. It hit with quite a sound.

This time, an arrow flying from behind pierces through Uusu's neck. When I was dumbfounded, another three arrows hit in a row.

When I look behind, two hunters appear from the shadow.

"...We bring down the prey when we are presented with the chance to."

Since when were you guys here.

However, it's a world which treats life cheaply. For the time being, we're saved without any intervention from me. I may become a peace-loving idiot.

Uusu who should've been dead, get up with straight posture and no bent joint, looking like a Kyonshii (Chinese vampire). From that body, black light(?) emerges.

"You worms, for destroying this annoying host's brain. I thank you."

...Demon-kun, I like you better when you didn't talk.

"....■■■■ ■■■■■ <<Cirlce of Anti-Evil>>!"

"How impertinent. I laugh."

The demon is looking uninterested, the handsome middle-aged priest invokes the spell which seal the hand of the demon with light magic square.

Even though the demon snickers at it, the magic square persist.

"Gunununu. This isn't a magic that should have been able to be used by human! I miscalculate"

The handsome middle-aged priest has begin casting for another spell.

The hunters withdraw, knowing that it's not an opponent that could be defeated with arrows.

The people who remain in this square are just me, the handsome middle-aged priest, and the three beast kin girls.

Probably interested with the situation, some people are peeking from the shadow of rooftops around the square.

Everyone sure can run fast~

The three beast kin daughters are chained together to a stake stuck in the square, so they can't run away.

For now, let's get the beastkin daughters out of harm way. I shouldn't lose the real reason of why I got into trouble with the fat priest in the first place.

Tearing off the chains would be too conspicuous, so I pull out the stake. Since I didn't look like I use too much force, even if someone saw it they would think that the ground is loose.

"It's dangerous here, quickly get away. Since I can't take off the chain, go hide behind the shadow of a sturdy building together."

"Impossible, nyesu"

<TLN: Nyaa+Desu>

The cat girl timidly speaks while occasionally chokes on her words. It seems that Uusu ordered them to "Don't move away from this place", and if they oppose it the collar will put them to death... This is troublesome.

I can't wait for the army to arrive here. Their war potential has fallen from yesterday, and there is not enough road space to bring the cannon here. There is no room for cavalries either. The magicians' number has also decreased sharply.

If it like this, if I play around the victims will only increase. I don't want Zena-san and the three beastkin girls to die here.

Let's disguise into masked hero, and finish the demon when the handsome middle-aged priest cast his holy magic.

I transformed(lol) before the demon begin to do something troublesome.

"That bastard over there. You worm dare to ignore me, I am angry!"

I face the arm demon. The AR indication has changed from Uusu to Demon kin. On the space for the name, phonetic symbols lined up instead of normal letters.

Has Uusu been swallowed completely?

Checking the AR while keeping the demon in sight, the beast kin girls status has also changed to [Master : none].

"You bastard, who are you? I am uncomfortable."

"A confirmation for now, you're not Uusu but a demon right?"

"Wa, wait! I am Uusu! Please take off this arm, I don't want to die! Please help!!"

Huh? Is his consciousness intact?

When I think of that for a moment, the arm demon [launches] three poisonous nails.

"Mufufufufu~. Humans always react this way~ I am thrilled."

I block the poisonous nails with the stake in the nick of time. The stake changes color and crumbles in a moment.

"Unununu, you blocked that, I am astonished!"

I pick up a holy stone on the ground. Should I weaken him with this?

The man's jaw start to transform to look like a wolf.

Before the transformation complete, I throw the stone at him but it was blocked with the poisonous claw.

"Fushururururu~. It's easier to talk now. I am excited ♪"

Here, it's painful to hear your way of speaking though.

"■■■ <<Sacred Javelin>>."

Spear of light formed from thin air flies from the handsome middle-aged priest.

"I ridicule."

The arm demon roars, wall of darkness erupts and divert the course of the light spear.

As I thought, he's not only able to talk easier but also able to use magic now.

"Everyone, please quickly get away from this square! Attack magic is incoming!!!"

I desperately raise my voice to tell the people who are peeking the square!

>[Loudspeaker Skill Acquired]

"All the panic, fear, anxiety, prejudice, arrogance since earlier are truly splendid! I am satisfied."

I'm going to be fine, but at this rate, the beastkin girls are going to die if left alone.

An especially large long roar comes out of the arm demon.

"Therefore, let this place become moi nesting ground. Aren't you happy? I service!"

Should I carry the beastkin girls on my shoulder and run? It can't be helped if I attract attention.

Consequently, while having such needless worry, the situation is changing rapidly.

The ground below is warping like special effects from Showa era shows. Even though the ground is hard, it's flashing dark violet light, warping, twisting, stretching... and the flash [Darken].

◇

When the light settles, I was in a place that look like a cave. Beside the ground which is unchanged, everything else look like bare rocks. In the space of around 10 Meter in radius, I see an exit on one of the wall.

I can somehow see it thanks to the faint purple light coming from the floor.

People who are here include me, the still-chained dog and cat girl I carry in my arms and the lizard girl on my shoulder.

The handsome middle-aged priest and the arm demon who were nearby before, aren't here.

"Welcome to moi Labyritnth. It still doesn't have name, and monsters are being created right now, you can thank moi for it. I am diligent!"

The arm demon's voice are coming from somewhere. It doesn't seem like telepathy.

The dog girl is pointing at the corner of the ceiling. It seems that the voice is coming from the air hole there.

"For the sake of moi complete revival, experience fear at your heart's content. Kill each other! Snatch everything. I encourage!"

After pausing for a bit, the arm demon continues.

"The souls of those who resigns are thin, I hate."

"Therefore, every room are connected to the exit and moi room. I am fair."

"I am expecting the despair that come after the hope. Strive, fodders! I encourage!"

...I see.

This is like the forced event [Escape from the Labyrinth Mission] in video game. Outbreak! That kind of feeling.

Phew.

>Title [Labyrinth Explorer] Acquired

2-8. The Labyrinth of Demon (1)

Satou's here. While thinking that it's going to be city adventure, suddenly it become dungeon attack, I am unable to follow the situation, Satou.

The labyrinth was easily created but I wonder if the exit is on the downtown?

An adventure guild could probably be established after some years.

◇

When I'm confirming the map, [Labyrinth of Demon, Bottom Layer], is displayed, the passage ways are not displayed.

...It's not going to be that convenient, is it?

The beastkin girls look anxious.

First of all, let's take care it.

"I'm Satou. A peddler"

"Cat nyesu"

"Dog nanodefu"

"Lizard"

The cat and dog girl choked on their words. While scraping sound can be heard halfway through the lizard girl's words.

It's not only Uusu who did it, even their master from before called them like that. The cat and the dog girls were slaves from birth but the lizard girl wasn't and she seemed to had have a name before becoming a slave. However, it's a long name mixed with incorrigible sound difficult to pronounce.

In the end, since they asked me to give them name that's easy to call, I name them "Pochi","Tama", and "Liza". Don't treat them like pets! You may be angry like that, but I don't have the confidence to remember them right with normal names so please forgive me, at least until we get out of this labyrinth.

Liza is not the Lizard's girl real name but it's just a cut out of "Lizard" word.

Now then, before we begin the escape, let's cure the beastkin girls first.

I take out cloths, a water bottle, and ointments from the bag. The ointments are sample products from the alchemy set. Since it's just a sample, I don't have a lot but it's probably sufficient.

"Disinfect your wounds with this cloths soaked with water from this bottle. After that smear the ointment to the wound and coil it with the cloth. Don't use the cloth you used for the disinfection okay?"

The beastkin girls are perplexed when I hand them over new cloths.

They're probably bewildered to be spoken not in commanding words for the first time, yeah. I feel like I'm back to nursing my smaller relatives back in the days.

"What's wrong? I will face the other way while you girls are treating your wounds, so don't worry."

Apparently it's not because they're embarrassed, but because they rarely ever got good cloth and ointment as slaves.

"Thank you, nanodesu. You don't have to face the other way nanodesu."

"Beautiful cloth. I'm happy~."

"Since the master is dead, we cannot possibly pay you back. It's better to put aside water and medical treatment until after we get out of the labyrinth... um, well... isn't it..."

The incomprehensible words are converted to proper sentences in the brain. It's good isn't it?

Pochi and Tama untie the string that tied the simple clothes they were wearing and undress without hesitation to begin treating their wounds.

Liza-san seems to be the thoughtful type and hesitate a little, but I [Order] her not to mind so she also begin the treatment.

When their treatments are finished, I distribute the baked sweets to the three. I give them 3 palm-sized sweets each. It should be enough for now. The sweets are remainder from the time when I went to various stalls with Zena-san. It's not bitten leftovers though.

Pochi drools all over her face, everyone stare at the sweets, but no one is eating.

"There are no poison in it, so eat it well."

Are they not allowed to eat without orders? Slaves

sure are oppressed~ Pochi chokes on the food so I pass her the water bottle.

"I won't take it away, eat it slowly."

I feel like a baby-sitter for a bit...

◇

I confirm the map once again. It still only displays this room.

...Is the magic ineffective, or is it dispelled...

I open the menu and use the [All Map Exploration] magic. Even though this particular magic is easily usable~.

<TLN: He's talking about how he's unable to use other magic lol>

The whole picture of [Labyrinth of Demon] is displayed. Easy mode is too good!

This looks like an ant's nest, rather than a labyrinth.

The passage from here to the next room is diverged like a tree's root, from that room to the other the passages diverge again like before. In labyrinth-like fashion, there are also secret intertwined secret passage ways that connect rooms.

Searching through the map, there are 109 humans here. In which 7 are demi-human. The remaining 102 are human kins with around a quarter of them being slaves.

The handsome middle-aged Garleon priest is in a considerable remote position. If we can meet up with him, it'd be already near the exit huh? I personally don't want him to end up dead, being a capable person he is, though he probably won't die easily so I will consider it lucky if we can meet him.

I tried searching for the arm demon but I couldn't find him. There's a particular room located in the deepest part, he's probably there...

If I carelessly beat him, the labyrinth may collapse, let's leave him alone for now.

The enemies are around level 10-20 of insect monsters. There were around 20 when I first searched, but now, there are more than 100. Additionally, snake and frog monsters appear too.

Let's give the beastkin girls some weapons since it could be bad if we were sandwiched between the passage.

Okay, let's look for some hidden suitable location in the passage to take some spear and sword from the storage.

After deciding what to do, I tried to go toward the passage but I was stopped by the beastkin girls in a hurry.

"Please don't throw me away! I will do anything!"

"Please don't leave me behind!"

"Mister, I don't mind being a sacrifice but please take me along. Please."

They desperately tried to stop me. Still no one tried to pull my clothes, is it because their experience as slaves or training?

"Don't worry. I was just going to see the state of the passage. I won't abandon you, so please be at ease."

I'm talking as gently as possible. Though I don't think it will fully relieve them, it's better than not saying anything.

After the three girls finished eating, I take out out daggers and magic gun from the bag and equip them (to himself and the girls).

Only Liza who has combat related skill, [Spear]. Since I can't exactly take a spear out of the bag, I take out another dagger and give it to Liza.

Probably because it's uncommon for slaves to have weapon, she hesitated but I pushed it to her.

I take the vanguard position, Liza is responsible for surprise attack from the back. Liza wanted to do the battle by herself but I asked her to be on the rear.

Since I have radar, there is no possibility of surprise attack, but I'm giving her the role to ease the girls' uneasiness a little.

The order is me, Tama, Pochi, and Liza. I [Order] them with a strong tone to not participate in battle. Since their level are only around 2-3, if they carelessly receive an attack they could die.

It's an escort mission for real.

◇

The floor on the passages become that of rocks. Since there aren't any paved stones that emit light anymore, it's dark. The fortunate thing? There are several shining stone pillars every few meters so, even though it looks eerie, at least we are able to walk.

The stone pillar is about a waist's height. Since the light only reach around our breast's area, the ceiling is pitch dark, it's unpleasant.

It was probably made so to fuel anxiety.

Such a detestable demon-like thing to do.

When someone got into a room the passages will turn pitch black to encage them inside, there are probably thing like that prepared.

"Tama, if you see anything in the passage ahead, tell me in low voice. Pochi, if you smell or hear anything strange, tell me about it. Liza, please be wary of the back. But please don't focus all your attention on the rear and be late to follow us."

"""Yes"""

I'm still a bit uneasy, but it's a good reply.

>[Leadership Skill Acquired]

>[Formation Skill Acquired]

Sign of the enemies are detected in the radar. It's quite a bit far ahead.

"I can smell blood from the other side of the passage, nanodesu."

Pochi said that.

It's a straight line from here, but it's still 500 meter away.

I praise Pochi while petting her head. This treatment is like what you're doing to a pet, but her tail flails around with pitter-patter, she's probably happy about it.

I investigate the enemy while walking closer. Level is 20, no special ability. Method of attack is ramming and biting. It seems that there are only one monster in the next room.

I just remember something and take a note of the current stat and abilites of the three, since they also have experience value column, I draw a plan... This really feels like a game.

Since the experience values are displayed as percentage, I don't know the concrete number, but it's still really convenient when gaining levels. Since I can't see the experience value of other person in the map, I wonder if this is restricted to party members? Or are there other conditions to follow?

I saw the light leaking from the room.

I instruct the three to wait and peek at the room. The insect-shaped enemy is single-mindedly eating [Something], paying no attention here. Like I said... I'm weak against gore you know.

I wait until the chewing sound stop, then shoot it with the magic gun.

The single shot blows through the hind leg's joint. The broken parts flies.

I'm not giving the huge cricket any room for counterattack, killing it in rapid-fire.

Good grief, why is this giant cricket appear in anywhere but a desert...

<TLN: Is this a reference to Haruhi?>

"Amazing, nanodesu."

"Amazing."

"Mister, are you a magician?"

Pochi and Tama are simply in high spirits, but Liza is having a question.

"This is a magic weapon you know. Don't tell this to anyone!"

I gave the warning while grinning badly. I didn't forget to pose with the magic gun.

Pochi and Liza nodded seriously, but Tama said "Ay", while looking so happy. I'm going to give another warning once we get out of the labyrinth.

The chain on the collar is obstructive. Tama is full with just holding the chain on her hand.

That's right, I can cut it with this.

I call Liza and ask her to pull the chain horizontally, then I shoot it with the magic gun.

I did the same thing to Tama and Pochi... but they were probably afraid, their ears were flat down.

I put the chain in the bag and give it to Pochi to hold.

Since the torn foot from the giant cricket was 2 meter long, I make an impromptu spear out of it.

I raised the weapon creation skill to level 1 first.

The nail parts on the toe are loose, so I fix it in place with a piece of wood and a leather strap. Since green fluids are oozing from the cut part, I wrap it with the used cloths from the treatment earlier.

When I'm going to give Liza the cricket spear... She is currently cutting the joint section of the cricket's head, working on something.

Is she hungry?

"Liza, if you eat that kind of thing, you'll have a stomachache."

"Y, You're mistaken. Since it's a monster, it should have a magic core inside, so I'm retrieving it..."

Magic core?

>Title [Insect Slayer] Acquired

2-9. Labyrinth of Demon (2)

Satou's here. I've given up on the idea that this is a dream, but now I'm thinking that this might not be a reality but inside a game instead, I'm having such doubt after being bewildered. If it's like that I would have preferred the world of eroge instead, Satou.

It's just my luck to have a cricket as the first enemy in the labyrinth, although I hope it makes getting out of the labyrinth alive easier.

Without attracting attention that is.

◇

"What is magic core?"

"Magic core can become money. If you give the things from a monster to a peddler, you can get various things."

Liza's answer isn't exactly wrong, but not what I wanted to hear, I guess expecting the jack-of-all-trades Nadi-san's bell-like reply is impossible.

Liza takes out a ball covered with green blood dirt from the monster. It's a red ball about half the size of a fist. Since the color is dull red, it's probably unusable as jewelries.

When she comes back, I pass a pouch from the bag to Liza. I also give her a bit dirty remaining cloth to wipe the clotted blood.

"Put the magic core inside this pouch. Also, use this spear."

I give the pouch to Pochi, and pass the cricket spear to Liza. The dagger which Liza had is handed over to Tama.

Exchanging equipments, truly RPG'stic huh~.

"Liza, for the next magic core retrieval, Tama and Pochi will help you, so teach them how to do it."

"Yes, I understand."

"Okay, nano desu."

"Ay~"

"Oh yeah, Pochi."

"Yes, nano desu."

"You don't have to force yourself to say nanodesu okay?"

"If I don't say it, I'll get spanked, nano desu."

I see, she was instilled to do it huh... Since I'm just a temporary master anyway, there's no need to correct it.

"Okay then, but I won't get mad even if you don't use it, so don't force yourself."

"Yes... nano desu."

We pray for whoever was the victim of the cricket and get out of the room. I wrote the name of the corpse in the memo.

I compared the girls' status before and after the battle, but beside their stamina, nothing has changed.

So they won't get experience just by being together?

Then, how do supply troops or priest raise their levels?

If I can raise the three's level then even if we meet more people in the way, it'd be no problem, however it's not that easy after all.

Since this world is game-like anyway, should I try a game-like approach?

"Tama, if you see a stone about as big as the magic core earlier on the ground pick it up."

"Ay!"

◇

We progress forward smoothly until the passage divides into branches.

They all lead to the same room, but one of the path has another room in the middle of the way. Either of them contains monster but the middle room has two level 10 caterpillar monster. And, there are also human there.... Let's help them.

"The road is branching~, nyan."

Just as the junction comes into our view, a report come in from Tama. You don't have to add strange words to establish your character, I said...

I praise Tama while patting her head. She seems ticklish.

Since Pochi looks at us enviously, I also pat her head gently.

Since both of them are about as tall as my chest, they're easy to pat. Are they about 120cm? Liza is a bit taller than me... around 165cm then.

"Let's go to the right passage."

We proceed further. There's something appearing in the radar but what is it?

"There are bugs up there~ nano desu."

Tama warned. This time she's imitating Pochi huh?

Now then, how do we beat invisible enemies?

Since I can grasp its rough position from radar, I look there.

I keep staring there.

AR display pops up with the monster's name and level.

I indiscriminately and repeatedly shoot at the place where the AR is.

Phew phew phew. Bota.

It seems that one of the shot hit, the caterpillar fall onto the ground.

"Tama, hit it with the stone."

Tama hits it for about 3 times. After two hit, the body of the caterpillar repels the stone. It seems that only one of the hit gives damage.

The caterpillar is approaching.

"Pochi, Tama, get back. Liza, come here. Hit it once from behind my back."

While holding back as much as I can, I kicked the caterpillar which was ramming here to gain time.

Liza attacks with the spear during that chance! The caterpillar's HP decreases for about 10%.

After confirming that, I shoot it twice until it die.

"Liza, Tama, I'll leave the recovery of the magic core to you. Pochi, follow me, there's another monster over there."

Tama hands over some stones to Pochi. How many did she pick?

There's the same caterpillar as earlier inside the room.

Furthermore, there are corpses of a young woman and a boy that looks like a slave on the ground. Unlike with the cricket earlier, they're not eaten.

"Pochi, when we get into the room, throw the stone at the monster from my side. When you run out of the stone, go back to Liza's place."

I casually enter the room and shoot the magic gun. As instructed, Pochi throw 2 stones from close range.

The caterpillar who got hit by the stone turn toward Pochi, spitting venom. In the nick of time, I kick the caterpillar's head shifting the direction. The caterpillar dies with just that kick.

Pochi who has finished throwing the stones runs back to the passage.

To the opposite passage that is.

Did she get flustered and mistook the way?

"Pochi, stop!"

I immediately chase after her. Detouring the caterpillar's corpse, I was a bit late.

"Uwa~~~ don't come, don't come here~~~!"

Huh? Who's that? It's not Pochi's voice. It's the man on passage!

I look at the radar. The position is dangerous.

"Pochi, stop!"

Okay, she can hear me properly now. Pochi is coming back here.

The man from earlier has disappeared from the radar.

Still, why did that young man run away?

Did he mistook Pochi for a monster?

Or did he feel guilty for leaving the two people in the earlier as sacrifices...

"Master! Are you alright?"

"You okay?"

Liza and Tama are coming here running.

"Ah, I'm okay. Let's go back to the room earlier to collect the magic core."

"I'm sorry, nano desu."

Pochi is apologizing with her ears falling flat. Her tail is also curling between her thigh.

"Pochi, it's fine to run away. But panicking is not okay. Do you understand?"

"...Yes."

I pat Pochi's head like, pom-pom.

When we got to the room, Liza and Tama are dismantling the caterpillar.

I write the two corpses name on the memo, I wonder if there's anything useful... I ask Pochi to examine them.

...Since well, you don't usually want to touch corpses, do you?

"Should I strip the clothes?"

Pochi asked, but we don't exactly need their clothes. I've only noticed just now, but the beastkin girls aren't wearing shoes.

"Take the footwears. Leave the clothes as it is."

Pochi passes over the collected things. The slave boy doesn't have anything, but the woman has a purse and jewelries like ring and necklaces. I create a folder in the storage and named it memento, then I put the mementos there. I will give it to the deceased's family later. I just got an idea to cut the hair of the two and put it in the memento folder.

The sandals are for Pochi and Tama to wear.

Liza, the biggest child, has to wait for her turn later. In the next room with the giant caterpillar, there should be shoes of the young man from earlier, so she wouldn't have to wait for long.

◇

The experiment to attack, however the damage, is apparently successful. Tama and Liza are raised by one level, Pochi by two.

Apparently one automatically learn skill if they level up, Pochi got throwing skill, Tama got collecting skill, and Liza got dismantling skill.

But I don't have dismantling skill... I should try cutting fish later.

Wait, there's something strange with Liza's skills.

The dismantling skill is grayed out even though the spear skill is white. Pochi's and Tama's skills are also grayed out.

I wonder if they aren't activated yet. They would be strengthened if I activate it but...

Their attribute values have also increased, but for example, STR is written as 15(18), so it doesn't seem like it instantly rises.

There are still around 100 room before the exit anyway, let's solve it until then!

I lead the beastkin girls (Tama-Pochi-Liza) out of the room.

>Title [Trainer (Tamer)] Acquired

2-10. Labyrinth of Demon (3)

Satou's here. The weak person who yearn for the sun so much, Satou.

Although dungeon is fine if it's in a game.

Fighting insect, insect, frog, insect, snake in a wet, damp basement is getting tiring.

◇

We've passed 6 rooms since then, but we didn't encounter any more living human. We came across several corpses though...

"Master, the magic core recovery is complete."

"Alright, let's take a break."

Liza and the other are passing the water bottle around after drinking for a mouthful.

Before I knew it, they way they call me have changed from [Danna-sama (Mister)] to [Goshujin-sama (Master)]. Since it seems easier for them to use that, I leave it alone.

<TLN: Yep, I've made a huge mistake in the last two chapter. Amended them.>

Liza drops the water bottle.

Water is spilling from the fallen bottle...

"I, I'm very sorry! Master!!!"

Liza desperately picks up the water bottle. Her hands seems to be unsteady.

Come to think of it, Pochi's and Tama's throwing accuracies were bad on the battle earlier too...

"Are you tired?"

"I'm very sorry! I wasted the important water. Please punish me in any way."

...You're exaggerating. No, Liza seems to seriously think that.

"Liza, we can just obtain more water. Rather than that, is your body okay?"

"I'm sorry... I feel heavy since earlier, I've tried to move my limbs, but they won't budge."

Pochi and Tama drink the water while lying on the ground looking lifeless.

Confirming their status, there doesn't seem to be any abnormality. They're probably tired.

"The break is canceled, let's take a full rest instead."

I lift Pochi and Tama in my arm and drink them the water.

I distribute sweet potato fries to the three. The three look very sleepy, but maybe because they're hungry, they have some vigor left to keep eating.

"After you finish your meal, sleep for 3 hours."

Pochi and Tama sleep with my legs as pillows. Liza shyly curled up into a ball a bit away.

When the three fast asleep, I observe their status.

The attribute values are increasing by 1 every 10 minutes, getting back to its original values. 2 hours after the rest, the grayed out skills turn white.

Speaking of skills, if the three leveled up then their skills would increase right?

They don't get skill just by doing something?

Apparently the improvement from level up is applied after you sleep.

...this is totally like like the masterpiece from the labyrinth's classic. It's scary to age if you're not on the stable.

<TLN: Some kind of Japanese idiom maybe? I don't understand either, sorry.

Edit: Apparently, it's Wizardry reference.>

◇

We broke through more rooms after that. The limit before we need to rest was about 3 level up based on earlier, we should rest after breaking through two more rooms...

"Stop!"

It's rare to see Tama warns without being sluggish.

But there's no enemy on the front?

"What's wrong?"

"The ground is~ strange?"

She answers with a question. There's something wrong on it, but she doesn't know what kind, is it? I watch the ground carefully, the ground texture do looks different. Although the color doesn't differ...

Before I can understand what's the discrepancy is, an AR display with [Trap: Life Drain] written, pops up.

That's right, this is a labyrinth, there should be traps.

Since there wasn't any until now, I forgot about it.

"Well done, Tama. There's a trap there."

"Ay!"

I stroke Tama's head and cat ears.

I let the three withdraw and try throwing stone at the trap, but it doesn't active. From the name of the trap, it probably only reacts to living things.

Since I don't know the range of the trap, I can't be sure if we can safely walk through the edge of the passage either. I won't even consider making the beastkin girls step through it.

There are rat monsters on the room after this, maybe I'll try to lure them here with stones.

I throw 3 stones in a row.

"Rats are coming."

In response to Pochi's report, I make the three fall back. The rats here are only level 10 and weak, but they act in group. Since I can't be sure if they can break through trap or not, let's take some distance.

The rats are caught in black spark far from the trap's location. In the end, the 3 rats are all caught up in separate location. It seems that traps are scattered around in this passage.

>[Trap Release Skill Acquired]

>[Trap Usage Skill Acquired]

>[Trap Discovery Skill Acquired]

Since the trap might be the type that can reactivate, we leave the magic cores behind.

I immediately allocate skill point to just Trap Discovery skill and activate it.

◇

Liza stab at the giant frog's mout with all her might. Pochi and Tama then jump from each opposite side to deliver the finishing strike to the frog's head with their daggers.

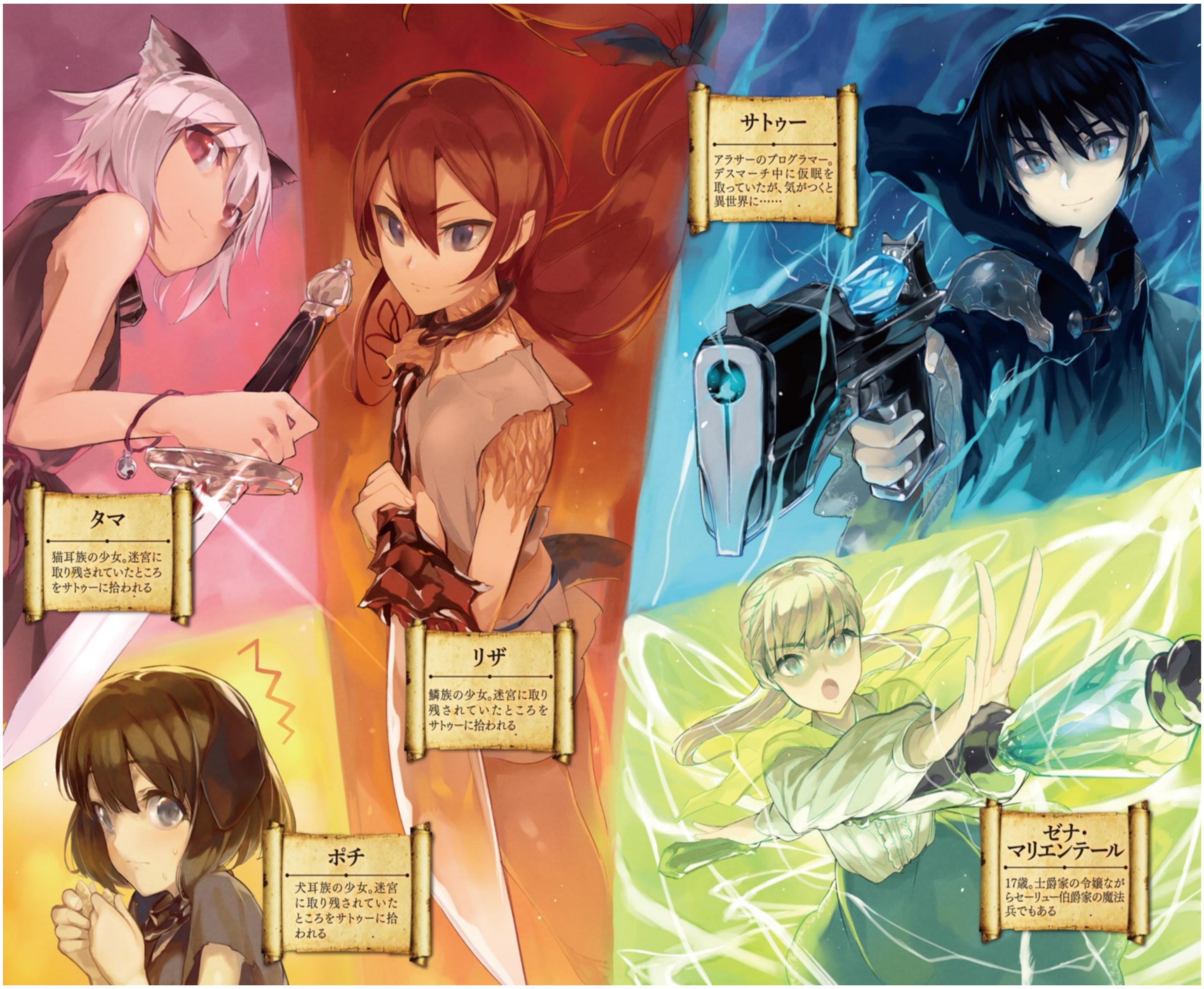
"Alright! You did well!"

"Yes!"

"Ay!"

"Nano desu!"

I praise them for the first monster kill they did by themselves. Since the opponent was only a simple level 10 with just tongue restrain as a special skill, I tried to let them to do it, and do it well they did. The fighting power of beastkin is higher than human of the same level after all.


サトゥー
アラサーのプログラマー。デスマーチ中に仮眠を取っていたが、気がつくと異世界に……
タマ
猫耳族の少女。迷宮に取り残されていたところをサトゥーに拾われる
リザ
鱗族の少女。迷宮に取り残されていたところをサトゥーに拾われる
ポチ
犬耳族の少女。迷宮に取り残されていたところをサトゥーに拾われる
ゼナ・マリエンテール
17歳。士爵家の令嬢ながらセーリュー伯爵家の魔法兵でもある

<TLN: Don't ask me why Liza's spear doesn't look, err, "raw"-looking >

<Either that the author didn't coordinate better with the illustrator or the detail was changed in the Light Novel version>

This room is 3 times wider than any other room before. There are possibilities of more enemies with this much space, but I can't sense any sign of them.

There's a house on the edge of the room. The roof is cleanly cut in two. It was probably swallowed up with the creation of the labyrinth. Unfortunately, there are no human signs on the radar...

Liza is dismantling the frog, Pochi and Tama are keeping guard of the entrances. This time, it's Liza's turn to dismantle huh. Since there's that skill things, I've assigned a rotation for the duty.

"Pochi, Tama, let's check out that house. Follow me."

I go toward the house with the two.

There aren't any corpse from casualties in the house but various things instead. Apparently it was the house of a wealthy person.

Two ornamental short swords surprisingly have decent attack power when I checked it with appraisal skill. In a stereotypical fashion, there's a hidden safe behind a wall painting. I blow the lock with magic gun and check the inside. In addition with a bag of golds and jewels, there's also a magic material called Dragon Powder in a small vial. Was the owner an alchemist?

We collect the small amount of jewelries, but leave the big things, like statues or other work or arts, behind.

Among the work of arts, there are a couple of stuffed animals on pedestals. Though I don't really care, I wonder if they were in the process of being repaired? I sort of want to see the stuffing process of fantasy animals.

>[Excavation Skill Acquired]

>[Treasure Discovery Skill Acquired]

>[Treasure Chest Unlock Skill Acquired]

There's an ignition magic tool (Tinder Rod) in the kitchen. That's the only magic tool here, but we put a frying pan, a pot, and tablewares for 4 people in the bag.

Since I can get water anytime from the water jug, and there are a lot of small water bottles there, so I put oils inside them to make improvised molotov bombs and put them inside the Storage.

"Here, cheeses and dried meats! Nano desu~♪"

On a collapsed furniture there are big breads, 3 lump of cheeses and some smoked meats inside. After confirming that they're not rotten with the AR, I slice some pieces for Pochi and Tama.

"Let's eat the remainder together with Liza."

"Ay!"

"Yes! Delicious no desu~."

I give the bag with the food to Tama, and bag with accessories and weapons to Pochi, while I'm holding the water jug and tub, we get out.

When we get out, the recovery of magic core is complete.

"Master, I have a request... Is it alright for me to light fire?"

"Fire in underground? What is your reason?"

Liza falters for a bit,

"U, um well, I want to eat the frog's meat... I'm sorry."

"You don't need to apologize, but is that safe to eat?"

"Yes, it's fine. I've dismantled and eat frog from the same family a long time ago. There are internal organs with poison but if we avoid it, it's alright. But if it's not baked there are a danger of poisoning..."

Well, even if this is in underground there's an airflow, and we already climbed up for quite a bit so there's no worry of lack of oxygen.

"Alright, I permit it."

Liza instructs Pochi and Tama to cut the frog's legs, while she herself is taking out wood blocks and chip from the bag and prepare it. I see, it was for this reason that she was collecting woods in every room.

I stop Liza from using flint to light fire, and use the ignition magic tool (Tinder Rod) from earlier to ignite fire... Chakka○n?

<TLN: http://www.vesta-tokai.co.jp/catalog/chakkaman/>

I give the cookwares and the tablewares gotten from the house to Liza.

Before long, Tama and Pochi hold the leg meat high up their head.

"Meat~"

"Nano desu~"

...I wonder, they look even happier than with the smoked meat earlier.

Liza cuts the meat into pieces, and lines it up on the frying pan.

She pierces the baked meats with skewers and presents it to me.

...Do I have to eat it?

"Thank you Liza."

I prepare myself and eat it... It taste a bit like chicken but honestly, it's a bit light. I guess it can't be helped since we don't have seasonings like salt though. It's a hassle to go back to that house just to search for seasoning.

The three people stare at me eating.

Oh right, they're waiting for permission.

"Stop looking and eat. If you don't properly eat and rest, we can't get out of the labyrinth!"

After getting the permission, Pochi and Tama start eating the meat on the frying pan. Liza isn't only frying the meat, she also properly eats it.

I glances at them while lightly toasting the black bread, cheese and the smoked meat to eat it.

After that, a cycle of dismantling, baking and eating repeat for about 30 minutes, the banquet only finish after the fuel run out.

Per the suggestion of Liza, I wrap a lump of meat in cloth and put it in the bag just in case.

If the condition is the same like before, they will get tired after 2,3 battles, so we'll make use of this time to rest to its fullest.

I let the three to bath in the tub, give them new clothes to change, and let them sleep with a blanket.

Although they'll soon get dirty in battle, Don't you feel better to go sleep with clean clothes?

2-11. Labyrinth of Demon (4)

Satou's here. Labyrinth from classic series usually has treasures, monsters and mysterious traps.

While the danger is immense, the returns you got from easy level up are also huge, these can be said to be the real thrill of the labyrinth.

A party consisting only of warriors sure have pretty bad balance isn't it?

◇

After two more rest along the way, we're finally around 80% of the way out of the labyrinth.

Since the rest before the last one, we haven't seen any more victim's corpses.

Pochi and Tama's equipment have changed to the ornamental short swords. That's the extent of the equipment change, but the three people are now level 13. It seems that their stats are about 3 level higher than the average human kin.

Pochi has [Enemy Search], [Throwing], [Dismantling], and [Short Sword] skills, Tama has [Dismantling],[Collecting] and [Short Sword], Liza has [Cooking],[Dismantling], [Spear] and [Thrusting] skills.

It can be said that their strengths are now world apart from when I first meet them.

If the enemy has no abnormal status attacks then even if it's level 20, the three can handle it. Although it could be dangerous to fight several enemies of the same level since there are no shield users...

"That wall~ is strange?"

Tama senses a strange sensation from the wall inside the room.

When I stare at it, I found a [Hidden Door]. Checking the map, there's certainly a passage behind.

However...

I change the map view point to bird's eye.

About 5 meter from this room, there's a perpendicular shape with 100 meter diameter right below. A pit, or rather, since it's 3 meter depth, a pitfall trap?

I warn Tama and co not to get close to it.

There's a crossroad after this, beyond that, there seem to be a room with 3 survivors inside. Since they've been resting for 1 hour, it's probably a safe zone there.

Although there are only 5 room left before the exit, because they don't have a map, it can't be helped.

"Everyone, stop!"

The radar indicate a red dot indicating enemy approaching with great speed. Since it's only 1 enemy, I wonder if it's attacking the room earlier?

While falling back I check the enemy's info.

Undead Beast, undead kin, 5 meter length, 2 meter height. The bite can paralyze, attack include the claws. Very agile. Weakness: Holy element.

"Level is... 40 you say?"

The labyrinth's sweeper huh...

It really does feel like the game of old. An abnormally strong enemy will appear to kill the player who's running out of time.

Before we come into contact with the enemy, we get back to the room.

I evacuate Pochi, Tama and Liza to the corner of the room. As expected, the enemy is dangerous. If they're careless, a single blow could kill them.

The enemy casually appear from the passage. Exerting force only when it's necessary huh...

It's a jet black panther-like beast with a red horn on its forehead.

The Undead Beast disappear from views!

I hurriedly look at the radar, but its position hasn't changed...

The enemy attacks from above!

It jumps and kicks the ceiling to plunge its body!

Behind my back, I feel that the floor below cracks.

To be so quick even though it's an undead... If it begin to jump around the three beastkin girls could be in danger.

Fighting it frontally is no good.

Seemingly to harass me, the undead beast opens its jaw before starting its bite attack leaving its open.

I overhead throw it to the wall.

The Undead Beast lands on the wall,

I put power in my foot and attack,

...It then breaks through the wall and fall (to the pit). Amen~.

◇

Now then, why don't we join with the survivors?

Beyond the crossroads, the floor is plastered with sticky white threads.

"Stickystick~"

"My feet is sticky~ no desu."

"I wonder if it's spider's silks?"

Tama and Pochi clear it with short swords.

In the room, there are 7 cocoons. The 3 survivors are among them. We should rescue them while the spider is gone.

When the person inside the cocoon realize that we are closing they begin to wriggle.

Just in case, I check the contents inside before we help them.

Nidoren. Slave trader, 40 years old, level 11, [Negotiation], [Torture], and [Arithmetic] skills.

Viscount Jin Belton. Noble, 33 years old, level 15, [Fire Magic], [Flame Magic], and [Social] skills.

Viscount's daughter Tana Belton. Noble, 14 years old, level 3, [Social], [Etiquette] skills.

The viscount is a good potential force.

Even so, why was a noble in that square?

We're splitting the work to save them.

I handle the viscount, Liza the daughter, Pochi and Tama are responsible for the trader.

Halfway through the rescuing, a spider coming from below are perceived by the radar. Just like with the undead beast earlier, there seems to be a pit here too.

"It's the enemy! Pochi, Tama, Liza, stop the rescue for the moment and prepare to intercept!"

The beastkin girls ready their weapon for interception.

After series of battles, these cooperations are to be expected.

Fortunately the victim's mouths are clogged up, a blessing in disguise. No noisy things are good.

A spider is crawling out from the hole on the floor.

First I hit its head with stones to deprive its consciousness. Then Liza skewers its head with her spear, while Pochi and Tama slice the joint of its body.

I thought it'd die with the first attack but... To not die even after its head has been pierced, truly a monster.

Liza receives the overhead sweep of the spider's leg, Pochi and Tama slice and dice with the short swords during that gap, shaving off the spider's health.

Since it seems that it would take some time, I throw a pebble in secret to give the finishing blow.

I leave the magic core recovery to Tama, and get back to rescuing with other members.

"I'm saved. I come from the the distinguished family of the founder Yamato-sama, the current head of Belton Viscount, Viscount Jin Belton. Expect rewards after we get out of here!"

"Thank you very much, Viscount-sama. I'm Satou, a merchant."

Just as we finished introductions, the viscount's saving is finished. The viscount goes to her daughter's place, takes the knife from Liza and continues the rescue by himself.

Is it because he doesn't want demi-human to touch her daughter, or because he's thinking of saving her himself.

"Thank you for saving me, I'm Nidoren, a merchant. I'd be disliked by the girls, since I deal with slaves trading."

"I'm a fledgling merchant, Satou."

"A merchant... is it? I thought that you're surely an adventurer."

While listening to Nidoren-shi, I present him cold waters.

"Do you know about adventurers?"

"Yes... ah! It's explorers in Shiga kingdom isn't it. Killing demon in the labyrinth, salvaging magic cores and treasures, it's a high risk high return job."

Tama returns with the magic core and I receive it.

"Putting aside the size of the magic core here, probably because the labyrinth is young, its purity is low."

According to Nidoren-shi, refined magic cores are used in the creation of magic tools, and the higher the purity the more efficient its magic operation is resulting in more advanced magic tools creation.

"Still, it was a brilliant cooperation, the training was certainly long isn't it? Such good slaves can easily fetch 20 gold coin each. I'd love to deal with you even once."

It seems to be better to not tell him that they're not officially my slaves. Since it looks it'd just come back at me.

I'm leaving mementos recoveries from the cocoons to the beastkin girls.

I pass foods to

viscount Belton and Nidoren. Of course, it's not the frog meats. The viscount heartily eats even while complaining the poor foods. The viscount's daughter only eats the cheese, and sips the water. Surely, she's exhausted.

◇

3 room left before the exit. The viscount has been shouldering the viscount's daughter this whole time. Should I carry her in my back? I suggested that, but it was rejected.

The problem is the next room. Like a dungeon made by a bad GM, located in unavoidable position is a monster house.

Leading the pack is a level 35 demon, then level 30 Skeleton Knight, Skeleton Deathschyte and Skeleton Warrior. The others are level 10-15 regular Skeleton Soldier.

Should I job change to masked hero?

Checking on the map, the handsome middle-aged priest is 10 rooms apart from here. I intended to join up with him, but the viscount's daughter exhaustion is extreme. Furthermore, each room is inhabited by 3 monsters from undead type. If we are to join up then the breakthrough would probably requires 2-3 hours.

If we manage to breakthrough the next room then the next after would be a vacant room with no enemy but...

Liza and Tama who were sent for scouting come back.

"Lots of bones~"

"Something spherical with wings is flying in the room. The others are approximately 20 skeleton monster. I think it's better to search for a detour..."

It's a sound assessment, but the exit is just ahead~

Well then, it's time to exhibit my special deception skill! ...orz.

2-12. Labyrinth of Demon (5)

Satou's here. It's hard to make people believing something that I don't believe myself.

A little bit more until the exit.

I want to get back to daily life asap.

◇

"The exit is probably after this. I have two reasons, first, there's a demon who, up until now, was nowhere to be seen. The other, the number of enemies is clearly different than anything before."

Those reasons sure are weak eh~

"...Why do those reasons mean that the exit is just up ahead, I can't understand."

"How about we take a detour as suggested by that demi-human instead?"

You're absolutely right... however! It's my turn now!

"Viscount-sama, did you forget? This is a labyrinth made by demon. They would put their kind in the place where they don't want to let people pass."

Dang, I should've used this reasoning from the start.

"But we are completely outnumbered. I don't think we can beat such large crowds just by ourselves."

I know right~

"Of course we have a chance... That is with the magic of viscount-sama."

I haven't seen him use it even once, but the fire storm used on the demon on the square back then was flashy. It should be enough as a shield.

Oops, I shouldn't have known about the magic of the viscount.

"As you may know, the undead kin are weak to fire. Moreover, I've heard rumor that says viscount-sama is the best fire magician in the earldom."

"Umu, because even like this, I'm the vice-captain of the magic soldier troops."

The viscount doesn't seem to wholly against the idea. So he's a superior of Zena-san huh?

"Viscount-sama, I have a question for the sake of strategy planning, how many time can you use fire storm?"

"The limit for fire storm is one use. After casting fire storm we can block the entrance with fire pillar and wait."

Fumu, is it a magic with bad fuel consumption?

It's convenient that the talk has suddenly progressed to doing the battle.

When the view is obstructed by the fire storm, I'd just exterminate the enemies with coin attacks.

>[Strategy Skill Acquired]

◇

Viscount Belton's fire storm is raging.

The winged eyeball uttered something in the distance but the battle started without anyone hearing it.

Surprise attack is basic.

"Pochi, Tama, throw stones at enemies who's approaching. Liza, thrust the enemy who passes over the stone throws."

I give commands to the beastkin girls.

Now then, let's smash them before the fire storm disappear.

I hit the center of eyeball of the winged eyeball with the last piece of holy stone. I don't know what to say to that huge exposed weak point. The holy stone penetrates the demon, smashing the bones on the back, hitting the wall. The roaring sound was masked by the fire storm's sound.

One set of several copper coins are used to destroy 3 high level skeleton monster. Coin shotgun it is.

When the fire storm subside, only 7 small fry skeleton monsters with half their health points remain.

For now, let's push the achievement.

"Wonderful viscount-sama. Weakened by the fire storm, the skeletons become brittle and were destroyed one by one with the stones throwing."

"Fumu, the filthy undead monsters were purified by my flame magic."

"That's exactly right, this is the first time I've seen such enormous magic, what a tremendous fire power!"

The viscount with triumphant look along with Nidoren-shi and his praise. I leave him to attend for the viscount's mood, and follow after the clean up of the small fry (hereafter, zako) skeletons with the beastkin girls.

Liza attack the feet of a zako skeleton to destroy its balance, then Pochi and Tama strike together to destroy it. Hiding behind the fire left on the ground, I destroy the skeletons with copper coins. I think it's because of throwing skill, the zako skeleton's health is easily depleted by just flicking a copper coin with my thumb ...Is there no rejection skill (Shidan). Even though it's cool.

>Title [Undead Slayer] Acquired

>Title [Demon Slayer] Acquired

◇

Soon the clean-up of the zako skeletons end, we head toward the exit. Since it'd be troublesome if monster reinforcement come, I leave the magic cores behind.

The passage is different from what we've passed so far, the floor is made by paving stones like the one found inside the room. The passage is 4 meter wide, 3 meter high. Thanks to that, it's bright. The passage continues in a straight line for a while, and break into a curve before the last room.

"The outside's smell, nano desu~"

Pochi reports happily while running around me in circle.

I've become considerably accustomed compared to the first time.

"Let's eat something delicious when we get out."

"Meat~"

"Meat meat~"

Since Liza is in the very back she didn't enter into the conversation, but Pochi and Tama look so happy.

Reflected in the radar, numerous lights appear in succession in the last room.

However, it's not red light which indicates enemy but white light which indicates neutral position instead.

It's probably the territory's army.

The handsome middle-aged priest has reached the skeleton room earlier too before I know it. What kind of trick did he use?

Well it's good either way.

I feel like drinking cold beer and taking a shower right now. Though it's probably unrealizable.

"There are people's voices~"

Pochi said that while pointing the front.

The passage turn is coming into view. After 3 turn from here, it's the exit.

"The wall on the front~ is strange?"

Tama reports. I confirmed from the map that there's a pit behind the wall. Maybe it's like the labyrinth shortcut gimmick in a game.

"There's a hidden door here too. Do not touch it."

"Ay!"

"Yes! nano desu~"

When we're passing through the hidden door...

Beast arms break through the hidden door!

I kick the door's fragmented pieces while an enormous body comes into view!

I push both Pochi and Tama to the edge of the passage.

I also want to jump out but if I carelessly avoid, it's certain the three on the back will meet harm's way. I catch the beast, killing its momentum, then it kicks the floor. The beast's jumping power is heavy and powerful, it quickly pass overhead the three to land behind them.

They finally catch up with the unfolding event.

Screams raise. Groan voices. All are overwritten by the roar of the beast.

It's the reappearance of the Undead Beast thought to have been dealt with.

No, it has two horns, different beast huh.

Leaving that aside, what to do?

It climbed all the way up the pit, it's impossible to deal with it like before.

Since there's level difference, if I ask the cooperation of the beastkin girls, they could die.

I'd like to ask for the viscount's magic help like on the bone hall, but his magic power is insufficient...

My thought is racing while avoiding the biting attack of the Undead Beast.

"■■■■ ■■ ■■■ ■■■■ Air Hammer"

A mass of invisible compressed air come from the exit's direction forcing the Undead Beast to retreat.

I was rolled up with it.

Undead Beast, seemingly in effort to reduce the magic's force, jump back to near the room's entrance in the back.

The door there opens, and the handsome middle-aged priest comes out of it.

What a bad timing.

"Get back to the room, it's the Undead Beast!"

Thanks to the Loudspeaker skill and the echo in the passage, voice louder than I thought comes out.

The handsome middle-aged priest begin casting spell without panicking.

Ridiculous!

You'll die in a blink of an eye before you even finish the casting.

The Undead Beast turns around after hearing the chanting.

Can't be helped, let's change its target to me and play the avoid war. Then let's defeat it with a strong attack slipped in the middle of the priest's magic.

"■■ Purification (Turn Undead)!"

Short. What's that.

The undead beast stopped moving, and turn back into a stuffed animal.

It can't even stand up on its own, the menace is gone.
GJ, handsome middle-aged priest-san.

"Satou-zannn~~~~"

Before I turn toward the voice, I'm quickly pushed. By Zena-san equipped with leather armor.

"It's good that you're awightt~~~ It's good~~~~"

Rubbing her head on my chest, she's delighted for the reunion.

The magic earlier was Zena-san's huh. From the other side, soldiers begin to appear, helping to rescue the viscount.

The beastkin girls are coming to my side, but they're standing by in a place a bit far. Liza put Pochi and Tama who tried to come here in check.

"I'm home, Zena-san."

Zena-san scrubs hear tears and lift her face.

"Welcome back, Satou-san."

The smile of tearful Zena-san looks awfully attractive.

<TLN: Yeah, it's a bit different. I guess we'll have to read the light novel version if we want to know why Zena's clothes is disintegrating lol>

デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲
2
Honobono tokidoki Serious soshite Harlem
愛七ひろ
Illustration・shri

3-1. To Daily Life

Satou's here. Not wanting to experience the real dungeon attack again, Satou's.

The arm demon who's missing with the appearance of the labyrinth is on my mind but...

For now I'd like to enjoy a peaceful life for once.

◇

We've come into a vacant lot about as wide as a school yard when we come out of the labyrinth.

Surrounding the edge of the lot, are two-meter high fences. It look to be hastily made.

Since the outer wall can be seen from there, it seems that this is the square where the commotion was.

Looking back at the labyrinth's entrance, it's a 3 meter high of sharp jet black rock with a hole. I wonder if it's made of obsidian?

There are 3 turrets 50 meters away surrounding the entrance. Wooden barricades with sharp pointed tips lined up on the places where they don't obstruct the turrets' line of fire.

"Satou-san, come here please."

Zena-san is calling from a tent across the fences.

When we reunited, Zena-san hugged me without letting go, but her co-worker, Lilio, who was late, teased her so she jumped out in panic. ...She was definitely very worried. Did she favor me that much~?

While Pochi and Tama hanging on both of my hand, we go toward the tent. Liza follows 3 steps back from me. Are we a master and his pupil.

I give our luggages to the woman official on the entrance and go inside the tent. Liza didn't want to leave her spear, but once I urged her, she reluctantly let it go.

The inside of the tent is unexpectedly wide. It's about as wide as a school classroom.

The handsome middle-aged priest who got out earlier is inside, being questioned by officials while getting medical treatment.

The viscount and his daughter aren't here. Are they on another tent?

Since Zena-san beckons me, I head to her.

The handsome middle-aged Garleon priest, Nebinen-shi and the slave trader, Nidoren are also over there.

<TLN: FINALLY, can we stop using his title now please author?>. The last person is a gray haired knight with bulging muscles and metal armor. The knight looks over here, and laughs. His expression looks like a mischievous boy even though he's already middle-aged.

"Hoo, so you're magician Zena's dearest."

"N, no."

Zena-san attempts to cover and deny the knight's word, but the knight ignores it and continues.

"She was haggard until your safety was confirmed you know. If her squad didn't watch over her, she was sure to jump into the labyrinth alone, it was that dangerous."

"That, for all the trouble I've caused, I'm very sorry."

I think it's a bit strange for me to apologize, but it's better than being awkwardly silent.

"Hahaha. You don't need to apologize. I just want to look at the person who got the straight laced having-no-interest-beside-magic-training to fall."

"L, like I said I don't..."

Zena-san tries to intercept again, but in the middle of the way, she begins to murmur her words and hangs her head while looking really embarrassed. Experiencing romcom in this age is painful ...No wait, my body is that of 15 years old.

The knight looks at Zena-san amusingly, places his hand on his chin, and turns his head to me with appraising gaze.

"However, even though he does look nimble, to be able to break through a labyrinth with such small number of people, even a great man can't dot that."

"If the girls weren't there, far from escaping, I'd have been in the belly of a monster by now."

And so I said that to make a good impression of Liza and co. Pochi and Tama who are quietly crouching beside my feet look up curiously, I pat their heads to deceive them. Liza quietly bows but wisely chooses not to say anything.

"They sure looks strong. I would like to make them my subordinates if they weren't demi-human."

This knight, even though he looks like a nice-guy who doesn't care with racial difference, the discrimination against demi-human is really deep-rooted~

I respond while smiling wryly.

"They're good comrades who've been together with me though."

"Fumu, if they weren't, it'd be impossible to break through the labyrinth. I'm sorry, this territory's people are always at odd with demi-human tribes, so they're incompatible no matter what."

So it wasn't just simple prejudices but disputes between race huh... no wonder it's deep-rooted.

"Commander! The preparation is complete."

A woman who wears magician-like robe call out.

What preparation?

There's a lithograph put on the pedestal. Yamato stones again after 3 days huh? It's bigger than the one I've seen back then.

Commander-san calls out people who has escaped from labyrinth with loud voices.

"I know that this might be rude, but everyone who has escaped from labyrinth need to be checked with this Yamato stone. This is the original Yamato stone specially loaned from the earl. Even abnormal status will be displayed. This is for the sake of proving that no one is possessed by the demon."

Everyone initially looks displeased, but they become quiet after being told that it's to find out whether they're possessed by demon or not. Since everyone here saw the moment when the demon arm came out of Uusu in the square back then.

Still, leaving my level to 1 and no skill even though I've broken through a labyrinth is bad.

It's been a while since I operate the menu with thought, I open the exchange tab. Since the beastkin girls are level 13, let's make me a bit lower at 10. Make the skills merchant-like with [Arithmetic] and [Estimation]. Would it be strange to have no battle-related skill? Let's put [Avoid] then.

◇

When my turn come, I put my hand on the Yamato stone. Yep, the stats has been updated with the previously set information.

"Indeed, the [Nimble Merchant] huh."

"...You heard that from Zena-san right?"

"That's right, you know well. Still, even though you're not a soldier or an explorer, to have that level at that age, you must've been through a lot."

"It's not that amazing."

Humility? It is.

In fact, this person is level 30 at 29 years old. Being level 10 at 15 years old is nothing to brag about. Is it because that it's hard to level up beside for combat-related professionals?

Small shouts are raised from behind.

They seem to be surprised that a slave is so high leveled at level 13 and even has 4 skills.

Liza is wearing a hard to read expression like always, but her tail is twitching a bit. She's probably a bit proud.

Next is Pochi. Since her hands didn't reach, Liza lift her up from behind. She looks really happy having her hands and feet loose in the air.

The Yamato stone official tells her to place her hand. Shouts bigger than the time with Liza are raised. For 10 years old to be level 13 is probably amazing. Her skills are 4 too.

Pochi's tail are waving with a buzz. She looks over here and make a noise with her nose.

The last one is Tama. Just like with Pochi, Liza lifts her. Did she also want to have her hands and feet loose in the air? she looks really happy her tail swinging on Liza's legs.

When her stats are displayed, the shouts are quieter than the one with Pochi. Her stat is as good as Pochi, but since it's the third time already, the surprise factor is already fading. Tama looks dissatisfied.

"It must have been hard to train demi-human slaves to that degree."

"It's not that much. Because the girls are excellent."

It's true that I struggled, but the girls' excellences is a fact too. Although I wouldn't die even without them, I would undoubtedly have an unpleasant time with the traps.

The inspection with Yamato stone end with Tama's turn.

It seems that everyone except Nebinen-shi who's in deep talk with the white-haired official is allowed to go home.

"Now then, since the inspection is done, is it fine for us to go home?"

"I'm sorry, I'd like to hear the time when the demon appear from you for a bit more."

◇

Me, Zena-san, and Nebinen-shi, the three of us tell the event which unfolded until we were swallowed up by the labyrinth in detail to the commander and white-haired official.

I was embarrassed when Zena-san excessively praised me for the handling of Uusu. Even Nebinen-shi concluded that I've subsided the possibility of rebellion and dealt with the agitator inside the crowd... Well, it's the truth though.

Since I remember the words of the demon when we got into labyrinth better, Nebinen-shi passed it to me to convey.

"For the sake of full revival huh..."

"I don't know how much magic power is needed for demon's revival, but here is close with the dragon line."

"Right, since it's near the earth veins... Even then, it would still take several months right? Before that let's call high level explorer clans from the labyrinth city, Ceribila, and bring it to an end."

Yup, lots of unknown words making it hard to follow the story. On the side, Zena-san who's clenching her fist is nodding with serious expression.

Let's summarize the words that I understand for now, it's fine to leave the demon alone for a few months, before that, defeat it by calling the high level explorers? It's like that, OK?

After that, what kind of monster appear in the labyrinth? How many of them appear at the same time? What kind of traps are there? various things like that were asked.

I only report half of the battle we've been but I don't hide the type of enemy of who came out.

At first it was just common fact checking, when the story arrived at the time we meet viscount Belton just before the bone hall, the official's face became strange.

"What's wrong?"

"No well~. Did you really fight that many battles without a spellcaster? Furthermore judging from the time the labyrinth appeared to your escape, each battle's time is really short I think? Did you properly take breaks?"

"Of course. Since we're not machines."

"Yeah, of course you are." (Most likely Zena)

"Yes, we took 3 rest, each for about 3 hours."

"It doesn't look like you're just bragging."

Huh? Did I make a mistake?

"It must be a party with exceedingly good cooperation. You did well not to get annihilated fighting to the bitter end even with that high pace."

"That's right~ If even one people incur serious injury, you'd have been annihilated... If I was with you then I could have became the role of support or healer."

Ah, Zena-san's eyes begin to turn teary.

"Along the way, we've found an alchemist hideout, and we found a lot of magic potions. It's partly thanks to that~."

I'll sully myself to stop a girl's cry. Deception skill come on~.

"Umu, as expected if there were no means for recovery, that many battles would have been impossible."

Yep, we went through hardships.

Whenever the beastkin girls were about to surely got hit, I immediately dash and parry the attack. If they are about to get surrounded, I aggro the enemy.

I really want provocation skill. Let's try to see if I can get it or not next time.

◇

Oh right, I should confirm it before I forget.

"Um, can I ask something?"

"What would that be? I don't mind as long as it's not military secret. By the way, my daughter is 15 years old with beautiful buttock and very popular."

What is this person saying? Let's magnificently ignore!

"It's about the labyrinth, I think it's spreading considerably. Is it fine to just let the labyrinth spread out like this?"

"Oh, did I not explain it?"

You did not.

"The labyrinth won't spread to anywhere beside to the outer wall of this square. I can safely declare that there is no danger of the city collapsing."

"I want to hear the reason for that safety if possible..."

"Umu, right. The army, collaborating with the town's magicians and alchemists have set up barrier. A consecration ceremony involving all the town's temples is being held. With this double shields, the labyrinth has been restricted from encroaching the city's underground."

I see.

Still, I thought the temple and magicians look like they're on bad term.

"I understand what you're thinking. For the temple and magicians who are in bad terms to cooperate together so quickly, it's because of the earl's edict. Even so, this quick isolation of the labyrinth is thanks to the fast report of magician Zena."

"That was thanks to Satou-san giving priority to reporting."

Then, me and Zena-san's concession and credit passing continued, but the white-haired official and the commander skillfully dealt with it. If left alone, I don't know how long it would continue... GJ white-haired official.

"That's why, As long as the barrier is seriously maintained, the labyrinth won't endanger the city. Have you understand that?"

"Yes, I'm relieved."

What a relief. Since I'm afraid if the inn collapse while I'm asleep!

3-2. Master of the Beastkin Girls

Satou's here. Even though slaves are common here, still not getting used to it, Satou.

It would be hard to spread fundamental human rights on this world.

I don't have any intention to do so though ...

◇

After several sessions of questions and answers, we're finally released.

The onee-san official who was given our luggages passes it back to us.

"The things over here are fine to take back. However, the magic cores over there will be bought by the earl."

Can I deny it? I tried to ask, but she answers me back with a [No] and a smile.

"Since we can't completely confirm the safety of this monster's meat, we will confiscate it. And since this spear is made from monster's part, we can't allow you to carry it on the town."

Liza over-reacts to that and turns over here. T, the rarely mad Liza, is angry?

Since she seems to really like it, let's negotiate for her.

"Since that spear is powerful, couldn't you ask a person with appraisal skill to check for any danger? Of course, I will bear the cost for the procedure, but could you give it back when it's finished?"

Liza, you're scary. Scary. Look, even the onee-san's smile is cramping.

"I, I understand. I'll arrange it. The new custody receipt will have to be issued and will be ready by tomorrow afternoon, please bring this temporary receipt to military post then."

"Yes, I'm counting on you."

That's right, let's ask about the treatment for the beastkin girls.

"Um, I have a question if you may..."

It's about the beastkin girls.

"...I see, the slaves' master was dead so you took care of them, and brought them out of the labyrinth is it?"

"Yes, that's right."

Liza also nods. Pochi and Tama lean against Liza feet listlessly ...Bored, are they?

"If it's like that, then these demi-human slaves are yours."

Is that so? I thought of buying and releasing them if they were brought to slave traders though.

"If slaves' master is dead in a labyrinth, except for the murderer, anyone who found the slaves will take their ownership, just like lost item. Therefore, customary and legally, you are these slaves' master."

Onee-san writes something on a certificate, and presents it to me.

"It's a certificate which claim that you're the master of these slaves. Since this is only valid within the town, it's better to make official contract on the slaves traders on the castle's plaza as soon as possible. It's not enough for thanks for the large quantity of magic core we've received, but there is no fee for it."

I receive the certificate and give my thanks to her, and along with the beastkin girls, we get out of the tent.

Oh yes, since the magic cores are used as materials for the labyrinth isolation barrier, we're obliged to sell them.

◇

Outside, Zena-san and the three noisy girls from back then are discussing something.

It's bad to disturb their work, but for them to only nods for my greeting is rather cold...

While thinking what's happening, Lilio grins and pokes at Zena-san while laughing, then she points at me.

"Good luck~", While receiving Lilio's support, Zena-san is coming here.

"Satou-san, I see that the procedure is complete. Are you going back to the inn after this?"

"Yes, I'd like to have the slaves rest at the inn too."

"You're really kind. Though, I guess even the stable's barn is more comfortable than the labyrinth's floor."

...Huh? There were some strange words mixed in.

"No, I wouldn't make comrades who stuck together in hardships with me to sleep in the barn. I intend to reserve proper room in the inn for them."

"Umm. Satou-san. There is no inn who will allow demi-human to lodge in this territory you know. If the master stay in the inn then the slaves will be put on the stable's barn..."

Are you serious? I thought it's just disagreeable at best, that they would let it if I pay more.

Since Zena-san looks so sorry, it doesn't seem to be a joke.

"Zena-san, you don't have to put that face. Thanks to you, I won't dispute it on the inn."

She still looks sorry, but I keep saying to don't worry about it.

Since Zena-san and her group are going to be on watch here until midnight, I thank them for teaching me and get out of here.

◇

Even so, if I didn't get the information from Zena-san beforehand, and is told to put the beastkin girls on the stable, I would probably get out of Gate Inn.

Should I buy a house? Or do I get out of the earl's territory?

It's different from when I first got here, I met Zena-san and many acquintances in this city so I'm starting to get attached to it. Although I don't intend to stay permanently...

On the way back, let's go to the worker's guild and ask Nadi-san if she's able to arrange for buying a house.

"Master, it's presumptuous of me to say this, but we're satisfied just sleeping on stable's barn. Since we slept on the outside ground under the roof before..."

"That... even for slaves, that's some excessive abuse."

"I'm sorry."

Why is Liza apologizing? I want to hear the reason.

"No that, I didn't want for master to make that face... I want master to not worry even if we sleep in the barn, but my vocabulary is not enough..."

"So that's it, you were taking me into consideration. Thank you."

Pochi and Tama who are dangling on my hands are pulling my sleeves.

I look at where their finger point, a girl wearing one-piece clothes seems to want to talk. A short stick is held in her hand. A spell-user huh?

"Can I help you with something?"

"Yes, how about some junction magic?"

Is it like the junction healer in MMO?

"For treating injuries?"

"Full treatment is impossible~ how about hemostasis and cleaning? It's refreshing, and if you don't clean your wounds then the meat will rot you know~? Ah, and if you're tired, then I can also use invigoration magic, although it's a bit expensive~?"

"How much is the hemostasis and cleaning?"

"[Soft Wash] and [Dry] set is 12 copper coins. One performance of [Bandage] is 3 copper coins."

Fumu, I guess there's no need for hemostasis. Since any wounds were immediately treated with ointments.

"Then, please 4 sets of Soft Wash and Dry."

"Eh? The demi-human slaves too?"

The spell-user girl is surprised with wide-eyes.

She's counting with her fingers with a pensive look.

"Err~ 40 copper coins and 3?"

"It's 48 copper coins."

Even though you can use magic, can't you do mental arithmetic? Since it looks like I have to pay in advance, I give her 3 silver coins.

The spell-user girl began to calculate by writing on the ground... Are you serious?

"1 silver coin is equal to 20 copper coins."

"U~, I know that, I'm properly calculating now because I know!"

The girl furiously calculates with one hand on her head. After a while, she finally finishes the calculation, and gives back the 12 copper coins change.

"Thank you for waiting~ Well then, let's quickly start~! To keep the small children stand still, please hold their shoulder well, okay."

I wonder if it's in the manual for this regard, even with demi-human, she's being careful to be polite.

Pochi and Tama who were surprised with Soft Wash tried to get away but I grabbed them as not to move.

When the Dry spell begin, Pochi who seems to be feeling good looks happy, enjoying the drying sensation. In contrast, Tama looks even more displeased than the time with the wash, and tries to get away from Liza who hold her shoulder.

"Thank you, I feel really refreshed now. Do you always perform the magic around here?"

"Today there are a lot of people who look like they've played around in mud coming out so I went to get some extra income. But I'm usually going around some brothels. The income is good since a lot of people there want refreshment."

I see, that's certainly true. She's sharp.

After I tell her that we're the last group of the people who played in the mud, the girl goes back to her usual routes.

◇

The day is coming to an end, I guess it's fine to take the official slavery contacts tomorrow.

While thinking about that, I bought 4 serving of delicious looking skewered meats.

Is it goat meat? The meat tastes a bit quirky but the green powder which tastes like pepper stimulates my appetite.

The beastkin girls are eating frantically, hagu hagu sound effects seemingly coming out. Come to think of it, the time with the grilled frog meat was amazing too~.

Even the usually restrained Liza, become intense when it comes to meat. Seeing her tasting the meat is a sight for my eyes. Her bashfulness when she realized that she was observed is good too.

When the day is becoming dark, the lamps on the main street are being lighted by spell-users holding short canes. Is it just my imagination or there are a lot of people.

Since I don't like to shout when some drunkard tried to touch Liza and Pochi, I buy the three of them hooded mantles. Curiously, Tama skillfully walks without getting herself tangled by anyone.

We proceed through hustle and bustle and find out that a stage has been installed in the square. Various carriages with cages are scattered around on the square beside the stage, some merchants are giving speeches here and there.

...Oh yeah, since yesterday, the slaves auction has started.

3-3. At the Slave Market

Satou's here. There's this so called uncanny relationship, even though I didn't want to, we meet again.

It seems to be fate.

◇

The slave market occupies around 200-300 meter in diameter of the square, bonfires are lighted every 20 meter away.

Just like in a festival, several slender pillar of woods stood, they're connected with string tied with innumerable thin metal plates which glitters from reflection of the lights from magic. If this wasn't a slave market, this fantastical feeling would have been perfect for dates...

A rope is stretched in the place that looks to be the center of the auction.

The slaves auction hasn't been started yet, but several musicians on the stage are playing a tune that feels obscene.

We don't enter the square, and just walk along the square's street while sightseeing it.

"Satou-dono!"

Dono? I don't know anyone who call me...

It was the slave trader whom we saved from the spider on the labyrinth, Nidoren-shi. Coming out from a small tent across the the slaves carriage, he's coming here. Girls, who are chained together, are lined up on top of the carriage.

"The slaves on that carriage are the exhibit for auction today. There are are those who have arithmetic and secretary skills among them, how about hiring one, Satou-dono? Since they are all properly educated, they're all virgins, but I can guarantee that no one will refuse for the night time."

...Educated huh.

Oops, rather than thinking the irony, I have other business.

"I'm sorry, but I must make our slaves here go through formal procedure first before thinking of new one..."

"Oya? Do ou want to sell them? If so, please do use our firm! If it's now, you can exchange for beautiful virgin slaves! How about it!"

He sure pushes hard. I don't have the slightest intention though.

...Not one bit, so please don't hold my sleeves while looking up so anxious. I brush Pochi's and Tama's head briskly. I can't see behind, but I can feel Liza being nervous.

"I've said this before, but I don't have any intention to sell them."

Yes, I do want to release them though.

Pochi and Tama relaxes their grip on the robe.

"Is that so, that's regrettable. Then what kind of procedures do you want? It's not about releasing the slaves, isn't it?"

"Since we're still on temporary contract, I thought of doing official one. Do you know the place where the procedure can be done?"

"If it's that then I can do it. Since I have a subordinate who have the [Contract] skill."

"Then, could you do it?"

"Certainly."

We're invited inside Nidoren-shi's tent and offered chairs. He instruct a subordinate man to prepare for contract.

Since the document's content are already fixed, we only need to write the master and slaves name to complete.

"Then, please write your name here. The slaves name are not written, so please put their thumb marks using this ink."

I sign at the place the man directed. The fixed text's lines are [To whom the slaves belong],[Slaves can't injure their master],[Slaves follow their master's order],[Slaves are to maintain their own body], just 4 of those. It's like the three principles of robot, although the last two order are reversed.

When we finish writing the written contract, the contract ritual begins.

"■■■■■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■■■■■ Contract!"

What did... he?! Is this magic?

After the last (Command Words) is uttered, the documents burnt and from the ashes a blue light wraps me and Liza in a halo then twinkles for 2,3 times and disappears.

When I look at the man's stat, he certainly has [Contract] on his skill column.

Maybe it's a skill that has only one magic?

>[Contract Skill Acquired]

Alright, let's try if this skill is usable later.

"With this, the slave contract is complete. If you wish, you can confirm the contract on the simplified Yamato stone on the auction center."

After the contract for the three is complete, I wanted to pay the fee, but it seemed that it's Nidoren-shi's authority, so he asked me to wait. Come to think of it, he came out when the first ritual begun. He seem to be back immediately, he sure is busy.

"Thank you, could I ask you something for a bit?"

"Yes, what would that be?"

"Is it rare for a person to release slaves?"

"Right, putting aside the general slaves who have their sentences time decided, I have never seen people who release lower slaves. I've heard story of people releasing slaves who have worked for years, but I have never seen it in person."

Is it that rare?

"It's possible to release them then?"

"Yes it's possible. Except for criminal or war criminal slaves. For those kinds, only state official or senior noble who are allowed to."

"For releasing, is it the same as the contract earlier?"

"That's right. I've done releasing general slaves several times before. With the [Contract] skill earlier, it's possible to annul the contract too."

Since we're here already, should I release the beastkin girls too now?

I can just employ them if they hope for it after the release.

"Master, it's presumptuous of me, but allow me to intrude on the conversation."

Liza who was lowering her head in silent while listening to us begins to talk, I wonder if Pochi and Tama were nervous with the ritual, they're sleeping while hugging Liza's legs.

"It's okay, what is it?"

"If it's no trouble for master, then please don't release us if possible."

She's saying slowly and clearly.

Are you an esper!

Or rather, why doesn't she want to be released? Isn't it better to be free?

"Certainly, in this earl's territory, Beastkin and Lizardkin can't exist unless they are slaves. If they're seen by the army then they would be exiled, there's also a high possibility of getting lynched to dead."

"Yes, furthermore, my tribe is no more, and just like you've heard back then, Pochi and Tama are in similar circumstance."

They can try to rely on their tribes, but for people who have no relatives, they will be treated lower than slaves.

I'm glad that Pochi and Tama are sleeping.

◇

Seemingly to break the heavy atmosphere, Nidoren-shi brings 5 girls in.

The five of them are quite the foreign beauty. They are all wearing thin clothes stopping at the knee. Since it's quite thin, the breast area is transparent.

"Have you finished your contract? Please take a look at them for now."

"Before that, I'd like to pay the fee for the contracts if possible?"

Let's just quickly pay the fee and go home.

"No no, since I was kindly rescued from the labyrinth by you, there is no such thing as service fee. Of course, since that wouldn't be enough, I'll give you 30% discount for the slaves."

Kuh, he made the first move. Giving small benefit first to make you easier to talk into next time, it's the same solicitation technique from some shady new religion.

Since it wasn't possible to refuse, it has been decided for Nidoren-shi to introduce slaves in rotation.

Since I'd doze off if I'm just listening to him, I decided to practice appraisal skill on this occasion. Appraisal is an always-active skill but I need to think [I want to know] or [I want to appraise] while looking at an object, then the result of appraisal will come into my mind.

Since the detail would be displayed on the AR no matter what I do, I turn other indicators beside radar.

During the rotation of two set of 10 people, I was just half-heartedly replying to give proper responses.

Still, their appeal point were nothing but virgin or their skills, why is that? Do the people of this country love virgin that much?

"Are you tired? Please bear it for a little more, the next one is the last."

So he says while bringing the next set, a black-haired oriental-looking beautiful girl from several days before is mixed among the six girls.

I see, so he brings the best for the last, truly a skilled merchant.

The others are... there. The violet-haired little girl with dangerous-sounding title is there too. Furthermore she looks here. She's really giving a hard look here.

Not matching her gaze, I look at the other girls. A blond freckled 15 years old girl with disgruntled look, a tall brown-haired woman who looks to be in her twenties with oval-shaped face, and a dull blond less-than 10 years old little girl that looks too thin. A braided red-haired 15 years old who looks like a plain literature girl.

A lot of them looks inferior to the 10 before them. Do they have some kind of special skills?

When I try to look with appraisal, the freckles girl has [Negotiation], the oval-faced woman has [Sex Technique], the thin little girl has no skill, and the braid girl has [Collecting].

While I'm at it, the violet-haired little girl has no skill, and the black-haired girl has [Etiquette].

What kind of line up is this?

"They are all may have inferior looks, but they will work hard for their master."

While saying that, Nidoren-shi explain about them one by one. Subjectively, does he think the black-haired san to be plain too?

"How about it? I could give you 6 set for the price of 3 gold coins if it's now!"

Nidoren-shi is hard at work promoting them. No matter how you look at it, that's too cheap. That mean each is 2 worth silver coins.

"It's been decided that those who doesn't sell well for today and tomorrow will be brought to the caravan heading to mining city."

Hearing the words of Nidoren-shi, the unmotivated slave girls rustle behind me. The panic begin when I look behind.

Shifting the clothes on the shoulder to expose the breast, rolling the skirt, taking strange pose, everyone tries to appeal with various method. The only two who didn't change are the violet-haired and the black-haired girls. The violet-haired little girl is staring intently like always, while the black haired-girl is downcast.

When the slave girls understand that their appeal isn't working on me, they give up one by one.

Just as Nidoren-shi instruct them to withdraw, the violet-haired little girl regain herself.

"Master! Master thinks that since you have those excellence demi-human slaves you don't need other slave, aren't you?"

"That's right, I don't need other slave."

Particularly, I don't want to buy you who have such trouble-sounding title. Absolutely!

"However, those girls are demi-human."

"That's exactly right, but I'm not dissatisfied with that you know?"

"Yes, just by looking at them, I understand that they're cherished. That's why! Please purchase me."

I don't understand the reasoning.

"Demi-human are shirked in this city. If you only have those girls as slaves then you wouldn't even receive a bread if you make them go shopping."

I see, I didn't think about that before.

However, I don't have to buy slaves just for chores, I'd just ask the maid at the inn. Yep, don't need it after all.

"If I was there, I'd do chores in place of those girls! The price is reasonable too, so please by all means, purchase me."

The violet-haired little girl look up for appeal. Hair that has been cut to shoulder-length, moist violet-colored iris, thin small lips, trembling small shoulders. If I'm into little girl, then I probably wouldn't hold up.

...I guess I'll buy?

Even though I'm not into little girl, I thought that she's charming. No wait, I don't need it, do I?

But, I feel like I absolutely have to buy her.

Then I purchased the violet-haired little girl (Arisa), and per her recommendation, I also bought the black-haired girl (Lulu).

Despite still questioning myself, I become the master of the two slave girls in addition to the beastkin girls.

<TLN: This is the end of volume 1 of the light novel version, but the web volume 3 still continues>

3-4. Little Girl and Night Turmoil

Satou's here. I think this is an unfortunate fate, to have an inseparable relationship with a person I'm not into.

I'd like to be together with a person of my type for once.

◇

A stark naked little girl is straddling on top of my waist.

...What the heck is this, a dream?

I've experienced similar situation with my younger cousins during a long vacation on my grandfather's home in the countryside, long ago.

The difference is that the little girl who's riding me now is naked, she doesn't have the same innocent atmosphere as my cousins.

The little girl moves bit by bit, then she greatly trembles, and snuggle against my bare chest. Her expression looks more like an adult woman rather than a little girl.

While looking very calm, I am actually really shaken inside. I'm not a lolicon okay? Absolutely!

Yet what's with this situation!

After purchasing the two from Nidoren-shi the slave trader, we were...

◇

"I will vigorously attend to master without rest, day and night."

The violet-haired little girl--Arisa said such thing during the ritual of contract. Even though Liza et al and the black-haired girl--Lulu were silent, did she want to appeal to me?

After the slave contract is finished, I pay 1 gold coin to Nidren-shi. Until the morning on the day after tomorrow, he'll be on the place earlier so he asks me to call if I ever need another slaves.

We're doing self-introductions outside the tent.

"Then, please let me introduce myself. I am from the now-extinct kingdom of Kubooku, Arisa. My age is 11 years old, there are still 4 years before I become an adult, but I'll gratefully accept to do night service even while I'm clumsy. Please cherish me forever."

While finishing the greeting with fluent words that doesn't match her age, Arisa slightly picks both end of her hem and bows. Although that's an elegant gesture, her hem is already short, coupled with her simple clothes, her lower body parts become almost naked.

And so I put my gaze to her face and simply reply "Please take care of me too, my name is Satou."

"...I'm Lulu desu. 14 years old desu. Born in Kubooku kingdom desu. Since I'm plain looking and thin... I'm not fit to be your partner at night, but I'll work hard like a horse... so please don't abandon me."

Lulu introduces herself while looking down and covers her face with her bangs. That clear voice isn't the type for seiyuu but it's a good voice with soprano feeling. It would have been better if it was not accompanied with trembling.

Though the person herself said thin, she looks to probably be B-cup, being B-cup at 14 years old is quite promising for the future I think, or is this world is of the big-breast faction? As long as it's soft, anything is fine!

Putting that aside, for this beautiful girl to say that she's ugly, that's too much even for humility. Covered with bangs, she looks like Sadako, but if I was to compare her with a beauty contest winner I've seen on TV back then, she would win with a big margin, that's how orthodoxly beautiful her face is.

Frankly said, she's my type. If her personality is agreeable, then I would think of proposing her when she turns 20.

I wonder if Arisa and Lulu don't have any prejudice against demi-human, even after the beastkin girls took off their hoods, they don't show any disgust. Although Lulu looks afraid of Liza, I don't sense any feeling of disgust. Do people from other kingdom not dislike demi-human?

Pochi and Tama initially act shy around stranger, but since Arisa and Lulu act normally to them, they immediately become familiar.

"Well then, let's get back to the inn."

I call out to the five and we return back to the street. Arisa smoothly and naturally clings to my left arm. The remaining other is being contested by Pochi and Tama. Since it doesn't seem that it's going to end, Liza carry both of them in both of her arms like luggages. Seemingly giving up, the two quiet down after their hand and legs are in the air ...so they like that pose.

Kyurukyurukyu~~.

A cute sound resounded. When I look back, Lulu blushes. Figure of bashful beautiful girl is lovely. I don't think of her as a romantic interest now, but I'm looking forward to the future.

A lot of stalls exude good smells but there aren't many customers. It seems that the auction has started, so the riches and the curious onlookers who want to look at beautiful slaves have flowed there.

Since it's convenient, we go to a stall with tables. I bought chicken soups and flat breads, assorted intestines and vegetables, and enough meat skewers for this number of people. I ended up buying a lot of meat skewers.

"Itadakimasu." and so the meal starts.

After the beastkin girls started eating, the two newcomers follow. Arisa stuffs herself with meat skewers, saying, "Ah~ Proteins after a long time♪" while holding her check. So this world has the concept for nutritions too huh, I ignore that while enjoying the scenery of the meal with everyone.

Lulu eats with all her might while still being reserved. But, the two's eating pace is slow compared to the other four, so they didn't eat much from the big combined platter. Next time, let's divide some small portions for them first.

Since I'm not really hungry, I finished my meal in the middle but since Arisa and the beastkin girls doesn't look like they've had enough, I order for more intestines and vegetables platters.

"Continue your meal as it is, I'm going to buy cloaks and shoes at the stall for a bit."

"L, let me go, if it's for shopping" "I will go"

Lulu and Liza stand up. Pochi and Tama stop chewing at the meat, and look here if only their eyes.

"Everyone keep eating as you are, this is an『Order』you know."

I could have gone when the meal is over, but I keep accidentally see Lulu's breast who sit in front of me, I can't calm down. I can clearly see the nipple of Arisa who's sitting beside her, but I don't care with that one.

I give cheap cloaks and sandals to the two, bought from the vicinity.

Soon after, the five eat through their plates leaving not even bread crumbs, so we go back to the inn.

＞[Service Skill Acquired]

◇

Just like Zena-san said, the inn refuses to let demi-human enter.

However, Martha-chan makes a bed from new straws inside the barn for the sake of the three, Pochi and Tama are overjoyed and even Liza reservedly gives thank. I wonder if it's warm to sleep on the straw covered with the blankets from the labyrinth.

I take out the cookwares and foods from among the lot bags of the labyrinth, and leave it to Liza. I also put the short swords of Pochi and Tama inside.

It's forbidden to equip demi-human with arms inside the town, but since it's the things taken from labyrinth for self-protection, it's probably fine.

As for the foods, "You can eat if you're hungry okay.", I give permission to Liza. With this, I can wake up late tomorrow (lol).

Lulu is going to sleep here together, since the inn accepts them anyway, it's better to sleep inside the room.

I tried to book an additional room from the landlady but there was no free room, so it was decided to add a spare bed in my room.

Since the room is wide being originally a twin room, even after two beds occupy it, it doesn't feel cramped.

I make Arisa and Lulu to sleep together on the new bed, and I sleep on my own bed.

Inside the labyrinth, for the sake of letting the beastkin girls rest, I was the sole watch guard so I didn't even take a wink of sleep. Is it because of that my eyelids feels heavy.

I surrender myself to drowsiness, and sleep after a long while.

◇

And so we fly back to the beginning.

Why am I sharing a bed with a little girl?!

Calm down Satou! Let's cool down here.

Arisa who notices me wake up says "You're awake?" mischievously while whispering and uselessly kisses me.

While receiving that, I comb her hair...

No, wait! I should have pushed her!

...I'll be branded a lolicon if this continue.

Arisa does not stop with my mouth, she kisses my ear, collarbone and chest in turn. Her small hands lightly, very lightly caress.

Respoding to that, I gently stroke her nape...

Why---! I don't feel like myself.

Arisa captures my hairless chest, putting her check on my thinly cracked abs while her finger is crawling.

Feelng that lovely actions, I feel like it's okay to let her violate... me?

This thought is strange. No matter how you look at it, there's something wrong.

My blurred mind become a bit clear. I operate the menu with thought, and make the log display ON. Found it in the log!

I slowly raise my body, lift Arisa who looks here, and put my face on her nape.

Arisa hugs my head while panicking for a bit...

Close to her ears, I『Order』gently but firmly.

"Arisa. I forbid the use of magic and skill. This is an order!"

Arisa loosens her hands, and looks at me with a shocked and distorted face.

"Furthermore, cancel the effect of magic and skill that you've used on me. This is an order!"

The order seems to be accepted, the log shows the cancellation of magic effect. The information displayed on AR changed too.

Just in case, I get the [Mind Resistance] skill which comes out in the log to maximum. It seems that I also got [Mind Magic], but it's fine for now.

"Why..."

"Isn't that my line? Using mind magic on me, what's your goal?"

Yes, the time when I bought her and just before this, she was using magic. The first one was [Charm Person] and [Fret] magic, and a little while ago [<<Temptation FIeld>>] and [Heat Heart] were used.

When I used appraisal skill her skill was [None] but the first time I see her the AR displayed [Unknown]. If only I remember earlier...

"...Even if master said I'm using mind magic"

"I also forbid the act of deceving and playing dumb. This is an order, state your goal."

I close her escape route and press for answer.

>[Questioning Skill Acquired]

Alright, let's allocate point and activate it. Let's make the level to be 3 for now.

"I repeat, don't lie and speak your goal."

She seems to have resigned and answers truthfully. She stops using polite language.

"...my goal was to become master's slave."

"And the goal for the second one?"

"I wanted to serve master."

She becomes a bit sulky while saying it.

"I don't understand the point, talk a bit more clearly."

"Mou! like I said. I fell in love with you when I first saw you. That thin and soft looking black hair! that defenseless expression! That outlandish baby-face! That delicate-looking body! If such a person is to become my master! And even though such dreamy boy was before my eyes, he was going to plainly pass by! I can't forgive that! That's why I used magic! To be purchased!"

She piles up her words like a machine gun. Since she looks a bit desperate, I keep listening.

"So, after you've been bought, you intend to brainwash me then?"

"No! Completely false! I've said『I will vigorously attend to master without rest, day and night』when I became your slaves right! That's why I seduced master since it's slave's job to make her master feel good!"

What kind of reasoning is that? It doesn't look like she's just lying to get through troublesome thing.

"I understand the facade, so what's your true intention?"

"Even though I was waiting for master to call me, you really went asleep... Since it can't be helped, I slip into your bed, and when I see your sleeping face, it's just irresistible~."

It's a tehee face. I'm a bit perturbed so I pull her cheeks. This much punishment is okay right?

"huuwt, it's huuwwt. iuainohahahyanorokirakenihite~."

This thin cheek sure can stretch. It's fun but since the corner of her eyes are tearing up, I stop.

"Even though I did my best to control myself in the beginning~"

"Then was it because you lose to your lust that you attacked?"

"That's right." so she nods.

"Really, just what are you..."

The AR displays these.

Name : Arisa

Age : 11 years old

Title : [Satou's Slave] [Witch of the Lost Kingdom] [Mad Princess]

Skill : [Mind Magic]

Gift (Innate Skills) :

[Self Status]

[Status Check]

[Hide Skill]

[Item Box]

Special Ability (Ability) :

[Never Give Up]

[Over Boost]

Good grief, it's full of skills I've never seen before.

Arisa answers me teasingly.

"I am Tachibana Arisa, just like you, a Japanese."

3-5. The Japanese in Different World

Satou's here. The typical Japanese who becomes so happy when they meet another Japanese in a foreign country, he let his guard down, Satou.

Since we're speaking the same language, and because our sense of value and foundation are close, I become relieved.

◇

"To be exact, Tachibana Arisa as the former Japanese who was reincarnated in Kubooku kingdom with her memory intact. Were you reincarnated too? No, judging from that black hair, you're a summoned hero aren't you? Satou-san?"

The AR doesn't display whether she's a originally a Japanese or her real name, Tachibana Arisa.

Since my stats didn't state if I'm a former Japanese, Suzuki Ichirou too, is it the same situation?

"What's wrong, why did you stop talking? You're the second Japanese human that I've meet."

Hearing that words, my gaze turns toward Lulu who's sleeping in another bed.

"Lulu is different you know? It seems that her great-grandfather was a Japanese man, though I've never meet him, mind. Atavism is a cruel thing. She could have been an idol if she was born in Japan."

"Your mind magic-"It's not""

Did she use mind magic to make Lulu looks ugly, I thought of that but she denied my word.

"This world's sense of beauty think that those who have flat face with thin lips, non-white skin, and small ass as the ideal. She has a lot of those counterpoints. Though thanks to that there weren't many buyers during our slavery days."

The type of beauty change depending on the time and place huh... that's unfortunate.

"So then, Satou-san, are you a reincarnated person or a summoned person?"

"Are there distinctions for them?"

Should I honestly talk or should I keep it a secret?

She's a mind magic user who didn't hesitate to force her way but she's also undoubtedly a clue. If the time comes for it, I can just order her to『Don't speak of this to other』.

"Reincarnated person is a person who died on their former world, then reborn in this world. Summoned person is a person who is forcibly abducted from their world to this one. Someone like hero is a summoned person."

Though it was an explanation coated with prejudice, I'm neither of those, aren't I?

"Does a reincarnated person always reborn as a baby?"

"There's a legend where they reborn already in adulthood, but in this world a reincarnated person will always be reborn as a baby without fail."

She's very decisive about it. When I try to confirm it.

"Reincarnated persons are told that by the god as they're reincarnating."

So they meet god? If a person is saying such things in Japan, people will doubt his sanity.

"Do summoned persons retain their original appearances? Like their clothes, belongings and figure."

"It seems that the summoned person retain their clothes. And of course, their figures too."

So even their figures are kept, but I became younger, why is that?

"Did you hear it from others?"

"The hero-sama from Saga Empire said so, I don't think it's wrong. Since the only one who could summon heroes from another world is Saga Empire."

Then if I go to Saga Empire, I could find out the way to go home? Let's not forget to check it later.

"I see, but I'm neither of those. I took a nap after works, when I woke up, I was already in a wasteland."

"You didn't see the god?"

"Nope."

Arisa crosses her arms and groans. Put some clothes on already.

"Then, did you get to the summoner's place when you came to this world?"

"No, I was the only one on that wasteland."

"Then were you high-level from the start? Or had infinite magic power? Or got a lot of interesting skills?"

"My level was 1 in the beginning, my magic was also only 10. I didn't have any skills too."

...No, there was that Special Abilty (Ability). Like the Meteor Shower.

"What's with that, impossible game?"

Oops, she's sympathizing with me, what to do if she finds out?

"Rather than me, it's about you. Tell me all your skills one by one. The Gift and the Ability too. Just you know, this is an『Order』."

"I will tell you even without an order you know."

"First, Mind magic is at level 5. Aren't me quite good? I've dedicated the skill points I acquired post-birth for this one."

Since it sounds strange, when I check it, the required points to level for each skills are 2-12 point with an average of 7 (Represented with 2d6 in her case), the required point to level up a skill isn't 1 but different values for each of those skills, it seems that the required point also increases as the skill level increases.

Am I a special case, or is there any specific condition?

"Self-Status is a skill to check my own status. It's more detailed than Yamato Stone. The most important function of this skill is that I can decide which skill I allocate the point I got from level ups."

From what she's saying, she can choose which skill she allocates the point to, it seems that this is a skill that every reincarnated and summoned person always have.

I thought that it's the same special ability that allows me to learn skills easily, but it's actually an inferior version of it instead...

As for the general populace, seems that they have probability to remember skill depending on their training as they level up.

"Status Check is a skill to see other people's stats. It's convenient~. It'd have been better if it was Analyze, but my Privileged-Reincarnation point wasn't enough."

It seems to be a skill which have the same effect as Yamato Stone.

Similar skills are like [Weapon Check], [Armor Check], [Gem Check], [Coin Check], [Plant Check], etc, and the skill that comprise them all is Analyze.

Privileged-Reincarnation is the point that the god gave her when she reincarnated, she says.

"Hide Skill is a skill used to hide your own skill. Once used, even if you were looked by Analyze or Yamato Stone, it'll show 『Skill None』, until it's canceled."

My AR shows [Skill Unknown], which mean that it's from different branch than Analzye, is it?

"Item Box, it's just as the name imply. It's the same kind of storage that usually exist in a game. Though it's not the same as the one heroes get with their infinite storages (Inventory), the store-able number is limited but it doesn't add to the bulk and there's no weight, it's really convenient~."

From what I heard, the item number limit is 100, and it can stack up to 100 piece of the same item. For things that has indeterminate shape, like water, it's counted per liter.

My storage is more similar to the infinite storage (Inventory) one, if I have to compare.

After saying that much, Arisa says "My throat is a bit thirsty.", then she theatrically swing her hand horizontally and recites "Item Box, Open".

In front of her, a black hole open on level surface, then she puts her hand inside and took out a water jug which she drinks directly. Her face seen from the side looks so triumphant.

The water she drink is spilling from her mouth and draw lines on her naked chest, looking inappropriately erotic. How old is this girl inside?

"At least use a cup.", I asked, but it seems putting things in and out each requires magic power to do, so she's minimizing doing those to the lowest.

It also works slightly different to my Storage. When she finished drinking water, she wanted to put the jug back, so I let her. How do I say this, if a clueless person saw it, it'll look like someone is putting things inside a black box.

>[Item Box Skill Acquired]

I don't need such inferior version of Storage...

Rather than that, the remaining are [Never Give Up] and [Over Boost], which one of those that let her mind magic to pass over the 300 level differences, I want to know.

"Fufufun, how about it, am I not amazing? There's rarely a slave that has this much skills!"

"Aren't there others too?"

"Ugh" she faltered, "Mou, you're really greedy~" while she pompously hold both her hands up like a gaijin.

<TLN: Gaijin means foreigner, yes I'm just messing with ya (though the author did put that line). :p>

I give a chop to her head.

"I'm against violence! the others are, unique skills, two of them even!"

Amazing isn't it? And since she once again start posing, I'm stroking her head roughly "My hair falls into disorder~", even though she's saying that she looks a bit happy.

"Even Lulu doesn't know these abilities. One is called Over Boost. By using all of my magic power and stamina, the effect of one attack will be raised by many folds? It's exactly the ability fit for a heroine~."

A disposable cannon it is.

"The other one is Never Give Up. It's a power to absolutely never give up no matter how powerful the enemy is! More concretely, no matter how much the level differences or the defense power of the enemy is, an attack or magic will hit with 10% probablity! Isn't it great~."

"However it can only be used 3 times. Once I used them all, it'll recover one for every month. Since my magic did not really work against master, I've spent all three them."

It was probably this skill that had put me under her magic. There are a lot of [~magic resisted] entries in the log, so it's doubtless.

What a troublesome skill. I should be glad that she's not an enemy, is it?

This is something that I heard later, but it seems that even if this skill is in effect, it's useless against an opponent who has complete resistance. For example, the elementary Water Shoot is ineffective against a Great Water Spirit who's immune against water magic.

◇

"There are several things I want to confirm."

"Go ahead~."

"How did you use mind magic without chanting?"

"Umm~n, it's a hidden function of Self-Status, once I remember a magic, then I can use that magic just by reading the last line of the Command Words in my head."

I expected something, but it's a memorization, I really have to successfully chant it at least once. Is there really no shortcut...

"Are you perhaps unable to use magic?"

"I'm failing to properly chant the spells..."

Yep, it's not a lie. I could use two, but those are quite irregulars.

"That's right eh~ I was going to give up when I heard other people's chants too. Eventually I managed to in one and half a year."

"That's right, I've only challenged it for two days, though it's actually two hours."

"What, that's too short~ If one could do it within that period then there would be more magicians."

Since it's getting colder, she's hugging me while saying that but I tear her off me, she falls off the bed and I throw her clothes and the bed cover below.

◇

"I forgot to ask. Who's the first Japanese human you met?"

"Don't use 'you', call me Arisa~."

"Answer me, Arisa."

Arisa unnaturally accumulate her words, and says.

"That's the Saga Empire's hero, Hayato Masaki."

3-6. Hero and the Taboo Girl

Satou's here. Heroes are enough just being in games, Satou who think that.

How many games out there with heroes in them...

◇

"I see, so the second one is the hero from Saga Empire."

I really don't want to get involved with him. If I carelessly got in touch, I could got tangled in demon lord's extermination.

"Yes, with a face that doesn't look like a 18 years old, although he is handsome, and with hair sticking out on his macho body."

"No, I don't care about his appearance, how is his personality?"

"He's a perverted gentleman (lolicon). When we first met, 『YES! Lolita, NO! Touch.』, he loudly yelled that, and then got beaten up by his women attendants."

<TLN: YES and NO are written in alphabet in the original text.>

Arisa said with white eyes.

"Isn't he the same kind as you (shota)?"

"I used to be like that a long time ago, but it's different now! I'll whisper with all my might that I love boy now!"

Please spare me the whisper.

"...Or rather, since you like boy (shota), isn't a 15 years old outside the scope?"

"Ara! That's not true! I mean you still don't have an adam's apple, your chin is still smooth even at this hour, and your voice hasn't become strange right? And I've seen it just now, even your legs haven't grown with hairs, it's really smooth isn't it!!!!"

Arisa kicks the bed cover, and stands up while roaring.

I can see various things, so please stop doing imposing stance while you're naked. Or rather, put on some clothes already.

"Okay I understand your enthusiasm, but wear something before I order you already."

"Yes, yes, I know."

She's too excited she's gasping when she answers while wearing clothes. And when you're going to sit back don't do it on my lap.

...I somehow feel like my chastity is in danger.

"The talk strays off to far, I'm not interested with his fetish but his personality."

"Right~ He's a straightforward justice-minded fool, I guess? If people said『That is evil』, he will directly confront it without even uttering a word of doubt, that kind of type. Originally there was a staff-officer-type glasses-wearing girl around him, but since she was needed in the noble bureaucracy, I don't think she'd participate in the war."

It's a type I'm not good against.

I have a friend who's like that too, those kind of types will drag you into their problem without even hearing your circumstances. I think I always got involved.

"Since he's a hero, he's surely strong isn't he?"

"Seems like it~ I didn't see him fighting, but it seems that he was already level 50 when he got summoned."

"Did you not check his skill when you met him?"

"Of course I did. His level was 61 with point mostly on basic sword and spear skill and a lot of various other skills. If you're interested I could write down the ones I remember for you."

"Ah, I'm counting on you."

I'll buy paper and pen when the dawn comes.

"However, I don't know about his unique skills okay?"

"You couldn't see it even with Status Check?"

"Yep, I couldn't. It seems to be an ability of the holy armor he got from Saga Empire, I don't understand why he didn't hide his skills too then."

Indeed. Is it a problem of cost, or is it deliberate to make his opponents let their guard down?

I guess the reason doesn't matter for now.

"But the person himself gave me a hint. Do you want to hear it?"

"Yes, I do."

"『My unique skills are contradictions』 there"

Like that, it's still useless~ says Arisa while laughing.

If he's like Han Feizi then it's fine, but if our ideas can't match then his ability could be problematic.

<TLN: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Han_Fei>

Alright, if it seems like we got into a situation where we would fight, let's run with all my might!

◇

I'm at disadvantage at the war on my lap.

Since she looks like a children, it's hard to hit her. Though if she jump on me, I intend to grip and throw her off...

Arisa pretends to be sleepy and leans on me with her back.

"Boy, the things you wanted to hear, is it over?"

"You're breaking your character you know?"

Arisa strokes my chin with her fingers.

"Onii-chan, I'm sleepy. Won't you hold me tight until morning?"

"How sly!"

I scoop her up my lap and roll her over next to Lulu.

"I forgot, since when did you notice my identity?"

"If I have to say, from the beginning."

I'm shocked. I thought I had conducted myself well.

"Since you have that Japanese face, I had an incline from the beginning."

"Isn't that too weak for affirmation?"

"The second one was『Itadakimasu』. There's no such speech in this world."

<TLN: Thank you for the meal>

Arisa put up two finger while talking.

"The third was『Protein』. Nutritions only come out in a few books since the era of Yamato-san, most people don't know about it. Furthermore, I said『Protein』fully in Japanese, but you ignored, didn't you?"

I was careless...

"And the fourth."

"There's still more?!"

"The next one is the last. When the thing about me being a Japanese came out, weren't you upset? You should have set a poker face and asked back, what's a Japanese? instead."

So I was completely caught in her bluff...

"I'm sorry, actually there's one more."

She points at my trunks, "A trunks made from synthetic material with a washing tag attached, there is absolutely no such thing in this world", and she laughs.

◇

"Next, tell me the contents of your item box. It'd be bad if I was killed when I'm asleep if you take out knife or poison from it."

I'm not forgetting to check for potentially dangerous situation.

"Umm〜 『Mind Magic』 related, five magic books."

She piles it up on top of the bed.

"If you've sold this books, wouldn't it be enough to buy yourself back?"

"Slaves belongings, if taken, it's the end. Besides, if they knew that the writing is about the detested mind magic, I don't know what they'd do..."

"Isn't it better to learn other magic?"

"Only this was available. If there were magic I wanted to know, I had to learn it by myself."

I know that feeling well.

"The remaining ones are just the water jug from a while ago, and various clothes, do I have to take them out too?"

"Ah, take them out. You don't have to for the water jug."

I got a headache after seeing the clothes Arisa took out. Yukata, sailor uniform, and unfinished maid clothes... It seems that they're all handmade. She doesn't have tailoring skill but it was her specialty before reincarnating.

I take memos for only the titles of the magic books, and allowed all the things back to the item box.

"You won't take it?"

"I want to read the magic books next time, but I don't have any intention to take them."

I tell the slightly dubious Arisa clearly.

I'd be treated as a pervert if I carry around little-girl-sized sailor and maid uniforms after all.

◇

After pulling myself together, I ask for the last question.

"Why did you make me buy not only yourself but Lulu too?"

"Since she's my older sister. Lulu is my half-sister."

"That's why you want to be together huh..."

Arisa goes to the bed and pat Lulu's hair, while looking sad, she talks.

"It's not just that. Master won't scorn Lulu despite how she looks right? Even in our hometown, servants were talking about how ugly she is behind her back."

"Even though she's this beautiful..."

"I think so too. Moreover, I was in the same situation. Don't you think that my violet hair and iris unusual?"

Arisa lifts her hair with both her hands and looks here.

"Ah, I haven't seen it beside on some stylish grandma's dye."

"D, don't put me together with such things..."

Arisa becomes crestfallen, but she's immediately back on her feet and continues.

"Violet hair and iris are considered to be bad omens, although there are few people who know the reason, if anything bad happen then they will be accused of being responsible for everything."

Is that why she was unsold? Is her [Witch of the Lost Kingdom] title due to that too?

"Could you tell me the reason why you became a slave? This isn't an order. If you don't want to tell me then you don't have to."

Arisa is at loss for a bit, but pieces by pieces, she begins to talk.

3-7. Past, Failure and Withered Labyrinth

Satou's here. There are many tragedies where the hero doesn't come to save the day.

In fantasy world, I would have liked if it's a happily ever after end.

◇

"I failed to make my hometown prosperous using the knowledge from my previous life."

"Even if I'm like this, I was a princess you know." said Arisa ironically.

"In the beginning it was working well, but then it began to be failing unnaturally and the kingdom became ruined, plunged into civil war, and occupied by the neighboring kingdom in the end."

"What did you do?"

"Just normal agricultural reforms. Like making fertilizers from leaves and manures, four-wheeled farming tools, some basic administration cheats."

I've never heard 'Administrative Cheats' lingo, but I put the pieces together from the administrative and reform parts.

"Even if you fail, could that even ruin the whole kingdom?"

"That's why I said『Unnatural』. The mountain where we collected leaves for fertilizer died off. A massive insect monsters outbreak came out of fertilizer which was fermenting, planted clovers and turnip which should had restored the land, withered it instead."

Indeed, those were some fantasy-like phenomenons, but if we add『Unnatural』to this, that means....

"Someone was interfering, was it?"

"Yes, but I only knew long after the fact. At that time, I thought it was because of the difference between the earth and this world, I was really depressed. I even got called [Witch of the Lost Kingdom], or [Mad Princess]."

So those titles were because of this.

It wasn't because she used mind magic to manipulate the king to create a harem of pretty boys for her or something huh.

"Still, if the intention was to occupy your kingdom, if the neighbor kingdom didn't gain any profit, there was no meaning to it, isn't it? Laying waste to the other kingdom to get it, didn't they get their priority backward?"

"They didn't care at all for territories of a poor country. They probably just wanted the [Withered Labyrinth] below the castle."

◇

"After our country was occupied, they made a public execution of the king and the crown prince for the sake of calming down the populace."

Tears are falling out of her frustrated face.

"Then the remaining princes and princesses were gathered, and they said this."

『This country was destroyed because of your foolishness. You people are not qualified to be royal families.』

"They made the court magicians to put coercion(geass) on the princes and princesses, starting from me."

『Live as a slave until you die』

"I was blaming myself for the destruction of the country, so I willingly received that geass and became a slave."

I take out a handkerchief from the storage using under-bed as a cover, and wipe her tears.

"Why was it had to become slaves..."

"It was for the sake of reviving the『Withered Labyrinth』I told you earlier. We couldn't escape if we became slaves, since it was geass and not contract, only a country is able to cancel that..."

She grasps the handkerchief along with both of my hands, and continues.

"Every month, when it was full moon, they sacrificed one person in a suspicious ceremony inside the labyrinth's interior."

"One year later, the labyrinth was resurrected. When the ceremonies were over, only me who had the taboo hair and Lulu, who was an illegitimate child remained. Our confinement was moved from tower to the royal villa near it. I don't know why they didn't dispose of us right away. But we were probably spares if the labyrinth ever to wither again."

Her grips are loosing its strength.

"And then, another tragedy struck when the next full moon happened. A demon appeared, the castle and the town surrounding it were destroyed. The royal villa where we were, was burned down too, I and Lulu ran took refuge to the mountain."

Arisa was forbidden to go out by Order, but when the castle was destroyed, their master seemed to have died in it, thanks to that they were able to escape from the villa.

"I thought that we have no choice but to be burnt to dead but Lulu's indication became『Master: None』, thanks to that. If I was alone, then I'd have died just like that."

Arisa puts my arms to embrace her and sits on my lap. Since she's trembling a bit in my arms, I let her off.

"Then we just wandered around in the mountain, and just as we were about to die, we got picked up by the wandering slave trader, Nidoren-shi. Since slaves who don't have master can't enter into towns. So I wouldn't be sold to some perverted nobles, I used Hide Skill to hide my skills and Lulu also pretended to have loss of speeches."

She lean her small head to my arm, her expression isn't visible.

"Wouldn't it better if you used mind magic to make Nidoren-shi to treats you two like daughters?"

"That's right. I was too desperate to hide my skills, when I realized that, I was already under the Contract to be Nidoren-shi's slave."

"You could just use the magic after that."

"I could have died if I was careless trying to do that and violated the contract."

Hmm? Wait a minute.

I make Arisa to face me.

"Didn't you just abuse your magic to push me down earlier? Why was the contract not violated?"

She looks up to me and smiles wryly.

"Because that's a service from a slave. I properly made the oath during the contract, right?"

『I will vigorously attend to master without rest, day and night』

"That's why I use every ounce of myself, including magic, to service you!"

She puts her hands on my side while looking like expecting something, "So embrace me~, indulge yourself on my unripe body~", while trying to hug me, I shoot her down with a chop.

◇

"By the way, who was that demon?"

"I don't know. I didn't directly see the demon. Only heard it from Nidoren-shi's talk with other merchants. I only knew that the town around the castle was burned down and it went somewhere after. Maybe it came to steal the revived labyrinth."

Is it like the arm demon, gathering power in the labyrinth?

I talk about it to Arisa.

"So the uproar that Nidoren got involved into, was about labyrinth?!"

Her face is close.

Bracing myself, I push back the oncoming Arisa, while talking about the demon raid's disturbance, the arm demon's making of the labyrinth, summarizing them all. The silver masked hero was omitted.

"You mean a new labyrinth was made?"

"Seems like it."

Is it a point to be surprised about?

"There are only 6 living labyrinths in this continent. The last labyrinth which appeared, did so 100 years ago. A labyrinth will appear in the place where the corpse of demon lord is, that's what written in books."

"That arm demon said that it was created for the sake of the complete resurrection, so I thought that it was just a recovery type shelter item."

"It's not such a cheap thing. That's a Legend class artifact item. I wonder what's the objective..."

"To produce demons to fight the hero maybe?"

Ignoring my nonchalant answer, Arisa ponders with serious face.

I'm alright with you hanging your hands on my shoulders, but please stop circling my waist tightly with your legs.

"Are there earth veins around this area?"

"It seems there's one called Dragon's Valley."

She says that with serious face while looking up... Fine, but why are you pressing your thin breast?

"If the arm demon's goal was to recover one arm, then probably it should have been over. I think full recovery would take many months. It could probably move around in its former form in short period."

"And that thing is underneath our feet, chilling~", she's shaking.

I don't know how long is short period, but Zena-san et al who are on the labyrinth's entrance are in danger.

"You're awfully knowledgeable."

Almost like Nadi-san.

"I've read most of the books in the castle's library."

"The letter printing in this world is really small you know~", Arisa outraging.

"Do you know? When you read books and gain new knowledges, you accumulate experience points~ Thanks to that, my level went up even while secluding myself in castle."

I see, this isn't a game after all, you can gain level even without going in battles.

◇

"Tell me if you know this."

"Of course~ Master~."

While rubbing your face against my chest, don't grope it with your fingers.

"In this world, to fight against a level 62 demon, how much force would you need?"

"What are the level of the best pieces you can prepare?"

"Around 48."

"Then if you equip them with 6 holy attribute weapons and the party balance is good, you can win~"

"There aren't 6 of them. Level 48 magician is one person, upper 40 are 3 people, and lower 40 are 2."

"It will be harsh, but if there are 10 level 30 people as back ups in turns, then I think, they could somehow do it. Although there probably would be many sacrifices."

She stops playing with her fingers and looks over here.

"Master, you sure know a lot about this town's forces. Aren't you a merchant?"

"I know an acquaintance in military. Also, although I call myself a merchant, I've never done any commercial business."

"Master can afford 5 slaves regardless."

"Well yeah, I got a lot of magic cores from the labyrinth after all, I won't have money trouble for a while."

The moneys are actually things I pillaged from the dragons, but it seems it'd be troublesome so I just mislead her here.

I grab her hands which were playing around on my chest above, seemingly misunderstanding something, she closes her lips shut and attempts to kiss me.

I push her back, peel her body off me, and lay her beside Lulu.

◇

I put on cheap robe and cloak, and going out of the room.

"Where are you going~", hearing that, "Sleep until morning", I 『Ordered』 Arisa that and got out of the room.

3-8. Masked Hero

Satou's here. I've played around imitating a transforming hero when I was a child but I didn't think that I would really stuck to be one.

◇

I come back to the labyrinth. Covered in blond haired silver masked hero style (lol).

I left the beastkin girls to rest in the inn, so I'm alone. Since Pochi and Tama aren't here I activate the [Trap Release] skill.

Opening the map, I mark the course to where the arm demon should be located.

Alright, with this I won't have to check the map every time I reach a junction.

I proceed for a bit while having the trap discovery skill finds the trap locations. I somehow know where the trap is before the AR indicate it.

I put force to my jump, flying over the trap.

It seems that there are 5 skeleton soldiers in the room ahead. Since pulling out sword is tedious, I just kick them.

The skeleton soldiers are blown away to near the wall in tatters, but they immediately get back up.

"Oh dang, that skill was still disabled."

I open the skill screen on the menu and tap [Fighting]. Not the level but the name. [Fighting Lv 10], the indicator changed from gray to white. I disabled it in order to not beat the people at the downtown back then to death, after I got the abduction skill. It seems that abduction skill has non-killing effect, that's convenient.

I kick an approaching skeleton. The kick hit the torso part blowing it away like it was shot, and sink it into the wall. The skeleton soldier who has lost its torso pauses for a bit, then it flies backward as if being pulled. Many other skeleton soldiers get entangled and destroyed.

I kick the only remaining skeleton lightly. It doesn't get blown away like it was shot like earlier, but it flies to hit the wall while breaking up.

"I should make sure not to forget to turn off fighting skill before I get back to the town..."

Since it'd take a lot of time if I throughly beat all enemies, I decided to fight only the one who blocks my path.

Jumping over the traps, kicking the enemies around, while galloping through the labyrinth.

I got into the life drain trap once, but it only rob a small portion of my stamina.

However, there's a place where I'm forced to stop my feet.

◇

『Thou hast to answer my question if thy wish to continue』

That's what written on the gate. Riddle huh, this is also a labyrinth classic.

『Shonimu is righting the tree, Dareson is eating the fruit, Yurato is planting the seed. Correct our right position.』

Yep, I dunno.

Therefore I decided to do the brute force way.

I take out a sledgehammer from storage, and hit it. Hit. Hit. Hit.

"Is it no good? No wait, I haven't enabled the hammer skill branch."

I allocate points to [Two-Handed Hammer] skill and activate it.

...I somehow understand that it's useless even if I continue to hit it. Is this an effect of the skill too?

I stop minding about it and swing the sledgehammer with all my might!

The handle breaks, and the tips fly to the other end of the room. The door becomes a bit recessed but that's it.

"This door would be a hot sale if I take it home."

I'm considering to ignore the door and just dig through the wall, but referencing the map it looks like it would take some time to finish.

"Should I rely on magic items with unknown effects?"

The frequency of talking to myself increased.

Unfortunately there is no other way around. I have also checked the pit, but there is none that goes to the other side of this door.

I don't have any choice but to deal with the riddle, but this is the type that requires you to know the preamble first.

"Tree, fruit and seed huh... There are some suspicious looking animal pictures, but there are nothing with trees."

I'm at a loss.

"『What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three in the evening?』, If only it was like that~"

That's right!

I take a pick from Storage, and use it to carve something on the wall.

『What is the creature that walks on four legs in the morning, two legs at noon and three in the evening?』

『It's Man』

>[DeRiddle Skill Acquired]

Thank you Sphinx! I don't know the one who answered that, but thanks for you too!

I'm pouring DeRiddle skill with point to the max, and activate it.

Shonimu, Dareson, Yurato, I still don't know what are they. However I knew which of the suspicious looking animal picture correspond to which name.

And, I somehow know that the tree, the fruit and the seed aren't in this room.

"Skill get, easy victory~ I thought it'd be like that~"

Despite being disappointed, is this sensation thanks to DeRiddle skill? I understand that there are still more that need to be done to solve this riddle. I don't know concretely how but...

In a game, it's common for key items to be located in different rooms, I search for rooms with strong-looking enemies on the map.

There are 3 blatantly suspicious rooms, furthermore each have enemies clearly higher-leveled than normal.

"Truly game-like eh~"

I try seeing the closest room. The room's floor is depressed except at the center. On the depression, tree root-like creatures are wriggling around.

There's a pedestal in the center of the room, a statue is put on top of it. That's most likely a key item for the riddle.

It seems to be impossible to jump to the pedestal with a single leap. That said, I don't want to land on that wriggling things.

The AR indicate that it's called Wandering Roots, since it's a colony life form it looks like even if I shoot it directly with the magic gun and destroy its external, it still won't die, there'll be no end to it.

That's why I use the molotov bombs I made back then. Since I've activated Fire Resistant skill, my body probably would be fine. If the wig got burned, my disguise will be blown, so I pour the water bottle from the top of my head. With this it won't get burned easily.

I ignite the molotov with the igniter magic tools (Tinder Rod). I casually throw five ignited bottles, and after checking that it's burning nicely, I jump into the fire!

"Like I can!"

Impossible impossible impossible! Even if I know that my body won't burn, it's still impossible.

Comparatively the live trees are burning nicely. I can see that the smoke isn't coming here, I wonder if there's air vents somewhere?

Since it's tedious to just wait, I check other locations.

The second room is like a square.

In the slightly-lower floor-level in the center, a 3 meter great-majin look-a-like monster is there. The AR indicate that it's a Stone Golem. Level is 40. It has [Physical Damage Halved],[Spirit Damage Invalid] unique skills.

"Standard golem is usually taken care by crossing off the E from EMETH so it become just METH, was it? There's nothing like that written, the letters itself are different anyway~"

Physical damage halved huh... that mean half of it still works right.

I maximize spear skill points and activate it.

I take out a steel spear from the storage.

After getting a good aim, I throw the spear!

The spear strikes the Stone Golem diagonally, passing through it and piercing through the earthen wall until its base.

A moment later, the stone golem crumbles from the place where the spear pierced through, demolished in single blow.

"It's an overkill~"

There's a blue gem in the mouth of the stone golem. This seems to be 『Fruit』.

The third room is a room with a treasure chest in the center.

Traps are laid all over the room up until the treasure chest location, there's only one safe path until there.

Though it's already easy as long as it has one.

I hang a black rapier on my waist, safely go through the traps and get in front of the treasure chest.

"Who~ah, the treasure chest was a mimic!"

Yes, the monster in this room is a dungeon regular, Mimic.

While I equip the rapier, the treasure chest is about to attack by opening its mouth, so I consecutively thrust the rapier. It feels like destroying a furniture rather than a living being.

>[Continuous Attack Skill Acquired]

The Mimic evaporates while leaving out purple smoke. I involuntarily step back and my foot almost got caught up by the trap. Dangerous, dangerous.

Underneath the place where the mimic was, there's a black stone. This one seems to be『Seed』.

When I get back to the first room the fire has been extinguished, thin and white smoke is rising from the cinders.

The Wandering Root has evacuated somewhere, it's nowhere to be seen.

This is fortunate, I collect the statue from the pedestal. This is probably『Tree』.

It doesn't seem that a boulder is going to crash down even if I took the statue.

I leave DeRiddle skill to place the collected item on the right position, then the door silently opens.

So that the door won't close when I'm going back, I stab a suitable great sword on the floor.

From there, there was nothing worth to talk about until the target room, I ran through.

◇

"This is the place where the arm demon should be..."

If he's not revived then I'm going back to indulge on lazing around~

An altar-looking thing is situated on the depth of the room.

I'm closing on it...

The candlesticks around the altar are suddenly lit with blue fire.

"Fuhahahaha! I appear!"

A magic circle with purple light emerges from the altar along with the arm demon's voice.

On the center of the magic cirlce, the arm demon relaxedly rises, no, its whole body has been revived.

"Muhha~~! In perfection I, am revived!"

"As usual, what an idiotic way of talking."

"Mumumumu! You bastard! Silver mask! I, struggle!"

The demon roars, and black aura is rising from its body. It seems to be some kind of support magic. The AR indicates that it's [Physical Damage 90% Cut].

"Unpreparedness is one's greatest enemy! I, do my best!"

The demon roars again. Purple lights are emitting from its nails, horn and tail. The AR indicates that [Physical Attack Power 300% Up].

"Is it fine now?"

I put the sheath of holy sword on my waist while listening the demon. I wonder if it's also called sheath for western swords?

<TLN: Koiguchi 鯉口>

Returning my consciousness which went astray to the demon.

"For showing that allowance, it's my turn now! I, dash forward!"

The demon attacks while dashing!

While leaving purple afterglows, the demon stab the poisonous claw with its right hand, but I duck from the attack and counter with iai flash, slashing from the bottom up.

The blue light track is beautiful like always.

The holy sword tears through the meat smoothly without any resistance, severing the bones.

"Gunununu! I, unyielding!"

The demon who has its arm cut, use the rotating tail to strike instead. Come to think of it, I was blown away by this tail the first time.

If I don't let my guard down, this isn't a problem. I cut the tail with a single stroke of sword.

"No way! You bastard! You must be a hero! I astonished!"

The demon shows its back after using its tail to attack, I cut it into three pieces from behind...

Yep, I'm alright. After defeating so many insects, I got accustomed to it.

"This can't be! Mao-sama... I, regret..."

After making sure that the demon's HP is 0, I collect the cut tail and arm and put them on the main body. It's troublesome if it resurrects again like before. Let's cremate it.

I set fire by throwing the rest of the molotov bomb to its body from a bit far.

I monitor the corpse until it's burned down from a place away. Probably because its existence is already thin, it has been burned out leaving only ashes in only 5 minutes .

Having finished my business in the labyrinth, I leave it behind.

>Title [Labyrinth Traveler] Acquired

Intermission: Zena

The invoked magic wraps my body.

Even though it's a sensation that I'm familiar with, right now it's irritating.

To confirm the effect I take a step forward.

Okay, it is working properly.

Together with the wind.

I am running.

◇

I met that person yesterday. Even though it has not been even a full day yet since then, I feel like it has been longer than that.

I thought that I could defend the demon's attack with my magic, but my body became battered instead. My feet and arms were throbbing in pain, I was like a doll, unable to move.

I slightly turn my neck.

<TLN: Yes, we have entered her reminiscence>

Fortunately, before I slammed into the ground, I was caught in roadside tree's branches somewhere.

...Fortunately? Is it really so?

My life force is going to disappear first before that overly strong demon could be defeated and for someone from the army to find me.

Even now, my blood is dripping out little by little.

My consciousness is fading but I come back to myself when I hear someone's footsteps. I muster all of the little energy I have left, and turn my sight.

That someone is wearing a robe so gaudy it's hurting your eyes.

I, who was on the brink of death, still think how out of place it looks in daily life.

I want to go back to (that) daily life too!

Even though I feel exhausted looking at that gaudy robe, I call out for him before he's gone. He has a voice that feels like he's going to be carefree wherever he is.

◇

Running.

Avoiding people, avoiding wagon, I am running.

Ahead, even a step.

Faster, even a moment.

I am running.

◇

I wonder if I blacked out, after calling him out, he immediately stands beside me.

It's a very calm-looking boy which you wouldn't think would wear that gaudy robe.

I wouldn't call him handsome, but he's someone who's giving you a favorable impression.

After ascertaining my wounds and dealing with my fractures, he gently, yes, very gently lifts me up to his arms.

His robe, which looks really new, is dirtied by my blood and dust.

But he doesn't seem to mind those kind of things at all.

Despite his delicate appearance, he has enough power to carry me without looking strained.

I wonder how will he bring me down from the tree?

With magic?

Contrary to my expectation, he flies from the branches without even using magic.

◇

I run through the alley.

Without killing my momentum, I kick the wall to turn at the corner.

I avoid people who are surprised like I'm dancing.

I don't even mind my skirt fluttering around.

I run using every ounce of my strength.

◇

I close my eyes in order to endure the soon-to-come impact.

I hear someone screams annoyingly close to my ears, but it was my own voice.

However the shock never came no matter how long I wait.

When I timidly open my eyes, with worried visage, he tenderly greets me.

He doesn't seem to directly go down below but jumps over a series of branches and go up the roof.

What a nimble person!

Let's call him Nimble-san from now on.

While carrying me, he's ferrying across several roofs, looking for a place to go down.

He was jumping up and down several times, but he was doing it like a weightless feather. As if he has wings.

I wonder if this is what it feels like to be flying in the sky?

◇

I am losing breath.

But I can't stop now.

I was entrusted to call for reinforcement, for the sake of not letting him die.

I am ignoring the scream of my body.

I will let it rest however much later.

Right now I must be faster, even one step.

◇

When we're going through a cramped house, he's being very careful as to not make my fractured limbs touch the furnitures.

I feel like a princess after receiving this much of careful attentions.

A luxurious thing, considering I had readied myself to die just before.

Whenever he avoids the furnitures, our bodies are getting in close contacts.

I've done training with male coworkers before, but he has no beast-like body odors unlike those men. On the contrary, I can faintly smell elegant-like fragrance.

His hair is smooth too. I want to touch that for a bit...

The fight has ended in the plaza. Apparently they won.

I am led by him to receive the medical treatment.

He hands me over to the relief station after the treatment is finished, and goes to rescue other people.

During our parting, he turns around and waves at me once.

I don't know if that was for me, but I feel a bit happy.

◇

It's almost the central main street.

A child suddenly jumps out from the sideway.

I cannot avoid him as it is. I jump over the child, performing a somersault in the air.

I know it's shameless since I'm wearing a skirt, but now it's not the time to be concerned about it.

I leave the child's safety to the adults nearby.

Imposing my feet with unreasonableness for the last time.

◇

On the evening of that day, Lilio and my friends made fun of me when they saw me talking with Nimble-san "Spring finally comes to Zena huh~", they said.

I don't understand love even if you tell me.

Whenever I'm thinking about him, I somehow feel like running in a lap.

If this is really love then I can understand why Lilio, who's a love-maniac, is fast to react.

The next day, I somehow go out with a skirt. There is no particular reason.

Before I go to the temple for treatment, I wonder if I can meet him I go to the bookstore he helped yesterday? I consider that for a bit... This small thought is a secret.

When I really meet him on the bookstore, I feel that this is a fate for a moment.

Am I exaggerating?

Lilio will surely make fun of it, "Children really do like fates eh~", no doubt about it.

He tells me that my unfashionable clothes is "Lovely".

Let's not forget to write the diary when I go home today!

◇

I jump into the central street while rolling.

Running on the street, I'm passing through carriages while grazing them.

I will apologize to the coachman who let out abusive languages later.

Waiting for my breath to catch up is vexing so I recite the wind magic, Whisper Wind.

There should gatekeeper inside the inner wall.

"This is magic soldier Zena speaking! On the east district, purple has appeared on the 13th square near the outer wall."

"Are you using magic? I'm Mondo of the gatekeeper guard unit. Are you certain that it's purple?"

Purple is military term for demon.

We can't exactly shout demon appears in broad daylight.

"There is no mistake, I've confirmed it visually. Please send reinforcements ASAP. I will go back there to help evacuate the civilians."

"W, wait, alone"

Without listening to Mondo-san's last words, I'm going back to the square where Satou-san is.

In the middle of the way, roars and building breaking come from the direction of the square.

My heart tightens, imagining the worst.

It's okay! I persuade my mind.

Nebiren-sama from Garleon temple is there, he is the best holy magic practitioner in this Seryu city. If it's him, even if he can't defeat the higher-demon, he should be able to buy time.

I recast Wind Walk which had its effect expired.

I reaffirm my trembling legs.

To run again.

Going back to that person's side.

◇

I was given a flower as present.

A small winter honey flower which has a gentle fragrance.

I wonder if he knows the meaning in flower language?

We went around the shops Lilio taught me. He is exaggeratively surprised on even the most ordinary things I show him.

It's kind of fun.

The trump card that I reserved from the the thing Lilio taught me was a misfire, it's a bit shame, but before I know it our hands are joined while we walk together.

The crowds which I always complain in my mind, only for today, I'm grateful to them.

Isn't this what they call a date?

The flower language was "Love which begins to sprout".、If only he knew about it.

◇

I arrive at the square sooner than I expected.

But I don't have time to wonder.

Because, there is only a vacant lot over there...

In despair, I collapse to the ground.

On the center of the lot, an ominous black rock grown with sharp thorn stood. I hear voices from that black rock.

I drag my over abused legs as if it's screaming in protest there.

If I'm not mistaken, the demon said something about [Labyrinth].

I don't understand the connection between demon and labyrinth, but Satou-san and the others might be inside.

I was going to jump inside even by myself.

But, I was stopped at the entrance of the black rock. By the commanders who came by riding horses. They seemed to have been in the inner wall when I contacted it earlier.

I was appointed to be a temporary liaison by the commander, to help in securing the square during the construction of military post.

Since I'm near the commander, I get a hold of various informations. The open space and houses surrounding the square seems to have been sucked into the ground. Alongside with the people.

I'm sure the nimble Satou-san should be able to take refuge in a safe place somewhere. Let's believe that now.

The consul-sama who came after the military post is complete, looks unusually excited while saying something about the Labyrinth Nucleus (Dungeon Core), but I don't really understand.

◇

We got permission to rush into the labyrinth after more than a full day had passed.

Of course I applied for the first group.

I want to run into the labyrinth immediately, but Lilio does not let go of my arms. Though it doesn't mean that I will secede the vanguard position.

First, we secure the first hall that we have entered.

From here, the plan is to advance the main force whenever we finish securing a room. Although it seems too careful, it's an ironclad rule when you're marching into a labyrinth.

We're advancing slowly through the passage even while I'm feeling frustrated.

Footsteps sounds are coming from ahead.

I carefully confirm the other side of the corner using mirror.

You're lying! It's Satou-san!

Not registering this unbelievable good luck, I hesitate for a bit.

I shouldn't have been hesitating.

From the corner of the passage, I see the figure of Satou-san getting attacked by a beast monster that appears from the wall.

I shake off Lilio who was gripping my arms.

As if under the effect of magic, I jump forward like flying.

I make a landing on the wall of the passage's corner.

The beast monster bites Satou-san.

It's okay.

Satou-san avoided it.

My head becomes pure white, but it's not the time for this.

I cast Air Hammer and blast the beast monster away. It doesn't have enough power to defeat it, but let's pull it away from Satou-san first!

Satou-san got caught in the blast, but the beast monster is successfully separated from him.

Before the beast monster start its counter attack, Nebinen-sama has managed to defeat it. As expected.

I, who is relieved after seeing Satou-san's face, begin to cry and embrace him without wanting to let go.

Lilio-san makes fun of me like it's other people's problem later.

Even though he has just escaped from such dangerous place like a labyrinth, Satou-san is like the usual Satou-san.

But it may be so that I don't worry too much.

Since I will be off duty tomorrow, I should make something delicious for him tomorrow morning.

Lilio will most likely make fun of me again.

That kind of ordinary life might be good once in a while.

4-1. Misunderstanding is a Spice for Love Comedy

Satou's here. There's this thing called the butterfly dream, and I, who think that's it's better for it to be a dream, Satou.

<TLN: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhuangzi_%28book%29#.22The_Butterfly_Dre

Could I ever go back to the nostalgic world someday?

◇

From the window, I can hear the traffic's noise outside. Did I oversleep?

I was able to obtain various knowledges yesterday, I also now understand Arisa's true color.

After the morning come, I've cooled off compared to the time when I knew that she bought herself with magic, and also, she has found out my true identity, so it would be dangerous to let her go.

I convince myself that she's a clue to go back to my original world. Strangling the neck of a little girl just to be certain, that kind of thing is impossible for me. I'd rather run away to the end of the world.

While contemplating to lose myself to the warmth of the bed and go to sleep once again, the door opens with a bang.

There was no knock.

"Satou-san, are you awake~? Your lover has come~"

Martha-chan sure is energetic this early. Behind her, "I, I'm not his lov...", is Zena-san who is trying to block Martha-chan's mouth while wa-wa-ing.

"Good morning."

While I might be a half-awake. I raise my upper half to greet them.

It's cold. I took off my robe after I had finished the business and went to sleep just like that, but... I see, the shirt I wore under the robe was peeled off by Arisa.

"Oh, that's quite a good body~."

Martha-chan gazes at the half-naked me interestingly. Zena-san is also looking from behind while blushing.

I thought she's accustomed with nude men as a soldier.

"I'm sorry, for making you see such unsightly figure. I'll go change my clothes immediately."

I place my hand on the bed while trying to get up. "Ahn♪" ...It's lukewarm.

When I look below, a half-naked little girl is there. My hand is attached to her naked chest... When did she crawl in?

Seeing me sleeping together with a little girl, Zena-san's face changes from red to blue.

"...Master ...If you do that much ...I'll break."

From over there, as if waiting for this timing, Lulu is sleep-talking.

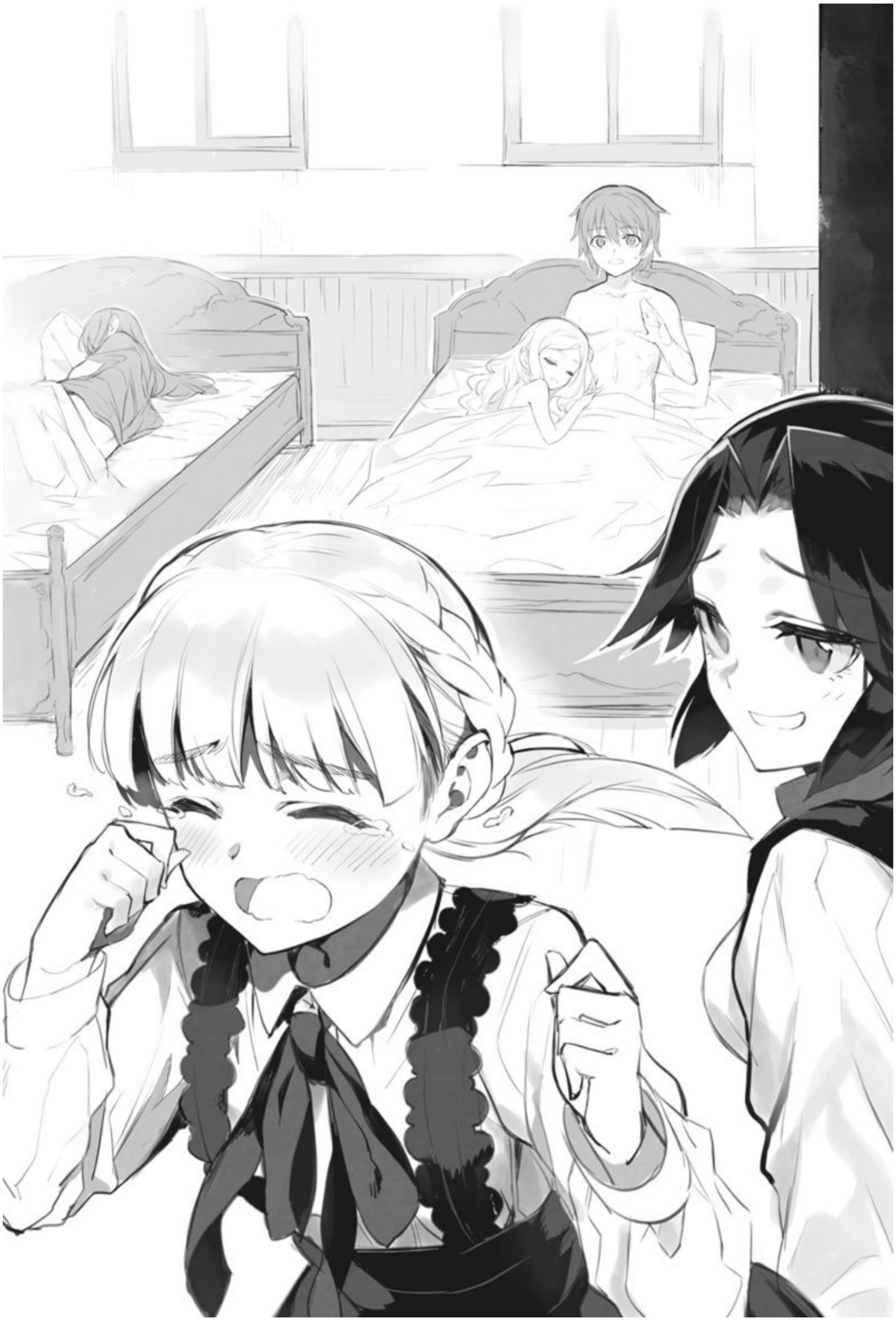
Looking over there, probably because she tossed around in bed, she's sleeping sideway with her back facing here. Since her clothes is short, her cute ass is facing here... I realize that she doesn't wear an underwear.

Furthermore the sheet is stained red... Huh? I didn't attack her okay?

"Fi, fi, filthy~~~~! Satou-san is an idiot~~~~!"

Zena-san runs out of the room while crying.

Martha-chan scratches her head, "Sorry for disturbing~ Please take your time~", and she closes the door.



This is the first time I've heard filthy in real life. It feels like someone's problem.

"Master, if you have a clean cloth, could you give it to me? Lulu seems to have a period."

I take out a piece of cloth from the bag.

"Thank you. Leaving that aside, do you not chase her? If you don't go soon, you won't be able to fix the misunderstanding you know~"

It's not like she's my girlfriend, but I'd hate it if a friend keep the unpleasant misunderstanding that I'm a lolicon.

Looking at the radar, she's at the main street just outside of this inn. As expected of a soldier, she's fast. As she is, she'll pass this room after a bit.

...This skill is convenient, but it's scary if a stalker obtains it.

While thinking stupid thing, I'm wearing the shirt on the floor, since I can't afford to jump out half-naked. It goes without saying that I have had my trousers since the beginning.

Measuring the timing, I jump out from the window to the street.

I land to block Zena-san's route. I catch the surprised Zena-san, and disperse her momentum by rotating once.

"Zena-san, it's a misunderstanding."

"But, you're sleeping with such a cute girl!"

"She just got on the wrong bed when she was half-asleep."

It's safe to sleep together since she's a child right?

I have been properly wearing trousers since yesterday. I want to strongly emphasize for my innocence.

I'm not a lolicon!

"There's also another girl with black hair! E, eu..."

"Do you mean the older sister with a bad sleeping posture, it seems to be her period."

Zena-san finally weaken.

"B, but, a man who buy slaves usually makes them attend in the night too, that is according to Lilio!"

Damn you, co-worker Lilio.

"That depend on the person. Those sisters are substitutes for maids you know? The beastkin girls are to act as guards, but they're not suitable for shopping."

"...But"

Even if she understands, her emotion still hasn't catch up huh?

If I say "If I intend to do that then I'd have bought a sexy woman." here, she'd likely be even more angry.

"Today you're wearing something different from the one piece yesterday. There are a lot of neatly arranged frills, it's gorgeous. It's drawing out Zena-san's charm."

At time like this, it's better to praise and leave her in haze.

Saying, "Such thing... It's just the clothes...", Zena-san shyly says while looking a bit happy.

"It's lovely, but aren't you cold wearing light clothes?"

"No, Since I've trained myself, it's alright."

That's not a line from a woman, Zena-san.

Here I should have take her under a man's arm and say "You'll be warm here"!

"That's right, a shop just ahead is selling beautiful stoles. Why don't we see it together?"

"Is that true? I'll go!"

Yosh, I've successfully steered the conversation off the course.

Then, after comparing several dozens of stoles and shawl, and I give her the pink stole she chooses herself as a present, her mood has completely back to normal.

Woman's shopping sure is long eh?

◇

When we got back to the inn, Arisa is calling me from somewhere slightly apart from the stable.

"Welcome back, master. I'm glad that the misunderstanding seems to have been resolved."

The main culprit is saying it like it's not her problem, gets a poke on her forehead.

"I'm home, what are you doing on a place like this?"

"We're asking Liza-san to share her breads since we were hungry."

"So you've finished eating?"

"Yup, Lulu is still eating inside. She seems to lack appetite..."

I see, for a slow person, smoked meat is probably painful. I hand Arisa several pieces of copper coins and tell her to buy some fruits.

I go back to my room for a change of clothes.

Zena-san is waiting at the inn bar in the first floor while drinking fruit juice.

Back in the room, I pour water to the copper basin on the table from the Hell Water Jug, and use it to wash my face. Since there doesn't seem to be any bed hair, I wet my hand for a bit and use it to comb my hair. Let's look for hairdresser in this world next time.

I change into a clean robe, and put on a new boots. When I'm tying my boots, I found a dried-up fruit.

Did Arisa throw this? Although, Martha-chan will clean it even if I leave it alone, I put it inside the storage since there's something that I have something in mind.

That remind me, I try to take out the『Piping Hot Meal』I put inside it during the first day I came here. It remains piping hot. I bite it after confirming that it's not rotten with appraisal. The taste also remain as it was.

『Piping Hot Meal』and『Dried-up Fruit』. Since it's interesting, let's test something out.

I allocate 1 skill point to Item Box skill and activate it. I store the remaining『Piping Hot Meal』inside it.

Since I likely will forget about it again, I put a note on the Notebook inside the Exchange tab.

◇

"Thank you for waiting, Zena-san."

"Don't worry, I was just having a chat with Martha-chan."

"This nuisance will disappear~.", and so Martha-chan goes back to work.

In her place, Arisa, Liza and the others are coming back, I call them.

Lulu doesn't look too well so she return to the room. I ask for a passing-by maid to bring water to the room, and give her few copper coins for tips.

I go outside with Zena-san, bringing Arisa, Liza and the others.

Putting 10 silver coins in a small bag, I give it to Arisa to buy their change of clothes and other daily necessities.

Liza and the others will act as guards and luggage carriers.

"Master, is it okay to use the extra changes money for sweets?"

"As long as it's only as far as 1 big copper coin, it's okay. Since that include for lunch, don't use it all for snacks."

"Yee~s", Arisa departs to the east street while saying so. Pochi and Tama are going along on both her sides, she looks like a children gang boss. Liza who follows from behind is looking like a parent.

"She's a very affable slave isn't she?"

"I don't know if that attitude is fit for a slave, but that girl is an easy-going person."

I don't know how a slave should appropriately act, but if she keeps being that exaggerated to her surrounding, I'm confident that she'd become a failure of a human being later.

◇

Since the weather is quite nice, we decided to take a walk together to a park nearby while chatting.

"Are you off-duty today?"

"No, I will have a duty this afternoon."

"Didn't you also have a night duty just yesterday?"

"That's right, we don't have enough personnels so a half-day holiday is all I could get."

Hmm? You came to meet me despite being that busy? I can't imagine that she has fallen that hard, does she have other business?

"No, it's nothing really important... It was the first experience of real battle for some people in the army, so to calm their heart..."

I see, come to think of it, even if it was something that wouldn't endanger my life, I was curiously calm.

Although there's some lingering memories from the battle yesterday...

No, even while fighting and after the fight with the demon, I was fine, Was it because it didn't feel real?

And even though I have slaughtered an entire community of race similar to Liza, I don't feel even the slightest guilt, why is that?

I wonder if it's an effect of an unknown Special Abilty?

Questions are whirling around in my mind...

And it's going in circle.

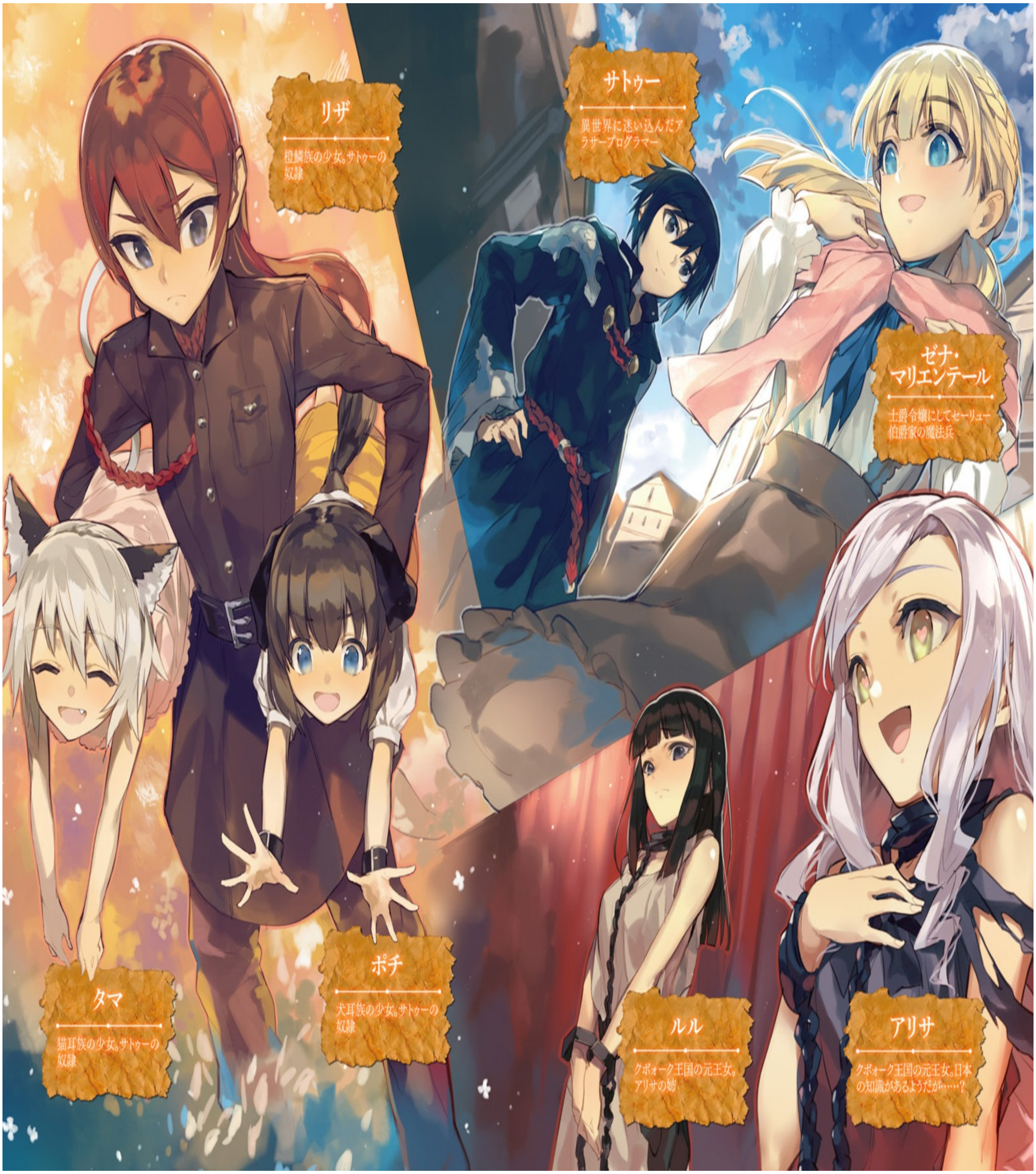
A fluffy fragrance tickles my nose. When I raise my eyes, there's a face of worried Zena-san.

"Are you alright? Satou-san."

"I'm sorry, my thought just wandered off for a bit. I'm alright."

Even if I think this alone, the answer won't come, guess I'll consult with Arisa tonight...

Then, I ask Zena-san to help me practice spell chanting in the park, but since I couldn't concentrate, it's not working. Even still, I continue the chanting practice as if running away from something. Zena-san patiently guides the me who was like that. It lasts until Zena-san's off-duty time is over in the afternoon...


リザ
橙鱗族の少女。サトゥーの奴隷
サトゥー
異世界に迷い込んだアラサープログラマー
ゼナ・マリエンテール
士爵令嬢にしてセーリュー伯爵家の魔法兵
タマ
猫耳族の少女。サトゥーの奴隷
ポチ
犬耳族の少女。サトゥーの奴隷
ルル
クボォーク王国の元王女。アリサの姉
アリサ
クボォーク王国の元王女。日本の知識があるようだが……？

4-2. Little Girls Shopping

"Okay~ Here we go~. Everyone, follow me~."

In accordance with Arisa's command, Pochi and Tama follow along. Arisa talks as if she's not a slave but a master. I can't possibly do it, but I'm not thinking of doing it either.

Even if master allow it, as a slave I shouldn't intervene...

"First of all, it's underwear! So what kind of underwear you girls are wearing?"

While saying so, Arisa roll up Pochi's mantle and skirt to confirm. Even if she's from different race and a girl, I think she should be more discreet, but I wonder if it's fine since she's still a kid?

"You're lying~ You're not wearing one! Don't tell me, you too Liza-san?"

"Yes, I'm not wearing an underwear."

Arisa says, "I can't believe this~", exaggeratedly with both her hands inter-lapping on her open mouth. It's some kind of expression, but since we are from different races, we don't really understand it.

"We will buy underwears for everyone~ Now, let's go!"

"Oou~."

"Oou~, nano desu~."

Seemingly forgetting something, Arisa lead Tama and Pochi by hands while walking together. Since the 3 of them are children, they could become preys for pickpocket or crime, so I follow along closely.

"Still, this country's underwear is knicker too. I guess I have to make it myself If I want cute shorts or bra~"

She seems to be dissatisfied with the selections of the shop. I don't understand the lingo, but maybe it's a type of underwear?

"It's better than having no panties I guess, Liza-san, I'm sorry for a bit."

After saying so, Arisa hugs my waist. Apparently she's measuring the size.

"Uncle, please give me 9 of this size, and 3 for this and that. How much is it?"

She confidently tries to bargain the 10 big copper coins price the shokeeper named, and she drives it down to 6 big copper coins. Furthermore she also gets 5 decoration strings as bonus. Does she have negotiation and haggling skill?

No wonder she was entrusted for shopping by master.

The 15 pieces of underwears are put into a bag. Physical labor is my role.

◇

"Kuh~ I'm losing to the sweet smells~."

"Smells good~."

"Nano desu~."

I stop the three people who are unsteadily going toward the stall with sweet smell and we go back to shopping. While she seems reliable, she is still a child after all.

"Wonder what's available for the clothings~? The materials are from linen or cotton huh~ Uwa, there are clothes from knitted grass too! Everyone, what kind of clothes do you like?"

Pochi and Tama are at loss. These girls have never choose their clothes before. I have custom ordered a clothes only once when I was still with my tribe, but beside that I normally got used clothes from other people. She probably comes from a wealthy family.

"I don't mind what kind, as long as it's wearable. Since I'm fighting with spear, a sturdy clothes would be good."

"I see, let's look for a clothes for warrior that looks cute! I'm burning!"

"Burning~"

"Nano desu~"

I think it doesn't need to be cute, but not only Arisa, Poch and Tama look happy too. They're probably swept apart by the atmosphere.

"This, how about this one piece? The chartreuse green color is quite pretty, and this cuff's decoration is cute too~ Furthermore the back is open, so when you brush your hair up, you can seduce a man with one blow~."

"Arisa, I'm happy that you're looking clothes for me, but I'm picking this tunic and pants. It looks easy to fight with and the fabric is thick so it'll last long."

She seems to dislike my choice, Arisa scratch her head which is covered with mantle. Putting us demi-human aside, why is a human like her hide her head with mantle? It's mysterious.

In the end, besides Arisa, everyone bought two sets of tunics and trousers, and a one piece recommended by Arisa.

"Arisa, we're satisfied with just one set of clothes. I don't want to waste master's money..."

"It's not a waste! If we dress too poorly, we're disgracing master! There's no need for flashy clothes, but we do need the the change of clothes!"

Arisa firmly declares. A girl from the same race of master insisting to this far. It surely is necessary then.

We bought from 4 stalls, and as one would expect, 15 pieces of clothes are bulky.

Since it wasn't going to fit on the bag, we bought rucksacks for each person to hold their own shares. Of course I'm carrying the shares of Lulu, who's sleeping in the inn.

We spent 4 silver coins and 2 big copper coins so far. Is it alright for slaves to spend this much money?

◇

"Next, it's shoes~."

"Shoes~?"

"We have shoes no desu."

Tama tilted her head, Pochi pointed at her own sandals-wearing feet.

It's not limited for slaves like us, even normal poor citizens don't wear shoes.

"Don't you think spare shoes is a bit too luxurious?"

We're spending large amount money like it's normal. I'm afraid that it's too extravagance. I don't mind if I'm punished, but when I think that master would be disgusted of me, my heart freezes.

"If you use your body to fight, then sandals is dangerous you know? Boots or at least shoes from thick leather is better."

"Our skins are sturdy, so it will be fine."

Arisa shocks her head.

"Biting insect, and among them some have poison, creatures like that exist. If your soles got injured, even if you're a hero, you could still die! Therefore, we should buy shoes."

She is push-fully going to the store, but the shopkeepers refuses.

Arisa tries to force through, but the shopkeeper doesn't seem that he's going to compromise.

"Why can't we!"

"Who want to touch demi-human foot! These guys are just right barefooted. You're obstructing my business, go away!"

Since he's going to thrust away Arisa, I lift her from behind. The shopkeeper's fist hit my stomach, but the power is too weak, it doesn't hurt at all.

After spending time in labyrinth together with master, it seems that I've become strong.

If allowed, I would like to fight in the labyrinth with master again. That frog's grilled meat was delicious ...No, this isn't for the sake of grilled meat at all. I was happy to be helpful in the labyrinth.

◇

"Now then~ I've pulled myself together, next is general goods!"

"Goods~."

"Goods nano desu~."

I wonder if Pochi and Tama understand what general goods are...

"Arisa, what kind of things are we buying? If it's tablewares or cookwares then we have it to some extent."

"Is that so~ then, let's omit things that I have and unlikely to be needed."

Arisa is citing the goods as if singing.

"I wonder what's available~ comb, hand-mirror, cup, flask, sewing needles, threads, cloth scissor, towel, pen and ink, and paper, I guess."

"Arisa, isn't hand mirror too expensive? Beside, what do you want the sewing kit and writing tools for?"

"Writing tools are a request from master. The sewing kit is going to be used by me. Since I was a self-sufficient cosplayer back then, even without skills, I could use sewing kit~ I could even make cute underwear and period-related clothing~."

We've finished gathering general goods from various shops, but we didn't buy hand-mirror in the end. Hand-mirror was exactly 3 silver coins. Even after Arisa tried to haggle it, it's still over our budget.

She readily gives up on buying the scissor and needle, but she only gives up on the hand mirror after terribly hesitating about it.

◇

"Alright, mission complete~ Next is the long-awaited snacks~"

"Snacks~ Meat~."

"Meat~ Nano desu~."

"Even though we've just had breakfast in the morning, we're having another meal?"

I thought meals are only for morning and evening, is it different for her?

Certainly we had many meals in the labyrinth, but that was special occasions to recover our strength that had been sapped by continuous fights.

"Sweets are needed for cultural life!"

Master has allowed it, let's not oppose it too much.

Even while we're choosing foods from the stalls, she didn't forget to pick fruits for Lulu. Since Lulu seems to be her big sister, she's a good little sister who thinks of her sibling.

"Everyone, what do you want to eat?"

"Meat~!"

"Meat!"

"Meat is nice."

Arisa becomes to look a bit disappointed.

I think there is nothing more delicious than meat, is it different for human race?

"What kind of meat?"

"The one with skewer~"

"Meat stick on bones nano desu~"

"I'd like roasted bird's leg meat."

After listening to our opinions, Arisa declares.

"Alright, since the budget is aplenty, let's go in turn~."

After that, it's the time of bliss. With moderate salt and oil, brimming with good smells, the grilled mountain mutton meats, I don't understand which kind is it, but it's meat attached to bone having chewing texture out of this world, it taste a bit like grilled chicken meat. Meat is wonderful after all.

Lastly, I tried eating the sweet paste recommended by Arisa, but it's inferior to meat. Human race sense of taste is different after all?

Even before I became a slave, I could only eat meat during a festival and it was fish meat. When I think about it, I'm lucky to be master's slave.

4-3. Miscellaneous Matters and Flags

Satou's here. Do you feel like you're dancing at someone's palm?

I feel like Son Goku from Saiyuki...

◇

"What's the matter? Master, your back is slouching you know~?"

My thought which has been going in circle stopped, Arisa is standing carrying large luggages.

"Your tummy hurt~?"

"Hurt no desu?"

I turn my line of sight to the direction where my robe is pulled, there Pochi and Tama are looking worryingly while crouching near my feet.

Liza calmly stands, but her worries are transmitted here.

"I'm okay, I was just tired after being so busy for the past two days."

I pat Pochi's and Tama's heads.

I'm really disqualified as an adult for worrying these girls. Just by thinking so, the guilt and fear that had been weighting on my mind just before disappear like fallen tides.

...I check the Log just in case any message pops up but there's none.

I really should talk with Arisa tonight. I whispered to Arisa, "Tonight, after Lulu is sleeping, spare some of your time", but, "Eh~ aren't you falling too fast?", an answers full of misunderstanding comes out. I will take that as an OK for now.

When I ask for the result of the shopping, Pochi and Tama happily begin to take out clothes from the bag, I stop them. It has been decided to check them after we get back to the inn.

Liza apologizes for spending too much, but I tell her that it's necessary expenses, so don't think about it.

Even with current pace of spending money, counting only the Shiga Kingdom's currency I have, it'll take 2-3 years before it's dried up, so there's nothing to worry.

On the way back to the inn, I'm listening to Arisa and the girls' experience in shopping. Pochi and Tama talk about their first time shopping in glee from beginning to the end, they're telling me how fun it was.

I suggested Liza to let me carry half of the luggages and Lulu's clothes, but she gently refused.

◇

Just before the inn, I'm seeing a familiar back. She's walking a bit unsteady.

Martha-chan and the helper girl from the inn are carrying a bunch of firewoods.

"Martha-chan, are you returning from errands?"

"Ah, Satou-san. Is the date over already?"

"Unfortunately, Zena-san had works in the afternoon."

While we're talking, I take some of the firewoods from Marth-chan and the girl. It may be their errands but our destination is the same. It's fine to take it by half.

Liza tries to take it, but I refuse because both her hands are occupied. Pochi and Tama are saying "Give here~" too, but there is no point taking it from little girls just to give it to another little girls, so they give up.

It's not really heavy, although it's at least 2-3 kilos. It's unreasonable for two young girls to carry two bundles of this each. They usually have it delivered but, it seems that today the amount is not enough for training so they went to purchase it.

We enter the courtyard from the back door near the stable. I put the firewood bundles on its place.

>[Carriage Skill Acquired]

"Thank you~ Satou-san. Thanks to you, we're saved~"

"Thank you very much, guest-san."

"Don't worry about it."

Martha-chan goes to the kitchen with one bundle of firewood. The helper girl, her name is Yuni. I decided to observe Yuni who's going to take care horses of other guest.

I know that there are horses from yesterday, but I've never seen how horses are taken care, so I'm interested. This is not at all an escape.

Yuni is standing on top of a stool, and doing her best to make her small body reach the horses to brush them. I offered to help, but she said that she would get scolded by the innlady if she let a guest helps her.

After hiding their luggages on the space below the straws, Pochi and Tama come back. Pochi and Tama start helping Yuni. Liza tells me that they've helped in the night and morning too. Is it okay to get the help if it's Pochi and the girls?

Seeing the three little girls doing their best to care for the horse, I feel like a parent who came to an athletic meet to cheer for his children, I'm healed.

The little girls become 4 before I knew it, but Arisa doesn't look like she's motivated.

"Since the clothes which I've just bought will be dirty~" so she says while showing town-girl-like clothes under her mantle.

"Liza, I'm going to the temporary military post to get the spear and magic core money, do you want to come along?"

"Yes, I will accompany master."

"Me too! I'm going too!"

Pochi and Tama stop helping and run here.

"You going somewhere~?", "You go nodesu?", saying as they're coming, but since we would likely become an annoyance if we all go, I tell them to continue helping.

"Ay!","Nano desu~", and so they go back to work while carrying the horse's fodders. I wonder why they look mysteriously happy?

◇

"How is Lulu's condition?"

"She seems to be alright. I've given her change of clothes and underwear, so if you go now you could get to see lucky lewd scenes you know~?"

I knock on Arisa's head for saying stupid things. Are you really half sister of that girl?

"Let's stop for a bit~."

I declared that and go to the Worker Guild.

"Hello Nadi-san."

"Ara, welcome Satou-san. You're together with a cute girl today."

As we entered, Nadi-san greeted courteously from the other side of the counter. There's also an old man, which seems to be the shopkeeper, but he always sleep whenever I come. Does he even work?

I talk to Nadi-san for a request to deliver mementos of the deceased.

Rather than a suspicious guy like me, this town's person like Nadi-san would be better to deliver them. By the way, I tried asking the officials at the temporary military post but I was flat out rejected. Because I conveyed the deceased name and rough figures, she should be able to contact the bereaved families.

"Do you also want me to collect the remuneration on your behalf?"

"Come again? What remuneration?"

After conveying the information about the deceased to Nadi-san who willingly undertake the delivery, I hear some strange things.

It seems that she wanted to know if she's also to act as an agent for receiving the rewards for delivering mementos. I'm just being a busybody so I don't really need rewards...

"Then how about only receive the reward if the family is rich? People like those will get suspicious you're aiming for something if you deliver the mementos without asking rewards."

So it become like that. It was decided to give the worker guild the maximum limit of the fee.

"Nadi-san, I have another matter to ask..."

Since I intend to buy or rent a house, I ask for the market price. In the end, I didn't ask for the intermediation though, and it's not because I can't afford it.

Nadi-san says, "There are a lot of people who dislike living in neighborhood with demi-human, of course this applies in the inner wall, but even in the west district, I don't think anyone would sell you a house. You could find it in the east street if you look for it, but since the public order is bad, if a prosperous person like Satou-san comes to live in, then thieves would attack you on the next day without a doubt.", so I was informed.

◇

"Please sign this transaction document. The expense for appraising the spear has been deducted from the paid amount. The spear's safety has been verified so you can bring it to the town, but please take care as not to give demi-human the weapon."

I sign the document presented by the official, and receive the spear back. I wrap the spear with cloth I brought.

The price of the magic cores is 17 silver coins. The appraisal fee is 2 silver coins, I wonder if that's a proper amount? Honestly, I think you can live just being an appraiser.

Just by going to the labyrinth with 4 of us in a day, we earned 6 Arisa... Wait, that unit is funny. It wouldn't be able to afford skill holder or knowledgeable slaves but if it's for labor slaves then it's plentiful.

If I distribute it for 4 then with our current living expense, it's enough for half a month...

"Eh~ Labyrinth is quite profitable~."

"You're risking your life though."

Arisa who was quiet inside the temporary military post began to cheerfully talk as soon as we got out. Her eyes is literally shining.

"Hey, Master, can you listen to me? Do you want to settle down in this town?"

"No, I don't have such intention."

Since we'll be obstructing people on the entrance, we're talking while continue walking.

"But, but, weren't you going to buy a house just a while ago?"

"I don't want to keep Liza and the girls stay in the barn so I was thinking of buying one but it seems to be impossible~"

Liza was going to say something but lost the moment to Arisa's vigor.

"The lover-san earlier is your local wife?"

"Don't say that unpleasant words Though I do want to get closer, she's not my lover. We've met only 3 days ago you know?"

<TLN:He's talking about local wife part>.

"Then~ I want to go to labyrinth city!"

Arisa declares while raising her hands and posturing with her entire body that it almost feel like she's letting out SFX.

Labyrinth again.

"Labyrinth city that mean there's a labyrinth there isn't it? Don't you feel repulsed to it?"

"Uuun, certainly unpleasant memories feel like they're going to resurface but more importantly! I want to raise my level!"

This isn't a game.

No, precisely because this is not a game that she'd want to level up.

"What do you want to do after you level up?"

"It's going to be demon lord season soon, so I want to level up in order to survive! While I'm at it, I want to raise magic skill that could be used to solve the Geass too."

Demon lord season, they're not cabbages and eggplants you know...

Since it was such a ridiculous phrase, I carelessly pay no attention to it.

4-4. Flea Market

Satou's here. Doing trial and error is the most fun time I ever have.

Although it's depressing when there are too many errors...

◇

"You could die before you could raise your level."

"It's alright, I have plenty of safety margins prepared."

I ignore Arisa who keeps talking in high spirit, and ask for Liza's thought.

"Liza, do you want to go to the labyrinth city too?"

"I will go to wherever master go to."

"I'm grateful for your deep loyalty, but I'd like to hear Liza's opinion. Since I will still be the one who make the final decision, please tell me your honest feeling without refraining."

Listen to subordinate's opinion and implement them as it is ⇒ If it fail, blame the subordinate, I won't be like that. I've decided not to be like that when I was in subordinate's position on my work. Don't impose absurd assignments!

"I would like to go to the labyrinth city if permitted."

"Hey~ I'm having a good speech here, listen~"

"I'll listen to you later."

"Che~, you're treating me differently than Liza-san~"

I ignore Arisa who becomes a bit sulky.

If we go to the labyrinth city, the advantages are as follow, Liza and the girls could go around freely, the discrimination would be minimized (it probably won't disappear), and Arisa and the girls could raise their levels.

The disadvantages are... None? Nono, I'll be parting with people I'm acquainted in this town, like Zena-san and Nadi-san. She worried about me so much, while here I'm thinking such cold-hearted thing.

"Well, I have no intention of settling down in the labyrinth city, but it could be nice to go on a tour there."

"Tour... This isn't like our original world."

Isn't it fine? Different world tour.

"Rather than that, where is this labyrinth city located?"

"I don't know?"

Oy, princess.

"Wait, don't look at me with those eyes. I do know that it is on Shiga Kingdom, but I don't know the exact location."

Should I buy some simple map from the bookstore? My map only display the wilderness from back then and Seryuu city, so it's unusable for this case. I'm not entirely sure of this but it probably could display the whole area only if I've been there first.

"Master you don't have horses or a carriage right?"

"Nope."

"I wonder where they're selling it?"

Since the square near the gate has an area full of big stables, I'll ask there. Usually I would ask Nadi-san, but I've just tasked her with a request earlier, so she's probably not available now.

"Since you can afford a house then you must be able to afford horse and carriage, but for the sake better journey, let's look for hidden treasures for traveling expenses!"

Arisa points at a flea market. This girl sure has an iron heart. Even after she was thoroughly ignored, she's not discouraged.

The flea market is open on the place where the slave auction was held yesterday, on the widest square of the east district.

The slave traders' carriages and tents remain as they were, but the stalls that were selling sake and foods in the midnight are gone, in their places, dozens of merchant open their business showing various junks lined up on a space about as small as a desk. There might be more than 100 of them.

"Master, I have a request before we charge ahead."

"I'll listen for once, what is it?"

"I want permission to use two magics. They're <<Sense Magic Wave>>

and <<Sense Evil>>."

After she explained the effect of those magics, I give her permission. The former is a magic to "Somehow" able to discern magic tools and the latter is to recognize someone who is approaching with malicious intent.

Since there doesn't seem to be any particular harm, I allow her. Of course I could do it myself even if I don't let her, but I'm not the kind of a person who like to prohibit anything and everything.

"This! This is surely a find!"

The tool that Arisa proudly proclaim is a magic tool for sure, a broken one according to appraisal. The name of tool is [The Invitation of the Dream Flies in the Moonlight Night], that questionable name come up, and the appraisal result is [▲▲▲ but ●●● in order to □□ did ●▲ playing ● namagu]. As usual, description of this world's magic tools feels like harassments. The shape itself looks like a musical instrument or a music box, but the decorations are obscene so it's probably a lewd tool.

"It looks like it's broken, so no."

I go out of the stall while the shopkeeper promote the tool as a work of art, and we look around other stalls. It's fun to go around stalls in this kind of flea market.

Because I see the same short wand I bought back then for less than half the price, I bought two of them. After I bought it, I realized that it was a waste of money... but it could eventually be useful for something.

Other things are ornamental strings to tie Pochi's and Tama's short sword sheath to their belts, I also buy tassel decoration for Liza spear. Each of them only cost several copper coins.

In typical RPG, leather products are usually expensive, strangely, from what I've heard from the nii-chan shopkeeper, in this season they kill a lot of goats who don't hibernate, so they stock up a lot of leather products making it cheaper.

Because prices are considerably cheaper on flea market, it's harder to shop than on normal stalls.

I didn't forget to buy a ribbon as a souvenir for Lulu. It's a pink colored ribbon about 50cm long. The color is lighter than the stole Zena-san bought this morning. I wonder if the dye come from this neighborhood?

A lot of suspicious medicines are being displayed, but according to appraisal skill, they are just fake energy drinks with no effect. I'm interested with the energy drink part, but since the skill doesn't tell me the ingredients, I refrain.

They're also selling soap and pomade among other hair products. I'm not buying the pomade because the smell is too strong, but even though the soap is an expensive item for this market and as much as one big copper coin, I buy it without hesitation since it has nostalgic scents of milk soaps. I only want to buy one but Arisa desperately pleas, "This is good stuff!", I ended up buying all seven of the stocks.

"Master~ this! Buy this~."

The thing that Arisa offered are... glasses. Since these don't have lens, it's just a frame.

"What do you want this for? This kind of thing."

"Of course it's for master to use! There aren't enough glasses boys in this fantasy world! This is the first step to bring the fetish to this world~~~~."

I give a chop to Arisa who started to scream incomprehensible things to silent her. The shopkeeper says that it's one silver coin, but I don't buy it of course.

◇

The neighbor stall has cards-like... Isn't that Karuta. From appraisal, it's an item passed down from the ancestor of Seryuu city's earl from ancient Yamato era. It's not a magic tool but it seems to be under effect of fixture magic. The market price is 10 gold coin.

"Onii-san, you have discerning eyes~ This is a toy from the ancient empire."

Arisa interrupts, "Eh~ How do you play it?", while looking playful.

Ignoring the shopkeeper who start spouting some random things, I'm fascinated with the pile of papers in front of me. There are five 30cm thick stacks of book and papers tied with string, among them one is worth 100 gold coins. It's abnormal compared to the other bundles which are only valued for about one big copper coin each.

"How much is that toy?"

"It's 3 gold coins, but for the cute young lady here, I'll give you 7 silver coins, how about it?"

I pretend to be interested with Karuta and listen to him. Its asking price is about 1/7 of the market price. I could get some profit if I resale it, but it's bothersome to look for the customers.

Arisa loses interest after hearing the price. She seemed to have wanted it because it's nostalgic, but it seems that she didn't really want it to that much.

"It's a bit expensive. How about these bundles of papers, are they some kind of reading material?"

"They don't have any value, but since they're made of papers, burning it would be wasteful, so I'm selling them in bundles."

I casually enter into the topic with the shopkeeper.

It seems that it was disused things from when he was sorting things for a certain wealthy person. He wanted to sift through usable books to be sold later, but found out that most of them are just paper useful only for scribbling.

"How much is it? It looks like most papers are writable on both sides, so it should be able to be used for the children's writing practice."

"Right then, I'll give you one bundle for 3 copper coins. If you buy them all then I'll make it 2 big copper coins."

I decided to buy them all. I'll have the unnecessary papers for Lulu and the girls to learn letters.

I put the papers to the pouch from the bag and give it to Liza. I was going to carry half, but Liza refused.

"Customer, if you want to teach letters, how about you use this item here?"

He shows me cards with Shiga kingdom's vocabularies, while the back sides are drawn with the picture of the corresponding letters. The picture is monochrome but since the lines are highlighted, you can understand how to write it. On the [Water] card, I don't know what's drawn on it, but there are only a few like that.

1 set consist of 100 pieces. They're written with ink pen one by one. It must have been made with enormous effort, but the market price shows that it's only 1 silver coin.

"Those are some interesting cards."

"This is something that I thought myself, I was thinking of using it to teach the children in my hometown."

From what he said, it was originally made from wood wastes and ink. He thought that it would sell well so he earnestly asked a painter acquaintance to make one set, and he promoted it heavily to the chamber of commerce but the production cost and the selling price were too lop-sided. It seems that the production cost 4 silver coins while chamber only want to pay 1 silver coin for it.

"So this was all drawn one by one?"

"Yes, of course it was..."

Won't the cost become cheaper if you use printing?

Arisa stops me. She puts her forefinger on her mouth.

"What?"

"Weren't you trying to suggest printing?"

"Yeah. ...Anything wrong with it?"

"When I was in the castle, I've never seen printing. It's dangerous to carelessly introduce technology you know?"

"Even though there's casting, they don't know printing?"

"Technology seems to be something like that."

Arisa who had failed once insists, I'll stop suggesting the printing.

I apologize to the shopkeeper for having private talk during the negotiation.

"I'm sorry, it was a difficult story to tell."

"I'm sorry too, even though there are only few people who are interested with this..."

"I want to buy 1 set, how much is it?"

So the interest was low? Even though that it could be popular.

He cites 4 silver coins. That's the production cost.

"Is it fine? Then won't you not profit from this?"

"It's fine. If I can give this product to a person who understand its worth."

I'm a bit moved with his melancholy.

It's a good idea, it would be a shame if it just fade away.

"Why don't you think the way to produce them next time? Since there should be demands, you could think about the price afterward. You could look for cheap material, or a way to mass produce them cheaply, it's fun to do various trials and errors."

I thought that he would think that it's just some needless words of the customer during the payment, but maybe because he found a fellow who understand him as an inventor, his eyes start to regain its strength, after confirming that, I go toward other stalls.

4-5. Flea Market (2)

Satou's here. Man who tries to scam with get-rich-quick scheme has the same atmosphere even in different world, I wonder why?

In the first place, in this world, having scam skill is enough to get you arrested…

◇

The Radar which has only been displaying white dots until now, suddenly shows a lone red dot.

It's near.

The man pretends to stagger while plunging straight at me. His hands are holding a box wrapped in velvet cloth. A scammer, or should I say a fraudulent extortionist.

He's coming with a speed and distance that normally would be unavoidable, but I avoid it naturally.

From the surrounding's viewpoint, it probably looks like a man suddenly falls down on his own. The fact that, it is, but…

"Aaah! My heirloom's pot!"

He cried out loud, we cannot not get involved now.

After I avoided the man, I confirmed that Liza and Arisa had completely ignored the man and kept walking, properly following me. Seems that Arisa had also noticed it with her Sense Evil.

"Hey, you! Don't run away!"

The man holds the broken pot with one hand, and grabs me with the other.

Matching the timing with when he grabbed me, I made him faint. The people around should see it as if he fainted because he was too exasperated.

If I only have the Fighting skill then I wouldn't have been able to do it this smoothly, thanks to Abduction skill, I did it without being noticed.

I put the fainted man to the back alley carefully. Before we leave him, I check his status because he might have friends, but he doesn't belong to any criminal guild.

He will probably loses all his belongings before he wakes up, but at least he probably won't die.

"The security here really is bad~"

"Yeah, when I first went into the east district, the content of my purse was quickly got stolen."

Come to think of it, even though this is a district with bad security problem, there sure are a lot of shops with expensive commodities. Is the crime prevention all right?

I begin to worry about other people's problems.

When I observe more carefully, there are several people with good physiques, who clearly aren't merchants, strutting along the area.

Checking on AR, they are called East District Vigilante Corp, one of the watchdog guilds. It seems that several groups are guarding the area together.

◇

Right now we are in the area of the flea market focused on pottery. I buy a bottle with lid to put medicine and ointment. The bottle is not made of glass but bisque. This is the same thing as the one from the alchemy introductory set, but won't the medicine have chemical reaction?

That remind me, I've bought an alchemy set yet I've never read the book even once.

A crowd is formed a bit in front of us.

"I wonder what~" Arisa says while briskly goes into the crowd, she comes back after a while with a bored face.

"What was it?"

"Since they said that it's a magic tool, I expected something good... but it's just a spinning top which moves after you pour it magic power. Furthermore it's 1 gold coin much, those people are also crowding just because they're curious."

What did you say?

"How did he pour the magic power?"

"There's a magic apparatus-like part on the disk section which he uses to directly put the magic power by hand, when he releases his hand the tool begins move. What? Are you interested with that toy?"

I leave Arisa who elatedly call me "Childish", and head toward the crowd. When the demonstration is finished, the crowd disperses.

According to Appraisal, the thing put on the stall is called [Rolling Ring]. Since the description is like usual, I don't read it. The disk diameter is about 20cm, it's big for a spinning top. The market price is 2 gold coins.

Some children pester the shopkeeper to spin the disk again but he refused since he has no magic power left.

"Hello, if you're fine with it, I could pour the magic power for you."

"My bad nii-san. Hold the disk with both of your hands, then circulate magic power from your right hand to your left. Blue line light will lit on the disk after a bit, you can stop pouring magic power then and gently place the disk on the stand."

It's completely filled after I pour 2 MP.

Looking at Timer, I release it after I found the right time.

The AR displays the number of rotation when I stare at the disk.

It's doing 600 rotations per 10 minute. Moreover the spinning speed is constant until it run out of magic power. Depending on its torque, it could be useful for a lot of things.

Some people who are interested like Arisa earlier are coming, but soon go away after hearing the price.

"Shopkeeper-san, I want to try something. I will buy it if it broke, so will you let me?"

"If possible, I'd like you to buy it before you break it..."

What the shopkeeper is saying is a matter of course, but maybe because couldn't sell it at all, for even the tiniest possibility of selling it, he allows me.

I ask Arisa to put her magic into the disk. It consumes 5 MP this time. Are there differences between individuals?

The rotation speed is the same as earlier. I press the spinning disk from both sides after 3 minutes has elapsed. The children are booing, but I ignore them.

The rotation is surprisingly strong. It has about the same power as a radio controlled motor.

>[Experiment Skill Acquired]

>[Verification Skill Acquired]

After I take out gold coins, the shopkeeper readily tell me the maker since he has nothing to lose. It seems that it's the work of Jahad, an old magician from the royal capital.

Seems that he's famous for creating useless magic tools.

I buy 4 for 1 gold coins. It looks useful for a lot of things.

"You, such things "Arisa You're being rude to master."

Arisa is rebuked by Liza. She was unreserved with me all this time but it seems that [You] is unacceptable.

[TLN: Okay, this might sound confusing but Arisa is using [Anta] to call Satou up there, it's informal and slightly rude version of "you" in Japanese. She actually never directly call Satou with "you" pronoun before, she alway use master when she does and not use personal pronoun at all in a lot of her dialogs with Satou but English language doesn't allow that (well, I could but it would sounds just strange with lots of passives) so I used "you" carelessly before this chapter (although it's not exactly wrong, it's not exactly right either, so confusing)

For more information: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_pronouns]

"U~ I'm sorry master."

Arisa is unusually obedient.

Because Liza's anger has force. I'm glad that she is usually mild-mannered.

"Then, what did you want to say?"

"Rather than toys, I want master to buy me magic books."

"I have books for Life magic, do you want it?"

"I'd like something more useful for battle!"

Yup, I could understand the lament of the Life magic author for a bit.

I want a recovery magic user from the present members.

I promise to bring her along when I go buy map. I think that the magic shop is still closed now, but she still insists.

◇

"Young master, could I have your time for a bit?"

I didn't think that I was the one who got called, but when I ignore the caller, he looks troubled.

He looks like a gentlemen from the outside, but his eyes are like snake.

"Can I help you with something?"

"Does young master familiar with an alchemy material called Dragon White Stone?"

"No, I'm uneducated with it."

The gentleman keeps talking with exaggerated grieving gestures.

"I think you might know this but in making antidote, one need different materials for each type of poison."

"However, this Dragon White Stone, processed with alchemy, could be used to cure all type of poison!"

"Of course, if you live normally, then you probably won't ever get poisoned."

"Yet, for Explorers who enter labyrinth, they don't know when they will encounter monster with poison so antidote is necessary."

"But, for the sake of bringing the loots back, Explorers are compelled to bring as little supply as possible."

"Therefore, antidotes made from Dragon White Stones are traded at high price in labyrinth city."

Without letting me cut into it, he had begun a solo sales talk.

I've been ignoring it, so I want him to just get to the point.

"This Dragon White Stone, especially! Especially for the young master (...), I'll give you special price for it!"

In short, you want me to buy the Dragon White Stone because it's selling well in labyrinth city, that was long just for this.

"I understand the story now, but why don't you go to the labyrinth city yourself?"

"That's what should have been but I must go to the south after this. Therefore, I will hand it over to young master who overflows with business talent."

On what basis is he saying that I'm overflowing with business talent?

Beside, he should sell it to a firm rather than an individual in a place like this. Suspicious, doubtlessly.

"This is a sample, I also have the certificate."

He takes out a pebble sized item, it's a Dragon White Stone according to appraisal. I still don't know if this is really an ingredient for cure-all antidote. I want reverse look-up too.

The market price for that size is 1 copper coin.

I try to properly decline it, but the sham gentleman strongly press on it. I can't separate away easily.

In the end, we decided to go to his carriage to look at the stocks.

On top of the carriages, clusters of very small rocks wrapped in waterproof cloth are put.

The sham gentleman pulls the cloth to show off the white rocks(...) and continues the sales talk.

I see a person, who's just right for this, coming here. Let's drag him into this.

"How is it, this quality here. If you bring this to the labyrinth city then it's going to worth close to 100 gold coins. Because of the brilliance shown by young master, I will hand it over."

"Unfortunately I don't have 100 gold coins on hands. At most, I only have 20 gold coins."

The sham gentleman looks slightly bitter. But I saw the corner of his eyes moving slightly.

"This is difficult, If it's 30 gold coins then I would've yielded..."

"Is that so, too bad. Well then, let's end this talk here."

And so I pull straight away.

The sham gentleman hurriedly get back.

"No, let's count on the future of young master, I will yield for 20 gold coins this time, for investment."

Ignoring the sham gentleman, I call the gnome who's passing through on the side. It's the manager of the alchemy shop.

"Hello manager-san"

"The heck are you?"

"I'm the beginner who bought the alchemy set in your shop the other day."

"Oh yeah, how's your training?"

"Yes, It's still quite difficult."

"Well yeah, it's not something that could be done overnight."

"Right manager-san, this gentleman here is trading something called Dragon White Stone. How about stocking some for manager-san's shop?"

Saying so, I point at the lumps of rock salt(...) on the carriage. That's right, the sham gentleman scam tactic is by first showing the real Dragon White Stone pebble to someone and then sell rock salts as the real thing.

"What are you saying, those are rock salts."

"Eeeeh~! So those are rock salts!"

I exaggeratedly act surprised and say "What is the meaning of this!", sending the fraud into panic.

If he run away, then I thought of letting him go but the manager's bodyguard with big body quickly constrict the fraud and drag him away.

You guys are too quick...

"I got dragged into a boring farce."

The manager looks truly indignant.

"Thanks for your help."

"Fuhn, you bastard must've known it from the start with appraisal. Just when I went to flea market for finding bargain on raw materials, I was made to dispose small peon instead."

To soothe him, I tell him about the thing with spinning top earlier, after hearing that he leaves me alone and quickly goes to that stall.

He probably got an idea to use it for mixing materials.

4-6. Carriage and Coachman

Satou's here. I do have a driver license but I have never actually drive for years.

As a man who lived in the center of the city, I was already satisfied with the public transport.

Although if I had my own car, it'd had been convenient in a date...

◇

"We only have horse-carriage cabs here. If you want to buy a carriage then order it on the merchant guild inside the inner wall."

I tried talking to the people on the stable areas near the gate, but they didn't sell it there. Is this like trying to buy a car in a taxi stand? I'm a bit ashamed.

"The merchant guild should have them if you're fine with used one. They were looking for buyers if I'm not mistaken."

A different coachman interrupts while we were talking.

I thank him, then I ride on his carriage cab to the merchant guild. I asked Arisa and Liza to carry the luggages back to the hotel.

◇

The coachman who has escorted me to the merchant guild kindly mediates with the guild for me.

"We don't usually sell to people outside of merchant guild member, but since you're introduced by Yosagu-san, let's make an exception."

Yosagu is the coachman's name. It doesn't really matter, but the merchant here is Sunifun-san.

He shows me two carriages. One of them is a covered wagon. The inside is about 4 tatami wide I think? The other one is a box-shaped carriage. It's about 2 meter high, and with a luggage space on the ceiling. The width inside is the same.

The covered wagon is 10 gold coins. The box-shaped carriage is 30 gold coins. The box-shaped carriage is more robust and safer, but you will need 4-6 horses to pull it. The covered wagon depends on its load, if the load is light then you only need 1-2 horses.

I wanted the safe one so I was going to buy the box-shaped carriage, but I'm told that since the center of gravity is tall, the operation of the carriage is difficult, so I stopped.

I have a car license, but driving a carriage? Since I don't have any experience on it, let's proceed carefully.

I ask to be shown the inside before buying. The inside of the covered wagon is, how do I say it, normal. Under the seat for coachman, there's a hidden space for valuables. It seems that it was remodeled by the previous owner.

"I'd like to buy this covered wagon, but could you also prepare the horses together?"

"Right, we could prepare two Gontsu horses from the guild for you. We could provide four if it's donkey, but depending on the load and the destination, they may not be suitable."

I tell him that the destination is labyrinth city and the load are 6 peoples and their necessities, he recommends the Gontsu horses for the task. If I carry heavy luggages then, even if it's slower, he says that donkeys are better.

If you want to be fast, then Shuberien horses are the ones you want but it seems that they all have been brought by the territory government.

The price for two horses and the wagon are 20 gold coins but I've managed to get it down to 18.

Sunifun-san is surprised to see me paying it fully and in cash.

Normally people will get the bill first, and pay at the later date. "I'm quite hasty, I used to get scolded by the people on my house because of it.", I use excuse as if I'm a son of a noble who's ignorant with the world.

"Satou-sama, since 6 people are going to the labyrinth city, it would be wasteful if you only bring an empty load."

Is that so?

Certainly, half of the space would be usable. Furthermore, me and Arisa also have plenty of storage capabilities.

"Do you have any products to recommend?"

"Right then, I think that crossbow and bolt would have demands in labyrinth city. Since the crossbows from Seryuu city are made to shoot Wyvern on the sky, its specs are higher than from other region so it would sell like hot cakes. Also, since it's currently cheap to procure goat leathers and furs due to the season, I think it would be easy to profit on it."

"Excuse me, do Satou-sama has commercial right?"

"Unfortunately, I do not."

So a permit is really necessary?

"That's unfortunate, we can only issue a permit for 10 gold coins."

"That's quite expensive."

"One doesn't need permit to do the trades in small quantity inside city, but if you enter a city without one then you won't be exempt from the tariff tax so the profit will be almost nil."

I see then I should put them inside the storage to avert the tariff...

But there's no reason to earn money illegally.

"If you don't go to other city then there's an item that is exempted from tax in the labyrinth city, but since the tax for it in other cities is quite high, there's really no meaning to it."

"What kind of item is it?"

"Because there is no demand in this city, they don't have name here, but it's in constant demand in the labyrinth city. It's an alchemy material called Dragon White Stone."

I think my face shows it when I heard the name. Since Sunifun-san asks for it, I tell him about the fraud I met in the east district.

"I see, it's natural that you had such face. However, the ones here are guaranteed by the merchant association."

It seems that they sell one small barrel for 10 gold coins, the same as the market price. By the way, it seems that you could easily sell that amount for 20 gold coins in labyrinth city.

If I could sell it for twice the price then wouldn't I net quite a profit?

So I thought, but he said that because of the tariffs for the entering cities on the way and the transportation cost, the profit end up to be quite small.

"If the stones doesn't sell, then you can bring it to the merchant guild, they will buy it at the price you buy here. If you wish, we could make a letter of endorsement to guarantee the quality."

I was almost made to buy in large quantity, but I declined by saying that there won't be enough space for water and food if I bought to many.

I end up buying 6 small barrels of Dragon White Stone, 100 pieces of goat leather, 100 bundle of wool, 10 crossbows and 1000 bolts.

Because they're all 70 gold coins even after I lowered the price, I sign a temporary contract, and will pay for it tomorrow along with the products exchange.

◇

Right now, I'm riding the covered wagon outside the Seryuu city ...That said, it's not like we have departed.

After I had finished the business at the guild, outside, I asked Sunifun-san if he could introduce me to someone who could teach me how to operate the wagon. There, Yosagu-san who were waiting for me to return said, "Then let this old bone teach you.", and that was how the flow went.

As Yosagu-san starts to teach the basic of operating a wagon.

>[Marshaling Skill Acquired]

Like always, I allocate 1 skill point to it and activate it. ...So it wasn't included in Operation skill.

It's awkward, but I can control the wagon for once. During the practice, I raise the skill level by 1, it's not as high as Yosagu-san skill level at 3, but since I could already control the wagon fine, I stop raising the level.

"Young guy do learn fast isn't it."
"Thanks to Yosagu-san good teaching."

Disregarding the cheat from skill, Yosagu-san's teaching really is good. I had failed once but he firmly taught me what to be careful with. He might be suited to be an instructor.

Particularly when I treated it like a car, forgetting that the horses are creatures, he was mad many times…

"You're good enough like this."

"Thank you very much."

"Next I will teach you how to fix and release the yoke that connects the horse to the wagon. The horse's fatigue depends on how good you are at this. If you value your horses, then don't cut corner on this."

Yosagu-san looks more serious than when he teach me to ride the wagon. He probably quite likes horses. After about 1 hour of strict training, I finally got a passing mark from Yosagu-san.

I thought that it had took a long time, but Yosagu-san said that one normally only scratch the surface in half a day, he's impressed.

Yosagu-san tells me that he was a coachman working for a caravan before he worked as a cab coachman in Seryu city. He teaches me various things like crossbows and spears are good for defending the wagon, or that I should always resupply drinking water at cities since they're not always available at the indicated spot on the map, or that when we take a break, I should not forget to give rock salt to the horse along with water.

◇

We're going to the merchant guild with the wagon. Since Yosagu-san's carriage is left on the guild, we're going there to fetch it.

During the way there, Yosagu-san talks about the brothels in Seryuu city. It seems that he's into big breasts.

As a thanks for teaching me various things, I've decided to luxuriously treat him at the shop he recommends, tomorrow evening. Since there are a lot of loli around me recently, this will be fun.

◇

Before returning to the Monzen inn with the covered wagon, I go to receive my clothes. I come just as the delivery, so I'm able to meet the rumored tailor. I feel like I know her face, then I realized that she's the bath tub partner (lol) I met on the first day, it's embarrassing. It's surprising that she also remembers me, but there's no real development, and I thank her for the quality of her clothes as an etiquette.

◇

I ride the wagon into the courtyard of the Monzen inn. Martha-chan is just right at it, so I tell her that I've bought the wagon. Since there are rooms in the stable, seems that it's all right. However, I have to pay for the parking fee since it's a different charge from normal inn room.

"Wilcome home~?"

"Nano desu~."

When I'm talking with Martha-chan, Pochi and Tama run from the shade behind the courtyard. Tama probably wanted to say welcome. Two people also appear from the shade. The helper girl (Yuni) is also together with them. I wonder if she doesn't have prejudice against demi-human?

Arisa and the girls seems to have been playing in the shade of garden plants of the courtyard. No, that words isn't right. They're trying to learn the letters from the learning cards.

At first, it seems that Martha-chan is teaching, acting as the teacher.

But in the middle, "Let's put the card face up and read the letter, then if you can guess the content in the back right, it's yours to take.", Arisa proposed that game-like study session, but since the other members weren't familiar with the game, they became quite addicted to it.

It has already been continuing for two hours. The one who win the most is Arisa, followed by Pochi, Lulu, Yuni, Tama, and Liza in order.

I leave the horses for everyone else to take care, and bring only Arisa to the room. Lulu's expression becomes a bit cloudy, but I can just clear the misunderstanding later.

4-7. Satou's Secret

Satou's here. I have finished doing self-analysis and self-development during the days of job hunting.

I'm reluctant to look back at it.

◇

I sit on the bed while putting the bag on the side.

Arisa is taking off her mantle as soon as she enters our bedroom, and when she started to take off her clothes too, I stop her with a chop to her head.

"Ouchie~ What, didn't you lust for me?"

"Let's decide that after 10 years."

"No way~ This is a chance to violate the precious body of a boy..."

While chattering pointlessly, Arisa still proceeds to wear her clothes back and sits on the opposite bed.

"You said something about consultation at noon right? Did anything happen?"

"Wonder where should I begin..."

"Why don't you tell me all about it? They said that the king has donkey ears~."

<TLN: http://www.worldstories.org.uk/stories/story/88-the-king-with-

donkey-ears>

Doesn't that story end with everything coming to light?

"Then how about removing the thing that you don't want to say? Though I couldn't tell it to anyone anyway if you order me not to~."

"That's right..."

The disposable long-range skill that I had when I first got here? Then I change the story a little by only telling that it was used to annihilate each communities of scale tribes.

I speak in quite a firm tone, but Arisa wryly smiles for some reason.

"What's wrong, I'm not bragging you know?"

"I understand, but unique skill is our trump card, you should hide it properly."

"Sorry, I'll be careful."

"Then, what is the consultation about? Were those scale tribe communities members of Liza's race?"

Arisa listens while hugging her knee on top of the bed. Since her new skirt is long, I'm relieved that her underwear isn't visible.

Liza's tribe lived in wetlands far away from here, they were wiped out after a dispute with the weasel tribe many years ago, Liza told me the story during the frog grill party back then. It seems that she was kidnapped by the slave-hunting human when she was wandering with her family. She also said that she and her family were fearful with Dragon Valley so they didn't dare to get close to it.

"No, it's not that, it's just that even though I accidentally annihilated a whole tribe, I don't feel any guilt. I feel like the guilt was easily and completely turned off like an ON/OFF switch. As if someone is manipulating my heart..."

If I didn't almost got manipulated by Arisa, I probably wouldn't think of this either...

"They call this Paranoia in my old life! but that won't satisfy you, right"

"It's different from paranoia, it's as if the feeling of『Guilt』is vacuumed into closet... It's hard to explain."

"Fuh~n? Weren't you originally cold-blooded?"

"Since I was a programmer I do like to think efficiently, but I don't think I was cold-blooded. When the game I made was made fun of (on the internet), I became depressed for days."

"Hee~ So you were a game developer? What kind of game was it?"

"I'll talk about it later. Rather than that"

"Do you want to know the cause for the ON/OFF switch feeling?"

Arisa who covered my words with hers, subtly smiles mischievously.

"Perhaps your MND (mental strength) attribute is too high?"

"It's certainly high but..."

"If your VIT (Durability) is high, you become able to take many hit right? MND is the mental version of that. In the first place, you're purposely letting yourself be tormented by guilt, unless you're a masochist, it should disappear fast."

Is that so?

I thought that it was someone's doing, but it was merely a problem of my stat...

◇

"Then the next."

"Ou ke~y, come at m~e"

Arisa is playing around, but it's reassuring to have someone to confide in like this.

"Based on the logic earlier, if I have high INT (Intelligence) then I should have good memory, yet I feel like I become extremely more forgetful than before. What is the meaning of this?"

"Uwah~ eh~, you have amnesia even being this young?"

I'm about to chop her but Arisa quickly takes a guard.

Because her flustered posture looks cute, I'll let this one slide.

"I'm joking, even though comprehension and memory do go up with INT, it doesn't mean that they go up equally. If high INT means that you can't forget then there wouldn't be any careless scholars right?"

No way...

My mentor was a professor extremely close to getting a Nobel prize. His careless episodes, like a revolving lantern, cross my mind.

<TLN: His or her, who knows? blame the kare>

"...That means, I was really just being paranoid?"

"Looks like it~."

Arisa throws herself onto the bed and laughs.

Speaking of which, I originally became paranoid because of this girl's mind magic attempt...

Even while thinking that, I'm not childish enough to utter it on my mouth.

◇

"Hey Arisa."

"What? Do you want to get sticky?"

"I'll refrain from that."

This girl really likes to utter one word too many.

"What are levels and skills in the first place?"

"Like the ones from RPG, as it is?"

"Any other meanings beside that?"

"I don't know. I didn't ask when I met god, and he didn't answer when I tried to call him after reincarnating."

"Just tell me as far as you know."

"Right then, I guess you can call skill a condensation of experience and knowledge? When you have skill, don't you feel that you『Somehow』know the what and how? Maybe it's close to intuition. For example, you could cook even without the skill, but if someone with high level skill cooks with the same ingredients and tools, he will make something more delicious."

I see... However, the appraisal and market price estimation skill are quite obvious though?

Also, 'that' is different too? I confirm it with Arisa.

"How about something like the contract skill, which clearly demonstrates its effect?"

"Well, contract skill is a kind of magic skill. It has chanting and it also uses magic power for the contract. But it's still basically the same as other skill you know? Even if you don't have the skill, you could still chant and use the contract spell if you have abundant magic power. However, like other magic skills, if you don't have the contract skill, the required magic power to cast the spell will be drastically increased and the success rate will sharply drop, making it realistically impossible."

I ask about skill level too.

"Here are the standards for skill level; level 1 is Beginner, level 3 is Full-fledged, level 5 is Skilled, level 7 is Expert, and level 9 is Genius. It is said that level 10 is Godly class~ but I've never seen it~."

Is that so, I generally raised my skills to level 10... No wonder I always got the market price right, and almost always succeed in haggling.

"Don't unique skills have level?"

"Nope. This was said by the god when I reincarnated, unique skill is a fragment of god power so there is no level. Master it well, he said~"

A fragment of god power?

Certainly Meteor Shower is befitting of its name, but beside that the others are subtle.

"What?! What's with that subtle expression?"

"No well, when you said that unique skill is a fragment of god power, I thought that my unique skill sure is subtle...."

"Enough to make that subtle expression on your face?"

Although I don't have proof for this confidence, I decide to tell her about [Menu].

Despite her behavior and speech, Arisa seems reliable, she looks to be useful if I tell her.

I don't intend to tell her in detail. I'll just roughly tell her about the functions.

"I'm telling because my unique skill is Menu with the same performance as the one Arisa and the heroes have"

"Well, I will listen if you want, but it's better if you keep it a secret you know?"

Arisa advices me.

"I don't mind, however don't tell a word to anyone. This is an『Order』."

"Okkey~ I'll bring it to my grave."

Arisa kneels on the bed, and haughtily taps her flat chest.

"My Menu has Self-Status, Status Check, Hide Skill and Inventory like Arisa's skills."

"As expected of unique skill, it's a cheat~ But Isn't it really common for a unique skill?"

"That's not all. Although I can choose to allocate point at which skill, I can't choose to do so for all skills like Arisa. It's only available for skills that I acquire by experience."

"Uwah, isn't it a degraded version of unique skill?"

"The Hide Skill from menu is superior. It can hide any skills."

"Looks like it~"

It seems that Arisa has guessed it.

"I mean, didn't you use Appraisal skill in the city? Your line of sight was unnatural, and your decision was too accurate~."

Th, this girl, is she an agent from somewhere?!

"I'm good at observing people. And you also have crisis sensing skill right? Although your movement with the accident faker was really great, it was amazing how you notice it in the first place."

"That's also part of the Menu. I can understand the position of people nearby with the radar display. There's also map display. It also has an auto-mapping function. It gradually fills in accordance to my walking range. It was a big help inside the labyrinth."

"I see, it's truly『Menu』. Didn't you think that you were inside a game for having such unique skill without any explanation?"

"I thought that I was in a dream instead."

"Well, it's unbelievable I know~." Arisa nods understandingly.

◇

While we're at it, Arisa-sensei also teaches me about level.

"...That's why you can level up by fighting or studying, so anyway, if you actively learn new things you gain experience. When the experience reach a fixed value then your level will be raised. It seems that experience goes up faster if you fight certain monsters."

It seems that she heard about the monsters thing from the soldier and knight on her homeland.

It gave far more experiences compared to monster they normally hunted.

"Hoo? Do you know why?"

"Not at all, I've never fought a monster."

"But" Arisa continues.

"If it's master, then you should know right? From what I've heard from Liza and the girls, they raised 10 levels in 1 day in the labyrinth. That's higher than the result from my 7 years of desperate studies you know?"

"Certainly, it was an abnormal growth when you think about it."

"Isn't it~. That's why, in order to increase our survival chance, we should go to labyrinth city to level up~."

She said the same thing back at noon...

Come to think of it, she said another strange thing back then.

"By the way, what the heck is demon lord season?"

"I wonder if they don't call it that around here? In my country we call it for the season when the demon lord attack after about 66 years cycle."

4-8. Demon Lord Season

Satou's here. I love cherry blossom season.

The dancing falling petals, and the cheerful people welcoming new life.

I like how there are many fireworks too~

◇

"Demon lord you say, the kind that wants to rule the world?"
"Yes the one who wants to destroy the world."

"Where is it coming from?"
"I don't know, maybe hell?"

Hell huh~.

"Don't look at me with those eyes~ From what was written in the book, it's said that they're invaders from foreign world."
"Is foreign world different from another world?"
"I'm not a scholar so I don't know."

That's right huh, let's ask a scholar next time.

"Is that 66 years cycle thing true?"

"Yep, there are records where the demon lord appear a bit sooner or later, but they generally seem to appear in 66 years."

"So, it has almost been 66 years now?"

"It was 62 years ago since the last demon lord, but seems that it has been stealthily gaining power while in hiding. Since the demon lord before the last appeared 132 years ago, it wouldn't be strange if the current demon lord appears any day now."

Arisa frowns forming duck mouth. The beautiful little girl look is ruined.

"I see, any sign for its coming?"

"If the world is in crisis, the god will tell it to the oracle~."

As expected of fantasy.

"However if we wait for the oracle then there wouldn't be enough time to raise the hero, so around 3-5 years before the 66 years cycle, they summon the hero."

With that kind of period, it's no wonder that countries will have a lot of time in their hand to prepare.

"Do we know the location where the demon lord will spawn?"

"It seems that they mostly appear in labyrinths or the outskirts around it"

Labyrinth again...

"According to the book I read, it may be because it's easy for the demon lord to raise armies there since there are earth veins deep inside labyrinth."

"Couldn't it just attack head-on without raising armies?"

"Who knows? Maybe the cost to cross between worlds is great. This is based only from circumstantial evidence, but it seems that only high level demons and the demon lord are able to cross worlds."

So the weak can't cross between worlds?

Or rather, if they could appear in the vicinity of labyrinth then.

"Then, this Seryuu city is in danger too..."

"Absolutely not."

Arisa nods with serious look.

"You're very sure."

"Because, this place is close to the Dragon Valley right? If they appear in a place like this, they will be exterminated by hordes of dragons. The legend even says that there's a Dragon God there."

"Are dragons and the demon lord in bad term?"

"They're natural enemies. Normal dragons wouldn't be a match for the demon lord but if it's from sub-divine class like heavenly dragon, then the dragon is stronger for sure."

Dragons are amazing.

The threat of demon lord should be resolved if we just put one heavenly dragon near the labyrinth but...

"If the dragons are that strong then why would they even bother summoning a hero from another world?"

"That's because~ The battle between dragons(.) and the demon lord(.) is too incredible. From songs sang by minstrel about the hero from long ago, there's a story where the hero is defeated by the demon lord. After that, the demon lord destroyed several small countries and met a dragon. The demon lord was defeated in the end but the battle made two great countries sunk into sea of flames. From the rumor said by the minstrel, even the large empire that preceded Saga empire perished because it got mixed up in the fight between the dragon and the demon lord."

I see now~ It's like eliminating a robber with a ballistic missile huh.

According to Arisa, there was once a labyrinth which the dragon encamped. However, from human's viewpoint, both dragon and demon lord were threats, so they made the hero at that time to fight it. It's unknown which one won, but it's known that there are no labyrinths encamped by dragons right now.

◇

The demon which appeared in Seryuu city might have come to check on the situation of the dragon.

If the fact that the dragons are no more then this city might become the target of the demon lord.

I bring the subject to Arisa.

"Even excluding the dragon, wouldn't it be 100 years before this city become a target?"

"Why?"

"The labyrinth is growing. It gives birth to monsters and sucks on the life of the adventurers who come seeking the magic core to grow. When the labyrinth vastly deepened, the monsters also become much stronger."

"I see... a young labyrinth isn't good enough for the demon lord."

Hmm? Wait...

"Hey, by any chance, are labyrinths tools for demon lord raid?"

"Well yes, there are some who think that."

"Then, isn't it better to destroy the labyrinth?"

If we destroy the labyrinth (Spawn Point) then the demon lord will have fewer army forces and the hero's job will get way easier isn't it?

"That may be so, but there are 6 labyrinths in this continent beside the one here. Suppose the probability of demon lord appearing in each labyrinth is equal, in 400 years, it was recognized as calamity whether or not it appeared. Furthermore, since the labyrinth produces usable materials like magic cores, people treat it as if it's a mine."

"I see, if we destroy it then people will hold grudges huh."

"Yes, Kubooku kingom was the leader of the small countries in neighborhood during the time when its labyrinth was alive, but when they destroyed the Dungeon Core, they rapidly declined."

"Could the destroyed Dungeon Core be revived?"

"Isn't that so? I wasn't around when they performed the ritual so I don't know the detail though."

So the labyrinth is appealing enough for people to even perform such an abominable ritual...

The saying that human greed knows no bounds is really true~

◇

"Still, you sure know a lot, Arisa."

"Now you're saying that after thoroughly questioning me?"

Arisa is amazed. I was sure that she would have said, "You can revere me more~", but if we have Arisa test, then she had failed.

"There were a lot of documents pertaining to the labyrinth in the storehouse of the royal family. The explanations earlier may contain deduction and hypothesis, so take heed okay?"

She's good at delivering flood of information. ...I'm nearly drowning from it though.

"I got the things about the demon lord and hero from books, documents, minstrels and storytellers' song tales. That's why the fiction and non-fiction may got mixed up. I did carefully examined it though~."

It seems that those were popular as entertainments.

"As for the details about skills and levels, they're from my own experience and the result of observation."

"Is that all you want to know?", she cutely tilts her head. Her figure is such that it would have stirred me with a craving to protect her if I didn't know her true nature.

"That's right, I forgot to ask anyone this, how many days is a year?"

According to Arisa, 1 year is 10 months, 1 month is 30 days. There is no concept of week, a month is divided by 3 part consisting of upper moon, middle moon and lower moon.

By the way I thought that my clock is off by 4 hours but now I know that one day is 28 hours here.

Compared to yearly unit, this world system is shorter for about 4%.

◇

Since there are still two hours before sunset, I ask Arisa and the girls to buy necessities for our journey.

"Then I'm counting on you to shop for rock salt and preserved foods. Also buy two barrels for water."

"Ye~s.", "Shopping~?", "Nano desu.", I received lively replies.

"For how many days of shares should we buy?"

"Buy the shares for 10 days. Considering the season right now, normal foods should be fine for the first 3 days. The preserved foods shouldn't expire for 240 days, is it about right? Seems that we would need quite an amount."

"I'll ask Martha-cchi if there is any wholesale shop around. And, since we probably wouldn't be able to carry it, I'll ask for delivery."

"Yeah, please do."

She's reliable at the time for shopping.

I'd be glad to accompany them, but I decide to go back to the room because there is something that I want to confirm.

◇

There's something that I didn't tell Arisa.

Dragons are natural enemies of demons.

Demons want to eliminate dragons.

Who summoned me to this world?

For what reason did I get summoned to this world?

Why do my power have discrepancies with those of the heroes?

Yes, I am,

"The one who summoned me might be the demon or the demon lord is it...."

Those words weren't questions...

4-9. Things That Could be Done Alone

Satou's here. The chemistry experiment during the days of junior school was such a fantastic time, wasn't it?

I also remember that there are differences between the thing I've learned in school and the actual practice.

◇

It's aggravating to be filled with bad imaginations with no way to prove it. Even if it's the truth, the heroes should win against the demon lord like how it usually goes. If they lose, then I'll take responsibility of defeating the demon lord in place of the dragons.

I take a deep breath several times and I'm becoming calm.

Having high MND (Mental Strength) surprisingly has its merit.

◇

I come back to my room. Returning to the main subject.

I want to do further verification and alchemy. Since the chanting practice need to be done steadily, I have no choice but to do it on the way to the labyrinth city.

First, let's verify the storage.

I take out the meal.

It's still warm.

I lightly bite it. The taste is still the same.

I put back the remaining meal to the storage.

It's a bit late, but the item name is [Seryuu Grill]. It needs a bit more ingenuity.

I add a new memo called Storage Verification. I write the date and the state on the memo.

For now, It can keep something warm, maybe it even has function to freeze state of things. I write such on the memo. I don't think that it could delay or stop time, that's way too improbable.

This time I take out the Seryuu Grill that I've put in Item Box. This one is already cold. The taste is like a cold grill. It's not rotten. Since it's only been half a day, it's natural.

Let's write that the item box doesn't retain warmth.

Next, I'm testing whether it's possible to move item between the storage and the item box.

I mark a copper coin with ink.

I try putting it inside the item box but it can't go in.

It seems that with skill level 1, it can't enter. I raise the skill level to 2 and inside it goes. I try putting various accessories, and it seems that it can only hold 4 pieces of 4 types of items. Is it the skill level squared? Let's write this on the memo.

When I open storage window in the menu, an item box tab has appeared.

I drag the item to the storage.

When I open the item box and look inside it, the transfer is successful.

I try doing the same thing in reverse, the item can be moved without problem.

Accessing the Item Box from the Storage consume no MP.

I put this information as a postscript on the storage verification memo.

Let's think how to use this next time.

Next, I'm trying if I can search the content of books inside the storage. It should be convenient to check it secretly in situation like the trouble with the dragon white stone today.

I was able to search in explanation in the game. Therefore I want to check if I could search for contents ...There were no books in the game though.

I tap the [Royal City Tour] book inside the storage and choose search on the popped-up menu.

I search for [Castle], then the explanations about castle are shown on the search hit. It seems that it can search with no problem.

The search results are displayed.

Ah, I've always wanted this function in real life~ I wouldn't have needed to scan books or OCR! Fantasy is awesome!

I suddenly come up with something and immediately try it.

If I could see the search result then couldn't I able to read the content of the book?

Since there is no browse option on the pop-up menu, I search for blank and it goes well.

I could read the entirety like it's on PC with scroll. It feels like a PDF file. Since I could search for words with this, this is more convenient for reading books.

Next I try moving the book to the Item Box.

Unfortunately, this one can't do searching.

I wonder what's the difference?

◇

I take out the alchemy set and put it on top of the table on the corner o the room. The book remain in the storage. If it's like this, even in the dark, I could read the book like the menu.

I'm reading [Introductory to Alchemy]. It's the book that the grandfather gnome firmly told me to read first. Rather than a book, shouldn't this be called a pamphlet? It's a think book with about 20 pages.

The book starts with explanations of the tools. Moreover, it features illustrations so beginners won't get the tools wrong. It's the book that the grandfather emphasized me to read first.

First, I take out the mortar and the pestle. The mortar is not the commonly known white porcelain but something pinkish in color. According to appraisal, it's made from agate. Isn't agate a jewel?

Following the book, I grind a reagent with 1 dried medicinal plant together, and then I put the crushed medicinal plant to a small bowl filled with water with a thin metal rod.

The compounding is complete 5 minutes from the start. Since it's the first thing to do for beginners, it's very easy.

>[Compounding Skill Acquired]

I immediately allocate skill point to the maximum and activate it.

The finished aqueous solution is [Antipyretic Medicine]. Judging from Appraisal, [Antipyretic Medicine -3] is under the name, while the detail says [Liquid medicine for lowering fever. The effect is extremely low, it's just a mere consolation]. This is my first time doing compounding, it can't be helped that it's low quality.

◇

"Those who have magic power go to chapter 2, those who don't go to chapter 4" is written in the next page of the introductory book.

It feels like a manual for business software, or rather, a game book from years ago.

Chapter 2 is about basic refining. Seems that I have to make actual potions. According to the book, drugs made by compounding and potions made by refining have different effects even though they're similar. Production of potions need magic catalyst and MP, in exchange the effect will be displayed in real time.

I continue to practice the refining according to the book. I put the potion I made earlier inside a metal beaker. Then I mix it with two reagents there.

Seems that I have to pour magic power before the reagents are dissolved. I tuck the beaker between my hands and imagine magic flowing from my right hand to the left.

It was like this with the spinning top, you pour magic by circulating from your right hand to left, I wonder if this is some kind of rule? Or is it just a simple custom?

The two reagents begin to shine faintly when I pour magic power. Since the room is dim, it glitters nicely. Seems that it's complete after it stops glittering.

>[Refining Skill Acquired]

It's not an alchemy skill huh. I also get refining skill to the max.

The completed Potion is an Antipyretic Potion -4. Since it's wasteful to discard it, I put it inside the bisque pot and put it inside the Storage.

◇

I open the menu to save the compounding recipes in the memo. The menu has a new tab, Production. I open the tab, and [Compound: Antipyretic Medicine], and [Refine: Antipyretic Potion] from the earlier are there. Not just them, there are also [Woodcraft: Club (Improvised)], [Composite: Insect Leg Spear (Improvised)], and [Composite: Insect Leg Spear (Improved)].

I'm sure that it wasn't there before, I wonder if I need to know 5 recipes as the prerequisite? Or maybe it need recipe beside improvised one. But since it's a unique skill, it's useless to try to verify it, so I stop.

I try tapping on the [Compound: Antipyretic Medicine]. There are 4 sub-menus, they're Compound, Inspect Recipe, Delete Recipe, and Detail. Compound seems to be disabled, it's grayed out. I though that maybe I could do compounding inside the Storage, but unfortunately it doesn't seem to be so. Even after I store the tools and reagents into the Storage, it's still disabled. There might be some conditions.

Then I continue the training to the end of the 6 chapters in the introductory book. Because there is one recipe in each chapter, I got to remember, [Compound: Painkiller], [Compound: Ointment], [Refine: Lower Recovery Medicine], and [Refine: Painkilling Magic Medicine (Potion)], those four.

Probably because I've maxed out the skills to maximum, all the medicines after chapter 3 are attached with [+5]. [The effect is extremely high, it's the highest quality] is written. I'm thinking of verifying the difference in effect next time.

◇

I'm about to start practicing the fifth chapter of the introductory book but...

<TLN: Yes, apparently this is happening before the last two paragraphs before the last ◇>

There are signs of someones' holding their breath on the other side of the door. The two luminous point shown on the radar haven't moved from awhile ago.

I stealthily approach the door, and open it at once.

Arisa and Martha-chan come rolling in as if being pulled by the door.

"What are you girls doing?"

I listen to the two while looking from above. My voice has become a bit flat.

"Na, nay.", Arisa is speaking in Kansai dialogue for some reason.

<TLN: Imagine "Ch, Chau nen." in Kana Ueda's (Rin Tohsaka) voice>

"I, I was just curious since I saw Arisa clinging to the door.", Martha-chan.

Yet you've also been clinging for more than 5 minutes, aren't you?

The two shaking girls are about to step away. They suddenly turn around and about to dash away to the corridor.

I quickly grab the nape of the two and restrict them.

"Wonder what were you really doing?", I cross-examine again.

"I'm sorry, I was tempted to see Satou-san embarrassing moment so I peeked."

Martha-chan gallantly apologizes.

"Uu~ because. A boy who's living together with girls! Went back to his room alone?! Don't you think that it's the job of the guardian to see what kind of foolery would unfold?"

Who's the guardian.

Furthermore, foolery... I don't have the mindset of a middle-schooler.

I release the gallant Martha-chan. Arisa isn't properly reflecting, or rather, her lust can plainly be seen so I punish her by poking her forhead 3 times in a row.

Seems that it still hurts even though I held back, she's holding on her forehead while rolling around on the floor. This might be a good medicine once in a while.

4-10. The Night Before Departure

Satou's here. I like both lawful shops and shops in gray-zone.

But I'll pass on compensated dating, Satou's.

◇

I take Arisa to the wagon. On the way there, I meet Martha-chan in the tavern, but she doesn't look particularly shy and offers me a meal.

Since I intend to eat outside with Liza and the girls, I decline.

When we got to courtyard where the wagon is, the 4 girls are waiting while looking bored.

When Liza notices me coming, she comes as the representative.

"Master, is it fine to put the luggage on board?"

"Let's see... Tomorrow, since we'll be picking more luggage from the merchant guild, let's do that tomorrow, but if we leave them here we'll be troubling the landlady huh."

Arisa whispers to me when I'm still thinking about it.

"Let's keep them in my Item Box? Don't you think that it's safer there?"

"There are only people we know now, so it's fine I guess."

I instruct the girls to pile the luggage inside the wagon for now.

The three small girls get up to the wagon to receive the luggage. Since Pochi and Tama have strength stat on par with two large adults, they handle the heavy preserved foods lightly. It looks as if this is some kind of magic show.

Arisa and Lulu are sorting the goods inside.

Needless to say, I and Liza are in charge of uploading the luggage. Since it's wasteful to wear expensive clothes for heavy duty job, I change into ordinary clothes. It's a simple linen tunic.

When we've finished loading the luggage, I made the girls beside Arisa to fetch water for 3 small barrels. One small barrel can hold 6 liter of water.

"You don't really need to exclude Lulu. I've talked about my Item Box with Lulu, you know?"

I'm afraid that someone would pick a fight with the beastkin girls if it's just them, so I ask Lulu to go with them.

"For now, let's split the preserved foods in half for each to keep, I'll carry the magic tools. Probably no one would steal the learning cards so put it on the wagon, and let's leave the foods that were entrusted to Liza and the girls alone."

"Kaay~", Arisa lightly said while storing the preserved foods into her Item Box. I also store the same amount.

The preserved foods are jerkies, baked black breads, fried beans and dried sweet potatoes.

Others that are in the bag are wheat flours, root crops, rock salts, and various other groceries. Since leaves vegetables are likely to give stomachache, it seems that they didn't buy it.

I've only noticed after doing this but...

"I'd love baskets or boxes to sort things out."

"Yeah true, I also want some cushioning materials. If we leave this alone, the cookwares will be noisy when the wagon shakes."

"I want thin ropes too."

"Ropes? Ah, for airing clothes huh."

"I think that having sturdy ropes is good."

Liza who just came back from getting water suggested.

I can't imagine what it would be used for.

"It's for draining blood from preys during the journey."

Right, we need ropes to tie thieves who may appear.

"You're such a philanthropist~ Thieves are thoroughly good-for-nothings and only bring harm, it's better to snatch away treasures from their hideout and annihilate them afterward. Even that famous thief-hunter girl said so you know~?"

What kind of acquaintance is she?

So there's a person who's famous for that, what a dangerous world.

"Are we not short on anything else?"

Pochi raises her hand while standing on her tiptoes. Did Arisa taught her that?

"Yes, Pochi-kun. Say it."

"A stool! I want one no desu~"

When I ask in detail, she seems to have used a stool when she helped taking care of the horse. She's brimming with enthusiasm to take care of the horses during the journey too. She's really reliable.

Tama also raises her hand in the same manner and says, "Brush~?". She tilts her body in troubling manner while raising her hand, cute. It seems that she wants a tool to brush the horse and clean their hoofs.

Tools for taking care of the horses, I completely forget about them.

Lulu also timidly raises her hand.

"....U, umm.", Her face turn bright red just by saying that.

I wonder if it's something that embarrassing? I glance at Arisa... She winks back. Are you from Showa era!

"I, I want a washboard and a bucket."

Is that really embarrassing? I have them in the storage so I've forgotten about it, but it's certainly necessary.

"If it's really possible, I want a mirror! I'm fine with hand-mirror size."

"Arisa, you're too extravagant."

Liza firmly gives a warning to Arisa. It's unusual for Liza to give an opinion before I decide.

I wonder if it's expensive in this world? That reminds me, I don't think I've seen any glassware. But, I'm sure there were mirrors from polished metals.

"I'd like to use one too, let's buy it if it's not too expensive."

"Yay."

Arisa looks unusually happy without acting. Lulu is also smiling. Liza doesn't have any objection since it's my decision. Pochi and Tama... don't seem like they understand.

It's decided that, tomorrow when I'm going to take the commodities from the guild, the five will buy the things we've just discussed.

After changing clothes, we go out to eat together.

That day, we eat dinner at stalls not far away from the gate inn. Since we've been eating meats everyday, I order light soups, and soy bean breads.

Since Pochi and Tama look so sad while we're eating, I order meat skewers for four portions. It's Liza who looks the happiest somehow... but it's okay as long as they're happy.

◇

Since I meet Yosagu-san who just come back from work on the way to the inn, we decide to advance the plan to go out during the night a day forward.

Arisa is saying, "Even though you have me, you adulterer~", but I make Liza to carry her like a luggage back to the inn.

"Is that okay?"

"It's fine, she's just something like a little sister. The person herself thinks that she's a guardian though."

The east district is crowded just like yesterday.

Yosagu-san, who's chewing a bought skewer from stalls, is greeting girls who are gathering under the outside light, while we press forward to the crowds.

When I ask if they're his acquaintances, he says, "They're courtesans." They usually work as waitress and courtesan in the inn at the same time, but during the slave auction they seem to look for customers outside.

Confirming from AR, a lot of them have [Sex Technique] skills. ...However, I'm anxious to see that a lot of them have various venereal diseases on the abnormal condition tab. Mostly are in [Incubation], but nearly 60% of them are suffering from it.

I wonder if it can't be healed with magic?

We enter red light district and walk for a while. Metal plates of magical light are hung on the shops, illuminating them with cheap-looking light.

Most brothels are two story buildings with verandas on the second floor. Courtesans who wear expensive clothes with high exposures are lining up on the verandas trying to lure guests.

When I look, they raise their skirts and show their bare legs then throw kisses. It's a feature every shop has, interesting.

The people who have [Sex Technique] increase, and proportionally the people who have Venereal Disease[Incubation] decrease for about 30%. As expected there is no one who has Venereal Disease [Diseased].

"Young master, here's the shop. Let's enter quickly."

Yosagu-san pulls me to the shop. This shop seems to be refined, there is no girls attracting guests on the veranda.

When I enter, verandas are installed on the second floor high along the corridor. I lightly wave at the girl who I saw from outside there.

The floor is made from bare wood, but it's well polished. Is it about 30 tatami wide? There are a stove, doors and a stair to the second floor inside. There are 4 rooms shielded with cloths on the left and right.

"Welcome to the Seryuu Branch of Captivating Mansion."

A woman in later half of her 40 come out from the back door while greeting us with penetrating voice. The woman is wearing a pink dress with excessive frills, but her fat is too self-asserting, her clothes looks like it'll burst apart at the seams.

Guided by the woman, we go to one of the partitioned room.

It seems that this is a room for guests to wait for the girls, since it'd be awkward to meet acquaintances in a brothel. The obese shopkeeper sure knows her stuff.

There are a sofa and three low quality marble tables inside the room. A girl of around 10 years old is standing by as a parlor maid.

"Excuse me.", the girl puts small green sake cup in front of me and Yosagu-san. Transparent liquids are inside of them. It's a distilled liquor from the smell.

According to the AR, the cups are made from jade. The liquor inside the cup is Shiga sake. It's a strong liquor with 50% alcohol content made from wheat.

"Ku~ delicious!", Yosagu-san gulp the liquor in high spirit.

It seems that he forgot to drink this sake when he went to this shop before.

The girl, is pouring the sake huh?

I sip it once as a social act. It certainly tastes good. It's like whiskey but transparent instead of amber-colored, I wonder if the processing is different?

Before Yosagu-san had his third cup, the shopkeeper comes back with 5 girls.

The first is the most beautiful girl with blond hair and blue eyes. With a small face, thin eyebrows, and strong-willed looking big pupils. Sticky-looking lips. Two large breasts that look like they would spill from the open chest clothes. Most likely, she's the most popular girl in this shop. She's 18 years old.

The second and the third are twins. They're beautiful girls with black hairs and black eyes. Their most notable looks are their western, or rather, French style. One of them has smaller breast than the other, but it's still around C cup. It seems that there a lot of people who spend the night with the two of them together. Of course, the fee will be for two people. They're 16 years old.

The fourth is a woman with droopy eyes. With dull blond hair and reddish brown pupils. Her eyebrows are thick, she's a gentle healing woman. Her breast is the biggest. It seems that there are a lot of repeaters for her. Her voice sounds mellow, it's comforting to hear. She's 21 years old, the oldest in this shop.

The fifth is a girl with red hair and reddish brown pupils. She's pales in comparison with the other girls but she has the nicest expression. She feels lively or rather, fascinatingly wholesomely erotic. Her breast size is average, but still around D cup. For me it's quite enough to be categorized as big breasts. 20 years old. She's the only person in this shop who doesn't has sex techniqu skill.

Every girls are wearing thin one-piece sticking to their skins looking erotic. The chest and abdomen area are transparent, I cannot help but utter GJ.

"Which girl will you choose?", the shopkeeper asked. Yosagu-san asked with his eyes, "Please don't hesitate to choose your favorite girl.", I said and he really did choose the most beautiful girl without hesitation.

I also aim her, but I'll yield here.

Yosagu-san drinks down the liquor left in the cup in one gulp, and leave the room with that girl. It seems that the second floor is for the guests to enjoy themselves.

I was at loss for a bit, but I chose the fifth girl in the end.

The guest room only has a simple bed, but it's clean and smells good so I have no complaint.

When we entered the room, the girl hurriedly took off her clothes and flaunted her body. I enjoy the feel of OPPAI liberated from the clothes, enjoying scooping them with my hands.

It's exactly the festival of OPPAI. Who was it who says that OPPAI contains man's dream?

I hug her waist and we fall down to the bed. It's a mature woman's body after a long time, so I'm taking my time to carefully enjoy it ...in various ways.

Though since the girl's reaction was good, I unintentionally gave too much service. Like this, I'm not sure who desire whom.

We enjoy ourselves until midnight. She faints from too much pleasure in the middle, so I stop.

>[Sex Technique Skill Acquired]

>[Lover's Talk Skill Acquired]

>[Seduction Skill Acquired]

Apparently this body has too much stamina, the partner couldn't catch up. I use her breasts that I've enjoyed plentifully as pillows and depart to the world of dream.

4-11. Departure (1)

Satou's here. I love to make programs without being limited. The last time I did that was when I made a legged robot for my graduate research during college. When I became a working adult, I haven't done it.

This time, it seems that I'll make magic tools.

◇

Yep, it's a good morning.

I walk the town while enjoying the morning sunlight, feeling refreshed.

Yosagu-san was unlike me, yawned constantly looking sleepy. I invited him for breakfast but since he didn't come home his family was probably mad so we decided to part ways outside the shop.

"If I made it big in the labyrinth city, let's come again.", I shouted him that.

Even though it's early in the morning, the people who are having meals on the stalls, and the people who are selling fresh groceries are lively.

The vulgar atmosphere that usually permeates in the east district was probably the fault of the visitors.

I'm smelling something good from the stalls.

Although I'm not particularly hungry, let's buy some souvenirs for the girls. Though I can't buy sushi in wooden box pack like those fathers from Showa era.

I buy a big handbasket made from thin wood from a street stall. It's about as big as two rice bowl. I also bought two lidded containers for soup and put it inside the basket.

I buy warm meals and put it into the Storage through the basket. I keep buying various things to the extent that it doesn't look unnatural.

Soup made from meatless animal bone and vegetables. Thick stew with vegetables and dried meat. Various grilled meats starting from grilled goat meats. Seryu grills. Freshly baked flat breads. Steamed potatoes. There are some scratched fruits from many fruits I've bought.

I've bought for about 30 servings. It's too much for souvenirs but I'll keep some for emergency. With these much, even if we are in an environment impossible to light fire, I could still provide warm meals. In the first place, I plan to use the Storage so that we don't end up in desperate situation.

I wanted to buy alchemy materials, but it was closed at the time.

◇

When I get back to the gate inn, Arisa who saw me from the window comes running down.

After she looked at my face, she begins to stomp the ground with her foot.

"Uuu~~~~. Mou! That glossy face~~."

She bites the edge of a handkerchief, taking a pose. Every single one of her gestures are old... let's not ask her age before she was reincarnated.

"I was the one who was supposed to take your first time~~"

I don't remember making such promise.

I keep silent about it since it'd be bad if I don't.

"You're fussy, and this isn't my first time anyway."

"Nooo, even though it was one in a millennium chance to snatch away the DT of a boy...."

<TLNote: DT, Doutei, Virgin. :p >

My condolences.

I call for Lulu, and we gather in front of the wagon. The breakfast are potatoes and meat skewers that I've just bought.

I talk to Arisa in whisper to check on Lulu's condition. If she still hasn't recovered, I'll postpone our departure for two days.

According to Arisa, it was only serious in the first day, it's fine now.

Since it looks painful, let's give her the painkiller I made from practices. There are five of it, those should be enough.

After we finished our simple meal, I advance as planned yesterday.

◇

I ride the wagon until the parking space of the Commercial Guild. Horses were easier to fine-drive unlike cars so it was easy.

It's lively here too in the morning. Every carriages which occupy half of the parking lot are unloading their cargo. Every carriages look well seasoned. The ratio for luggage carriages and covered wagon is fifty-fifty. The carts are loaded with a lot of 10 kilogram bags. The people who are moving the bags look like ruffians who wear villager-like simple long-sleeved shirt and trousers. I can see patchworks on its knee and elbow.

While I look at other carriages out of curiosity, Sunifun-san who has finished confirming the load and assessing the prices comes here.

"Good morning, Satou-sama. You came really early."

"I'm sorry. Am I troubling you by coming too early?"

I don't think that what I'm doing is that bad, but let's apologize for now.

"Not at all. The god of business surely like people who are quick."

Even though Sunifun-san said that, if I look at the surrounding, it's probably customary to bring in the goods in the morning and bring it out in the afternoon.

I am guided to the warehouse. The goods that I've ordered yesterday are put on one of the section. I confirm the products and their number with the help of an employee. I check the contents of every barrel of the Dragon White Stone and close the lid.

Sunifun-san watches over me doing that like a grandfather watching over his grandson. Hey, you're not that old right.

I ask the employee to carry the goods to my wagon, while I complete the payment for the transaction at the office.

When I get back to the wagon, the loading is complete so I visually check on the goods. Since I've put tags on the Dragon White Stones, it doesn't seem like it has been swapped. It can't see through if the inside of the barrels are swapped, but they probably wouldn't have enough time to go that far.

I thank the employee and give him one big copper coin.

"May you have good businesses!", Sunifun-san left the words as farewell as I left the guild.

◇

"Welcome nano desu~."

I'm greeted by Pochi when I return to the gate inn. She hugs me as I go down the coach seat, so I rub her head. I separate from her as I pat her head, and I work to unfasten the horses from the wagon.

"I'll help no desu.", she immediately stands on the stoll that we've just bought and begins to help. Might as well teach her the way to unfasten the belt, manage the yoke, *etc*. It's also good to review myself as I teach others.

"What's everyone else are doing?"

"Lulu is washing over there. Others are shopping no desu~."

"So Pochi and Lulu are house sitting huh?"

"I'm watching the luggages no desu~"

Pochi said it pridefully. She's certainly qualified for it. I can somehow imagine Tama sleeping on top of the luggages.

I ask Pochi to take care of the horses in the stables. Meanwhile, I put the goods I brought from the commercial guild into the Storage.

I thought of leaving the goat leathers and wools outside, but the smell was severe so I stow it away. Let's practice to make deodorant next time.

Pochi carried the luggage until it loaded. Pochi says, "Watching the luggage no desu." from the wagon. Since she's doing her best, I'll go to see Lulu's condition. Since the laundries that Lulu is doing are underwear, I go back without calling her.

◇

After that, I ask Pochi for house sitting, and take a cab to the plaza before the castle. The flower bed on the center are still being worked on but the pavements are already beautifully set with the paving stones. They sure work fast. They might have used magic since this is fantasy.

The wall on the magic shop are still being repaired, but it seems that it's open for business for once.

"...then... catalyst... scales. If you get your hand on these, I'd like you to deliver it to the magic corps station."

"I'll see to ask my magicians and alchemist friends. At most, I could get my hands on 1-2 pieces of scales."

As I enter the store, a magician-looking old woman and old man come out while having those conversations.

The old man take a glance at me but leave without saying anything.

"Oh, a visitor eh? I'm sorry but I don't deal on love potion or energy drink. Go to the alchemy store in the east district."

It's a thin and dried up old woman. Wearing clothes appropriate for a magician. Deep blue robes with long sleeves, wide-opening tall hat unwieldy for indoor, wearing numerous ring with suspicious design on her fingers, and with about a 5 cm big emerald pendant designed after skull on her neck.

"No, I want to buy magic books."

She raised just an eyebrow in surprise after hearing my words. She put lean the cane which was on her hand to the wall and take out a litograph from under the counter.

Yamato stone again?

"We don't sell magic books to a man without talent okay? Recently there are a lot of scoundrels of nobles who buy magic books just for prestiges, soiling them. I'll sell the books only to people having certain amount of magic measured from this instrument."

...Dang, I should've brought Arisa along.

I don't know how far this stone can measures, but it'd be bad if my enormous magic power is known.

"I'm sorry, I'm afraid that it'll break if I carelessly touch it."

"Fuhn, excuse huh? If you put magic power on this, it will emit blue light. It's cheap compared to the instrument in royal capital, but that's exactly why it's robust. So that it won't break if a veteran do his best, magic power stops flowing after it feed on the required amount. If one has a capability of a full-fledged magician then it will shine blue. Other than that it'll stay red as it is."

Is it safe? If it's as the old woman said that there's no problem but if the punchline is, "Actually it can read the exact value.", that's scary.

"If you don't want to try then go home. I have a business to get Dragon Powder from my alchemist friend after this."

The powder that the old man mentioned earlier is Dragon Powder huh. When I thought that it's a familiar name, I remember that I obtained some in the labyrinth.

Would she be willing to trade magic books for this?

"Shopkeeper-san, If it's dragon powder then I have it, if you're fine with I can give it to you?"

I take out 5 vial of Dragon Powder from the bag. I got 6 from the labyrinth, but I decide to keep one in hand.

When I take it out I estimate the market price... 20 gold coins huh?

"Are those real?"

The old woman picks one vial and takes out one earpick worth of powder, then she tests it with some reagents and apparatuses.

"I'll buy it for 10 gold coins a vial."

What a greedy old woman.

When I say that the market price is 20 gold coins, she says, "That's the price on a shop", rejecting it.

Since I don't intend to force the sales and the aggrement doesn't seem to be achievable, I'm about to leave the shop, but her hands hold out at the speed that doesn't match her age. Her eyes are fiery and glittering, she's a bit scary.

"W, wait! That thunder old man is probably going to buy them at that price, I'll buy it at 20 gold coins a piece. But I'll pay at the end of the month as the condition. Since the payment from officials is slow."

"I'm sorry but I intend to leave the city tomorrow, so I can't accept that condition."

The negotiation continue until lunch time, and in the end, it's decided that the payment is in the form of magic books. Because magic books higher than intermediate level aren't allowed to be sold to people who aren't a citizens of Seryuu city, I'm having a hard time choosing books that worth 100 gold coins.

First, I'll collect lower-class magic books from every elements. Still it's only 40 gold coins, so I buy thesis and investigation, and various miscellaneous notes for reading materials. It's 60 gold coins up to this.

Then I buy canes and amulets. It seems that only those who have permit from the city are allowed to sell magic scroll, so I can't buy it here.

Furthermore, I buy cheap catalysts for making potion. It seems that they're made from magic cores from lower class monsters.

"Oh, your main job is an alchemist eh. Then, how about these books?"

The old woman takes out two magic books from the back of the store written with, "Magic Catalyst and the Material", "Seeds and Catalysts". I'm a bit worried with those titles, but since the author is named Jahad, I buy it. It's the maker of the spinning disk magic tool if I'm not mistaken.

I buy 5 other books written by this guy.

"15 gold coins remaining is it. What else do you wish? I don't have good magic tools left. At best, I have a tool that emit light, or a tool that heat up if you put it above."

Oioi, you're putting out good things in the end.

When I receive them, the first is a crystal ball about as big as a candy ball and the other is something black that looks like a pot stand with 20cm diameter. It's about 3 cm thick and feel like it's made from porcelain. On one side, a copper line is drawn on top of a concentric circle.s

The crystal ball-- Light Drop begin emitting light after I pour it magic power. Seems that it shines for 30 minutes every time it's poured with magic power. The pot stand-- Light Hot Plate is also the same, by putting magic power on the copper line, it gives warmth for 10 minutes. However, since it only emit heat enough to scald a person yet not enough to boil water, it's not suitable for cooking. That should be usable to warm tea or stew though.

The Light Drop is one gold coin each, while the Light Hot Plate is 3 gold coin. Since the Light Drop is in stock of two, I buy both.

In the end, since I couldn't find good stuffs for the remaining 10 gold coins, it's exchanged in cash. I thought that I have to use it all up but that's not good. Dangerous, dangerous.

"Fuhn, putting money aside, it's been a long time since someone bought this much."

"Thank you very much, I was able to buy many nice things."

Thanking the old woman, I ask to deposit the stuffs I've bought in the store for a while. After this, I've completely forgotten to buy map from the bookstore next door.

The old woman kindly agree to keep the stuffs, then I go toward the bookstore.

4-12. Departure (2)

Satou's here. I'm not a person who often take trips, but I've strangely grown attached to a city I've only been to for a few days.

I'm want to come again for notable tourist attractions.

◇

The bookstore is kept by the already recovered gray haired old man, Semone-san isn't in the shop. I'm not able to worship that glorious proportion... regrettable.

The shopkeeper give me the map to labyrinth city.

How do I say this, it's a map that screams, "Measurement? What's that is it tasty?". Although I didn't expect it to have map symbols or contours, but it's questionable if this thing has concept of cardinal directions.

Probably it's shown on my face, the old man explains. Accurate maps are classified informations so only people from the kingdom's side could get a hold on it. I miss Google Map.

Since it's better than nothing, I buy 5 maps until it reach the Labyrinth city. Later on, I learn that merchant guild sells better maps.

My business is over with this, but the shopkeeper, demonstrating his commercial spirit and kindness, recommends me various books.

Books that looks like it'll be useful for journeys like, "Journey to Royal Capital", "Dictionary of Herbs", "Carriage Repair Reverse Dictionary", etc, I'm charmed by their titles so I buy all the recommended ones.

There are introductory books for woodworking, smithing, engraving and various manufacture-related books, but since there's no demand and coupled that they're old books, they don't sell well at all.

When I show an interest to it, the shopkeeper begin to pile one book after another. Since they could be bought for 2 gold coins for everything, I decide to buy them all.

Furthermore, he also recommends good reading books for breaks during a journey. Although most of them are about love or heroes, but I find exceptions like, "Ancient Battlefield and Withered Labyrinth", "Mad Magician and Death Army", "Man who Created Labyrinths". I buy the three of them and 5 popular picture books.

Picture books are good for learning letters.

It was a bit over the budget, so I drive it down to 10 gold coins.

◇

I bought too much indeed. The bag with almost 30 books inside is quite heavy. If I didn't have the status compensation, my waist would have gone bad.

It becomes quite the amount after I receive the stuffs I've bought from the magic shop. Though it's not like I could not walk back carrying them, I'll look way to conspicious so I wait for a cab carriage.

"Hello, nimble Onii-san."

I turn toward the voice behind.

With a face as if saying that the prank is successful, it's Zena-san's coworker girl friend (Lilio).

"Hello, Lilio-san. Did you imitate Zena-san?"

"Ehehe~ Did I pass? Hey hey, did you skip a beat?"

I somehow understand that I mustn't let Lilio meet Arisa.

"I noticed immediately because your voice is different."

"Eh~ Too bad~ but, but, isn't that love? The power of love?"

Girls really do like love talks huh.

Lilio is coming closer to impose her small body. I have enough loli girls, so push her shoulder back so our body doesn't stick together.

"Are you alone today?"

"Yep, the other soldiers are sleeping~ But Zena, from yesterday noon until midnight today, is keeping on guard the who~le time. Magic troops are lacking in number isn't it."

I wanted to say some parting words to Zena-san before I leave for the journey but...

Alright, let's change the departure to tomorrow morning.

"Lilio-san, could you deliver a message for Zena-san?"

"Okay~ But no passionate lines that would make chest hot okay? If it's too intense, it might be interpreted wrong you know~."

While crossing her arms, Lilio talks with a bad face.

I ask her to tell Zena that I'll be leaving early tomorrow morning. Lilio willingly agree to deliver the message.

"Acha~ Zena's first love end up unrequited huh~." , It seems that she intended it to be a monologues, but I heard it loud and clear.

I don't reply to that and go back to the gate inn wth a cab carriage.

◇

On the carriage, I store the books inside the Item Box. When Arisa knew about me going to the bookstore, "Didn't I say to take me along~", she's angry, but after I tell her that I bought every elemental beginner magic books, her smile returns.

Besides, you probably haven't learned how to learn Shiga kingdom letters right?

"Then, are we going to depart?"

Since Arisa asked, I tell everyone that we'll depart tomorrow morning.

"I'm going to the alchemist shop on the east district and the general guild to finish some business, so check if there's anything that we forgot to buy. It's fine to play learning card when it's over."

"Card!", "Nano desu!", Pochi, Tama and Lulu rejoice. It's rare to see the figure of Lulu who looks happy like a normal girl, I click on REC button in my heart.

"Empty dummy barrels are too light it'll seem unnatural, so I think it's good to store long-lasting potatoes in them."

"It's going to be winter soon, it might be too cold to sleep with just the mantle. I think it's good to purchase a blanket for master at least."

I agree with Arisa and Liza's opinions and allow them to buy those. Of course the blankets are for four people. Since Arisa saw some made from cottons in the marketplace, I permitted her to buy after hearing the price.

◇

I go to the alchemy shop alone, and buy a lot of painkiller and deodorant materials and recipe compilations. It's an extravagance worry, but when you're shopping without caring for the remaining money, maybe because there's no fun of hesitating, it's a bit lonely.

On the general guild, I listen for the progress of the request I asked from Nadi-san. Even though it has only been a day, it's already mostly complete. The rest weren't in home so she's going to go back tomorrow.

Nadi-san passes me something as I give her the reward. What she gave is a big basket filled with things like small bag with money, vegetables, sandals and various other.

Poor home gives vegetables or home industry product like sandals instead of money, even things like wood spoons and others. It seems that Nadi-san did say that rewards are unnecessary but she was given them before she could decline.

I tell her that I'm leaving Seryuu city tomorrow and I present her the rewards as a bonus.

"Satou-san, your next destination must be either royal capital or duke-sama capital right?"

"No, I intend to go to the labyrinth city."

"There are a lot of demi-human in labyrinth city, life will be easy there."

Come to think of it, I haven't meet the most famous demi-human, the elves. I thought that Seryuu city should have them.

"That's right, I'd like to see the elves the most."

Nadi-san is showing a subtle expression hearing my reply.

She looks at the back and calls the manager. It's the old man who were always sleeping.

"Manager~ please come here for a bit."

The manager comes here while stroking his beard. He's much younger than I thought. He's a bit small and skinny, but he's a handsome man with a matching greenish black long hair.

The manager who got here doesn't say anyhing, Nadi-san lifts one side of his hair up. They're quite familiar.

Lookie lookie, she points her finger.

The manager's ear, the tip is a bit sharp. Is he demi-human too?

"Satou-san's reaction is too light."

"I'm sorry, what's wrong with manager-san's ear?"」

Nadi-san is mad after hearing my answer.

"Mou~ What are you saying, I'm showing you the proof since you said that you want to see an elf."

"Eh? He's an elf? I thought that elves' ears are longer though?"

Is he a half-elf?

The manager-san looks grumpy from my reply. He goes back to his position and resumes his nap.

Looks like I've offended him with my answer somehow.

"Mou~ manager! Just because you were mistaken with long-ears tribe

(Booch), please don't immediately sulk!"

"What kind of tribe are long-ears tribe? It's said that elves has ears this long from my hometown?"

I make a motion to express long ears with my finger.

"What Satou-san said is a tribe among ears tribe called long ears tribe (Booch). They're taller than normal people in average, and their hair is blond instead of green. They have talent in magic and live as long as the elves. The saga empire first emperor was an ears tribe and was a king of the hero, so the tribe is considered to be sacred. They seldom ever goes out of Saga's empire, since they even have a sanctuary there, so they're rarely seen. However, they're hated by the elves and is called 『False Elf』."

I see, let's not get it wrong next time.

I apologize to the manager for the rudeness. Since the manager answers by fluttering his hand while napping, I take that I'm forgiven.

◇

The next morning, we've finished having breakfast in the stalls. I have paid for the inn too.

Martha-chan said, "Stay here next time too~" as a carefree farewell, I leave the inn by driving the wagon.

<TLN: Operating? Or driving? Are you driving horses? or riding but he's not exactly riding on the horse.>

I thought that Zena-san will come to see me off, but she had an all nighter, she's probably still asleep. Let's send her a letter next time.

When we're departing I inadvertently see a white dot moving along the inner wall.

I greet the knight Soun at the gate entrance and leave the city. I'm troubling people if I wait here.

When I got a bit away from the gate, I hear, "Wait~", from behind.

Since I'd be a hindrance for the traffic here I go to an open space outside the gate and stop the wagon.

The traffice at the gate looks to be in disorder when I look at it. One horse is slipping out from there. I wave my hands from the top of the wagon.

"Satou-san!"

Zena-san is coming here on a horse while smoothing her hair which got disheveled by the wind. She's wearing a dress unsuitable for riding a horse. She wears different cosmetic than the usual.

"I'm glad that I made it!"

"Zena-san, I'm also glad that I got to meet you before I leave."

It's good that I don't end up being ungrateful.

"You're going to the labyrinth city right? Please send me a letter when you've settled down. I will absolutely reply back!"

"Yes, I will wihout fail."

I thought that she'd say that she wants to go together, but I'm glad that it's about letters.

"Pinky swear~", Arisa shows her smirking face from the wagon while saying unnecessary words.

Zena-san bites it and vigorously asks for "I want to pinky swear!", I couldn't refuse and we pinky swear.

Doing it at this age, I'm a bit embarrassed.

I'll properly say farewell to Zena-san who stares at her bend little finger ecstatically.

"Then, let's meet again some other time! I will send you a letter for certain after I arrive at the labyrinth city."

"Yes! I'm looking forward to the day I'm be able to see you again."

It's good that it didn't become a sad farewell.

My reunion with her will happen faster than I thought, but I still don't know at this time.

Zena-san earnestly waves her hand until the knight Soun grabs her by the nape to the station.

Intermission: A Certain Master and His Vassal's Conversation

"--As has been said, with the cooperation of all temples and magicians, the labyrinth won't expand toward the city, and as long as the ceremony is maintained, the barrier will last. In the future, for the sake of reinforce the barrier, we'll build several holy monuments in the eastern district. Please sign these documents for securing those sites."

The white-haired official-- consul of the earl, Ortes, read the report while adjusting his monocle.

"Then, is it usable? That labyrinth?!"

A man bend his body forward on the desk while having a joyful look--the earl of Seryuu.

Can the labyrinth be commercialized? He asked.

"The three great temple, Parion, Garleon and Tenion have conducted ceremonies to determine it and the result are 『ġēse』, 『ġīse』, and 『ġēse』. They're relatively favorable."

The consul stop there, and add, "However."

"Our experts have pointed out several problems."

"The first one must be about the entrance which is inside the city."

"That's exactly right. Other labyrinths have shown that monsters could overflow from it after some years. Therefore, it is necessary to have something to have blockades in case it happens."

"Additional walls outside the barrier huh... quite a lot of expense. Since we already have the quarry from 3 years ago, we only need the workers huh."

"Yes, and we have just secured women and men slaves who looks able from slave dealers."

The earl becomes dubious after hearing the consul.

"Do we need to buy slaves for this? Don't we have enough labor already?"

"The people have become agitated, we'll use the slaves until temporary walls are complete. After we have finished using them we could just put them in the mine. Or we could make the obedient ones to be soldiers."

The earl considers the prior investment before deciding. When the labyrinth is able to steadily supply magic cores, the economy of earldom will most likely quickly grow.

"Have you blocked the entrance for the time being?"

"Our experts said that it's dangerous to completely block it."

"The reason?"

"It could ruin a country they said."

"You mean『The Nightmare of Ishtan』? I thought it was just a myth, did it actually happen?"

There was a country called Ishtan 200 years ago. The country suffered significant damage from monsters that emerged from a labyrinth. The king who was worried with that invited a famous magician to seal off the entrance of the labyrinth. For safely closing the labyrinth and made the monsters threat disappear, the king was hailed as the wise king. However, 10 years later, the seal was broken by tsunami of monsters which overflowed from it and destroyed the entire country in a day.

"Wasn't Ishtan safe for 10 years? Then it should be alright to close it off for a bit while right?"

"Yes, we can't guarantee it but it's most likely fine."

"Alright, then close the labyrinth's entrance after the inner walls' construction is finished."

"I will arrange it at once. Please sign this document."

The consul presents the document which he has prepared it beforehand.

The earl signs while reading it and continues to talk with the consul.

"There's another problem in regard with the labyrinth."

"What is it?"

"The Dungeon Master was the senior demon who had attacked this castle some times ago."

The earl breaks his intense expression, and ask the consul expressionless.

"Is that definitive?"

"Yes, a magic soldier who participated with the castle's defense was on the spot. Furthermore, the assistant priest of Garleon, Nebinen, testified for the power of the demon."

"Fumu, we don't know the demon's goal but we've obtained the answers from the oracle. It can't be helped if we're anxious."

The consul furrows his brow a bit, but regains his composure.

"We're obliged to tell the king about the labyrinth, how will you choose the representatives?"

"Yeah, if I'm not mistaken one of the survivor of the labyrinth is a noble."

"It's viscount Belton."

"Then let's make Belton with several officials to be ones."

"I understand. I'll send a messenger to inform Viscount Belton."

The consul summons his subordinate and tell him to prepare the letter for the Viscount while adjusting his monocle.

The report itself has actually been sent to the kingdom with the magic mirror. But it's considered proper for a noble to be the messenger for reporting directly to the king.

"Were those all the things about the labyrinth?"

The earl is confirming while stroking his goatee which doesn't really suit him.

"No, I was wondering if we could send inspection teams to the labyrinth city, Selbira."

"Learning from the pioneer huh. How many do you suppose we should send?"

"Four groups consisting of two military units groups, a merchants group and a general citizens group would be good. Let's make them bring back the know-how about the public order problem, tax, and structure of explorer guild. If possible, I'd like them to invite some high ranking explorers to investigate our labyrinth's rank."

"General citizen? Is there any meaning in sending commoners?"

The earl asks dubiously.

"It's my bad for calling them general citizens. I mean to say 'people who are knowledgeable about the streets.'"

The earl who seemingly agree with the consul's answer exaggeratedly gives permission.

"Excellent, I'll leave personnels' selection to you. Tell me when you have your candidates."

"I respectfully accept it."

◇

"Were you able to grasp the identity of the silver masked hero?"

The public call him hero, but no one know his identity. Since the earl cannot overlook an existence that could equal senior demon hiding in this city, he did not only make his formal investigators but also the consul's spy to investigate.

"We have succeeded in narrowing down the candidates, but we're lacking conclusive evidence."

"Who and who?"

"The first candidate is Sir Kigori from the knight. He has body reinforcement magic and herculean-strength skill. He was off duty so he stayed at home during that day. There are many other things that match like his long blond hair, but he should has been boasting more if he was really the silver mask."

"Right, he's a narcissistic man isn't he?"

"The second candidate is Yasaku-shi the explorer. He's a level 45 warrior. He's not only high-leveled but also equipped with various strong magic tools, so he could possibly endure the demon's attacks. He's accustomed with fighting monsters and demons. However, his hair is black."

"What is such man doing in this kind of frontier place?"

"Your excellency, please stop belittling your own territory."

The earl is laughing while expressing his gratitude.

"His aim is probably dragon scales from the Dragon's Valley."

"Is he suicidal?"

"No, what I said isn''t exactly right, he's probably aiming for dragons which are nesting away from the dragon's valley. As one would expect, he couldn't possibly come back alive if he goes to the Dragon's Valley."

"Yeah, it'd be over just by the scales tribe before he could even meet the dragon."

The consul clears his throat and goes back to the discussion.

"The conversation had wandered off. The third candidate is Yasaku-shi's companion, the magic swordsman, Tan-shi. His level is high at 42, and he's probably used with dealing with demon like Yasaku-shi. He's a blond, but he can't possibly fought the senior demon while being only able to use body reinforcing magic."

"Right, it's not like the opponent is unaffected by magic."

"Moreover, explorers usually fight in party."

After being lost in thought for a while,

"I see, certainly we're lacking the decisive evidence to ascertain who the silver mask is."

"Yes."

"Is there no other candidate?"

"It's not like there isn't, but beside the three above, it's impossible judging by their ability..."

"They might be hiding their true ability you know?"

The earl is grinning.

"There are four people who were omitted from candidacy. The first one is the Earl predecessor's bastard child, Ratts-dono. He was present in both uproars. His hair and height match the condition. He also has the need to hide his true ability and identity. That said, someone like him probably remained as a spectator until the end."

"That's right, brother-in-law is that kind of guy."

The villainous face of his brother-in-law floats in the earl's mind. It looks like a villain compared to the real person, probably because of the long discord between them.

He's not related with the silver mask, but since he was present during both the incident with the demon, the earl orders the consul to keep an eye on him.

"The second one is the alchemist, Akabana-dono. He wore the same robe as the silver mask, he even had the silver mask in his house. He was present at the day of the uproar, showing his face on the relief station."

"Hou? That's suspicious."

The consul shakes his head at the earl's words.

"However, silver mask isn't an uncommon thing. Because it's used during harvest festival to ward off demon, there are probably more than 10 shops which sell it."

"Fumu, was it a man who was fighting?"

"No, the figure was slim and the skin was abnormally pale that it didn't match the strength the silver mask was showing. A friend of mine testified that."

"Maybe he drank medicine that could change his body?"

"The elder confirm the existence of such medicine but the feedback reaction is too strong that it's suicidal for healthy person to drink it."

"Is that so."

Even if it's possible, if the medicine makes your body handicapped then there would be no meaning in fighting. The earl thinks so and moves his interest to the next candidate.

"The third one is a man called Usu who's affiliated with a criminal guild called Brown Rat."

"It's a guy who's a polar opposite of a hero."

"This man had similar physique and hair and he was confirmed to be present during both uproars. Moreover, the one who was carrying the demon's arm during the rebellion uproar was this guy."

"Hou? Did he cut the demon's arm and got possessed by it?"

"The possibility exists."

The consul picks on thin document from the stack he's holding and gives it to the earl.

"A hypothesis has arrived from the elder. 'Wasn't the demon who possessed the man called Uusu different from the demon who attacked the castle?' He said."

"For two senior demons appeared at the same time, isn't that impossible?"

"Maybe they were demons who were in hiding in hope of creating a labyrinth, he said."

"And then they fought each other because one intruded another's territory is it?"

"It's written as such in the hypothesis."

"How much is the truth from what old man thunder said?"

The earl puts one hand on his chin while thinking.

If it was said by someone else then we would laugh at it together, but the elder that the consul refer-- the earl call him the old man thunder, is the leading magician in this territory and even in the kingdom he's among the five most powerful one. Even if what he said seemed absurd, it couldn't be ignored.

"Right then, since there's no evidence I can't say for sure, but if it's the truth then a lot of things would start to make sense."

"Like the abnormal endurance?"

"Yes. While fist fighting the demon, he received a concentrated attack from 30 magicians and came out unscathed. He couldn't be human."

It's possible with certain magic tool, but the earl and the consul have no idea about it.

The first three candidates who were mentioned cannot clear this condition too, so they are exempted.

"If he's a demon, then that question is solved huh."

"The knight leader who was commanding also reported that, 『He was strong without no doubt, but his movement was like an amateur.』."

"A senior demon who isn't used to fighting huh..."

"Or maybe, it was confused with the difference of the possessed body compared with its real body...."

If the other demons are able to hide themselves, then the threat can't be ignored.

The earl thinks so and translates it into action.

"Alright, arrest all members of Brown Rat guild. Thoroughly investigate everything about this man called Uusu."

"I understand."

◇

"Oh yeah, I almost forgot with the last candidate."

The consul pulls a report from the document stack.

"He's called Satou, a self-proclaimed merchant."

"Self-proclaimed?"

"Yes, the person introduced himself as a merchant but no one in the merchant guild knew him, and he didn't have any business activity during his visit to Seryuu city."

The earl who had his interest piqued chimed in.

"Is he a spy from other country?"

"No, his performance was too poor to be a spy. The only things he did after arriving at this city was just sightseeing and doing tryst with women. He seemed to be well-off but he did nothing but wild merrymaking."

"Sightseeing? In this place... a city with scarce tourist attraction?"

"Yes, it's a good way to check on the city's facilities and road as a way to confirm the nation's power, but it's too conspicuous."

"That's right, I've never seen anyone who goes on a tour in this Seryuu city."

The consul continues his talk after clearing his throat.

"This person is like the three earlier, he was present during both uproars, and was a survivor from the labyrinth."

"Self-proclaimed merchant, but actually an explorer eh?"

The earl finds it quite amusing.

"Well, according to viscount Belton, 『He was excellent at commanding the demi-human slaves, but the actual person himself was mediocre. He's a coward who didn't equip a sword, couldn't use magic, and only stealthily threw stones from behind the demi-human slaves.』, he said."

"Is that guy acquainted with viscount Belton?"

"Rather than an acquaintance, he's the man who rescued viscount Belton when he was caught by monster."

"Hou, should we give him some kind of medal?"

"I think it's unnecessary since the viscount himself is giving him rewards..."

The earl nods while getting back to the story.

"Even without fighting strength, he was able to escape from the labyrinth. We should consider that he has some kind of experience."

"Isn't it just because the demi-human slaves were strong?"

"From the Yamato stone check, they're all level 13, around the level of an average knight."

The consul reports it plainly. His expression doesn't show if he discriminate against demi-human.

"All of his slaves? It's not just one slave who is at the same level as an average knight?"

"Yes, the three are."

"That's some battle potentials."

"Yes, since they're demi-human slaves they're not allowed to have weapons inside the city so there's no problem with the public order, but it's extraordinary for a self-proclaimed merchant's guards."

The earl is contemplating while the consul waits for his master.

"A son of a noble, or a wealthy merchant's son... No, can't be, someone like that would have humans as their guards. The prince of the lost kingdom..."

"I think you're jumping to conclusion for that one."

"You're right, it's fun to guess his identity but there's no meaning to it."

"Yes."

"Let's scout for people to be put into the inspection team for labyrinth city."

"Are you serious about that?"

"Write the candidates."

"I understand."

◇

"Still, the day after he arrived at Seryuu city, he was at the spot where the demon attacked, moreover, the day after that, he was present during the rebellion, and again, he got dragged into the labyrinth. What an unlucky man."

"If that man is bringing in demons then we should expel him from this territory..."

"That can't be. Nebinen testified that he stopped the rebellion, found out the mastermind behind it and discerned the demon."

The earl raises his eyes after hearing the consul's report.

"He's quite an able man. If what Nebinen said isn't a lie..."

"It's not just Nebinen-dono, a magic soldier who was present also testified the same thing."

"Fumu, a mysterious man huh... I'm interested but I can't get free time to meet him."

"Yes, since you need to reorganize the territory army, rebuild the destroyed city, the isolation of the labyrinth and other things that keep piling."

The earl seemingly of doing mischief, grins while crooking his lips.

"About that medal earlier."

"Are you going to really give him one?"

"No, not medal, let's give him gentleman title."

"...court rank is it?"

<TLN: Not sure which rank is the earl is using, so this is going to be temporary although well...>

The consul is unusually shaken with the earl's world and his words is mixed with thorn.

"You don't mind right? It's a rank given to 10 people a year. We don't need to give him position or pension either. At most his privileges are being at the lowest seat of nobles and exempted of the tax."

"To give a person of unknown birth and parentage a rank, this vassal who has served for generations object."

The earl has anticipated the consul's objection and solemnly states his excuse.

"He saved the oldest member of that vassal, viscount Belton's life, stopped the rebellion, and uncovered the plot of the demon. Aren't those enough for achievements?"

"There is no objection to his achievements but..."

"Furthermore, I'm not giving him viscount or baron rank but a false noble rank of gentleman."

The consul realizes that the earl isn't serious from his expression.

"Please stop joking. Right now is the important time for the earldom to make rapid progress."

"Sorry, forgive me. I was having fun imagining how my vassal would look like if I give a vagabond a court rank..."

Admonished by the consul, the earl apologizes.

Having finished letting off the steam with the joke, the earl and his consul move to their next agenda. Their night is long.

Intermission: Friends of Yuni

I've made new friends today.

They're demi-human girls called Pochi-chan and Tama-chan.

All demi-humans that I've ever meet eyes were like stray cats ready to bare their fangs, they were scary. But those girls are different.

◇

My morning starts early, because I'd get scolded if I don't get to the gate inn before the dawn. When the sky begins to brighten, I leave the orphanage to the main street.

It's dim, but I'm not afraid. Because I'm with other children who are running toward their job's place.

I enter through the back door since the big gate for carriages is closed. The back door is also closed, but for the short me, I can just slip through the small gap.

I head to the staff door through the courtyard. The water is low when I peek at the water jugs. I must fill it before the landlady woke up!

I pick up a bucket and go to the well.

"Kuu~~~~~, heavy~~~~."

Hanging on my body weight, I pull the rope connected with the bucket.

Drawing water is a hard labor. Especially for someone as light like me.

I wonder if the day will come when I can draw water effortlessly like Martha-san?

"Intruder~?"

"Suspicious person nano desu~."

I was surprised by voices from the dark and let go off the ropes.

Ah, even though I was about to succeed...

I turn toward where the voices came from.

From there 4 lights are floating out together with carefree voices!

"Kyaa-----!"

"Unyaa----"

"Nyuu----"

I wasn't able to suppress my scream. But anyone would be surprised if they were in the dark.

Encouraged by that fact, I harshly scold at the someones who are in the dark.

"Don't raise your voice suddenly! I'll have to draw again now!"

"Sorry~?"

"Nano desu~."

Those someones frankly apologizing making me losing my tension.

The sun gradually rises and I can see the faces of those girls.

Those girls are beast-men.

◇

I was surprised at first and shouted, "Don't come here!".

But Pochi and Tama didn't mind it.

"I'll help~""Nodesu~."

Saying so, they begin pulling water in place of me. Pochi quickly pulls the rope like a joke.

I wonder just how strong beast-men children are. Or maybe these girls are special?

After Pochi is finished drawing the water, this time Tama says, "Unfair~? Tama will also do it~", and begins drawing water. These girls must have thought that this is a play or something!

Oh god I'm sorry, Yuni is a bad girl.

I use the two who are happily playing around until the bucket is full of water. Moreover, not only drawing, they also help me carrying the water.

As a thanks, I will share today's meal with these girls.

◇

I break apart the black bread I've received as breakfast and bring it to the two with soup.

The work here is hard but it's nice because I get delicious meal.

Even without garnish, the soup is far better than the thin soup that is occasionally served on the orphanage, even the slightly sour black beard goes well with it.

There's no the bittt~er steamed gabo fruit or pickled gabo leaves as the only meal!

The two will surely be delighted!

While thinking so, I go to the stable.

There's a big lizard-man woman beside the two girls there!

I'm scared enough to almost drop the soup bowl, but I can't waste the important meal! I frantically bear it.

"Yuni~?""Nano desu~."

The two girls welcome me.

But, wait?

Hey, what are those in your hands?

"Meat~?""Cheese nano desu~."

No way~~~~!

Eh? Eh? That's a lie right?

You can't eat meat even after so many years right?

How do slaves, two demi-human slaves at that, get that kind of expensive thing?

Furthermore, it's quite a big lump!? Huh?

I hold out to keep my drool.

It came out a bit but I immediately wipe it.

"I thought I'd eat with you together..."

'I'll share you this', giving like I'm above them, would be quite comical.

"Ara, aren't you the errand girl? What's your name again? Since you're here already, why don't we eat together?"

From behind the lizard girl, two girls come out. The who started talking is a violet-haired girl of the same age as me, and the other is a black-haired Onee-san with regrettable face.

The violet-haired girl, talks in a really bossy way that I wonder if she's really the same age as me, but she, Arisa, is. She cut the dried meat and cheese lumps and shares it with me.

The lizard girl, called Liza, is going to say something but, Arisa says, "It's fine, the little girl's share is trivial. Master will surely consent! If he's mad then I'll be the only one who'd get scolded, moumantai.", and Liza-san understands. I don't really understand what Arisa is saying but now is the time to savor the taste of these meat and cheese.

I puff my cheeks like a squirrel while thoroughly enjoying the taste many times over. I'm sure that I'll remember this day for a while, and I'm confident that even gabo fruits would taste like meat and cheese!

◇

Rather than dividing my meal as a thanks, I got to eat delicious things instead.

Furthermore, after the meal, Pochi and Tama help me taking care of the horses. The two are really strong.

Even Liza-san who was bored, helps changing the litter boxes of the horses.

I thought that demi-humans are scary, was I wrong?

◇

There are good things and also bad things.

The landlady told me and Martha to buy firewoods from the lumber shop.

Umm? Do we really have to bring this two bundles to the inn?

Martha-san says, "Yosh! Let's do our best~." but you won't be able to easily carry it you know?

Still, I'm an employee, I won't complain. If I carelessly complain I might get fired, and I don't know if I could get another job then. In the future, if possible I don't want to become a courtesan at the street corner.

I lift the firewoods with all my power.

My feet are staggering, but I won't lose.

Since Marthan-chan is carrying bundle of firewoods even bigger than mine!

Carrying the firewoods.

Yes, carrying it.

...Carrying firewoods.

When I'm about to faint, the weight is suddenly no more.

I look up and an unknown man has taken my firewoods.

No, don't take it! I must bring that home!

Before I could complain, Martha-san thanks him.

I said he's unknown, but when I look at him again, it turns out that he's a guest on the inn. He's the person who gave me tips lavishly just by bringing water to his room this morning. It seems he's called Satou-san.

Satou-san not only carry my firewoods but also Martha-san's.

A man is strong after all. He's carrying it without breaking a sweat. I didn't notice it before, but Pochi and Tama who are carrying big rucksacks are together with him. So the master of the two is this man. It might be good to be a slave of this man, I'm thinking such.

◇

When I get back to the inn, I continue to take care of the horses. Pochi and Tama also help me like in the morning.

That's okay.

It's okay?

But.

"Please don't, I'd be scolded by the landlady if I let a guest helps me!"

For the master who's wearing such expensive-looking robe, please don't help me taking care of the horses.

Please stop with that disappointed face.

It's like I'm doing something bad!

◇

"Plate!"

I declare so and flip the card.

The plate is drawn on the back.

"Yes~ this is the third!"

I carefully collect the card that I worked hard to get.

This is a tool for learning letters it seems. At first, Martha-san who can read letter was teaching us but in the middle, Arisa devised this play.

After that, everyone is engrossed with it! This is the first time I've done this play.

I've always wanted to learn how to read letters, but it was like saying, "I want to fly on the sky". It was such dream-like things....

But now it's different!

Only in a few hours, I've learned how to read 7 letters!

◇

Fun thing doesn't last for long they said, but this is too much.

Even though I've made new friends, tomorrow Pochi and Tama are going to leave this Seryuu city.

But I've made a promise to the two. I will absolutely learn words and write them a letter!

I don't know the cost to send a letter, but I have a secret saving of two copper coins. If I have this much, then I should be able to send a letter.

In the evening, when I've finished my work, Satou-san gives me a bag full of wood blocks. When I look inside, although they're a bit poor, they're the same thing as the learning cards.

He says, "It's a thank you for getting along with our girls.", and gives it to me. I want to thank him immediately, but I don't know how to express this gratitude.

◇

Oh yes, the wood-block cards that Satou-san gave become extremely popular at the orphanage. Some interested older children asked for woods waste from the lumber shop and the children who are good with arts drew the pictures.

Even though a week hasn't passed since then, we have already finished making 3 sets.

It'd be nice if everyone becomes able to read letters in one year~

That's my dream.

It's nice if that really happen.

The work is hard as always, but after that day, I'm seeing more happy dreams each day.

5-1. Journey (1)

Satou's here. Typically in a game, it's walking in the beginning, carriage in the middle and teleportation or airship in the endgame, getting convenient as it goes.

A friend said that going on an adventure in a carriage is miserable.

Since this isn't an adventure, I guess it's okay to enjoy myself right?

◇

The wagon makes clattering and rumbling noise as it travels through the highway between hills.

"Uuu~."

"Nya~."

Whenever small animals like rabbits and rats show up near the bushes, Pochi and Tama react as if they're going to jump out of the wagon. Every time it happened, Liza seized the two by their waists. Alhough the wagon is only about 20 Km/H fast, so they won't get hurt even if they jump out.

"Pochi, Tama, you'll fall if you lean over too much, sit on the back of the coachman's stand."

"Yes nano desu."

"Ay~."

The two reply with good answers and place themselves on the left and right sides of the coachman's stand.

Though it's probably only until they find something else.

The winds are slightly cold, but since it's cloudless the warmth from the sunlight is pleasant.

After we got out of Seryuu city for a while, we came into a forest, or rather, a gathering of branching thickets. We came out of it after 1 hour, and now we're advancing through what you'd call hilly areas.

I could see shepherds herding their sheep on the other side of the hills sometimes. I've only seen goat-made products in the city, but there are shepherds too huh.

Gakon. Gakokokon.

The wagon shakes as the wheels are climbing up. From behind, I'm hearing Lulu's small shriek, and Arisa's abusive languages, but I'll pretend that I didn't hear it and let it carried away by the wind.

Since the highway is made to avoid the hills, it's winding. The ground is not paved with stone pavements, the soils are bare. As a result, the wheels stumble into rough spots several times. Although the horses are just moving along the course of the road by themselves, it's the coachman's job to fine tune the wagon.

Even though I'm supported by skill, due to the lack of my actual experience I couldn't avoid them all.

Arisa climbs above Pochi's head and shows her face from behind (me).

"I'd love for you to drive more carefully~."

"Don't be unreasonable to a novice coachman."

I put aside Arisa's protest irresponsibly. Pochi looks troubled with Arisa who nests on top of her head.

Oh, Pochi is counterattacking, she catches Arisa's hands and playfully bites it.

"W, wait Pochi, stop that. The sleeves will get sticky with drools~."

"Hamumu, nyanoresu~."

Arisa who pulls her arm back and Pochi who hounds her rush toward the luggage rack near the coachman's stand.

"Don't get rowdy now~", I warn them lightly. The wagon is shaking, it'd be bad if they fall.

Tama who sees Arisa and Pochi playing around looks raring to go.

Ah, Tama also participates in the war.

Since Tama isn't suited for patience or perseverance, I guess this can't be helped.

◇

The trip is more relaxed than I thought it'd be. Since this is a fantasy world, I thought that we would encounter some monsters or something, but there weren't any even up to now.

I tried searching in wide area but there were no dangerous animal or monster. At most it was just foxes. I spot packs of wolves sometimes but they're 10 kilometers away at the edge of the forest earlier, so there's no need to be vigilant for the time being.

When I went on a date with Zena-san back then, she said that the military is doing practice by regularly eliminate dangerous animals and monsters around the perimeter of Seryuu city. This is probably thanks to that.

Liza who seemingly couldn't let the little girls who were still playing around any longer, warns them. I had thought that they should be stopped soon, so it's helpful.

Replacing Liza, Lulu who took refuges on the back of the wagon sitting behind me.

Come to think of it, I haven't talk with Lulu much. Communication is important, let's talk with her properly from now on.

"Lulu, are you fine? You don't have motion sickness or the like right?"

"Y, yes!"

I thought that she wouldn't reply, but quite a surprised voice came out.

Right, she moved behind me silently, so she would be surprised if I call her out without turning my head.

The beastkin girls have high physical abilities and I thought that it's natural, but for Lulu who is just a normal girl, it would be surprising. I've almost replaced my common sense with unreasonableness--- I should be careful.

"You don't have to be so nervous. Just like Arisa--- or rather not, be more like Pochi and the girls who casually interact with me."

"Such things... Since I'm slave, it's unbecoming."

Lulu lets out a faint voice that sound as if she's about to disappear, seem like this will need some time.

For the time being, I should get her to get accustomed with having conversations with me.

"Lulu, do you have anything you like?"

"I like taking care of Arisa."

Is she a siscon?　No, it's probably just a normal sisterly love.

I'm reluctant, but I continue to talk about Arisa as the topic. To clear away her reserved attitude, it's important to continue the conversations no matter the topic.

"You really love your younger sister."

"I sometimes question who is the older one."

"Certainly, she really doesn't act like a 11 years-old."

"Arisa is a genius since she was a child."

"How was she?"

Rather than genius, it was because she had the experience from her previous life, but I'd better not talk about it huh?

After that, Lulu continues to brag about Arisa happily until noon. Humans are good at speaking about the thing they love, this is no different even in another world.

Lulu who talks about Arisa, looks very happy. Her eyes are sparkling, her cheeks faintly blush too. Her face which is normally that of beautiful girl, gets even more beautiful. I'm scared that I would fall into a dangerous world (lolicon) if I'm careless.

I could hear Arisa who seems to be in agony for being praised very highly behind but maybe because she understands my intention, it doesn't seem like she would interrupt Lulu's story.

When the wagon goes on a straight line for a while I look at the luggage rack. Arisa is writhing on the floor while Pochi and Tama are mimicking her by lying down on the sides. Noticing my gaze, the two look toward here while still on their mimicking position. I gesture that it's nothing, and then they resume to imitate Arisa happily.

Yup, peaceful is nice~.

Then, Lulu continues to talk about Arisa for nearly one hour after that.

◇

Let's change the story since Lulu's voice started to become hoarse.

Of course, I'm ready to hear Lulu's talk about Arisa anytime. Let's make Arisa participate if I need to punish her.

Just as I try to get the timing, I hear a cute growl from the side.

Confirming on the menu, it's about time for lunch. We could eat in the wagon as it continues but I want to check on the condition of the horses fixtures so I decide to take a break for the lunch. It's not like we are in a rush, and we won't reach town for two or three days anyway.

According to the map, there's a boulders formation just up ahead, so I pick that place for the break.

"Let's have a lunch soon."

"Meal~?""Meat nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama answer faster than Lulu who has become red on my side. Jumping from back of the wagon, a girl shows her face.

"Shall I cut some cheeses and breads if we're going to eat in the wagon?"

Liza, weren't you just keeping watches on the back of the wagon?

Arisa who has revived follow after Liza. Her voice has become hoarse while her hair is in disorder, she's a bit scary.

"We have a nice weather today, let's eat like we're having a picnic~."

"That's right. Looks like that there's a boulders formation up ahead, let's take a break for 1 hour there."

After that we advance through the road for awhile, in the middle of the way we get out of the highway and climb a hill. The carriage shakes and loses its speed because the ground is underdeveloped grasslands. I advance the wagon carefully.

Soon, we can see the boulders.

Each and every one of them is quite big. The boulders are about 2 meter high and nearly 7 meter wide.

I stop the wagon near on the side of a boulder.

I descend from the coachman's stand, and help Lulu to get off it.

Arisa jump toward me while saying, "Tou!", like some kind of hero, I avoid her.

"Wait~ Aren't your treatment toward me getting worse?"

"That's not true at all. You're cute Arisa.", I answer half-heartedly, and lowered the fixture of the wagon.

"You didn't put your heart into it! You'll stray off the path of delinquent soon~"

Your vocabularies reeks of Showa era like usual.

Pochi and Tama also imitate Arisa, "Tou~?""Tou nano desu~", they're jumping while saying that. It's good that they didn't imitate the pose.

I release the yokes on the horse and tie the veins on the wagon. I check on the fixture of the wagon, and it seems that the horses bodies don't have scratch so it's fine.

Liza comes down with a barrel filled with water, I give it to the horses. I'll give them the priority because they're the ones who work the hardest today.

"Liza, prepare something that's easy to make like sandwich or salad."

I ask Liza for the meal.

Since it's bad to only have Liza to do it, let's try to see whether Lulu or Arisa can cook.

"Unfortunately, Arisa's female power level isn't high enough for cooking."

Arisa said so in monotone while looking toward the day after tomorrow. Is she feeling guilty? I won't say such old-fashioned thing like a woman have to be able to cook, okay.

"I've no experience in cooking, but I could do things like peeling fruits or making tea."

"Then, Lulu will act as Liza's assistant. Help her cooking by following her instruction."

"Yes! I will do my best."

I ask Lulu to help Liza. I wonder if she's happy for being helpful, I feel like she could get her voice out more around me like she has accustomed to me. I wonder if it's too early to think that?

Should I ask Pochi and Tama to collect firewood?

When I look at the two, they're exuding atmosphere like they're about to run toward the meadow. Their faces turn to me, but their ears twitches every time the bushes make sound.

Let's occasionally let them play appropriate for their age~.

"Private Pochi! Private Tama!"

"Ay!"

"Yes nanodesu!"

Good answers.

"I will assign you two a mission! Check the security around the perimeter of the boulders!"

"Ay!""Desu!"

The two begin to run like arrows. Let's remind them, "I'll call you two back when the meal is ready, so don't go too far~", so they won't overdo it.

I guess I'll make Arisa to collect the fuel.

"Arisa, gather things like dead leaves and firewood near the bushes around here."

"Kay~."

I direct Arisa as I give salts to the horses. Arisa who doesn't have any particular complaint go to gather the firewood while singing some minor anime-like songs.

5-2. Journey (2)

Satou's here. Hiking is nice, isn't it. When you're surrounded by nature, fully inhaling the scents of the trees and the plants, you completely forget about all the unpleasant affairs at work.

◇

After I've finished taking care of the horses, I begin to compound for deodorants behind the wagon. I want to do something about the intense smells of the goat leather and wool.

During compounding, Liza come to ask if the meal is fine without soup since the firewood isn't enough. It's cold, and the black bread without the soup would be too hard.

I catch a sight of the Light Hot Plate beside me which I've used to heat water for compounding.

I decided to use this to help for cooking. After heating the soup with this, you could put the burning firewood until it's boiled. I'll leave the magic supply for Light Hot Plate to Arisa.

Still, I didn't think that gathering for fuel would be this hard. I should have bought them in Seryuu city.

I'll take out scrap woods from the Storage if we get in a pinch. The fact that the Item Box could only store item with particular size is a bottleneck.

◇

I, who have been making deodorant behind the wagon, could smell the nice aroma from the soup. The finished deodorant is in the form of a white powder. I put it in a small bag and it seems that you used it by mixing it together with the smell source.

I take out the goat leathers and wools from the storage and put them inside the Item Box in a small sack with the deodorant. Since they were too many to get inside, I leveled up the Item Box skill level to 4.

Liza comes to say that the meal is ready exactly right after I've finished my business even though she probably didn't watch me.

Now then, since the meal is ready I should call Pochi and Tama back.

I call them in loud voice.

Yup, let's buy a whistle when we get to a town.

I do have whistles in my Storage but it'd be disastrous if I blow it and make a kaijuu or an angel appear, so I won't.

"A prey nano desu~."

Pochi comes back while boastfully presenting a rabbit on her hand. The ears are short for a rabbit. According the AR, it's called Short-eared Rabbit. Pochi is dirtied with grass and mud from the top of her head to her foot, but she's smiling nicely.

I relay the rabbit I've received to Liza.

I praise Pochi while stroking her head. Since I can't let her have a lunch like she is, I put water to a bucket and wash her face and arms with it. I've made this policy from the time we were in the labyrinth before we had meals, so when she's presented with the water bucket, she's splashing the water around. Lastly, she shakes her head to remove the water without using a towel. This habit of her is irreparable it seems.

"Meat~? I've brought it~."

This time it's Tama who has come back, her voice comes from behind.

I wonder what did Tama catch? Is it a bird~?

"Meat! ...nano desu?", Pochi tilt her head in puzzle midway.

When I turn back, the thing that Tama holds is an about 80-cm high rat... or not. The AR shows that it's a rat-man.

The rat-man seems to be unconscious, but at least he's still alive.

"Tama, please let that one go."

While looking a bit sad, Tama says, "Prey~ No good~?", she's coming here while tilting her head.

I almost allow it involuntarily, but let's not eat men. I should teach her about this gradually.

"You'll hurt your stomach, so no."

"Aye~."

Tama begins to spin on spot while still holding the rat-man. Then, she throws the rat-man across the meadow.

Oioi, that was too wild no matter how you look at it.

The rat-man has its HP decreased by a little, but it seems to be alive.

Since we treated him too rough, I decided to check if he has any external wounds. Before that, I scold Tama properly.

The rat-man doesn't seems to have any injury. According to AR, he doesn't have any skill, age 2. As expected of rats, they grow fast. He's grasping something that look like a ball of mud on his hand, but, since I have no interest on it, I leave it alone. It's probably this child's boxed lunch.

Since he only seems to have fainted, I put him on a meadow a bit away from our camp. I put several fruits beside him as a remuneration for the trouble.

On the other hand, Liza has quickly dismantled the rabbit that Pochi caught and she is grilling it now. The entrails that has been washed then properly cut into tiny pieces by Liza, and fried together with some herbs.

By the way, we're using a dead tree from the other side of the boulder found by Tama as the fuel.

"My stomach is hungry nodesu~."

"Copycat is bad nano desu~."

"Meat~ nano desu~."

Arisa demands for lunch while imitating as Pochi. Pochi protests at her, Tama follows suit.

...this is slightly amusing nanodesu.

Since the rat-man doesn't seem like he'll wake up, we decided to begin our meal.

Liza holds out the biggest piece of meat.

I pass it to Pochi because she's the MVP this time. The second biggest one is given to Tama. She was no good with the prey, but she played an active role in securing the firewood.

The meat of the rabbit is tender and delicious. I don't know if whether this is because of Liza being good at cooking or the fresh ingredient, but good food is good food.

I'm offered the herb fried entrails, but since the meat is enough, I decline.

Kasakasa.

Even if I don't look at the direction of the sounds, I know from the radar that the rat-man who has awakened runs away. When I check on it later, the fruits has been properly taken away.

◇

I'm enjoying a tea break with Liza and Lulu after the meal.

Lulu pours me the tea. She was taught in the royal court even if it was just a small country, so the tea made by Lulu is on different level than the one I usually drank. Truly delicious.

Seemingly not at all dissatisfied when I praise her, even while acting humble, her face is smiling.

Arisa follows Pochi and Tama along to go on a sightseeing of the boulders. The person itself said, "I'm surveying", of course, but I could only saw pleasure trip on her mind from her tension.

I search the map while enjoying the tea's aroma.

I tried to look for rat-men, but the only rat-man around here is the child earlier. I wonder if he's a lost child?

From the map, there's a hidden village dozen of kilometer away southeast from here, so he's probably a lost child from a rat-man village outside of the earl's territory. Fortunately the lost child is running into the direction of the village, and the dangerous animals are only foxes, so he's probably going to be okay even left alone.

Since I was only searching for monsters' special attacks or level earlier, I had missed the rat-man. There might be thieves too, so I make an adjustment to the search pattern.

Mumumu, there are thieves. Although there is quite a distance, and the highway is separated from the southeast mountain so we probably won't encounter them anytime soon.

Uoh!

When I narrowed it further, red dots begin to rapidly appear on the screen, but there's nothing when I look around.

Normally insects or small animals won't be shown since I've made it OFF by default.

When I face toward the nearby red dot, something is escaping.

Is it a small animal looking for leftovers? If this was a game, then, animals which likely won't be enemies would be excluded from the start. This is troublesome.

I guess I should exclude anything with level 1 without poison. They won't hurt even if they bite anyway.

Alright, I've excluded anything without poison or special abilities.

Hm~mm, the red dots still isn't decreasing.

No wait, when I look better, are those insects? Mosquito-like insects are flying. Furthermore, they have [Race Characteristic: Blood-sucking]. Right, mosquitoes suck blood, don't they?

Let's put aside this setting only for when we go to mountain or thickets, and exclude anything beside thing with poison in normal situation. I'll do something about creature I see for the first time with AR. If they're level 1 then elimination them is trivial anyway.

◇

When I'm just about to finish the adjustment, I could hear Arisa's voice calling me from the top of the boulder.

How did she climb that up?

"Is there anything?"

"A bit, come up on top of this rock."

Pochi come backs from the back of the boulder while piggybacking Tama. Apparently, Arisa had made this two to be the stepping stone to go above.

"Arisa is unfair~."

"Pochi also wants to go up nodesu."

<TLN: Yes, this isn't a typo. Pochi occasionally doesn't use 'nano desu' but 'no desu'. I guess it sounds awkward so I'll make it 'nodesu' whenever she does from no own.>

Arisa stretch her arm to reach out, but it's impossible to pull us with one arm.

Since the two people looks eager to go on top, I raise them in turn.

Although because I can't find scaffolds for myself, I jump up once to get there at a blind spot of Liza and Lulu.

"See it from here."

I look at the direction where Arisa points at.

I'm seeing collapsed boulders there. What does Arisa want me to see?

"What am I seeing?"

"Mou, look at it properly."

I see. I finally understand what Arisa wants to show.

"Are those stones from shrine's archway (torii)?"

<TLN: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torii>

"I can only make conjectures since they've collapsed, but looks like there are 3 collapsed torii lined up. Maybe there was a shrine here."

I stare at the remains of the torii's stones. I tell Arisa the information from AR.

I thought that they were just traces of megalithic civilizations, but...

"It's a broken Travel Gate."

It's a well-known gimmick for shortcuts when you're traveling in a game. The ones here seems to have been broken since ancient times, so I don't know the how or if it's possible to repair.

Hearing that, Arisa enthusiastically says, "You can fix it?!" but I briefly answer, "Impossible."

It is attractive to have shortcuts like the one from games, but I'd like to refrain from jumping into an unknown location.

I didn't think too much about this before I become the person concerned, but I wonder why games' protagonists could so simple-mindedly go through gates.

It seems that the boulders has magic catalyst properties, they momentarily react when I try to pour it magic. Although I don't want it to end up with, [You've been trapped inside a stone], situation if it malfunction, so I'll stop acting rashly.

◇

Right after we depart, the three little girls went straight to the dreamland. As soon as the wagon started running, they immediately went asleep, probably because they're full. Arisa seems to have lost to her physical limit too.

"Master, could you possibly teach me how to drive the wagon?"

"That's fine, you can sit here."

I agree to Liza's request and make a space on the coachman stand.

It'd be helpful to have people who could drive the wagon beside me, let's teach the other members later.

"Do you want to try it too, Lulu?"

"Yes, I'd like to."

I tried to bring this matter to Lulu who's sitting right behind me, and unexpectedly got a good answer.

I stop the wagon for a moment, and change place with Lulu while holding the reins from the luggage rack. I make Lulu to sit on the coachman stand for training of her together with Liza.

"First, it's about the operation of reins."

I give Liza the reins first.

"Hold the reins a bit loose. But be careful not to make it too loose."

I teach the two like how Yosagu-san taught me.

The two only make minor errors which is normal for people who are tense, and have successfully learned how to drive.

Liza's driving is, though a bit rough, enough for a passing mark. She learned it several hours faster than me, and she's already at the level where she could replace me holding the reins.

>[Education Skill Acquired]

Lulu's driving is, although a bit more unreliable than Liza, fine enough to drive in a flat plain. It'd be fine if she practices it little by little.

While I and Liza watch over her, the wagon driven by Lulu shakes and rumbles while proceeding along the highway between the hills.

5-3. Black Mist

Satou's here. Although we have what we call pending plans, Death March doesn't exist in this world if I could just smoothly schedule the minute details beforehand.

◇

"Yiss~ 10 straight victories!"

"It's only Arisa who wins, unfair~ Pochi also wants to win~."

"Tama too~"

I can hear the little girl's voices from behind. The members beside me have been playing the learning cards for about 2 hours.

Since I couldn't really look away, I don't know the details but it seems that Arisa has continue to childishly won.

"Arisa, here's the commemoration for 10 successive victories."

"What is it? A picture book?"

"If you could win that many, then you should be able to read it right?"

"Nnn~ I could probably do."

"Then read it for Pochi and Tama. If they're only studying the learning cards, they would get bored before they remember the letters."

"Aye aye."

At first Arisa was reluctant with the picture book I held out, but she finally consented and spread the book open on the floor.

Still, it's amazing that she could learn it in two days.

Pochi and Tama who were complaining since a while ago, quietly sat and perked their ears when the story began.

With nothing but Arisa reading the picture book as a BGM, the wagon continues advancing.

I ask for a change of coachman since I want to search the location for our campsite today on the map.

I wanted to ask Liza at first, but since she's listening to Arisa's story with a serious face, I ask Lulu instead.

"Please handle the wagon for a bit."

"Yes, master."

I move to the edge of the coachman stand to make space for Lulu. I pass the reins, and want to concentrate on the map but from Lulu's point of view, I'd look like a master who sits beside her in silent... I don't want that.

I migrate to the luggage rack behind and lean my back on the stand.

I immediately look at the map to select the camping ground. Actually, I've thought of a several candidates before we started the journey, but unfortunately the distance we have traveled is shorter than I thought so they're unusable.

There are about 4 hours more before the nightfall.

If we run on this hill for about 3 hours then we'll get closer to the valley between the east and west mountains. According to the book that I've bought from the bookstore back then, [Journey to the Royal Capila], the valley up ahead is a difficult place so I want to make a camp before it.

From what I've seen on the map, there are two locations that could be used for it. The place up ahead has a pond nearby, should I go there?

Something like water spirits or aquatic monsters would usually appear in fantasy setting, but according to the map there are only big frogs there so it should be okay. Big frogs are different from giant frogs from the labyrinth; they're not monsters but just common amphibians.

I wonder where do you draw the line between monsters and normal creatures?

◇

"Master."

I got called out by Lulu who rarely does it.

Since her voice sounds a bit bewildered, I move the map to the edge of my view.

"What's wrong Lulu?"

"U, um, please look at that."

I put my face beside Lulu and look at the place she's pointing at, black mist is moving from one side of the southeast mountain.

Still, it's quite far. She did well to see them.

"Just a bit ago, birds were flying out from the side of that mountain so I was curious. Then, that black mist appeared."

"I wonder what is that?"

That place is beyond the scope of the map. I look hard there.

The AR indicate that it's [Unidentified Flying Insect Monsters]. The details don't appear because this AR is linked with the map.

Appraisal also doesn't work when I try to use it, it's probably outside of its effective range.

"What what? Is there something~?"

"Arisa, continue~?"

"Something nodesu?"

Arisa hangs over me, popping half of her body outside onto the coachman stand. Furthermore, Tama gets on top of Arisa.

I can only imagine this from the presence, but it seems that Pochi also got on them but she fell.

"There's black mist-looking thing over there."

"What's that?"

"It's black, so, Bats?"

Pochi is pressing forwards with her nose first on the narrow space between me and the wagon's canopy. I'd like to tell her that she's going in the reverse direction.

Our eyes meet for a while, then I open some space in front of me and fix Pochi's direction.

"Black lumpy is moving nodesu."

Oh, amazing. She could look at these distances?

If they're flying-type monsters then they could probably get here in 10 minutes.

In a moment, I decided that I'm going to move the wagon into hiding and go outside to see the situation.

"Lulu, call me if we get close to that forest you can see from here."

"Y, yes."

I put Arisa who was riding on my head beside Lulu.

"Arisa, observe the black mist's movement beside Lulu. Since that black mist might be monsters, get ready for battles."

Liza reacts to the word, 'monsters'.

"Pochi, Tama, get ready for battle."

"Aye aye sir~."

"Roger~ nanodesu."

Who taught them those words. Nah, I don't even need to hear it, there's only one truth like always.

Even though I said to get ready to battle, it's only for Liza to hold the spear and for Pochi and Tama to arm the swords. Tama passes pebbles for stone-throwing from the bag to Pochi.

I thought that her bag looks heavy, so there were those things inside huh.

Liza puts the stones she receives from the two on a small bag tied to her waist.

I take out a crossbow from the box and prepare it. Although I'm just preparing the bowstring. I haven't set the bolts, since it's dangerous.

After I confirmed that Liza and the girls' preparation is complete, I take out 3 additional crossbows and 200 bolts.

◇

"They're coming, a part of that black mist is moving."

It's still not in the map range. When I look at the mountain over Arisa's head, a part of the black mist on the foot of the mountain is certainly moving.

I change place with Lulu to be the coachman and make Arisa and her go back inside the wagon.

After Liza and the girls said that their preparation is complete, I accelerate the wagon.

Arisa asks me in low voice.

"Master, couldn't you see their level with Menu or something?"

"They're out of range. If I could get as close as 10 Km then I would know."

"I wish permission to use magics if the monsters get close."

I give permissions to use magics beside the uniques or the ones she used on the flea market.

"I want to use monster avoiding space (Dodge Field) too. I'd also like to have permission to use Sleep Wave, Sleep Field, and fatigue space <<Ennui Field>>."

I give permission after hearing the description of each magics.

"If the enemies are many, then make them sleep with the sleep magic."

"It's ineffective when the opponents are agitated."

Arisa said while smiling wryly. Then isn't there no meaning for that in battle?

"That's why I want to combo it with <<Ennui Field>>."

"Although you don't use it often, you sure have the knack for it."

"Yep~ But unfortunately, since it doesn't distinguish between friend or foe, it's only for the last resort."

"Don't you have means for direct attack?"

"I could use mind shock bullet (Psycho Ball) and mind shockwave (Shockwave), but at most it could only stun the opponents."

"If you cooperate with Liza, then those two attacks could be quite usable."

I give permissions to use the two magics.

I wonder what those crowds of monsters are chasing?

Monsters emerge from the edge of the map.

"Hexapedal boar (Dash Boar)?"

Rat-men are on the same position as them. The luminous points on the map are moving together. It seems that they're cavalry beasts. Their speed is near 50 Km/H. There are 5 of them.

"What are those?"

"The beasts that the rat-men ride to run away from that black mist."

The dash boars are level 5-6, the rat-men who ride them are level 3-7.

Their positions are bad, if we leave it as it is then they'll come from behind us.

The black mist enters the map range a few minutes late from the cavalries.

"The monsters coming from behind are called Flying Ant, they're only level 2-4 but they're troublesome because of their poison and acid attacks."

"Geh, are the poison and the acid lethal?"

"It seems that the acid burns. The poison is the paralyzing type, so it'd be fine if you're only bitten by one."

That said, if we get carelessly paralyzed, we'd be surrounded to death.

There are already 50 flying ants which have appeared chasing the rat-men.

When our talk is over, the rat cavalries break through the forest 200 meters away from us and cross the highway, missing the hill.

Alright, seems that they won't come here. While apologizing to the horses in my mind, I steel my heart and whip them. Me, Liza and the girls could deal with them, but it'd be dangerous for Lulu and the horses if they catch up.

I can hear loud striking sounds from the other side of the forest. There are 89 in total which chase the rat cavalries.

Let's just let them go past.

My optimistic thought ends when Arisa reports from behind.

"One of them is coming here."

5-4. Flying Ants (1)

Satou's here. A member of society with workaholic tendency, Satou.

It's not like I can't understand when people liken hard workers with ants, but I don't want to get along with dog-sized ants.

◇

I know from the radar that there is one flying ant coming here. Since there is a considerable speed difference, it's just a matter of time before it catches up.

"Lulu, evacuate from the coachman stand. Arisa, are you confident with your aim using the stun magics you mentioned earlier?"
"As long as the range is within 20 meters, it's fine."

I take out a cane from the back of the wagon-actually I take it from the Storage-and give it to Lulu who passes it to Arisa.

"Eh~ It's plain, but it's quite a good cane."

I won't speak of it, after all it's more expensive than Arisa.

"Shoot twice then fall back even if you miss and switch with Liza. Pochi and Tama will cover Liza."

"Kay~."

"I understand, master."

Pochi's and Tama's answers are a bit late.

"Nyu~?"

"Is it okay not to throw the stones?"

Oh yeah, I forgot about the throwing stones. Since I want to confirm the stun magics type for now, let's keep them as reserves.

"This time it's fine not to throw the stones. I want you to concentrate on the ant which got onto the wagon."

"Aye aye sir~."

"Roger~ nano desu."

The relative distance is under 100 meters.

The other ants are chasing after the rat cavalries who go toward the hill.

50 meters. Lulu who probably feels uneasy is grabbing the cuff of my clothes.

30 meters. The sound of the wings is approaching.

20 meters.

"Mind Shock Wave (Shock Wave)."

"It falls~?"

"Arisa, amazing nodesu."

The ant which got hit by Arisa's attack seems to have fallen onto the ground. Although according to the map, it's still alive. As expected of insects, they're not so soft as to die from crashing.

"The magic knocked it down, but it's not defeated yet. Though it's fine if we could just kill it before it woke up..."

Certainly, it'd want to return to its nest when it wakes up.

"Ants, lots of them nano desu!"

"Guh, it's impossible to link with these numbers~"

Pochi's voice is a bit late compared to the radar which shows red dots swarming here.

They're forming groups with 8 monsters in each of the 4 groups.

"It's a bit too many."

"Yeah, even if I successfully use Shock Wave, it'll probably only affect three of them."

"Can you fire it continuously?"

"I can't, the chants could make it in time, but I can't cancel it until I release the magic power."

"Pochi, Tama, restrain the enemies by throwing stones at both sides. If they come within Arisa's range, switch with her."

I could be the shooter too but it's impossible to leave the reins to Lulu, what should I do.

"It's Tama's tu~rn."

"I won't lose nodesu~."

I look back at the state of the backseat for a bit. Tama and Pochi are throwing stones. Liza supports them to recover their posture after throwing the stones.

"Atatta~?"

"They're falling no desu."

"Yosh, you did great, children! Shock Wave!."

It seems that they've shot down the first four enemies, and the radar reflects---following them, the enemies are decreased by four.

There are two enemies who caught up to the wagon from behind, but one of them is skewered by Liza's spear and the other one who jumped inside is skillfully dealt with by Pochi and Tama.

I'm guessing that's what happened from the noisy sounds from behind and the change of luminous points on the radar.

I can't afford to look back yet.

The ants are swarming on both sides of the wagon, I shoot any ants which go ahead on one side with magic pistol while ants which come from the other side get mercilessly kicked by me.

The kicked ant, becomes part of the scenery while scattering in pieces.

◇

The second wave of the ants is disposed with the same flow too.

But it seems that the ants have moderate intelligence, the third and the fourth waves are attacking from the shadow of the thickets on the left.

The ants are flying in parallel on both side of the thickets 300 meters away from us, it seems that they're waiting for chances. The range is not enough for the magic pistol.

I ease the wagon's speed and leave the reins to Lulu.

I take the crossbow leaned against the coachman stand, an put the bolt on the bowstring.

I can see the ants' bodies from the gap of the trees. I aim for the ant on the tail of the queue.

I aim at its future position---

Shoot.

"No matter how you look at it, you're just wasting arrows."

A luminous dot disappear from the radar.

"It's fine as feints. Arisa, I leave you to watch out for the back."

"Hoi!"

While talking, I shoot at the next ant. I can hardly believe it myself, but after this, every nocked arrow hit its target without fail. Along the way, we're about to leave the forested area, but it's too late. Every ant has been shot down before we passed the area through.

◇

"Lulu, it's okay to lower the speed now."

"Y, yes."

I put back the crossbow, and go to receive the reins from Lulu. Maybe because she holds it with all her might, her hands can't come off, I gently take her finger off the reins one by one.

"Sexual Harassment?"

"Not."

I was looking at Lulu's graceful hands, but I change to look at the inside of the wagon.

Arisa is looking here over her shoulder from the very back of the wagon. I don't have anything to feel guilty about, what an impolite girl.

I must tell everyone that the first stage of the battle is complete.

"Everyone, thank you for your hard work, we have successfully repelled the ants it seems."

"What about the ones before this forest area?"

"Seems that they've given up and returned."

I look behind and give everyone words of gratitude. Tama and Pochi are having an argument about the one who defeated the most enemies but Arisa boastfully says "I defeated 7 of them~♪".

"U, um, master... y, your hand."

I turn toward Lulu since I could hear her small voice beside me.

Oops, I've been holding her hand. This is really sexual harrasment then. I separate our hands and apologize to Lulu.

It feels like she's shy about it but doesn't dislike it, it must be my imagination though. I'm not a middle-schooler, I should have limits to misunderstanding.

"Is it fine if you let me be the coachman?"

Lulu asked in modest voice, as a result, I leave Lulu to be the coachman. I sit next to Lulu, open the map, and check on the state of the rat cavalries.

This is bad.

The rat cavalries are reduced to three, but they're going strong.

While bringing along the Flying Ants, they detour the hill by making a big arc.

And with their current course, they will surely cross with this wagon.

I change places with Lulu. I don't want to let Lulu sits on the direction where they will appear.

"The other rat cavalries seem to be coming here while bringing the flying ants. I'm sorry, but prepare for battle once again."

"How many are there?"

"52 ants."

It seems that the rat cavalries have managed to defeat five.

Those rat cavalries show up on top of the hill. I have a feeling that the rat-man with red helmet met eyes with me. The guy's dash boar is larger than the others. Enough to let two people onboard.

That rat cavalry approaches our wagon, and begins to run parallel with it. The other two lower their speeds, seemingly to attract attention of the ants.

When it get beside the wagon, the rat-man lowers his helmet and shows his face, even though he has rat's face it's nihilistically handsome and looks like it's saying something.

"◆◆◆◆! ▼▼▼▼! ●●●●!"

＞[Ash-Mouse Tribe Language Skill Acquired]

＞[Green Scales Tribe Language Skill Acquired]

＞[Elf Language Skill Acquired]

Somehow, I got various languages skills.

After thinking what could happen later, I decided to take the [Elf Language] skill. I raise it to level 3 and activate it.

"Human, words, don't you understand?!"

"Sorry, but, can you quickly get away? I don't want to get involved."

Even though I've purposely learned other language, the Shiga kingdom language came out. I complained back with Elf language, since I'd complain anyway even if I use Shiga language.

Putting me aside, I won't allow our girls to be in danger.

"Oh! You understand Elf language do you, then I have a request!"

Oioi, you're asking now after getting us involved?

"Please take care of the princess. If possible until she gets home, but if you can't then at least until you give her to the same tribe."

After saying that, the red helmet throws someone wrapped in thick coat he has been carrying to here.

I receive her in hurry. It seems that she has fainted.

When I look back, the red helmet has gone back to help the other two fight the ants.

I lay the girl in the wagon and go to very back where Arisa and the girls are. Even without seeing the battle, their (the cavalries) luminous dots are already gone from the radar.

The red helmet most likely chose to die a honorable death. The girl earlier is probably that much important.

However, reality tramples on such thought.

An ant jumps on Arisa and the girls, and another one jumps on this wagon.

5-5. Flying Ants (2)

Satou's here. Shooting games were popular a long time ago, but I didn't play it. But since my work was related to FPS, I did play them in game shows...

◇

The flying ants formed groups of 8 ants and then start to head toward this wagon.

I pass 4 crossbows to everyone except Lulu who is handling the wagon, and give them a simple lecture for its operation.

Use the lever to pull the bowstring, then put the bolt on the rail and pull the trigger. If you don't think the hitting the target part, it is actually quite simple.

"Take a stance... shoot!"

Matching my signal, the bolts fly. The target is the approaching swarm.

Three ants were shot down. After setting the next bolts, we shoot once again. This time we hit two.

We won't make it for the next volley, but Arisa unleashes Shock Wave as we've arranged before, and shoots down the remaining three.

Because the next group is getting closer than the one before, after shooting one volley of bolts, we decrease their number with Shock Wave, and then, the remaining two ants fall prey to Liza's spear and my zero-distance bolt shot.

"Master, do you have any MP recovery medicine?"

I give three of it to Arisa. After receiving it, Arisa puts one hand on her waist and gulps down the energy drink in one breath.

"The next one is dangerous."

Yes, for the next wave, three groups are attacking at once. We are already shooting with bolts, but it doesn't look like they're decreasing. The saving grace is the fact that there's still some distance.

"Please give permission for me to use Over Boost. I could somehow do something to half of them."

During the pause of our conversation, Arisa gulps down another medicine.

"I understand, I permit you."

"Thank you, I love you."

Please don't raise a strange flag.

Arisa's light joke is a bit stiff.

"Over Boost!"

Matching Arisa's Command Words, light violet aura gusts forth.

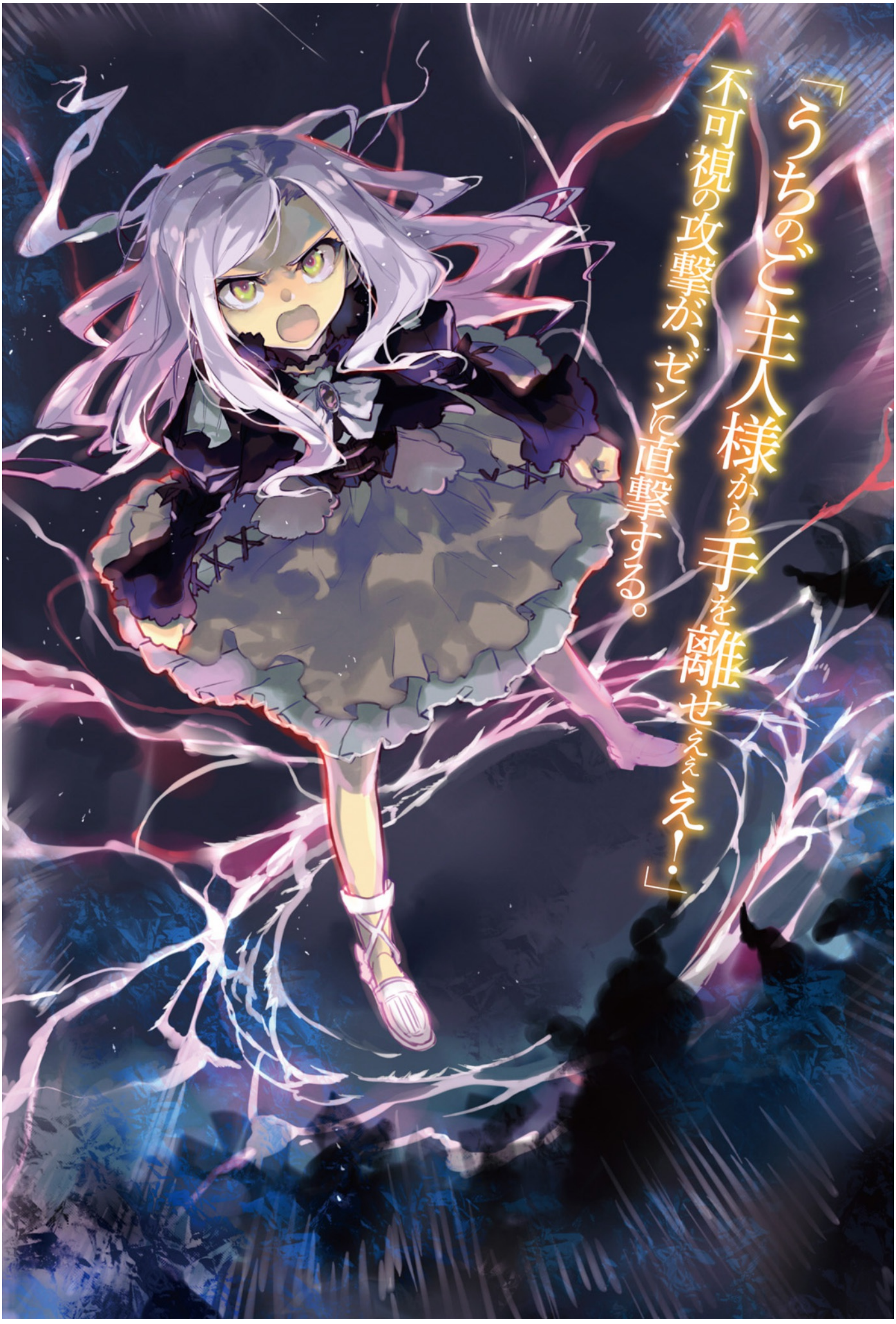
She holds the long cane, and begins to chant orally.

The violet aura are forming great numbers of magic circle on the center of the long cane.

"■■■ ■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ Shock Wave"

An invisible shock wave tramples down upon the swarms of ants. The ants who got hit directly, different from what happened until now, die while spilling their bodily fluids from their heads. The other ants who got hit by the aftermath wave are also spinning around until they fall.

Even though Arisa said half, in actuality, all three of the groups become unable to fight. As expected of unique skills.


「うちのご主人様から手を離せええええ！」
不可視の攻撃が、ゼンに直撃する。

I gently catch Arisa who blacks out.

"My eyes are spinning~."

"Round and round~ nano desu."

"Perhaps this is the effect of Arisa's magic, I feel a bit dizzy."

The three seems unable to stand due to the after effect. I leave Arisa to Liza, and decide to clean up the remaining five ants which were late.

I have Lulu to stop the wagon.

"Pochi, Tama, pull the strings of the crossbows."

"Aye.""Desu."

The two looks exhausted, but they're doing their best to set up the crossbows.

Whenever I shoot the crossbow, I exchange it with the loaded one from Pochi or Tama.

This feels like Nagashino.

<TLN: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Nagashino>

After clearing the swarms up, I fire at high angle aiming at the fainted ants by confirming their position on the radar. I tried to mimic the protagonist from a manga I read long ago, but I didn't think that it would really hit.

Because I have no scope, I shoot continuously at the relative position where the enemies are crowding while learning the fine-tune. Even if the hit rate is no more than 20%, it should be enough.

Several of the ants who got shot down in the beginning are still alive, but it's impossible to hit enemies who are two kilometers away after all. The bolts can't reach them.

◇

We're taking a short break to quench our and the horse's thirsts.

"It's tiring but it's good that everyone is safe."

"Tir~""ring nodesu."

"Arisa still isn't coming to, is she alright?"

"She'd be fine after a night's sleep."

Seen from the AR, Arisa's stamina and magic power which have became zero are gradually getting restored.

Lulu is wiping her sweats with a wet towel.

"Liza and the girls, please collect magic cores, stingers and poison glands."

"The stinger is clear, but I wonder which part is the poison gland."

Since it's hard to explain it, I demonstrate to them by dismantling an ant and show the location of poison gland.

"Put the stingers in this bag and the poison glands in this container. It's enough to just collect 5 of each. Please take care not to get poisoned while doing it."

The remaining ants far in the distance seem to be withdrawing, the dots are decreasing on the map.

I entrust the wagon to Lulu, while I'm compounding several [Antidote: Flying Ant] from the poison glands as the raw materials. One of them could be made into five antidotes.

I lower the "Princess" the red helmet left from the wagon, and put her beside me while I'm compounding. I could put her on the bare ground, but then it'd feel like I'm abusing a child so I spread a sheet on the ground for her.

"Master, Arisa has awoken."

"Wait, no~ Didn't I say that you should tell『Arisa isn't waking up.』to master, and guide him to give me MP recovery medicine by mouth~."

It's really Arisa-like, but what are you doing exposing your own evil intention.

Since she did her best today, let's pardon her with just a forehead poke.

Arisa come from inside the wagon borrowing on Lulu's shoulder. She opens her arm and says, "Help me down", so I help her to get down.

Sure enough, she clings on my neck when she's getting down-- That's a feint, her real aim is to kiss me.

I barely succeed on avoiding her holding my ground, and hit her with porehead poke α. There's no meaning to the α.

"Auu, love is painful."

"Yes yes, I love you Arisa."

Looking at the wagon, Lulu also shyly stretches her arms. She's probably inspired by Arisa.

For Lulu who rarely shows her spoiled side, I gently hold her to get down. Of course I did not hug her tight.

However, I'd like you to stop staring at me so sheepishly. I feel like I would forget the age differences.

"By the way, what is this? Is she something you got from the rat-tan?"

Rat-tan... she means the red helmet right. That's quite a cute nickname.

<TLN: Rat-tan = Nezu-tan in romaji>

"The red helmet said that she's a princess."

"Oh, a princess you said! Even though you have beauties from various races waiting for you, now you even want to add the rat princess into your harem! This is why a man is so!"

You reeks of acting.

"M, master..."

Huh? By any chance, did Lulu take Arisa's words seriously?

"I, I'll also do my best to get your favor."

"Yes, yes, you're cute Lulu. But let's talk about favor after 5 years while refining yourself to be a woman."

Lulu's tension is strange, I wonder if this is an after effect of the battle. I unintentionally answer her like to Arisa.

Lulu puts both her hands on her cheeks, and she is twisting her body. It's cute, but what do I do now.

"We're~""Back~"

"We have come back, master."

The three came back at the right timing. There are 5 poison glands inside the container. The magic cores are plentiful inside the bag. And--

"Why are there a lot of stingers?"

"Yes, master had said that it's enough to collect 5 of them, but I wondered if it's possible to make disposable spears from them so I collected more."

"I see, let's make it next time."

"Yes! Thank you very much."

I likely will forget this, so I make a memo. If I forgot this kind of promise, it would gradually worsen our relationship.

Moreover, Pochi and Tama collected some parts of the red helmet and the rat cavalries equipments. There are no remains of the corpses, and the armor worn by the rat cavalries beside the helmet's were broken so they left it as it is. Also, I forgot about the recollection of bolts, but it seems that they have collected all the bolts besides the broken one.

Liza laments greatly at the fact that there is no meat left from the dash boars.

The "Princess" entrusted by the red helmet still hasn't awoken yet.

Since beasts might possibly gather at the ants' remains, we go ahead several kilometers with the wagon.

The camping ground is an open space with a small pond nearby. Lulu is really afraid with places without a pond. It may be some kind of trauma.

◇

After I've finished taking care of the horse, I'm reading books while drinking the teas brought by Lulu who came during the break of cooking.

I'm skim reading the travel journals I bought back then by unfolding them in the menu. Since I don't want to look like I've gone senile, I open the introductory for life magic book wide turning it vainly.

It's probably better to read normal books, but it's more convenient to use the Menu because I could take memos and search for similar items.

I'm starting to smell a delicious aroma from dinner Liza and Lulu are cooking. They're making bean soup for today's dinner at my request.

"Oo~i""Preys~""We've caught it nodesu~"

The three girls who went hunting come back. I hope that they're not bringing fairies or something~

I slide the book sideway and look at the voices. With Arisa in the lead, Tama and Pochi are holding wild boars-- Of course, it's the four-footed ones-- high up.

It seems that they also hunt the ants which had fainted from the Shock Wave on the ants remains site.

"Master, please taste this."

Lulu brings a small bowl with soup inside.

Arisa said "Why only master, unfai~r", but she lost interest after being told that it's a bean soup and went to dismantle the boars with Liza.

I taste it. Yup, it tastes good thanks to the peppers I've bought from the high-class restaurant.

"It's delicious, I'll be enjoying the dinner."

"Yes! I'll work hard to help."

Lulu's expression has become quite natural.

I feel warm and fluffy now, but the the rat-men's "princess" who is beside me awaken.

5-6. The Rat Princess

Satou's here. Princesses are often present in fairy-tales. But don't you think that there are a lot of suffering princesses?

At least, I'd like it if they end up in happily ever after.

◇

"Have you come to?"

I asked gently while feeling relieved. However, the girl takes a leap to distance herself from me. No, she tried to but because of her anemia she got her feet tangled and tumbled over.

"...Where is Mize?"

I don't know that name, but I could only think one person.

"Is that the red helmet from the rat-man cavalries?"

"Yes."

Although she's right to be on guard, she sure is a taciturn girl.

"After entrusting you to us, he went to bravely fight the monsters... and died."

"It can't be..."

I hesitated for a bit whether to tell a lie to prevent her from getting shocked, but I decided to tell her the truth.

Her face went pale, she must be shocked.

"I am Satou. A traveling merchant. May I ask your name?"

I can see it with AR, but it's proper to introduce yourself to start a conversation.

"...Mia."

A short answer came out after a beat of silence.

Hu~m, it's difficult in quite different way than Lulu.

"Princess-sama, have awaken~"

"Ah, her name is Mia it seems."

"Eh~, I'm Arisa. Nice to meet you, Mia."

Arisa is dumbfounded after introducing herself and looked at Mia's face.

"What is the meaning of this, I wonder?"

Arisa is coming to me. Does she not use Status Check?

"What do you want to ask, say it."

Arisa takes a deep breath.

Inhales.

Exhales.

Inhales again.

"Why is it an elf!"

Arisa said so while pointing at the pale pointed ear of Mia.

Still, I don't think you need to be affected to this degree, right?

"It wasn't the rat-men's princess?"

"It's your fault that you did not properly check on it."

Certainly I thought that I was mistaken when I received her. Although, that's why I took the elf language in the first place. I conversed with Mia in elf language too, did Arisa not hear it?

"Kuh, even though I've made her a special cheese platter..."

I thought the saying that rats like cheese is just a folklore. Wasn't it the fault of western animations.

"Oh well. More importantly, let's eat!"

Arisa pull Mia's hand to make her forcibly stands up.

"If you're hungry, you'll just end up getting even more depressed, let's eat a lot and cry a lot! That's the best memorial service for the departed."

Those are some good words coming from Arisa. I have a feeling that she quoted it from somewhere, but I won't make fun of it.

Mia is overwhelmed by Arisa's vigor, and she take a seat for the meal.

I interpret for the two of them while walking together.

◇

I understand this after we've talked for a bit, even though Mia can't talk in Shiga language, she can understand the rough meaning of it.

Thanks to that I could finish the meal without having to become an interpreter for the little girls.

From the AR, I know Mia's stat, her age is 130 years old. A woman. Level 7. Her skills are, [Water Magic], [Bow], [Spirit Seer], those three. Her titles are, [Maze's Master], and [Little Child of Boluenan Forest]. Her true name is Misanalia Boluenan. I think that her nickname should be Lia, is it because of a custom of the elves?

Mazes huh. Are those different from labyrinths?

From her appearance, she looks to be midway between Arisa's and Lulu's age. Her breast is even more humble compared Arisa-- for Mia's sake I won't talk more than this.

Her hair is light turquoise almost blue rather than green. Her pupils are beautiful emerald greens. Her skin is white, and her body is thin to the point of almost looking unhealthy.

Still, I'm worried whether I'm cursed with a spell that makes me draw little girls.

Mia is eating only vegetables while avoiding meats since a while. The meats that she refused are shrewdly taken by Tama. From the opposite side, Pochi is swapping her vegetables to Mia's plate.

If you're picky with your foods, you won't grow big you know?

The one I'm most worried about, Liza, is intoxicatedly chewing on the wild boar's leg meat, she's not paying attention to her surrounding. I'll leave her alone.

Lulu is busy acting as a waitress. Since Arisa is taking care of her, even while Lulu is busy, she's still properly eating.

"Boar meat is delicious~"

"Meat stuck on bones is good nodesu."

"Mia too, do eat without refrain."

'Meat, I dislike.'

"She dislikes meat she said."

"Arara, how very elf-like."

'I am an elf.'

"Lulu, don't give her only vegetables, please cut some fruits too."

'I like pears.'

"She likes pears she said."

Mia's replies were shorts, but she did what she could to establish communication with the little girls.

◇

After finishing our meal, everyone is drinking teas made by Lulu.

Since Pochi and Tama don't seem like they have interest with tea, they're enjoying an after-meal nap on the sheet. Liza and Lulu are doing the clean-up.

I search for [Bornean Forest] in the travel journal book. It's located south from here, adjacent to the a Shiga kingdom duke's territory. It's a bit off from the route to the Labyrinth city from here, but it's not like we could not go to it.

I'll be fine with escort her there, but it's probably a good idea to check the reason why those ants were chasing her. I don't think that it was just a chance encounter when it was that many.

I ask her in elf language. I'm careful as to not make it sounds like a cross-examination.

"Mia, I have a few things to ask you about, is it fine?"

"What?"

"Could I hear the reason why those large swarms of flying ant were chasing you?"

"...They came to capture."

"Capture Mia?"

"Yes."

Mia answer my questions bit by bit. I feel bad for everyone else, but I'll translate the informations I got from the conversation to them later.

"Why did the ants want to catch you?"

"Because it's necessary."

Well, yeah, of course.

If I don't plan my question better, I won't get the answer I want.

"Who is the one who need you?"

"....a magician."

It's a good news that it's not the same kind as wagahai-kun.

<TLN: 'Wagahai' is how the demon back then refer to itself, pretty funky way to do so in Japanese.>

"Do you know why you're needed?"

"For the maze."

Still, mazes huh, this is a world with a lot of mysterious words huh. Her title is master of maze after all, I wonder if the maze can't function if she's not there.

"Where is the maze located?"

"...mountain."

"Is it near here?"

"Probably."

It's probably where that mist, or rather ants, came from.

Although, it's not like I intend to go there.

"What is that magician doing in the maze?"

"Making things like ants or puppets."

So the ant was made huh, they're like the subspecies of the ants from the labyrinth. By puppets, is it the moving dolls?

Nevertheless, even though I don't know for what reason the magician is gathering forces, it's probably not for something good. Judging from the position, it's to wage war with Seryuu city maybe?

"Do you know what they are made for?"

"...don't know."

Mia's face which had became red after taking the meal is turning pale. It looks like she knows but she doesn't want to tell or remember.

"Do you think that magician will come after you?"

"Surely coming."

That would be so huh.

That mean I can't just push her to the manager of the worker guild. If possible, I would have wanted to.

Even if war breaks out, I don't think that Seryuu city armed forces would lose, but the flying monsters might indiscriminately attack the girls I know somewhere in the city. It's painful to even think about it.

Should I become the silver masked hero, persuade or force the magician to give up on the maze, and push the magician to the soldiers on the gate of seryuu city? I feel like the plan is too simplistic.

Lastly, let's ask what the person herself want.

"Mia, Mize-san asked you me to take you to your home or to the same tribe. Which one do you wish?"

"...I want to go home."

"I understand."

"Everyone, we'll take a detour to bring Mia home, is that fine?"

I asked everyone beside the two who were sleeping. Since no one disagree, it's decided.

5-7. Mistake and Clean-up

Satou's here. They said that carelessness is one's greatest enemy, but precisely because ones doesn't realize their carelessness that I feel that they would fail.

Things you get accustomed with are the most dangerous, it's the same for any world.

◇

Now then, shall I pay a visit to our magician comes midnight?

I'd hate to get attacked by the army of ants when the morning dawn ...ants are not nocturnal right?

I go inside the wagon alone, and begin to change my clothes. Since Arisa is peeking, I roll up my smelly sweaty shirt into a ball and throw it on her face. Suffer well in that stink.

I'm still wearing a mantle on the outside, but I change into thick trousers and shirt inside, and also knee-high leather boots. Since I will be trekking the mountain, it'd be inconvenient to wear a robe.

"Sniff, sniff, snifff."

"Arisa, stop it, that's vulgar."

This is the first time I saw Lulu scolding Arisa. Still, what the heck is this girl doing? No, I understand when I see it, but I refuse to acknowledge it.... Aren't you too much of a pervert to sniff on a smelly shirt?

I take the shirt away from Arisa and give it to Lulu.

"I'm sorry, but please wash this when you're doing laundry."

"Yes, master."

"Before that, let me enjoy the teens' scent""Auu."

I poked her forehead before she finished.

"Love is too painful~ please do the punishing in more sensual way!"

"There are a lot of other girls who cry for being defiled, treat yourself better."

"Uuu~ I'm a maiden too."

A maiden wouldn't do such things--- At least publicly.

"At any rate, what are you going to do by changing clothes?"

"I'll do some reconnaissance."

I'm actually going to the magician's place, but I won't say it.

"I will accompany master."

And so Liza proposed, but I persuaded her to defend the camp. She insisted that I take Pochi and Tama as bodyguards, but when I said that I'd go back before the sun set, she let me go.

◇

Truthfully, I won't be going straight to the magician's place right away. I want to enlarge the search area before the next pursuing armies come, so I'm going to retrace the course until the area where the rat cavalries was devastated. I should be able to reach it before the sun set if I run.

After I reach a place invisible from the camp, I run at the level where the ground gouged. In just five minutes, I've reached the place where Arisa massacred the ants with her unique skill.

The ants which pile up on one after another are obstructing the road. I lightly jump over it.

A lot of small animals are gathering, perhaps the monsters' corpses are delicious.

Even so, with this many monsters' corpses, it will interfere with the traffic.

If this was a game then it would disappear in time but reality is troublesome.

...Hmm?

...Dang.

"'Reality is troublesome', not that!"

I stop my feet, and look back at the mountain of monsters' corpses.

I'm imagining for a bit.

In a highway with scarce traffics, monsters corpses piled up. Corpses which died with no external injury and with only one arrow stuck. Normal person would be interested to know more. And then, the only wagon that has passed this route was ours.

If it's not someone really dumb, they would probably connect the corpses with us.

This is bad.

I change my plan, and indiscriminately stow away the monster corpses in the ants folder inside the Storage. I had thought of dismantling and throw them on the roadsides but I decided to use storage since it'd be too time-consuming.

Since the corpses are not displayed on the radar, I rely on my sight. It was easy to remove the corpses on the open road, but the ones stuck on the thickets a bit away were hard works.

Nevertheless, thanks to me repeating the corpses retrieval with all my effort, the road is cleared from them as far as eyes can see before the sun set.

I'm hiding bloods and traces of battles with suitably long tree branches. They would probably attract attention but it's better than puddle of bloods in plain sight.

Since I see from the radar that Pochi and Tama are departing from the camp to look for me, I finish hiding the bloods with trees from the Storage and return.

This took more time than I thought, so I couldn't do my original goal.

◇

With Pochi and Tama hanging on my arms on the sides, I walk down the highway in sunset.

I'm hearing chewing sounds of small animals from the bushes on the roadsides. There are probably some pieces from the corpses, I feel sorry for taking away foods for the small animals. And it was unexpectedly hard to keep Pochi and Tama from pushing through to the bushes.

In a place 10 minutes walking distance away from the camp, I catch a monster on the radar.

Let's check the detail.

Gargoyle, level 5. Plainly speaking, it's a flying stone statue. Noteworthy points are complete immunity to mind attack and night vision. Also, it's hard, since it's a stone statue.

It could be an independent monster or a familiar of the magician. It's probably the latter this time.

Its moving speed is slightly faster than a person.

The gargoyle destination is probably the place where Arisa massacred the large groups of ants right?

"Master~?""What's wrong desu?"

Pochi and Tama pull my hands. I've stopped swinging them on my arms.

"Tama, do you have the throwing stones?"

"Aye."

Then, I should drop it with a stone.

"I forgot something, let's go back."

"Yes nano desu~.""Aye~."

I spin the two like spinning tops while on my arms. Since they demand to do it again, I do it thrice after that.

More, they said but since it'd be troublesome if we can't secure best location to attack the gargoyle, I promise them to do it again once we get back to the camp site.

◇

The three of us are hiding beside a shelter. Although I said shelter, it's just a rock as high as a grown man.

The gargoyle is flying overhead us.

After a moment pause, I throw two fist-sized stones with both hands. I throw one more a beat later. All three stones hit the target and the gargoyle becomes a mere broken statue.

"Co reco co re.""Core nano desu~."

Is that a core retrieval song? While listening to the mysterious song, I watch over Tama who's singing with strange intonation and Pochi who's interluding her while both of them retrieving the core.

Just like the ants, low level monsters have small magic core with pale color. The price is most likely cheap too.

"Aye.", so she says while presenting the core. I put it in my pocket straight into the storage. And then we head back to the camp site.

Needless to say, the two didn't ask what was the [Something] that I forgot.

◇

Since I don't want to needlessly make Lulu and Mia worry, I only tell the gargoyle thing to Arisa and Liza.

And since the probability that the camp would get attacked when I go toward the magician is high, I decided not to do a late-night visit.

Although, even if I don't go there, I feel like the opponent will come here instead.

The night watch tonight will be in 3 shifts. The first are Liza and Arisa, the second are Pochi and Tama and the last are me, Mia and Lulu. They're alloted according to the potential of enemy search and fighting equally. I'd be glad to have Lulu together with Arisa, but since I wouldn't know what to do with just me and the taciturn girl, I made her join us.

Pochi and Tama take position on the left and right of me who's lying on the sheet. We've been sleeping together since the time in Labyrinth. Although I didn't sleep at all since I was on guard at that time.

"Together~.""Nano desu~."

"Good night, Pochi, Tama."

"Aye~.""Nighty~."

I could hear Arisa grumbling from a distance, but since it's nothing much, I let it off. Lulu and Mia were at loss finding the place to sleep, but by Arisa's suggestion, they will be sleeping beside us. It's a bit crowded but since it's warm, it's nice.

I frantically try to retain my consciousness which was almost taken away by the comfortable warmth. There'll be 3 shifts of night watch, but since it's almost certain that there will be a night attack, I'll be careful not to sleep.

While watching the radar, I'm reading the book from the menu to prevent drowsiness. This is going to be a long night.

5-8. Shadow Stalker

Satou's here. It's nice to have handy tools, but relying too much on it made you unable to notice the oddness with your own eyes, thus unthinkable mistake happens.

This happens in daily life, work and even in another world.

◇

Just before Liza and Arisa's night watch duty is over, I see enemies on the map.

There are three monsters called Shadow Stalkers. Since I've never heard of it, I check their details. Level 12, it has [Physical Damage Halved], [Stamina Drain] as race specific skills, if I don't have any means to counter it they might become formidable enemies. It doesn't like they're undeads. Their speeds aren't that fast, but they would probably get here in 1 hour. The enemies probably have ran out of flying type monsters.

I'm arranging various things related to battle to be displayed from the menu.

And then I turn my view to my chest. I had thought that something has been pressuring my chest for a while but as it turn out, it's Pochi and Tama who climbed on my chest and stomach while letting out ,"Gude~", sounds, sleeping there lying on their bellies.

I place them on the sheet while being careful not to wake them, and get up.

"Ara? Master, are you doing yobai?"

<TLN: http://everything2.com/title/yobai>

"Are you having trouble sleeping? Master?"

Arisa, whose somehow being held on Liza's arms called me out. Liza is probably already sleepy, her voice is weak without power. I should let her sleep a little before the enemies get here.

"I'll change with you, so it's fine for you two to sleep."

"Is it okay? Isn't the next turn going to be Pochi and Tama?"

"I'll make the two do the watch duty together with Lulu in early morning."

Arisa ,whose free from Liza's hold is coming while saying, "Let me sleep on your laps~.", but I lift and roll her to beside Lulu. Arisa is probably tired too, without complaining she goes to sleep while using Lulu as a body pillow. Lulu's painful expression from being clung by Arisa is cute too. I'm almost taken over with wicked thought but I manage to forcibly shake it off.

I continue watching the map while adding twigs to the bonfire. It's still 50 minutes before the monsters arrive. Since back then, the monsters doesn't increase in number.

"...I'm thirsty."

Mia who has woken up hands me a water bottle. After I receive it she sits beside me while I'm drinking the water.

"Why?"

A small voice comes out of Mia. It doesn't seem to be a monologue.

"Why am I protecting you from the magician?"

"Yes."

"As you can see, there's nothing deep to it."

Likely not satisfied with my answer, she falls silent.

"It's dangerous."

"Looks like it, a lot of monsters did come out back in the afternoon."

"Mize and even the others... died."

Come to think of it, what's the relation between elves and the rat-men?

"The red-helmet(Mize)-san, do you know him from somewhere?"

"Forest."

"Bornean Forest?"

"Yes."

Connecting the story from the few words of Mia, it seems that the red-helmet was saved by Mia's parent when he was dying and surrounded by goblins outside the forest 10 years ago. The red-helmet then stayed in Mia's parent house for a while while being taught together with Mia various things by Mia's parent, so they became acquainted.

It seems that the red helmet he was wearing was a mithril product given by Mia's parent. So it exists, mithril huh.

The reason the red-helmet called Mia princess, was probably because of this.

"Did you get attacked by the magician when you're visiting Mize-san's hometown together with him?"

"No."

After asking her in several angles, I understood the rough situation. Seems that Mia was abducted from her hometown on the forest by the magician, and held captive in a maze in a mountain. The magician then forcibly made her to be the "Master of Mazes" with a forced contract ceremony. Even if she's called master, she was nothing more than the proxy of the magician, she was forced to sit in the master room for half a day.

According to Mia, the maze's movement is weak, so she's probably some sort of a key or a catalyst.

"Did Mize-san come to help you on the maze?"

"A coincidence."

Mia denies while shaking her head. When I inquire for more details, it seems that she executed an emergency escape command on the Maze Core when there was a chance at the time the magician went back to his room. When I said "You know well", she said, "It's in elf language." Perhaps, she pushed something like a button written in elf language.

And then she escaped to the Rat-men village and reunited with the red-helmet there.

"The village was burnt because of my fault."

Mia painfully said so. I hold her shoulder and say, "It's not your fault." to console her. In times like this anyone would want to be comforted even if it's just merely words of consolation.

The subordinates of the magician who came to look for Mia seemed to have burned down the village as a lesson. Those subordinates got disposed by the red helmet and his friends in a counterattack, but there were some villagers who fell victims. Hence, it was hard for her to stay in the village, so the red helmet with his subordinates were going to escort Mia to meet the elf in Seryuu city.

And then, when they were going down the mountain--

"We were attacked."

"By the flying ants right?"

"Yes."

From then on, it's probably the same as we have seen.

◇

Meanwhile, the shadow stalkers are stopping at the site where the flying ants were decimated by Arisa's uniques skills in the afternoon.

I should wake everyone soon.

I call Pochi while sending magic power to the Light Hot Plate.

"Pochi."

Pochi who's sleeping with Tama curling up like a ball is reacting with her ears twitching. Pochi is getting up while rubbing her eyes and looking so sleepy.

"Unyu~, food?"

"Not that, wake everyone up since I feel some presences from the forest."

Among these members, Pochi is the easiest to wake up. The one with the worst waking habit is Liza.

"It's not morning but wake up nodesu~."

She steps on Tama's stomach and knocks on Arisa's head with a whack. Lulu gets up hearing Pochi's voice.

"Liza wake up too nodesu."

Liza's body is swaying from the shaking but she's only groaning without waking up. Tama get on top of Liza's stomach to assist Pochi. However, while half-asleep, Liza catches the two and hugs them.

"Mugyu~.""Wake up~?"

Looks like the two will be like that until Liza wakes up.

Arisa is coming to the bonfire while yawning with her mouth wide open. Lulu puts her hand in front of her mouth and begins yawning cutely. Where is this difference in girl power coming from?

"Fuwaah~ is it enemies?"

"They're still far, but there are three coming."

"Judging from the atmosphere, they're not powerful."

I teach her about the enemies' types and characteristics.

"They're not undead right? Then they're easy preys with mind magic."

When she gets to the bonfire and sees Mia who is sitting besides me, Arisa does an exaggerated gesture by opening her eyes wide while saying, "What a fearful girl!". Who is she imitating?

"Hey wait, you have me if you want to do it with someone!"

"Stop saying those stupid things. I was just hearing her rough situations."

"Then why is she clinging to your arm?"

Come to think of it, Mia is clinging to my right arm before I knew it. I thought we were separated after I activated the light hot plate earlier. Since I'm used to be hugged by Pochi and Tama, I didn't mind it.

Mia parts her hands after being pointed out by Arisa.

'"I didn't hug him."'

"She didn't hug me she says."

"That's a lie! I saw you separating just now."

'"It must be a mistake."'

"If you're an adult, don't fuss too much over it."

"Gunununu~."

I receive a cup of tea from Lulu who's handing it. Am I thinking too much for seeing Mia who casually sits beside me after getting the tea?

"Liza, here nano desu."

"Nya, my tail hurts~."

Following the two, Liza has woken up.

I wonder if Pochi and Tama dislike tea, they're drinking plain boiled waters that Lulu had put. By the way, Tama can drink hot water just fine. She drank soup just fine too.

"Liza, it's about time to wake up."

I said so to her, and her loosened face began to rapidly tighten. After confirming me visually, to keep up her appearance, she greets me with composed face.

"G, good morning, master."

"Good morning."

It's not morning though.

I should make them get ready soon.

"Enemies are closing in. Wash your face and keep awake."

Everyone begin the preparation, only Tama who keeps staring at the top of a tree. There aren't enemies there according to the radar.

"Is there something over there?"

"Those birds, weird~?"

Birds?

There are around 20 owls nesting there. It's certainly a bit scary.

◇

It seems that the shadow stalkers have noticed the bonfire, they're enclosing in to this camping ground. They're at the other side of the owls' tree.

The three beastkin girls are in charge of the middle. Arisa will deal with the enemis on the right. Me and Mia are left to deal with the enemies on the left. Lulu is taking refuge in the wagon for safety.

I'm hearing fluttering sounds from behind.

Is it the owl earlier?

I look back for a bit to confirm it.

It is really an owl from earlier. It has a single red head-feather as its characteristic. Since the place where the owl landed is the place where we buried the boar remain for dinner earlier, it's probably attracted to the smell.

I'm convinced with that and look back to the front.

Right at that time, a red dot indicating an enemy suddenly appears on the radar--- Furthermore, it's at point blank range.

5-9. Shadow and Magician

Satou's here. The one who's weak to horror movie, Satou.

I'm fine with ghost or apparition, but I'm scared with faces of the characters who got into spasms in terror.

◇

The enemy who suddenly springs up comes from the direction of the owl just before.

Appearing from the stretched shadow behind the owl, it's a figure of a person wearing black robe. I can't see its face because its wearing a hood and long sleeves.

"I've come to pick you, Mia."

Mia who's beside me is trembling.

"...No."

This man with the bent back is, without a doubt, the magician. The owl from earlier is nesting on the man's shoulder. Is it a pet or a familiar?

I put myself to protect Mia behind me, and check on his status. His name is Zen, level is high at 41. Skill is--- [Unknown].

This unpleasant feeling, is he the same kind as Arisa and the heroes?

While agitated I continue to read his status--- What is this?! Skill [Unknown] also appears there.

Mia is trembling behind me.

I can roughly understand the details. This guy is too dangerous for anyone but me. Let's deal with him carefully. It seems impossible, but I'd like to settle this with discussion if possible.

"Nice to meet you, magician-dono. I'm Satou, a merchant."

"I don't have business with someone like a merchant."

The magician doesn't seem like he'd even bother to introduce himself.

I wonder if it's because he looks down on merchants or he just has low communication skill.

"Even if you don't, I have a duty to protect this girl. I won't pass her to a suspicious man."

"Fumu, you seem to be protected by generous and skillful mercenaries, but if they stand before me it will become a bloodbath, do you understand?"

The magician points his cane here while keeping his back bent.

"It's no good! Master, this guy is too strong."

Arisa warned me from behind.

"I am the great King of Night. It's good that you know your place, but trashes don't have any place to call me 'this guy'."

This is bad, the magician's attention is directed toward Arisa.

"■■■■ ■——"

The magician begins to chant magic toward Arisa.

I don't want to leave Mia, but I can't afford not to now. I rush toward the magician, and strike his stomach with my fist.

But the strike is unable to stop the magician's chant. My fist has penetrated the magician's robe, but there is no response at all. Is it this guy's unique skill?

"---Shadow Whip."

When the magician finishes his chant, shadow stretches from his foot to form something that look like a spear that plunge toward Arisa. Is that the shadow whip?

I'm back stepping away from the magician, and I cut myself between the shadow whip and Arisa.

I block the shadow whip with my whole body. The shadow whip coils around my body, at that time I feel some small pricks.

>[Shadow Magic Skill Acquired]

>[Shadow Resistance Skill Acquired]

What do you mean with shadow resistance.

Ah, it's been a while since my scientific blood denies the fantasy.

But I'm profiting from this trouble.

I feel like the resistance skill will be of small importance in this situation, but let's increase the chance to protect Mia even if only a little.

I allocate points to shadow resistance and activate it.

◇

"Fumu, that's an unbelievable body. Are you really a merchant?"

"A friend of mine calls me nimble merchant."

From behind our conversation, I can hear Arisa whimper.

"It's useless, it really didn't work."

Did Arisa counterattack when the magician started to chant? Her magic power decreased for a bit. There is absolutely no change to the magician, he probably has resistance.

"To put yourself in front of a woman to protect them from my attack, you have my praise."

"If you admire me then won't you back down?"

"That's a different story. Mia is needed to achieve my goal."

I'm finally able to free myself from the shadow whip. This shadow whip only gives me insignificant prickly damages but it had no substance and no reaction so I couldn't tear it off. Yet it could be used to restrain thing, some fantasy substance it is.

"What is your goal?"

"There is no meaning to tell you that. If you want to save Mia, then bring a hero along."

"Do you have some grudges on heroes?"

The magician doesn't answer and laughs loudly while looking up the sky.

Accompanying his laughter, countless shadow whips appear from his feet. Does the spell earlier retain its effect?

It's going to abduct Mia who stands listlessly. If physical attack isn't working then how about magic attack.

I take out magic guns from the pocket, equip them on both hands, and set the power scale to the MAX.

For someone of this guy's level, this much probably won't kill him.

"Way off the mark."

Following the magician's word, the magic whips expand toward me and Mia.

I intercept the shadow whips with the magic guns. Dual wielding guns feels like a chuunibyou from somewhere, I don't like it.

It's working.

I succeeded in destroying every magic whips that had went toward Mia, while I let the one that came toward me to coil itself on me. I wasn't able to destroy them all as expected.

"Those are quite good weapons."

"Is that so? If you leave Mia alone then I will give you one, how about it?"

While offering the trade to the magician, I smash the shadow whip coiling my body with the magic guns.

I hear Mia's short scream from behind.

I turn just my head, Mia is being restricted by shadow appearing from her feet.

More shadow whips appear from the magician and restrict me.

The magician begins to chant a new magic.

I can't let him casts more magic than this, I fire the magic guns to the magician. His health decreases but immediately recovers before the next shot. Is this guy's unique skill invincibility?

I change my aim to the cane, and fire the magic bullet.

"Help me nodesu!" "Help~?"

Pochi and Tama seemed to try to do something to the shadow whips but they slipped through it. Even just slipping through the shadow whip seems to give them damage, the two jump back while screaming.

Liza and Arisa are looking here from a cover while waiting for their chance and eluding the magic whips.

All the magic bullets that I fire are blocked by the shadow whips that appear from the magician's feet.

Then, finally the magician's magic, [Shadow Portal], is activated.

Mia's body is sinking into the shadow.

I give up on shooting the magician, and hold Mia's upper body from sinking with brute force.

"I'll have you return this girl. Since it'd trouble me if you're careless, I'll say this, if you try to forcibly pull her, Mia's life will be no more."

The magician is sinking into shadow too. I still can't see his face.

"You are no match for a transcendent being like me, resign from your unreasonable struggle. If you wish for death then you're free to visit my maze, I expect a show of courage and wisdom to break through it."

The magician disappears into the shadow while laughing loudly. He didn't see through Mia's sinking until the end, is it because he has allowance to do so or because of carelessness.

My body is almost dragged into the shadow too, but maybe because of my resistance, it stops at 1 cm deep.

The pulling power of the shadow for Mia is strong. My pulling power is even stronger, but Mia's health gradually decreases. If I put more power than this, Mia's body would break.

I have decided.

"Arisa! When morning comes, go ask for assistance at the worker's guild manager."

After telling her that, I let myself sink into the shadow with Mia.

Arisa and the girls should be able to deal with the shadow stalkers somehow. If possible without injuries I hope.

That manager is unreliable but this time it's a crisis of a person from his tribe, Nadi-san should be able to arrange for it.

◇

After I'm sunk, there is only jet black space around.

There is no sound or light, it truly feels like inside shadow. Of course there is no air too.

It is indeed a bit painful. My health decrease faster than from the coiling shadow whip. Still, probably thanks to self-healing, it comes back up at fixed interval. Perhaps, I've become unable to die by suffocation.

Even with air, a person would go mad if they spend too long in this place.

Thanks to the lack of oxygen, I can't concentrate well.

Yes, how about Mia.

Since I can't even look at my own body, it goes without saying that I can't see her either.

I take out Light Drop from Storage and pour it magic power.

I thought that I could see my body then but it didn't work. The radar shows only me too.

I use [All Map Exploration] after a long time of not using it. But unfortunately, radar display remains as it is. It might really be only me around.

I open the map and see it.

There, something is written-- [It's an area with no map].

"What's this a game!"

I retorted.

And then, as if the voice is echoing back to back, the shadow space with no sound is breaking, like a glass, vanishing into fragments.

<TLN: We Majin Buu now lol>

◇

I'm in a place like the one nobles use to have audiences with people. It's a vertical room, like a school gymnasium cut in half. The floors are made of stones, fat circular stone pillars are lined up along the wall, and candlesticks attached to the wall are emitting LED-like magical lights. There's a throne in the furthermost of the interior, and in that interior a sphere 2 meter big in diameter is blinking rainbow lights while floating at knee-high height.

Mia who is made to sleep is sitting on the throne. Beside her, an unknown beautiful blond woman is nursing her. Her face looks exactly like Mia, but her breasts are outrageously big. No, such thing doesn't matter now.

The magician who is running his fingers through something that looks like a music stand beside the throne notices me, before I could rush to him.

"Absurd!"

Even while surprised, the guy is not loosening his fingers from playing the music stand.

"Yes, absurd! How did you escape from my prison of shadow! It's something that shouldn't be broken by a group of low level people like you bastards."

Are you surprised, boasting or looking down, be clear about it.

My feet are a bit unstable, I wonder if it's the effect from the shadow space earlier.

"I have a light amulet with me. Shadow magic isn't going to work."

Oops, I wasn't going to tell him the true reason but even for deceiving him the detail was too appropriate. Is it thanks to deception skill?

"I see, I cannot permit unfairness. This room is only allowed for people who have captured the maze, those who earn it can come here, that's the rule."

The magician stops there, and nods to his own words.

"And then, the hero who is able to get here, is the one who is qualified to annihilate me, the King of Immortal."

What is this guy saying?

Capture the maze, does he want to kill himself?

Furthermore, didn't he say that he's a King of Night initially? He can't decide the name for himself.

But, rather than that, I feel slightly mad at this guy's excuse. He got our girls and Mia in trouble for such reason?

"If you want to die then go do it yourself. Don't involve other people."

"Fuhahaha, I have received blessing from the god, I am immortal."

It's unpleasant, but if I continue this stupid talk, my feet will recover soon.

But, the other guy doesn't seem like he intend to continue.

"Well then, I'll have you leave from the master room."

The door located beside the throne is opening and then--

5-10. Maze of Trazayuya

Satou's here. When I was in grade school, I love the free time to play during the school athletic festival.

When I became an adult, I occasionally went to fitness clubs to move my body, but in this world, I wonder if there are facilities that provide you place to safely forge your body?

◇

Right now I am falling.

I had prepared myself for the enemies when the door beside the throne was opening, but instead, the one who came out was a beautiful woman who looked exactly like the woman who was caring for Mia.

Right when I was distracted with that, they activated the true mechanism to reject me out of the master room.

The entire floor disappeared. To make the entire room into a pitfall, even a death trap has its limit. No, the trap discovery skill didn't activate so it might have been an impromptu trap.

I don't think that I'd die even at the current falling speed but I'd hate it if I'm sunk deeply into the ground without any mean to get out.

Maybe I should stick some things on the wall to decrease this speed, like often seen in manga.

I take out a sledgehammer from the Storage and kick it strongly, the reaction force makes me collide with the wall on the opposite side. The wall is soft and smooth, there is no place for gripping.

I take out a great black iron sword from the storage and stab it into the wall. With a screeching sounds, my falling speed gradually decreases. My wrist hurts a little.

After I reached a certain speed, the great sword, seemingly hit its limit, breaks.

I fell into a water body on the bottom of the hole before I could take out another great sword.

I experienced only little shock since I arranged my feet to make my fall straight

I sunk considerably deep but since the velocity was quite reduced, I didn't hit the bottom.

While swimming up to get to the water surface, I execute [All Map Exploration] magic.

The map displays [Maze of Trazayuya].

The maze consists of 20 levels with each having 500 meters diameter. It's pretty small compared to the labyrinth in the labyrinth city. According to the book that I've read, there are at least 200 floors that has been explored there, with more to come. Furthermore, each floor is several kilometers wide, so this one is quite obviously smaller.

Moreover, most passages are systemically perpendicular. It's exactly a maze. While the demon's labyrinth felt kind of biological, this maze feels systematic or rather, artificially made.

I finally get my face out of the water.

The place that I've fallen into is blocked off by stone walls. I could see a few mosses growing on the stone walls. According to the map, the 20th level is 300 meter above.

Looks like this level is modeled like the outside.

From what I see on the map, there is no enemy here.

The exit is two kilometers to the west. A bit further to the east, there's a hidden door called [Room of Trazayuya]. Judging from the name, it's probably the room where the secret of this maze is sleeping, though since I already know the route, it's probably unneeded.

....No, I cannot deceive myself.

I really want to save Mia as soon as possible but I'm curious with that Trazayuya room too. It might be just a simple intuition, but I feel like I must go there.

I apologize to Mia in my heart and begin dashing to the hidden door.

It's hard to swim because of my clothes. Particularly my boots, it's hard to kick the water because of it.

Since no one sees me, I put my clothes inside the storage. I discovered that I could directly put what I wear into the storage.

◇

The hidden door is protected by the same kind of riddle from the labyrinth of demon on Seryuu city but thanks to DeRiddle skill, I easily get through it.

The hidden door is letting out moldy smells. The walls and the floors aren't made of stones but resin-like materials.

This looks like someone's research room. It's fully equipped with dining room, bathroom and bedroom. From the accumulated dust, the magician (Zen) have probably never come to this room.

I'm fascinated with the tub on the bathroom, but this isn't a situation where I could casually take a bath.

There are many books and memo in this research lab. I don't know how many yeas has passed for the books, but most books beside the magic books have deteriorated really badly so I put them inside the menu to read from there.

I already have a guess it from the maze's name, but it's said that the creator of this maze is called Trazayuya. He is an elf. Moreover, it seems that he's from the same hometown as Mia.

All the books are written in elf language. If I didn't get the language from the red helmet, I wouldn't be able to read them at all.

There are some places where the inks are blurred, but I could roughly read it. It seems that this maze was made by Trayazuya-shi and the elves for the sake of "Safety", mimicking the labyrinth's function.

The memo tells about the guy's anguish, or rather, his over-protectiveness for his tribe.

'We, the elves, have weak attachment to life. When faced with desperate situation, we don't struggle much compared to other tribes. Because of this, a lot of our younger generations died in the labyrinth. This maze is made as an absolute necessity for when the elves need to flee from dangers to safety.'

Others details are like, how the maze has something called Maze Core not unlike Labyrinth Core, although it cannot grow up like a labyrinth, but it sucks up magic power from its surrounding and refines it into magic cores just like a labyrinth.

And then I found some disturbing words.

'The facilities to make artificial monsters by inserting magic cores into existing creatures on cultivation tanks have been completed.'

Are monsters originally normal creatures?

Certainly the monsters that I've fought up until now are all looking like deformed normal creatures. Since Wagahai-kun was a demon, that particular one is probably entirely different.

After thinking about that, I feel a bit reluctance in drinking potions which are made from magic cores.

Let's get back on track. I'll think about that later.

Trazayuya-shi has made three prototyping facilities. A facility to cultivate monsters. A facility that produce golems. And a facility to create dolls that would serve people.

However, since he earned the cooperation from the rat-men community nearby, he abandoned the last one.

Suddenly, I'm interested with what the monsters who live here are eating. I wonder if they cannibalize each other or if there are feeder monsters being produced?

Even after the maze was completed, the other elves didn't come here.

There is one thing at the end of his note.

'No one would forget my failure in just 100 years. My life will soon end. This maze will be sealed until my countrymen need it in the future. I believe that the day where the elves lead the world once again will come--- Trazayuya Bornean.'

<TLN: I'm normalizing the elf forest's name to Bornean, since it probably comes from 'Borneo'.>

I see, so this is why Mia is needed. Still, the magician is good to have known how to solve the seal without reading this note.

I have obtained various informations but I have not gained the way to save Mia.

I'm a bit worried with a scribbling that read, "Explosions are romance!", but there probably aren't any idiots who would make self-destruction mechanism in a facility that was made for safety.

Since there doesn't seem to be any way to get back to the main level from this one, I decided to get out of the maze from one end and search for the main entrance.

I continue through the road from the underground lake that I had fallen into to the exit. I can't run since it's narrow with stalactites poking out here and there. Flowing water from the underground lakes are dripping from the stalactites.

While minding as not to step aquatic creatures that look like salamanders, I continue walking to the exit.

◇

The exit is on a vertical cliff 5 meters above the ground.

I try confirming my location on the map but since I'm in an unexplored area, I perform [All Map Exploration] magic.

This here is [Ash Rats Principality]. It's five mountains away from the highway that we had traveled. It seems there is a rat-men community about one mountain away from here. Even though it's called principality, the village only has around 1000 people.

The entrance of the maze is located near the summit of this mountain.

Since it's a bit dark, I take out the Light Drop to light the surrounding.

I can't find decent footholds.

It can't be helped, I jump down 5 meters to the ground.

I feel something not right when I look around.

I had thought that it was because right now is early winter, but it's too strange that there aren't even any sounds of insects. Most trees have their leaves fallen, and even among the fallen leaves, most of them are withered.

I have always call them another world tree, but the AR displays that they are called Shiiya trees. Even evergreen trees can have their leaves fall.

I'm bothered with them, but right now my top priority is to get to the maze's entrance.

◇

I run up the mountain. Since the underbrushes have withered, there aren't many obstacles.

Along the way, from the radar, I caught sight of a big tree on the mountainside.

It's not in red, but it's a level 20 fairy tribe. I wonder if it's a trent?

If I continue to run on this course, I would get near it, but since I could just escape even if it turn out to be hostile, I continue on.

When I run on the side of that tree, the log displays [Resisted charm effect].

On the base of the tree... There's a big-breasted older sister in nurse outfit.

No well, I do like nurse outift.

But think about the TPO even if you're an illusion.

"Excuse me, o young gentleman over there."

Moreover, her speech style is from the historical drama.

The AR indicates that it's a Dryad. Level 21. It's a tribe with charm and illusion skills.

"Do you have to be so hasty in the middle of the night? If you don't mind, how about a cup of sake?"

The girl points to a red table and chairs that appeared out of nowhere, filled with sake and foods on top.

Rather than dryad, I feel like being fooled by a fox.

The dryad approached me and took my arm when I was distracted with the table. I feel something soft on my arm.

I'm almost tempted to enjoy the poyonpoyon while drinking, but I mustn't forget about Mia.

"I'm sorry but I don't have any time to accompany you, if you have a business then can you please say it quick?"

After I said so, the illusion disappears, and a girl with green long hair that touch her feet appears, in bare skin. She looks to be around 12-13 years old I guess? So the feeling earlier was an illusion too, her actual figure is quite modest. Since I can't be turned on with that, I'd like you to cover yourself. Be more modest please.

Her expression has changed from the bewitching one earlier to stern. It's the face of a child whose not used to being angry so there is no force to it.

"Become mine, human!"

"I'm sorry, but how about proposing again in 7-8 years?"

"No, become my meal!"

The girl says that all kind of trees here has died for several months making the animals disappear. Furthermore, the earth veins on the mountain were cut off recently so she is dying.

It's most likely the fault of the [Maze of Trazayuya].

"This is because you humans sucked the mountain's nourishment."

"I could give you a bit of my health and magic, but I cannot allow you to eat me."

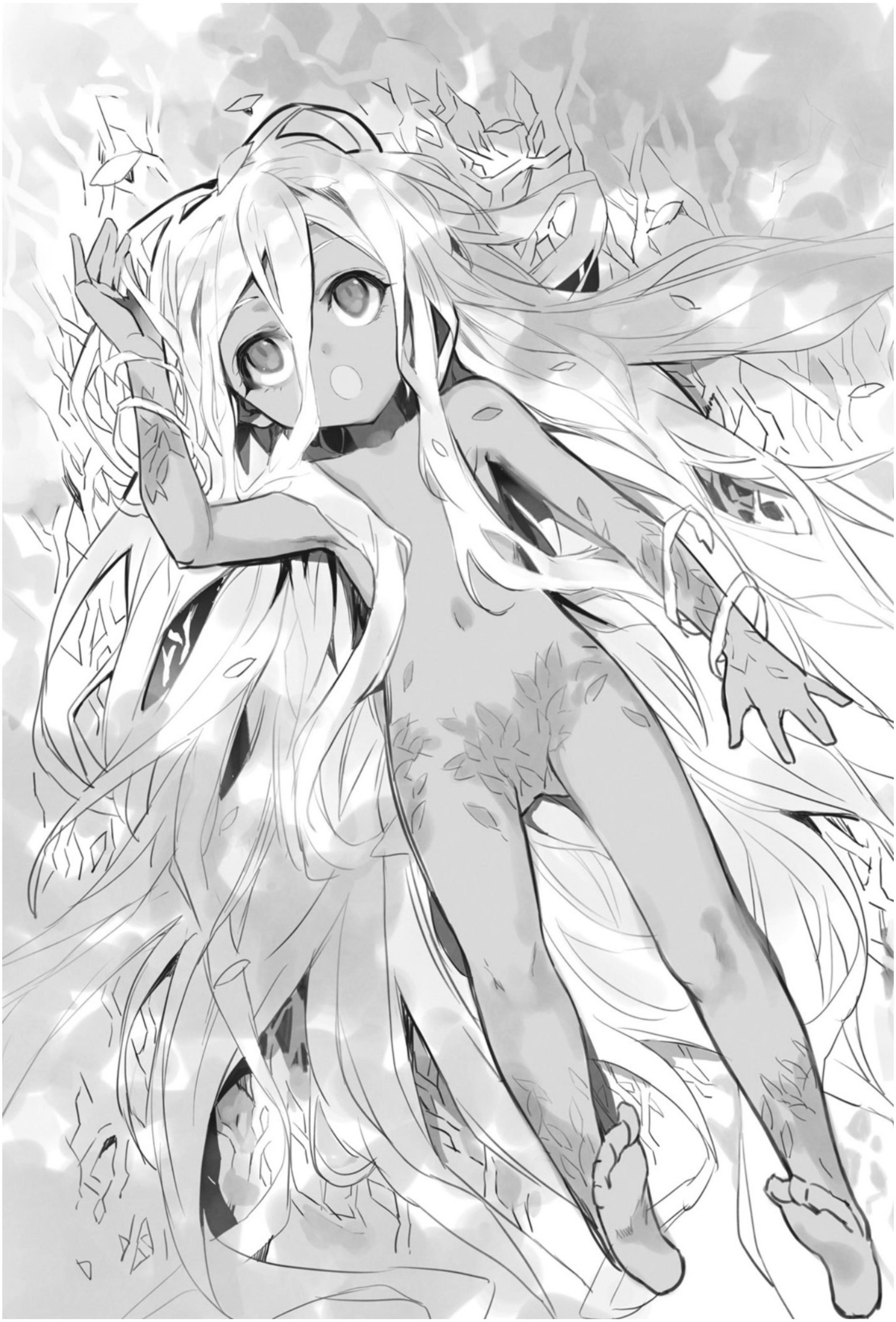
Seems that I went easy because the opponent looks like a child.

"If you give me your magic then I'll eat it."

"That's good."

I let her sucks my MP. I had thought that it would be like vampire sucking from the neck but turned out that it's directly from the mouth. Frankly speaking, it's a kiss.

Kissing a young naked girl, I can't let my acquaintances see this.



The girl was satisfied after sucking 300 MP.

After that, I arrived at the maze's entrance without any particular problem.

5-11. Maze of Trazayuya (2)

Satou's here. When I was a child, I was good at solving the maze quiz that appeared on the corner of newspapers.

When I became an adult, the only experience involving maze that I had was from the one on theme parks.

◇

The maze's entrance is a tower of about one and half meters high. The tower is hidden by the vegetations, so ones wouldn't find it if they didn't know about it in the first place.

There are some traces of people going in and out, but even those are few. According to the map, there's a back door used for monsters to go in and out.

I open the door and go inside the tower. It's carelessly not locked.

I was contemplating to wear the silver mask before I went in, but since the magician is the same kind as Arisa, he probably had seen my name. Since it's better that silver mask = Satou is not known, let's not transform into the silver mask this time.

I look up the enemies information inside the maze to prepare the necessary weapons. The majority of them are flying ants at level 5-8, and skeletons are at level 1-3. The slightly stronger ones are the level 18 bone golems and the level 15 wood golems.

The other curious ones are like slime-based enemies and homonculus, but they're small fries at level 5.

It's just that, I'm a bit interested with the [Nature Art] that the homonculus have. What kind of skill is that? Is it the same kind as Nature Magic?

If the situations allow, I'd like Liza and the girls to learn it.

The high level ones are the iron golem located in a large room in the center of the maz, and the magician in the master room.

My equipment will be a saber rather than a shield, and a submachine-gun-like magic gun. I'm not using the usual magic gun since this one seems to be stronger.

Actually, this is a high performance gun that could fire 50 bullets per second when charged with magic power once, but since it needs 10 minutes cool down once it fire all the bullets at once, I haven't used it until now.

For this occasion, I choose to use [Scatter] shoot mode since I don't have to worry with friendly fires. Even though the power is lower than usual, it's enough for fighting the small fries.

I put on the overcoat that I took off when I feel into the lake. It's different from what I wear just now, it's thick but cheap thing I've bought on the east district of Seryuu city. This is good enough for the blood of my victims.

I go down the spiral stairs while straightening my equipment.

◇

I've entered the maze after I got out of the stairs.

The ground is different from the resin-like thing on the underground, but although it looks like stone pavement, it somehow feels like plants. The visibility is good since lights are leaking through the crevices on the floorboards.

This is good since I don't have torches like when I was in the labyrinth.

I could hear some light metal clang-clang sounds from somewhere, although I don't know what kind of thing could produces that sounds. Since I still don't understand even after listening to it carefully, I decided to put it in the corner of my mind.

Since I have no intention of fighting steadily, I look up for the shortest route to the master room.

I kick and destroy the skeletons that I meet, and throw bones on any flying ants who come up, eliminating them.

Even though I've prepared a nice gun, it didn't get any turn at all.

Still, this skeleton's skull is not that of human. It's probably from rat-man tribes.

This maze isn't like the one typically in a game where you go to lower level every time you clear a level. Rather, the blocks are connected in three-dimensional formations and you might go up and down in complex structures.

Even on this stair I'm descending right now the wall-like object isn't touchable making it feels like a trompe l'oeil making me unsure whether I'm descending or ascending.

This is like a theme park somehow.

While thinking about that, a skeleton that I kicked left out a big magic core. Since the magic core got out in bare, I pick it up. It's impossible to do it for the ants.

I thought that it's strange so I checked on the log, it turns out that the thing that I just defeated was a bone golem not a skeleton. The level difference is 6, but it didn't feel different from the other small fries.

The enemies resistances are weak, I'm advancing through the trap smoothly too, however the road becomes dead end in front of me. According to the marker, there should be a path here though?

I check on the map, it's certainly a dead end here.

After double-checking, I understood that this maze is changing its joints with the passage of time. The sounds that I occasionally heard signified the changing of its joints.

What a uselessly amazing gimmick. It's something that even modern science would be hard-pressed to reproduce in a way.

I continue advancing the maze while checking the map whenever I hear the sounds.

Since I was running while minding the map, I'm plunging into a passage where a lot of slimes gathered.

It's finally the turn for the rapid-fire magic gun. They all die in just 3 burst, but the ground becomes slimy it's disgusting.

◇

I've finally arrived at the large room in the center. This place is unmoving, serving as the halfway point. It's 5 meter high and 20 meter wide here.

When I got into the room, the door automatically closes and the magic formation on the center begins to shine.

An Iron Golem pushes out of the magic cirlce. Beside it, a beautiful blond woman like the one in the master room stands. This golem is fastened with rivets, looking like a pre-war thing.

I see now, this girl is a homonculus. That explains why there are several people with the same faces. Judging from their faces, I wonder if Mia is the base?

I change the rapid-fire gun mode from scatter to convergence.

The iron golem is close to 4 meter high. There are the same letters as the stone golem from the labyrinth on its forehead.

"You did good to have come this far, explorer-dono."

It's an easy-to-listen charming voice even in this situation. Though she's speaking in monotone so it breaks the immersion.

"I'm a merchant though."

"Merchant? ...O explorer! You did well to come here."

After looking puzzled while tilting her head, she tilted it back and continue to talk. She's moving like a doll.

You're insisting me to be an explorer huh.

"I'll give the excellent you the right to fight the guardian. If you could beat the guardian, I'll admit that you have the qualification to advance ahead. The winner will be given a reward from the master of the maze."

She was still speaking in monotone. It feels like in an elementary school festival.

The beautiful woman doesn't mind the unamused me and continues the talk, following the scenario.

"Now, let the fight begin. O iron giant, there is no need to hold back."

The woman gets to the corner of the room after finishing her long speech. Her face looks satisfied, or rather, proud.

After the woman got to the corner of the room, the iron golem starts moving.

I pierce the character on the golem's forehead with the rapid-fire magic gun. Changing [EMETH] to [METH] by destroying the [E]. The golem stops moving as according to the anecdote. Yes, like the anecdote from our world.

Probably not expecting this to end in an instant, the beautiful woman on the corner falls into confusion.

I ignore the woman and head toward the exit.

"You're careless!"

The beautiful woman attack with a rapier from behind while talking in monotone. It looks like she used some kind of reinforcing magic, her stab is reasonably faster than her level tells.

While being careful as not to break the woman's hand, I stop the rapier.

"Come to think of it, what is the reward for the winner anyway?"

"...Me?"

She tilted her head like before, and said so after hesitated for a bit. Why is it a question.

Apparently she didn't prepare any reward since she didn't think that I would win.

I make the woman faints, and take the rapier as the reward. Since the hilt design is cute, let's give it to Lulu or Zena-san as a present.

I lay the woman on the floor and advance ahead.

◇

Afterward, I arrived at the master room without any considerable setback. The latter half had traps, but since I avoided all of them with trap discovery skill, I didn't even know what kind of traps there were.

The magician is in the interior of the master room. There's Mia on the throne, but she seems to be still unconscious. Her HP has fully recovered, but her stamina is still only at about 30%.

"I really did not think that you would come this far so fast."

"Is that so? If possible I'd like to avoid fighting and just get Mia back."

The magician laughs.

I continue to step forward to the throne while talking. I'd rather not get thrown again into the underground lake if I ignore the magician.

"Impossible, that's impossible. You have shown your qualification by defeating the iron giant."

The magician's solo performance continues.

"However, your title is insufficient to go against me. I'll have you fight formidable adversaries so you could gain the title 'Hero'. As for your reward, I'll give you this holy sword, Gjallarhorn."

The magician pull the sword on his hand.

The AR indicates that the sword is a holy sword, Gjallarhorn. Its performance is inferior compared to the holy swords I have, but it's still incomparable to common magic swords.

I don't understand this guy's real intention.

Does he really only want to commit suicide?

"Your opponents are them."

The magician's shadow expands to the center of the room as he speaks. And then, 3 iron golems appear from the shadow. Moreover, five beautiful women come out from the door beside the throne and line up behind the golems. Their faces are the same as the beautiful woman earlier, but since their hairstyles are different, they're probably not the same person.

"However, you would merely get killed by strong enemies like this, while the title hero is attained by overcoming life-and-death struggles."

From this guy's viewpoint, my level is 10. It shouldn't be possible to beat 3 level 30 golems.

The magician spreads his hands toward the heaven and continues his words.

"Therefore, I'll give everyone the blessing of my god--- Limit Break."

5-12. Maze of Trazayuya (3)

Satou's here. As I have always lived in the gluttonous Japan, I've never starved.

The wartime story in the olden days told by my great-grandmother felt like some kind of far away events.

◇

The purple aura gushing out from the magician not only wraps the women and the golems, but also me.

I check on the log for once, it seems that it was properly resisted. I didn't get the skill because it was probably a unique skill.

"Well then, I'm expecting a desperate struggle."

While saying so the magician runs his fingers on the maze core operation machine that looks like a music stand.

Walls come out to separate the throne from the hall in the master room. From the map, it doesn't seem to be simple walls, but other blocks from the maze who have moved here.

I tilt my neck to avoid a magic arrow going straight to my face.

I look at where the arrow flew from, the former beautiful women who have turned into demonic figures are there. The golems which are coming here while flinging their arms around have the same atmosphere.

I could kill them instantly, but I'd use the golem to understand how the magician's unique skill works.

While dodging one, the other is coming.

While maintaining our distance, I concentrate firing the rapid-fire magic gun on a leg of the golem. The leg was destroyed after about 10 firings.

The third golem manages to body blow me. My HP is only decreased in a single digit although I don't know the exact value. Isn't it about as strong as wagahai-kun?

Its level is still 30, but did it get stronger equaling to twice its level? I defeated the golem in the large room with one hit back then, so I can't compare these ones with it. I should've have fought it properly.

Still, if the unique skill only strengthen its recipients to double their level then it's nothing to worry about.

I ward off the next blow from the third golem and make it hit the second instead. The second golem's head is destroyed, but the third golem's fist which it used to hit the other golem also got destroyed.

I see, [Limit Break] is just as it says.

Using this opportunity, the former beautiful women are unleashing magic arrows in rapid successions. The magic arrows are being fired from magic circles that appear in front of their foreheads.

I properly avoid them, but it seems that they can persistently home in on the target. I don't think that I could avoid them forever so I shoot them down with the rapid-fire magic gun.

The 5 of them fired a lot. They sure have quite the MP to keep on it.

The second golem which got its head destroyed is still able to move. And then, it points both of its open hands to me.

Don't tell me.

Slightly different from my expectation, the golem fires all 10 of its fingers like missiles. I can effortlessly dodge those, but they explode when it got close to me.

Putting aside physical damage to my body, my clothes became tattered.

The magic arrows that was floating and aiming on the air are rushing to me, fired by the former beautiful women.

The golem which match its timing with the arrows attack approaches me with its fist. The first to reach is the fist.

Since I'm afraid the gun is affected by the explosion earlier, I'm not going to use it.

I jump on the golem fist and make it as foothold, but the arrows are going to hit me.

I unfasten my mantle with the quickdressing skill, and fling it to the nearby pillar to change my trajectory--

--I managed to evade the arrows and the fist.

The arrows pierced the golem but it only reduced its HP by less than 10%. Even if they hit me, they'd only do little damage but I hate pain.

Rather than that, the former beautiful women's states are strange. How do I say it, their movements are now looking more like zombies than demons. They're saying something like "Uuu~", or "Aaa~", painfully so yet they keep shooting the magic arrows.

Since I'm worried with the condition of the women, I've decided to make quick works of the golems.

I throw fragments falling from the golem in super high speed. The golem is pulverized whole, don't even mention the letters on their foreheads.

While I'm throwing it, I see the figures of the former beautiful women being ruined in typical fashions.

While bleeding from their eyes and pores, they're unleashing giant magic arrows, no, spears from magic circles in front of their whole bodies.

If I don't quickly stun them, they would really die.

I impatiently fix my posture and face toward the women.

However, it was too late.

As the magic spears unleashes upon me, the women's lives also disappear. When their HP gauges became zero, their life burst over like some kind of game characters.

I do not take evasive action against the five spears and let them pierce my body.

It hurts.

"Why did you go that far."

I don't know if the girls', who were artificial life forms, senses of life were the same as me, but it's sorrowful.

If I think about the meaning the magic arrows which were too many then...

I destroy the remaining two golems who were approaching by using the fragment of the first golem.

Both the golem and homonculus are artificially made, but since the golems looks like robots, I didn't hesitate in destroying them. Deep inside, I probably perceive golems as machines and homonculus as humans.

After all the enemies have been eliminated, the hall with me alone becomes once again connected with the throne on the master room.

I set the title as that guy desired.

◇

The magician's applause is echoing through the hall.

"That was splendid. Welcome, new hero."

The magician's shadow brings me the holy sword.

I can't see the face of the magician with bent back because of the rainbow colored light emitting from the maze core behind him.

"Is your purpose a hero?"

"Indeed."

"Then, couldn't you just go to the Saga empire without doing this roundabout charade?"

I asked with harsh voice. I've been shocked with the tragic deaths of the women, my heart has become restless.

"Fumu, Parion's hero eh. When I went there, the hero had been sent back home."

"Don't you know that there's a next generation?"

"Ah, so it's already that season eh. However, the time is not right."

"What do you mean?"

"You wouldn't understand even if I explain."

It seems that he won't answer.

While having the dialogue, I'm calming my heart down.

"Hey magician, do you really only want to die?"

"The right answer to that question should be no."

"I don't want to have a Zen dialogue."

Hearing that answer, the magician is laughing like a mad man.

Two purple lights lines are sipping through his hood.

"Kuhahaha, I see, so you're a comrade who has also come from the land of the god."

"I don't know any such country."

No wait, I think ancient Japan has been called that a long time ago.

"Kakakaka, it's useless to put on false front, what did you pray, wish, and desire from the ruthless god?"

"I did not hope for anything."

I haven't even meet one.

"If there was one, then I had wished for a rest I guess?"

I wished hard for that one.

"Fuhahaha, such selflessness. Truly worthy to be a hero."

"You, what did you wish for?"

Yes, why is your race not human.

"Don't you know it? Don't you see it? Yes, I am the king of night, an immortal existence. What I wished from the omnipotent god was a body that won't die, a live without starvation, and power to strike back at unreasonable violence."

"So that's why you were born with that body..."

The magician shakes his head while spreading his arms horizontally.

"You're reading too far. The god had let me reincarnated in a body of a healthy baby. And arranged me to be raised by good parents who I could respect, and met a pure lovely spouse who was more than I deserved."

Then, why?

"I became too accustomed with my new life. Even though I was robbed by unreasonable violence in my previous life, in this life it was done differently."

The magician takes off his hood.

"I was prisoned by a noble who fell in love with my wife and executed under false charge. The first view that I saw when I was resurrected in this figure was the head of my whole family starting with my parents in front of the castle. And underneath them was my broken doll-like corpse of my wife..."

Tears aren't dripping on his white cheeks.

Purple flames are raging from his eyes sockets.

"Your pity is unnecessary. I changed the corpses of my whole family into undead, and along with the corpses of the people with the same circumstance as me, we bared our fangs toward the noble and completely destroyed everything."

There is no way for him to shed tears.

Because his figure is that of a white skeleton.

"I, who had completed my revenge, intended to depart to the next world where my wife is waiting. However, the blessing from the god cannot allow that. Even with the purification technique (Turn Undead), or with the holy sword that I got with much hardship, I wasn't able to die."

He said, "Truly god's blessing (curse)."

"Come now, hero. I've said all that need to be said. Stab me to bring my end! At the very least, kill me before even my heart turned into demon lord."

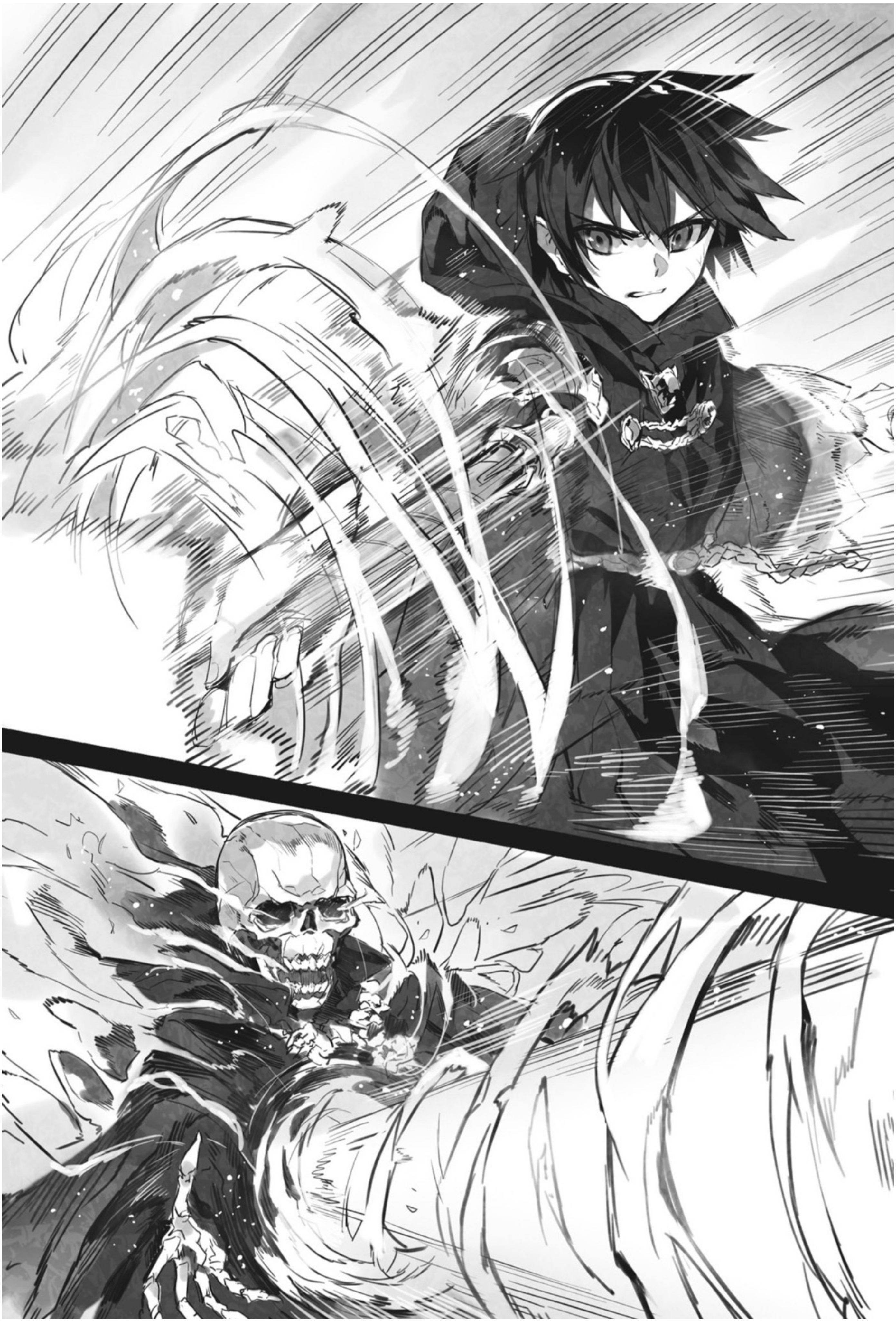
The magician Zen, no, Immortal King (No-Life King) Zen, said so.

<TLN: No-Life King is a direct katakana translation from the author so there's no other interpretation possible>

Accepting those words filled with insanity, I pull out the holy sword, Gjallarhorn.

It's a curious sword with drill-shaped edges.

I raise the sword as if praying, then stab No-Life King Zen with all my might.



"Kuha, kuhahaha. Ena, my other half of wings. I'm going to you now..."

Zen's body is destroyed by crumbling into dust.

The robe falls and spreads out on the ground.

I could faintly hear, "My gratitude", in the end.

>Title [No-Life King Slayer] acquired

>Title [Maze Traveler] acquired

5-13. Maze of Trazayuya (4)

Satou's here. Whenever I played a game for the first time I never skip any event until the end, maybe because my job was making games.

If the game is not to my liking, I didn't enjoy it until the end and went to dispose it on a second-hand store, Satou.

◇

"Kusukusukusu, it's a failure huh."

"Yup, a failure."

Two purple lights emerge from the crumbled remains of Zen.

"Goodbye, hero."

"This is your victory."

I reflexively cut those lights with the holy sword since I feel evil intent from them. However, the lights which had been scattered away gather themselves back and rise into the sky.

"Let's meet again."

"See you."

The lights penetrate the ceiling and disappear before long.

◇

Were those angels? I felt maliciousness from them though.

But, I don't have the leisure to think about it. Because--

『System Message. This maze will begin to enter into self-destruct sequence. The staff members and trainee are to escape immediately. I repeat』

---I heard that announcement.

I rush to Mia and make her who's still unconscious to drink magic potion with restorative effect. Since the medicine hasn't been tested, I give her one third at a time. She wakes up exactly with one bottle.

"Mia, do you recognize me?"

"...Onii-chan?"

I am not.

Mia's blurred eyes become focused.

"Here is?"

"The master room of Trazayuya Maze."

Hearing me, Mia hurriedly look for the magician.

"It's alright, he is no more. He won't show up in front of you anymore."

"Really?"

"Yes really."

This is not the time to have a carefree talk like this.

『The self-destruct sequence has been executed. The staff members and trainee are to escape immediately.』

I have to stop it quickly.

"Mia, can you stop this maze from self-destructing?"

"I'll try."

Mia unsteadily walks to the operation board.

She tries to operate something for a while, but then she shakes her head.

"Impossible."

She gave up fast.

After asking for more detail from Mia, it seems that every functions has been locked somehow. So it's helpless even for the maze's master.

I somehow know that this maze would explode if I destroy the maze core. Let's bet on my physical strength and escape by running then.

I carry Mia who has given up and staring at the floor under my arm.

"This will be dangerous, so hold me tight."

Without looking at Mia who's nodding, I run.

◇

I'm running through the passage.

Running.

And running.

At first, Mia was screaming loudly but she falls into silent now. It seems that she has fainted.

I mow down skeletons or ants which came out from time to time and continue to run. It's a bit tough to protect Mia from the falling debris.

We finally get to midway, the central room.

Inside the room, I take the still unconscious big-breasted beautiful woman (Homonculus) on my shoulder, on the opposite side where I hold Mia.

Even though I couldn't save her friends, I'll save one even for my own self-satisfaction.

I'm a hypocrite if I do say so myself.

Even after carrying more luggages, my speed isn't falling. It just becomes a bit hard to keep the balance.

I jump through the trompe l'oeil stair with one leap.

Okay, it's just 4 levels left.

When I got there, I could feel vibration and hear thick explosion sounds from the depth.

『System Message, the Subsystem has been activated. The Maze Core has lost its power to support facilities due to entering self-destruct sequence. This maze will self-destruct soon. The staff members and trainee are to escape immediately. I repeat』

While listening to that robotic voice, my feet aren't stopping.

Damn, if there's a subsystem, then couldn't we stop the self-destruct there? If only the map has the control room written or something.

I'm feeling eerie vibration from my feet, maybe the collapse is starting.

3 levels left.

A block falls in front of my eyes.

Without losing my momentum, I kick the falling block and make it flies to the other side.

I couldn't keep Mia and the woman unhurt while doing that kind of acrobatic feat. I'll let you two drink as many potions as you want when we get out so please bear with it for now.

2 levels left.

An especially strong vibration occurs, and makes the passage's turn just ahead to cave-in.

I look back the opposite side, but the upper level has collapsed too, blocking the path.

And, the ceiling here is also collapsing.

I put Mia and the woman on the ground near my feet.

I hold the ceiling with both my hands, but the ceiling breaks facing my crushing power. I protect Mia and the woman from the falling fragments.

Do we have no choice but to get buried like this?

A piece of the falling debris hits Mia. Mia's health decreases by 10%. The woman also only has 30% remaining.

『The trainee's health has decreased. In accordance to the top priority of training program, ejecting the trainee outside the maze. Other trainees are to be separated from the particular trainee as to not get dragged into the teleportation.』

Is this what the Trazayuya guy mean in his memo?

◇

The three of us succeeded escaping with the safety program for trainee (elf).

I'm apologizing for making fun of the over protectiveness inside my mind.

I make Mia to drink the homemade potion. I let the woman drinks one too while I'm at it. The AR shows that the woman only has No.7 on its name's row. She doesn't have an actual name huh.

I recognize this place but I'll check the map just to be sure. It's near the place where I got out of the Trazayuya maze master room.

I see a cliff with water strongly gushing out of it. That's probably water overflowing from the underground lake.

The water flow becomes weak while I look at it, so I jump to the cliff and check on the map.

There may be someone who needs help.

According to the map, the survivors are me and one other. Slime-kun lives on it seems. There's no other survivor huh.

But in just a moment, the slime's HP is exhausted.

Rest in peace.

Right at that time.

The log begins to flow with great speed.

This hasn't happened since the time with meteor shower.

I scroll through the loot on the log. "Defeated all enemies on the map" is written there. I see, so this is the condition to trigger <<Automatic Loot>>.

There is no [Source] thing this time.

I move all the new loot to Trazayuya Maze folder.

Most of them are the remains of monsters and broken machineries.

There are also several magic books, they're probably magician Zen's belonging right?

Since the vibration still continue, the collapse probably is still continuing, I go back to where Mia and the woman are.

＞Title [Survivor] Acquired

5-14. Joining

Satou's here. I want riddle to be called mystery.

With this brutal adventure life, I'm saying goodbye to carefree sightseeing trip, Satou.

<TLN: If you haven't noticed, these "Satou's here" preludes will only get weirder lol>

◇

Zen, Zen, Zen huh, I was overwhelmed by his drive, and made to dance according to his plan. He was probably satisfied, but it was a real nuisance to get involved.

Still, even though I've murdered someone because of the course of the event, I don't feel any remorse. It's not just because of my high MND but probably also because his outer appearance was that of a skeleton and he looked happy in the end.

I pull myself together. First, let's check on Arisa and the girls' situation. It seems that Liza is a bit hurt but everyone is safe. They're not in the camping ground but already near Seryuu city.

Somehow they thought that, "When it's morning", meant that they should get to the worker's guild before morning. I meant to say, "Depart when it's morning", but it was difficult to complete it.

I could tell them my safety if we have cellphones, but it can't be helped if it doesn't exist. Let's look for something with the same function when we got to the royal capital and labyrinth city.

Now then, it'd be difficult to traverse through 5 mountains when it's this dark. Putting aside my physical strength, my mental state is weary. I want to rest at least until dawn.

Should I take a rest until dawn here?

I've thought of heartless things, when I think about it, I remember that I shouldn't leave Arisa and the girls alone. If they, slaves they are, come back alone then wouldn't they be treated as escaped slaves?

The knight Soun who guards the front gate is a big hearted person, but I'm not sure if that applies to slaves and demi-humans too.

My health is already fully recovered, and my stamina is still at 90% anyway. I hate to think like an athlete, but let's psyche myself up.

Of course I'll also take Mia, who I'm carrying on my shoulder, and No.7 (homonculus) along. If I leave them here, they'd fall preys to wolves then there'd be no point in me saving them from the maze.

I wrap Mia and No.7 each in thick sheets. By chance, Mia now looks like at the time when she was first handed to me by the red-helmet.

>[Packing Skill Acquired]

I put Mia on top of No.7, and carry both of them on my arms. They call this, bridal carry. If I have common physical strength I'd be down in just a few minutes, but the me now could carry them for many hours without problem. When I try to walk, Mia almost slips out so I wrap one more mantle on the two to stabilize them.

I push my way through the mountain road while carrying the two.

◇

I haven't even run through the mountain road for a few minutes before, like usual,

>[Off-Road Skill Acquired]

comes up, so I put points to it until the maximum and activate it. Incidentally, I also enable the [Sprint] skill in similar manner. I might be wasting points but there's still about 90% of it remaining so it's fine.

I've been thoughtlessly using them up until now, but seeing those purple lights, I feel like I'd get involved with troubles. I've decided to carefully examine each of my skills and use half of my points to strengthen myself after I've reunited with Arisa and the girls.

I'm passing over a place that looks like the ruins of rat-man village after

10 minutes of running. Was this the village where Mia met the red-helmet again?

I'm interested, but I have to keep going through the mountain now.

I can somehow identify good thickets to jump from, I wonder if this is thanks to off-road skill. I can't tell it as clearly as the trap-discovery skill could to traps, is this because the difference in natural and man-made things?

Probably thanks to the off-road skill added with sprint skill, I'm even considerably faster than a horse-drawn wagon. Moreover, combined with 3D-maneuver skill, I'm passing through the mountain almost in a straight line. I feel like some kind of ninja from a manga.

After crossing two mountains, dead trees begin to decrease and greeneries are becoming rich.

At such time, I see interesting place with shinning lily of the valley-like flowers and flickering mushrooms on the middle of the way. I want to look closer but time is precious now, so I give up. Since it's regrettable, I put a marker on the map for the place.

Mia and the woman sometimes get tangled with branches that stick out but I destroy it by flicking coins with my hand.

I run through the mountain relying on the moonlight. It feels like the moon in this world is awfully bright.

After the fourth mountain, a Giant Boar jumps on me. I've noticed it on the radar, but since it suddenly jumps here, I just kick it away.

I've been avoiding small animals who jump my way so far, but as expected, it's impossible to do so with a bear-sized giant boar.

Its head which got hit directly went with a splat, I averted my eyes. Without looking at its scattered head, I put it into the storage before it falls onto the ground as a souvenir for Liza. Since I've seen Liza dismantling it several times already, I may have become accustomed it. Even though I'm boasting now, I'm confident that I'd have abandoned it if it was not dark.

And then we finally get to the highway. From here, it's 80 kilometers away to Seryuu city in straight line. There's one and half hour until dawn.

I run pass the hilly areas in straight line. The grounds are scooped out but no one would mind it anyway, probably.

◇

I'm thinking while running. The thing with Arisa and Zen, I feel I have a luck (Hard Luck) that gets me tend to be involved with humans who have been given power by the gods. I can't think that they're all existences with good will.

Does the gods in this world enjoy themselves by giving people trial?

Or, are they like mythological gods from Northern Europe and Greece where they have human-like trait with both evil and good?

No, there's also possibility of devils pretending to be gods like in the bible.

There's no answer with just just guessing. Later in our journey, let's look for more information about gods if I see a big temple or library.

Then I could compare the informations I got to Arisa's own.

Still, seeing this trend, there are other reincarnated people out there right? And even with them around, this world's culture and civilization didn't collapse huh.

Maybe the people who were chosen were like me, who actively does not intend to spread modern-world knowledge.

People who love conspiracy theory probably would say that the reincarnated person who's spreading modern-world knowledge would be removed by some kind of power.

Now then, the magician Zen said that he became No-Life King after he was executed by a noble.

What I'm worried about when I heard that story is my unique skill [Indestructible]. They sounds too similar. I'm afraid that I'd also become No-Life King or Demon Lord if my HP becomes zero.

<TLN: I translated it as Immortal back then, but it's more appropriate to be Indestructible so I'll change it for now. We'll see how the author play this out.>

Were the skills I saw from Zen in camping ground, like [Physical Attack Invalid] or [Instant Recovery] unique skills? Maybe it was because of those two skills that he wasn't able to kill himself.

This is only a guess from what I gathered from his talks, but [Hero] title combined with a holy sword are probably able to invalidate the two skills.

Perhaps the demon lord has the same requirement too, or am I just thinking too much?

However, in comparison I was able to completely annihilate the heavenly dragons and the dragon god without any title. The meteor shower might have the same effect as [Hero and holy sword], but I feel that conclusion is too light.

I think that the dragons may be existences that hunt the demon lords, but they may also be a race that specialize in attack. I'm not really satisfied with this, but until I get new informations, let's conclude that for now.

◇

While recollecting the things that I talked about with Zen, I remember to put my title back to [None]. While I'm at it, I also change my level on the Exchange tab. Since Arisa and Liza have leveled up, I also raise my level to 12.

The growth of Arisa and the girls are like these

Arisa.... Level 10=>12, Skills are omitted

Lulu... Level 2=>3, Skills are [Etiquette], [Marshalling(new)]

Liza... Level 13=>14, Skills are [Spear], [Thrusting], [Dismantling], [Cooking], [Heavy Blow(new)]

Pochi... Level 13=>14, Skills are [Short Sword], [Throwing], [Dismantling], [Enemy Search], [Shooting(new)]

Tama... Level 13=>14, Skills are [Short Sword], [Throwing], [Dismantling], [Collecting], [Enemy Search]

Lulu's new skill [Marshalling] is not bad, but I'd have loved if she learned [Cooking].

In a game, you could assign skill for party members but reality isn't so convenient.

Come to think of it, I have [Education] skill if I recall right.

Maybe I could teach intended skills with this? I'll work together with Lulu to try it next time.

◇

I'm looking at the map every 10 minutes, but there's still nothing but me in this highway. Arisa and the girls have arrived in front of the Seryuu city's gate.

I've done an impossible thing by getting to the place where I could see Seryu city in 40 minutes. I'd say that my speed was 120 KM/H in average.

Since I lowered my speed when I reached highway as not to break them, you could guess yourself what my speed was on the hills.

When I got out of the last forest I began to walk normally since I could possibly be seen by the Seryuu city's scouts.

There are only 3 kilometers left anyway, and the gate isn't going to open for 50 minutes.

I came into a slightly elevated place 2 kilometers away from Seryuu city. I could not only see the outer wall from here, but also the entire gate. Our wagon can be seen in a distant.

While I look at it, the wagon starts to come toward here. Apparently, someone has seen me. The one with sharp eye, Tama I wonder?

The wagon comes into my view, Liza is operating it. Pochi and Tama lean out of the wagon as if they're about to fall and are waving at me. Arisa and Lulu are anxiously looking toward here, seems that they can't see me yet.

I put Mia and the woman on one of my arm smoothly, and then I wave back at them.

Still, everyone look strange. I've thought that they would worry about me but aren't they worrying too much?

Before long, the wagon comes into view while raising dust clouds.

I put the two on the side of the road and go to greet everyone.

The wagon makes a sudden stop, then Pochi and Tama who descend like they're tumbling down run here.

Bam, with that sound, Liza who jumps over Pochi and Tama from the coachman's seat runs here first. "Mafter", she says in a loud muffled cry while strongly hugging me. Losing her body weight, I support her center of gravity. Liza is crying like a flood while hugging me.

While I was surprised with Liza's unexpected behavior, Pochi and Tama climb up my body and Liza and hug me from both sides.

"Wlcome~""Nano desu!"

Maybe because they can't express their relief well, they're thoroughly play-biting my head and shoulders, and licking my face. This is intense.

Arisa and Lulu who come down from the wagon late aren't able to interrupt the intense hugs. "Welcome home.", said Arisa while looking at the ground, and said Lulu gracefully.

"I'm home, I'm sorry to worry you."

Liza is still crying while hugging me, but when she hears my voice she replies with a weak tearful voice. And then, seemingly aware that she's hugging me, she shyly parts away from me.

Matching her, I put Tama and Pochi on the ground and pat their heads.

"We were worried nodesu!""Any injury~?"

Pochi and Tama look at me worryingly, Lulu is looking at me while smiling, and then Arisa pushes to the front while still looking a bit at the ground.

She's not like the usual Arisa?

"...I, I was worried! Mou, promise me to never do something that absurd ever again!!"

Arisa resolves herself to raise her face and come up with words. Tears are swelling up on her large eyes.

I gently hug her while apologizing, and lightly pat her back.

She seemingly isn't able to hold back anymore, begins crying, and I comfort her. Maybe because they're swept away with it, Pochi and Tama also begin to cry together with Arisa. Lulu and Liza who look on us from a distance are also moved to tears.

I've decided to apologize for how many time, however many, until everyone stops crying. The pouring tears and scolding from everyone who was worried about me, warm my slightly hardened heart. And then, I continue to apologize until the sky turns white.

5-15. Joining (2)

Satou's here. It's not my intention to, but I can't help but lock on it when big breasts are presented in front of me.

Wanting a stout heart that won't lose to temptation, Satou's.

◇

I wonder if Arisa feels refreshed after crying her eyes out, she immediately asks me barrages of questions about my circumstance. I put aside the hard to talk things like about hero thing, or the purple lights, or reincarnated person and only roughly explain about how the magician has accomplished his goal and won't after Mia with the ants and monsters.

"Uuu~, you're hiding various things from me right?"

"Well yeah, I'll tell you about it when the time is right."

It's not exactly pleasant but it concerns Arisa too so I'll talk about it with her when it's only the two of us.

"Promise me! I'm fine doing it during our bed talk too."

It's good that she's back to her usual self.

I unwrap Mia and No.7 and put them on the wagon.

"Wait a minute, leaving aside the elf girl, what is this busty beautiful woman? Tell me what you were you talking about with the magician~~~!"

Arisa's screams are echoing.

Since it likely would reach Seryuu city, I stop her.

"You understand right? The identity of this person!"

Arisa nods to my words. Since the woman's real nature is a homonculus.

Mia finally wakes up from this uproar, and looks around unsteadily.

"...A dream?"

"It's not."

"Are we saved?"

"Narrowly, yes."

Mia's expression is changing while responding briefly. I tell to her what I told Arisa.

"I do not know the courtesy of humans. My mother who was with me for more than 100 years said that even though she didn't explain anything to me, I would understand that it's different when I go outside."

Oh, Mia is speaking with long sentences.

"If I may, a『Thank you』is enough. If the other person is a young man, then say it together with a laugh and a smile."

Arisa readily answers to Mia. Something isn't right though?

I see now, Mia was talking in Shiga kingdom language. When I ask her later, she's able to talk it right from the beginning. When I ask her why she didn't use it, I get the,『Human language make feels like I'm talking while clattering, I hate it』, nuance from her answer.

Mia stands up, corrects her appearance and bows politely.

"Thank you, Satou."

"You're welcome."

Come to think of it, this is the first time I'm thanked by Mia.

I reply back without making fun of it.

"Let me introduce myself once more. I am the youngest elf of Bornean forest, daughter of Lamisauya and Lilinatoa, Misanalia Bornean."

While saying, "You have my utmost gratitude.", she kisses my forehead.

>Title [Friend of the Elves] Acquired

<TLN: Yes, it seems to be different in the LN. This picture is actually located before Satou vs Zen, but heck, no more chapter to place this

iirc.>

◇

"This woman is?"

"Oh yeah, I forgot about it. You got more woman again?"

"Master is filthy."

"Matter of course huh."

After the event with Mia ends, the topic returns to no.7.

Mia, Arisa, and Lulu are speaking like I'm a husband who's caught cheating.

I shake No.7 who faints looking so happy.

"...Good morning?"

"Yup, good morning. Do you understand the situation?"

"Please wait a moment."

She spoke without intonation like always. She's contemplating while tilting her head to one side, seems it's her habit.

Since Arisa who's nearby says, "Gross", I straighten her up.

"An instruction remains in the message queue. Since the previous master has died, My ownership has been resigned as a result. According to other records, you have the qualification to be the new master."

No.7 stops there and waits for my answer.

Well, I won't complain if a big-breasted beautiful woman become our companion. Her master, Zen, has died and there probably aren't anymore of her friends remain.

Before I can open my mouth, Arisa reacts first. "No, that's not how it is.", she says to No.7, pulls her behind the wagon and talks secretly with her.

"Master, please sit here~ Everyone else sit here~"

After that, I'm going along with Arisa's favorite small theatric play. It's a parody of some kind but I don't know what it is at all. Then, while I'm still confused, it becomes that No.7 calls me master while she gets [Nana] as her new name.

<TLN: Nana means seven, yes, Satou's terrible at naming people lol>

Although Arisa gives me a look when she heard the name, I'd like you to spare me on this since I don't have any naming sense.

I don't understand the meaning for the small drama until the end but No.7's title has changed from [Zen's Doll] to [Satou's Servant], so there might some kind of profound meaning to it.

"Please take care of me from now on, Nana."

"Yes, master. From now on, please treat me well."

...What did you teach this time, Arisa.

◇

After getting a new companion, I decided to take Mia to the manager of worker's guild. Mia has someone from the same tribe to rely on, unlike the other girls.

Since my deeds to stay in Seryuu city is still valid, I can enter the gate without tax. And since it doesn't seem possible for this to apply to other members, I go alone to call the manager.

"Hello, Nadi-san."

"Hello. Eh? Satou-san, didn't you depart yesterday?"

"Yes, actually a lost elf child has fallen under my care, so I'm making a visit here thinking in borrowing the manager's help."

"You're a good person, you even come back for that."

Nadi-san greeted me pleasantly, but I feel like the last one is mixed with a bit of shock.

"The manager is still asleep, so I'll wake him for you. Please make yourself comfortable on this sofa while you wait."

While saying that, Nadi-san briskly cleans up menswear and magazine-like books on the sofa to make some spaces. They're most likely the manager's.

While I wait, I pick up a magazine-like book. It's a gossip magazine that cover Shiga kingdom related topic. There aren't more than 10 pages, but I flip through it since I feel nostalgic. Articles such as the outcome of love between a noble girl and an explorer somewhere, or map for 'service' on the royal capital are abundant.

I'm hearing the sound of Nadi-san who wakes the manager up from the floor above.

The two come downstairs when I'm reading an article about competition of some famous fighters in an arena.

"I'm sorry to disturb you."

"...Where is she?"

"Mou, manager! When you talk to an ordinary person, please talk more properly. I'm sorry, Satou-san. Where is the elf girl?"

I thought that he was in bad mood for being woken up back then, but this guy is just taciturn huh. Maybe elves default character are taciturn?

I guide the two to the open space outside the gate where my wagon is waiting. The worker's guild wasn't put with [Closed] signboard or something, was that alright?

I ask Lulu who was in the coachman's stand to call Mia.

"Mia? I can't believe it, the lost child is Misanalia?"

"Yes, do you know her?"

"Ah."

He could speak fluently when he was speaking to himself but it's just a word for the reply huh? Nadi-san looks at the manager with troubled face. I see, I understand now why this guy is always sleeping in the store.

"Yuya?"

"Mia."

"Nn."

"Ran away?"

"No."

"Lost"No""

"Lia?"

"House."

"I see."

"Why?"

"...Cleaning up."

Their words exchanges in elf language are interesting. I can guess the intentions but I'd like an interpreter for the actual conversations. Mia only denies when it's about being lost, then they continue to mutually understand.

With the help of Nadi-san, I generally understand their conversations. Manager(Yuya)-san is an elf who comes from the same hometown as Mia. He came to Seryuu city 10 years ago to clean up the mess that his granduncle had created. He didn't mention it, but it's most likely about the Trazayuya maze.

I report to him about the thing with the magician who kidnapped Mia. He had an underground hideout in the rat-man's territory which looks like a maze, and that when we escaped from it, the maze self-destructed burying it along with the magician.

"Go home?"

"Won't"

"I see."

"Have work to do."

Nadi-san became a bit anxious with the flows of the story, but she was back to be beaming with smiles after hearing the manager's words.

"What do?"

"Go home."

"Can you?"

"Together with Satou."

It seems that the manager asked if she could go back home, but Mia said that she'd be fine with me. Really, they could understand well with just that. If you're acquainted with someone for more than 100 years, I guess you'd end up understanding what each other is thinking.

Lastly, the manager tells me, "I'm counting on you". Then the manager and Nadi-san

pulls us along when they're going back to their shop, and negotiate with the knight Soun to make ID for Mia. I consult with the two if they can do something to make Nana able to create an ID, and the manager says, "Leave it to me.", while using magic art, [Fake Patch], to camouflage Nana's tribe into [Human].

At the same time, the manager warns us that this magic can only deceive replica Yamato stone while the original which was present when we got out of the labyrinth back then and Status Check ability could see through it.

By the way, the AR shows me, [Tribe: Human][Tribe: Homonculus], when I look at Nana, while appraisal skill gives me, [Tribe: Human (Fake)].

For the time being, thanks to the manager and Nadi-san, the two got their ID safely. With this we'll be able to visit towns in the middle of our journey.

When we're waiting for the ID to finish, the manager gives me a bag containing money while saying, "Nn".

"Please use this for Mia's travel expense. Though it's only a little since it's manager's secret saving."

"Said too much."

The manager complains with the added information from Nadi-san.

"I'll gratefully receive it."

I receive it and put it on the pouch.

We don't particularly need it, but it would be rude to decline this. I'll give it all to Mia later.

I promise the manager and Nadi-san who see us to send them a letter when we get to the forest.

The wagon advances through the same road as yesterday.

I pray for this to become a peaceful journey with nothing happening, and the wagon continues one while rattling.

Intermission: At Territorial Army

I hear rustling noise of equipments.

Uuu~, the break is already over huh.

The punctual Iona hasn't woke me up, which mean there's still time. I'll enjoy dozing off for a little more.

"Guhaaa!"

What are you doing to a helpless beautiful girl.

A chain mail is suddenly thrown onto my stomach, I get up while moving it aside.

"Hey Ruu. Wake me up more gently."

I complain to the only possible culprit, Ruu.

Iona and Zena-chi never do it like this.

"Just get up already. You're running out of the time to take a meal you know."

What!? I can't let that happen.

I get up and wash my face. Since it's troublesome to use the ladle, I draw water from water basin to the jug directly. If Iona and Zena-chi found out about this, they'd scold me.

"What's on the menu today?"

"Seems black bread and stew."

"Eeeh~ I'd like goat meat or steak sometimes."

"What's with those luxuries, even captain-class doesn't get them."

I amuse myself with the chats while wiping my face with my favorite towel.

"If I became a mistress of a noble, would I be able to eat them everyday~?"

"Nowadays, looks like even nobles have it rough, so you probably won't get many delicious things too?"

Iona doesn't dream big eh~ even though she's from a branch family of a noble. Guess that's why her excitement has been dulled~

I throw my pajama which is a knee-length shirt on top of the bed, and take out an underwear and armors from my own shelf.

"Oi, Lilio. Don't show me your dirty ass."

"What a rude thing to say~ even though it's this cute."

You don't have to see it, Ruu.

It's not like I like I'm an exhibitionist, so I wear my underwear. I'm wearing a short shirt on my top. Ruu and Iona wear breast wraps. Unfortunately, me and Zena-chi don't have much need for ones.

Of course I'd wear a cute shirt and breast wrap when I go on a date, but that's only if I have a boyfriend. I wear armor on the top anyway, it'd only be painful to wear an unneeded breast wrap.

After I finish wearing the chain mail, I put on the sturdy metal-reinforced leather boots and Zena-chi comes just right after.

Ara, how cute.

What she's wearing is Iona's if I'm not mistaken, with lots of frills, Iona's charm point is how showy she is. Isn't that the clothes she was boasting about when she bought it after saving up for half a year.

Good grief, everyone is sweet to Zena-chi.

I've thought that Zena's done changing and have taken a seat on the cafeteria already, but wearing that clothes, don't tell me.

"Zena-chi, you had a date with the boy right?"

"Da... n, no. He was worried about something so we were just having a talk."

That's what you call a date.

Still, seeing your beloved while lacking sleep due to the current overloaded working condition, how lovable.

"Lilio, your hands have stopped. If you don't change fast, you'll really miss your meal you know?"

"Hoo~i."

Reproved by Iona, I continue wearing my clothes.

Zena-chi folds a pink stole really carefully on top of the bed.

Oh? Isn't that the newest color from Pinen clothing store from the center district?

Zena-chi is certainly a noble, but I don't think a daughter of a noble lineage could be that extravagant.

"Zena-chi, what's with that stole? Don't tell me, it's a gift from the boy?"

"Ehehe~."

Uwah, Zena's face is becoming lovestruck.

"I was given it by Satou-san. It was a product from Pinen-san's store Lilio told me back then~."

You're amazing, boy. Even cheap things in that place should be around 2-3 silver coins.

I wonder if he's a stupid son of a large store owner from somewhere? I pray that Zena isn't being played.

She's taking off her clothes, and I let it slide when she stealthily unfasten her breasts paddings. It was a date after all, some charms were needed for woman right.

"Zena-san, please change your clothes quickly too. Since we won't make it for the meal, do you want me to make some sandwiches?"

"No, I already had a meal, so I'm alright."

"Did you have a feast?! You had a feast right~~~."

After Zena-chi finished taking off her clothes, she gives it to Iona and she's closing on me while fetching her equipments.

"I did not. I just had some sweets while teaching Satou-san how to chant."

I am being dragged by Ruu and Iona to the cafeteria while Zena-chi is speaking fondly, "When I was going to sit down on a bench, he laid out a handkerchief on it you know."

Oh no, isn't that guy quite a playboy?

◇

The next day, I'd be on the bed all day since I'm off-duty, but I change my clothes and go out.

The sweets reserve in my room has ran out. Zena-chi is on duty today, and she's going to guard until midnight today just because she can use magic. Since it'd be pitiful if there's no sweets when she gets back, this kind Lilio-sama will buy it for her.

Well~, it's important for a popular woman to be attentive!

There's a familiar figure on the plaza in front of the castle.

It's the boy--- Zena-chi's beloved. He's wearing an expensive-looking clothes like usual. Looks like he's back from shopping, he's carrying a lot of books.

If you buy that many, you could just hire a manservant.

Since my mischievous heart grows excited, I creep on his back and talk to him while imitating Zena.

"Hello, nimble Onii-san."

The boy turns around and speaks normally. Tsk, he's not surprised huh.

"Hello, Lilio-san. Did you imitate Zena-san?"

"Ehehe~ Did I pass? Hey hey, did you skip a beat?"

Ooh~ he remembers his girlfriend's best friend's name even though he meet me only once. No~ It's hard to be beautiful~ What should I do if he's fallen for me.

"Are you alone today?"

"Yep, the other soldiers are sleeping~ But Zena, from yesterday noon until midnight today, is keeping on guard the who~le time. Magic troops are lacking in number isn't it."

It looks like he wants to talk with me, but it doesn't seems like he's going to seduce me. He's not making a pass to this beautiful me, that means maybe he's not flirtatious?

Since the topic is about Zena-chi.

"Lilio-san, could you deliver a message for Zena-san?"

"Okay~ But no passionate lines that would make chest hot okay? If it's too intense, it might be interpreted wrong you know~."

I don't want to whisper love words to Zena-chi. Although since we're in women barrack, something like that do occasionally happen, because we live for friendship.

"I've decided to go to the labyrinth city for a business trip."

That's quite far. Isn't that on the far-most side of this country?

"Hee~ you're going on a long expedition again huh."

"Yes, I've stocked goods which are in shortage there."

"That so~, you're a merchant after all. When are you departing?"

"That, I plan to depart early morning tomorrow."

Acha~ Zena's first love end up unrequited huh~.

Let's treat her something next time.

"I understand, I'll properly convey it."

"Yes, I'm counting on you."

After saying so, the boy nods and leaves with a horse-drawn carriage away.

◇

When I get back to the barrack, everyone are gathering and having talks in the cafeteria. It's still a long time before the meal, is there something happening?

I ask the squad who are talking beside me.

"Yana-chi, did something happen?"

"Ah, Lilio, listen to this."

It's a good choice to ask Gayana-chi who loves to talk. They're told that the territorial army has announced the application for personnel selection for deployment in the labyrinth city. The deployment is going to take two months.

But, even though they say that it's training, in actuality it's about hunting monsters in the haunts right?

I will absolutely pass on this~.

However, judging from the buzz around, there are a lot of people who want to go. It seems that they add one silver coins for each month on the pretext of training. It's an amount that couldn't be ignored for us, underpaid soldiers. Furthermore, looks like the sales of magic cores we get from the labyrinth will be split equally for soldiers.

The danger is great, but the return is just as big. Danger is everywhere anyway. Even a senior demon appeared recently during my normal duty in Seryuu duty. If the silver mask-sama hadn't arrived at that time, I would be six-feet under right now.

That reminds me, the boy is going to the labyrinth city.

This is just right, I could aid Zena-chi's love while getting rich, let's apply for the selection.

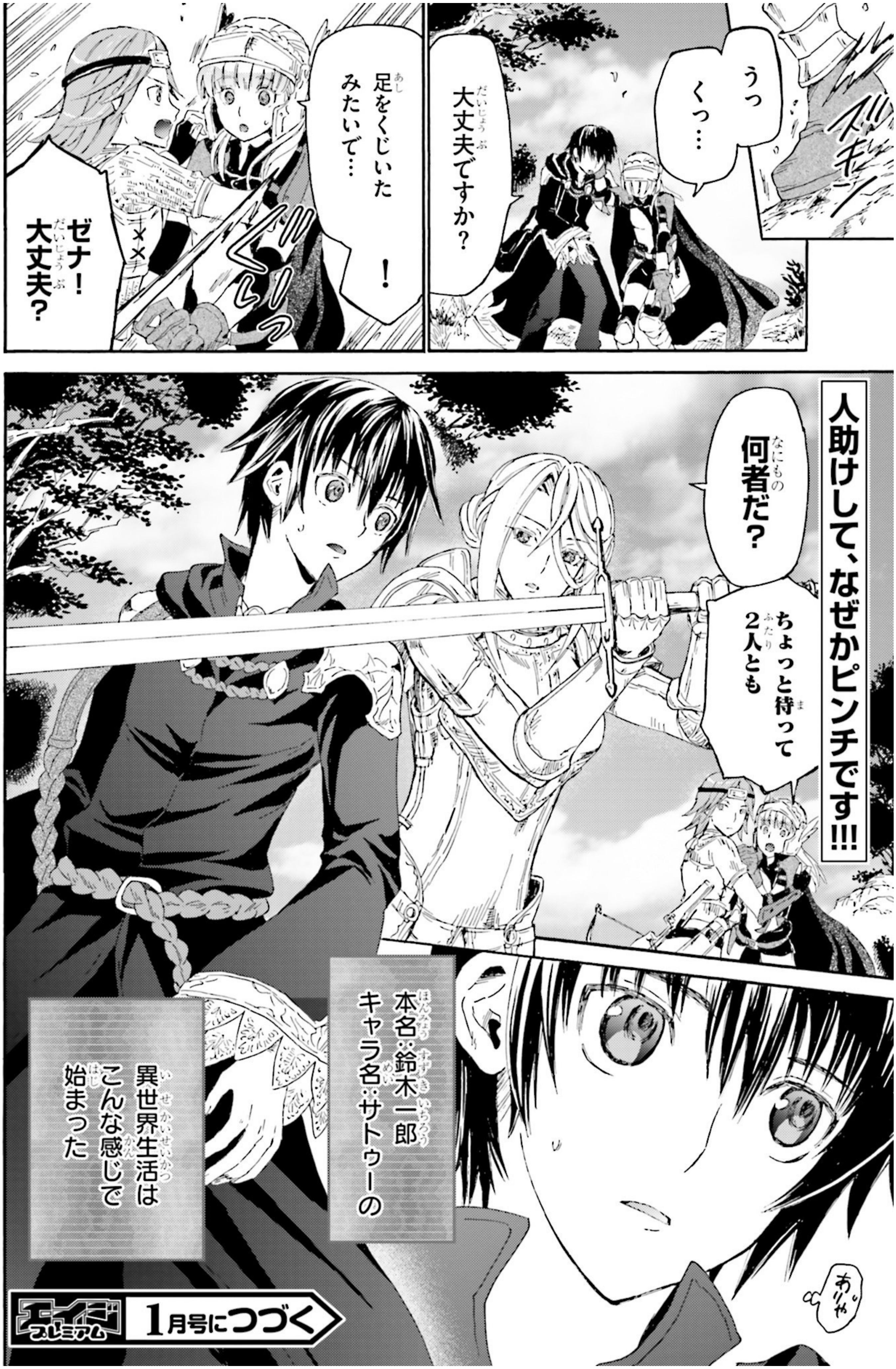
Since Zena-chi won't be back until midnight, let's talk to Ruu and Iona first. Ruu isn't going to complain as long as she could get stronger, and Iona is unexpectedly greedy, she should be easy to persuade.

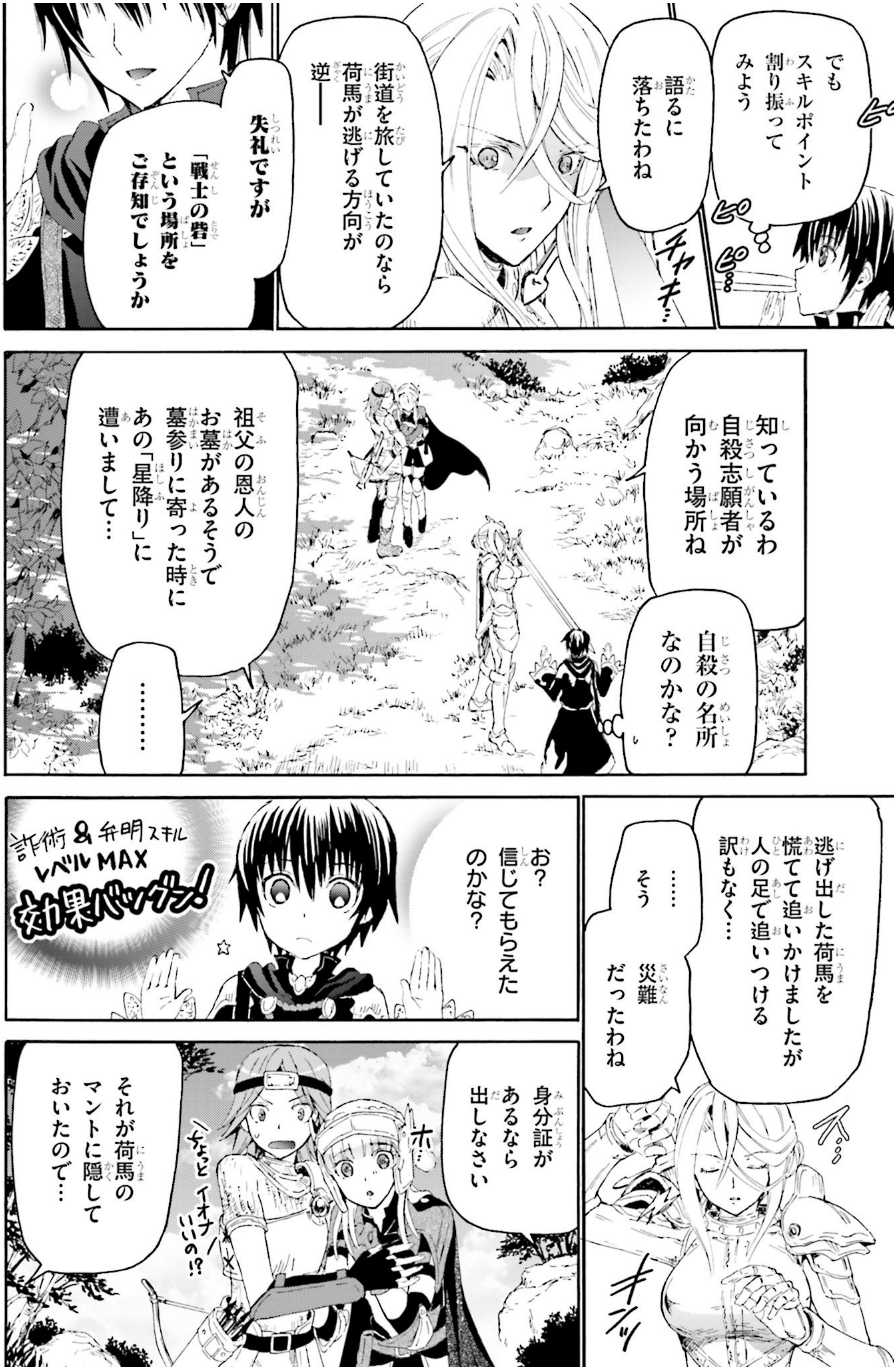
I don't know if we'd get selected, but let's work hard~.

TLN:

Since I'm not sure if we'll ever get Lilio and Iona's picture from the LN, here are them from the manga version.

The one with the two-handed sword is Iona, while Lilio is the one with the crossbow holding Zena back.


ズギン
うっ
くっ…
大丈夫ですか？
足をくじいたみたいで…
！
ぐいっ
ゼナ！大丈夫？
人助けして、なぜかピンチです!!!
何者だ？
ちょっと待って2人とも
本名：鈴木一郎キャラ名：サトゥーの
異世界生活はこんな感じで始まった
ありゃ
エイジプレミアム
1月号につづく


でもスキルポイント割り振ってみよう
ピ ピ ピ
語るに落ちたわね
チャキ…
街道を旅していたのなら荷馬が逃げる方向が逆——
失礼ですが「戦士の砦」という場所をご存知でしょうか
知っているわ自殺志願者が向かう場所ね
自殺の名所なのかな?
祖父の恩人のお墓があるそうで墓参りに寄った時にあの「星降り」に遭いまして…
………
逃げ出した荷馬を慌てて追いかけましたが人の足で追いつける訳もなく…
……そう 災難だったわね
ス…
ギシッ
お?信じてもらえたのかな?
詐術&弁明スキル レベルMAX 効果バツグン!
身分証があるなら出しなさい
ホ…
ちょっと イオナ いいの!?
それが荷馬のマントに隠しておいたので…

[TLN2: And before you ask; no, I won't scanlate or translate the manga.

I'm sorry.]

Intermission: Labyrinth and Fairy

"Sensei! Houya and the others had gone to the goblin's nest!"

The one who boorishly breaks this elegant afternoon tea time is the home fairy (Brownie) entrusted with taking care of this ivy mansion, Giril.

Giril who's usually very calm is panicking with popping eyes.

It's not the time for me to be so calm. I wear my familiar magic clothes made from Yuriha fiber and take my favorite cane with one hand, then I go out. At the outside, my attendant who has already completed his preparation, Dohar--a very sturdy Dwarf--accompanies me to the labyrinth on the outskirts of Selbira.

This comes a bit late, but I'm a nature art user who hails from Bornean forest and the one who has broken through level 50 after devoting myself for 500 years. The name is Trazayuya Bornean. Recently, I've been called elf sage instead of my name.

"Boss, the kids seem to have taken the chick kids."

"I see."

"It seems they want to be acknowledged by the chick kids."

"Let's hurry."

"Hei!"

The kids Dohar mentions are someones who have followed me here from Bornean forest, Houya-- Houlsetaya, along with 5 others young elves. They, who were level 5-6 when they first got here, have approached level 20 in rapid growth now. They're young ones with bright futures. Since there are a lot of elves who finish their lives uneventfully without even crossing level 10, they're worth to be specially mentioned. They're a bit thoughtless but it can't be helped since they're still young, being less than 300 years old. They will settle down with time.

They'll grow up, become more discreet, before long they will pass over me, and if they gain influence in the world, the elves position will also go up. That is my very wish. To have the elves regain back the leadership of the world is my dream.

At the end of last month, around 15 young elves had come asking for my guidance, I wondered if the news about the kids' rapid growth had traveled to the hometown. They're clearly younger than Houya and the others. The youngest one is my distant nephew, Yusalatouya, at only 150 years old.

I've thought of making them into a group of five people and let Dohar makes them get accustomed with the labyrinth but it seems that Houya and the others have taken them to the labyrinth to brag themselves. Another reason is probably the fair-looking Lulilutoa who's also a master of Lute-playing being one those who've arrived recently. Appealing to women is a common thing regardless of age or race after all.

Dohar shows his red metal explorer plate to the gatekeeper who guards the entrance to the labyrinth on the west side of Selbira. That gatekeeper has known us since he was a new recruit, but he has never not checked for the plate for the past 20 years. It's quite commendable, but since right now I'm worried with the safety of the young ones, I can't help but feel annoyed. I'm still lacking in discipline.

After we're finished with the checking, we descend the stairway to come into semi-basement and continue through the passage. The passage is 10 meter wide and 5 meter high which meanders for about 2 Km. They made it to be twisted so when monsters overflow from the labyrinth, they would be slowed down.

One meter above is the ceiling that acts like dormer window that could be opened, while soldiers are patrolling outside. This 2 kilometers passage are used to preemptively shoot to death monsters which could come out overflowing from the labyrinth.

Thanks to this, "Passage of Death", the labyrinth's monsters have never got to Selbira.

Dohar and I begin to run while calming down my restless mind. I don't want to get mistaken with monster if I carelessly make noise in this passage. It's especially dangerous for Dohar since he's short.

Dohar opens the labyrinth's gate after we finally arrive there. I'm powerless against this heavy gate.

◇

"The kids are going to sweep the goblin's nest, they said."

"I understand."

There are many goblin's nest inside this labyrinth, but they probably went to the so-called fairy area infested with plant monsters, an unpopular area.

Ones will have to defeat the troublesome plant monsters, because they act as obstacles, to get to the goblins' location. Plant monsters have high stamina, and they're hard to deal without someone with fire magic in your party. And even if you defeat them, their magic cores are buried deep in the ground, it's not possible to dig out. They're monsters that embody the saying, "Great pains but all in vain." Since it's not worth the effort, the cores are rare to come by as alchemy materials.

Making use of their unpopularity, I made a tunnel straight to that goblin's place using nature art and alchemy to act as an exclusive hunting ground for the young elves.

I've planted Gabo fruits for the goblin's welfare and breeding and eliminated other monsters beside goblins with Dohar.

Now then, I've called them goblins so far, but the ones in this labyrinth are not the wicked fairy goblins but pseudo-goblins that have magic cores inside their body. The wicked fairy goblins have dark green body and bleed red blood, they're fairies who are hated everywhere while the pseudo-goblins can't speak, have dark body and bleed green blood, they're genuine monsters.

The wicked fairy goblins don't exist in this continent for 200 years except in one region, since they are hunted all the same with the pseudo-goblins. Therefore, ironically, what most people refer as goblins are actually pseudo-goblins.

◇

Dohar takes care of monsters who occasionally appear in one blow with his battle axe. He's already working as my attendant for nearly 100 years. He was overjoyed as he recently had managed to break through level 40, passing his father.

"Boss, it's basilisk."

"I understand. ■■■ Magic Arrow."

I unleash 21 magic arrows toward the basilisk appearing from the back. There are 21 magic arrows, where usually even one is hard to resist. The basilisk becomes pieces of meats without being able to do anything.

"Is it a stray?"

"Yes, basilisks usually appear 5 level below. Some stupid young explorers who overestimated their abilities most likely had gone to the depth and drew one here."

"You're right."

This is troubling. Low level people won't be able to resist Basilisk petrification. The one we encountered just now was just a lower basilisk so it couldn't turn someone into stone, but I don't know if they could take its stare without getting their hearts stopped.

Near the end of the tunnel, we meet a herd of goblins. They're only level 1-3 but it's a herd consisting of around 30 monsters. It's annoying to wait for Dohar defeating them so I provide assistance with magic arrow.

"Boss, for the goblins to appear around this place, that means-"

"Umu."

I briefly answered Dohar's guess. I've scattered medicine that would make goblins think there are strong monsters so they don't go near the tunnel entrance. If they go far past it, then that means the foods don't suffice.

"This is bad."

"Yea, the kids 'ere in danger if we don't get to 'em fast."

The labyrinth monsters periodically enter breeding season. Goblin's period is short, but in exchange their propagation rate rarely change. However their propagation rate is huge, so it can't be helped if there's a calculation error.

...I remember something unpleasant. Last month, Giril mentioned that the reserve Gabo seeds in the storehouse had gone. The storehouse wasn't locked so poor people occasionally stole Gabo fruit from there, so I had just thought, "Again huh", when I heard it.

I've left the job of sowing Gabo seeds here to Houya and the others, but I wonder if they properly follow my order to do it with one small bag? If they sowed the three small-barrels worth of Gabo seeds that were in the storehouse...

I must hurry. If my prediction is true, the goblins may have started breeding explosion. If it really happens then 30 baby goblins could be born by eating the stomach of their mother goblin. And then the children would start breeding again in two weeks. If we're unlucky, we might be facing ten of thousands goblins.

When we finally arrive at an open space, countless bodies of goblins and three dead bodies of the young elves come into our views.

"Regrettable."

"Boss, please save the remorse until we get out of the labyrinth."

I accept Dohar's advice and advance forward.

We smash through the goblins that have clogged up the tunnel. Since we can't avoid the plant monsters, I use nature art <<Enhance Sharp Edge>> on Dohar's battle axe and continue on while he's cutting them.

We finally arrive at a location that could only be called painting from hell littered with corpses as far as eyes can see.

While clearing the goblins corpses with magic and a thin sword, I see the tragic corpses of the young elves full of goblin's teeth marks.

I call the young ones' name several times.

However, no one answers back. Whenever Dohar swings his battle axe, the goblin corpses increase. I deal with three goblins who rush towards me by deploying the <<Floating Wheel>> for my self-protection.

Boom, we hear explosion sounds from the back of the room.

"Dohar."

"Yea, boss."

We act in harmony, making ways through the sea of goblin to the place where the sound comes from.

To back Dohar, I give him reinforcement magic. They're Strength and Dancing Blade.

Strength multiply Dohar's strength several folds allowing him to tear through goblins like a tornado. Dancing Blades is small blades that arbitrarily fly around the target while cutting up enemies with forces. It can be said that Dancing Blades is useless in a labyrinth, but it shows matchless power if the opponents are goblins.

"Houya, Lua."

Lua is smiling weakly hearing my call. Her beautiful transparent green hair has been dirtied with goblins' blood in spots. Still, I'm glad that she's alive.

Houya's explosion magic mowed down several dozens of goblins who had tried to crushingly surround them to death. Even so, there are still hundreds of goblins in front of us.

"■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■■■"

I begin chanting the highest order of nature magic. I've only ever used this when I fought a Lesser Dragon in my life. It's wasteful using this on goblins, but this is the best magic to safely defeat large number of enemies.

"■■■ ■ ■■■■■■■■ ■■■"

What cruelty! Lua has lost her left arm. It could be said that this is a world's loss as her lute playing tones can't be heard anymore.

"■■■ ■ ■■■■ Wild Dancing of Void Spears <<Multiple Javelins>>"

Unseen spears are pouring unto the enemies like downpour. Amidst Dohar who's cutting up the enemies and without injuring Houya and the others, it changes hundreds of goblins into corpses.

I've not only saved Houya and Lua. Beautiful Lua has protected my distant nephew, Yusalatouya, on her back even while losing one of her arm. The young Yuya is unconscious but I give him an emergency treatment and carry him and Lua together with self-propelled stretcher <<Floating Stretcher>>.

◇

After we've returned, we immediately look for a high-ranking Garleon priest, and ask him to use healing magic. Unfortunately, the recovery for Lua's left arm didn't go well. Until I complete an artificial arm indistinguishable with the real one in the future, Lua must bear through the hardship.

Giril found cold body of Houya on the next day, he most likely felt responsible for the disaster, letting the guilt got into him.

I bring Lua and Yuya back to Bornean forest, taking the blame, two-third of the congress is in agreement to exile me.

Even though I've been away from the forest for a long time, it's sad to be chased away from your hometown. However, the lost of many young people will result in generations without children for dozens, or even hundreds of years. It might be a fitting punishment for someone who has created this racial crisis like me.

As a sole atonement, I will create a pseudo-labyrinth for the sake of elves' growth without the danger like in this disaster. I vow to dedicate my life to build a place for training without the danger of losing lives, for the future of young elves.

I dream of bustling figures of young elves who devote themselves with studying in my maze, someday.

And, I believe in the future where the elves lead the world again.

I am Trazayuya Bornean. One foolish elf man who had scattered the lives of many young lives.

Even so, I cannot abandon my dream.

Intermission: Tama

Wagahai is Tama de Aru[1], the name given by master.

Tama has a family nyan.

A really strong and kind master, and Pochi who's like a little sister and Liza who's like a mother. And also cheeky Arisa and docile Lulu. Everyone is not a cat-person, but they're all important family nyan.

Arisa said that if I use, "Nyan, master will be happy, but it's a lie. Far from being happy, he's worried instead.

"Okay~ Here we go~. Everyone, follow me~."

Arisa is leading the way while running. Today is a shopping day.

New clothes! Fluttering and fluffy, cute clothes with no weird smell.

"If Pochi was to wear this clothes then Tama would be cool with this sharp one I guess?"

"This ribbon is better~?"

Not the one that Arisa recommends, but the matching one with Pochi with a small ribbon attached is what I want.

"Ara? That's unexpected, you like cute things huh~."

I don't know how to use money, so it's Arisa who buy it.

After the shopping is over, we eat a lot and lot of meats with the leftover money. I am very happy.

We pass by a park, I see a nice sunny spot for napping, then I notice master there.

"Master~?"

I run to him to talk, he looks in pain somewhere.

Pochi who runs with me together looks worried too.

"Tummy hurt~?"

"I'm alright, I might be tired though."

Master says so while patting my head. I want to be patted more, I rub my head against master's hand.

◇

The outside! I'm going outside the city for the first time.

Arisa asks, "Didn't you live outside the city when you were small?", but I only remember the winter chill and the warmth of someone's fur.

Alhough I clearly remember the time when I met Pochi, I don't really remember past things.

Pochi wasn't able to speak words and just groaned with, "Gururu~", but I worked hard to teach her words. Since I'm the onee-chan.

The wagon is shaking here and there, it's fun. Since Arisa and Lulu cry their butts hurt, I ask, "Are you okay~?". Arisa screams back, "Nothing is impossible with human's intelligence!", but I don't really understand the meaning. Arisa's words are fun, but I always don't understand them. She's a strange child.

Arisa teaches me many things. [Janken], [Guppa], [Hopping], [Card play], [Anisong], a lot, lots of things.

Next time, if I catch a prey, I'll give it to Arisa.

The scenery is flowing while I'm sitting beside master, it's fun. Pochi also sits beside master on the other side.

"Nya!"

Just now, a prey is in that thicket!

I tried to jump out, but Liza gripped my girdle so I wasn't able to jump out. Too bad.

The wagon shakes and Arisa complains. Even though wagons are for shaking things, Arisa is really strange.

Pochi counterattacks Arisa who rides on her head. Uu~ I want to join in. But, I'm the onee-chan so I'll endure. Uu~, endure... impossble nyan♪

I play with Pochi and Arisa until Liza stops us.

◇

Uu~, I catch glimpse of many preys.

But, until master has ordered me, endure it, endure.

"Private Pochi! Private Tama!"

"Ay!"

"Yes nanodesu!"

I take on the pose Arisa has taught yesterday, "Swoosh!", and answer master.

"I will assign you two a mission! Check the security around the perimeter of the boulders!"

"Ay!""Desu!"

I chase after a rabbit that I've had my eyes on since earlier with Pochi.

The rabbit is hopping around with, "Pyon pyon"-like sound.

Pochi and me are running together.

It's slower than monsters nyan.

I throw myself.

Pyon pyon.

Nyau, it ran away.

Pyo~n.

Pochi jumps on it.

The rabbit twists its body and slips underneath Pochi.

I won't let you run!

Tou!

But the rabbit dives into a hole hidden in the grass' shadow.

Uu~, if I go there, the clothes given by master will be dirtied.

However, Pochi plunges into the hole without hesitation.

I'm the onee-chan after all, I'll give this rabbit to Pochi.

I catch a snake loitering around under the rock. It's a snake with no poison and delicious.

But, it's a bit small. I look for the next prey while twirling my tail around, and come across Arisa who's looking for firewoods.

"Arisa~?"

"Ara, Tama. Hmm? What are you holding?"

"Snake~"

That's right, let's give it to Arisa.

It's a bit small, but it's good for snacks.

"For you~?"

"Wa, no, don't come here."

"Not poison~?"

Even though it's not a snake with poison, so it's fine.

Now, Arisa, go ahead and chew it from the head without reserve.

"Wa, toss it away."

"Pow~?"

"Yes, turn around. spin and spin~, then throw it with a pow."

"Ay~."

As Arisa says, I spin and spin~ and throw it.

Seems that it's a new play, but I don't understand the fun.

"Yes, that's good."

Arisa crosses her arms and nods with, uh-huh. Seems it was correct.

Arisa pick a firewood on her foot and go back to master.

Next, for the sake of master, I'll look for a bigger prey.

I chase after a dragonfly.

I chase after a cricket.

I found it.

Conceal myself~, tou!

I pin the prey from behind, and it faints just from that.

Weak~?

Even though it's a present for master, but I'm told, "Let it go."
Even though, it's a big prey~.

But, it's an order from master, Tama will listen to what he says.
I spin and spin~ like Arisa taught me and toss it away.

I was scolded by master.

I must tell Arisa that it's bad to lie.
Because I'm the *onee-chan*.

---

1. TLN: This is impossible to tl for me without losing the humor, yes she's mimicking the demon wagahai-kun. Dearu is like nanodesu, no particular meaning and definitely not her name. :p

   Apparently the author is referencing to a famous Japanese work

   http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Am_a_Cat

Intermission: The Work of Manager-san

My name is Yusala Touya, an elf who was born in Bornean forest.

"Manager, the preparation is complete."

The one who calls me is the sole employee of my shop, the small Nadi. Although she wasn't even as tall as my knee when I first met her, she's grown taller than me before I knew it.

Human grows fast.

"Let's go."

She answers me with an energetic, "Yes!", and carries the big rucksack below her feet on her shoulder.

She presents another medium-sized rucksack below her to me while smiling.

That's my share of luggage huh.

"Laborer."

"We can't. We don't have extra money for that."

I tried to tell her that I wanted to hire a laborer to carry the luggage, but it was rejected. Since she's in charge of the shop's accounting, I can't push it too much.

It can't be helped, I put my favorite staff in the rucksack, and shoulder it.

"I've put manager's favorite dried fig in the bento, so let's do this energetically!"

Hou, it's quite rare for the economical Nadi to look out for others.

My lips gets slightly loose. Since the sharp-sighted Nadi grins when she quickly sees it, I tighten it hard.

◇

"Let's enter the mountain from around this area."

Nadi says so while showing the map to me.

We tie the horses that we rode here on trees. Just in case, I sprinkle medicines to ward monsters around them.

We're in the middle of a job from a merchant boy called Satou to deliver an item for the ashgrey ratkin people who live on an undeveloped land deep in the mountain.

Normally, I wouldn't take such annoying job, but since he's taking care a girl from my race, I couldn't decline it.

Rather than saying I cannot decline, normally I should've taken this job free of charge.

But a good-hearted person he is, he requested the job formally. Moreover, he gave three gold coins as the payment. I wanted to tell that I didn't need the money, but Nadi quickly blocked my mouth and I was stopped.

"Manager?"

"Sorry."

I lost in thought for a bit.

"Then, please."

"Umu."

I use the secret art for walking in the forest.

"■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■■ Wood Walk"

Green aura wraps Nadi and me.

It's been awhile since I use this magic.

While we're advancing through the forest in these states, branches and weeds as tall as grown man avert themselves from us.

"This magic is really amazing, no matter how many time I see it."

"Is that so."

I feel slightly embarrassed from Nadi's straight praise.

As a nihilistic grown man, I have to remain expressionless.

I guide Nadi while we continue advancing the mountain path. Since obstacles are avoiding themselves from us, it's no different than walking in a highway.

"Ah, that's the firefly lily of the valley flower!"

"We can't."

Yes, while we're using this magic, we cannot hurt creatures of the forest. Once we do, the magic won't be usable for a season.

"So it's like that, aah, even though we could get five gold coins from the alchemy shop with that flower."

I lead Nadi who keeps staring at the flower in regret by hand, and advance ahead.

I wonder if there was a big monster that passed here, I catch sights of rocks and trees that are gouged unnaturally. Did some kind of high level monster have settled down in this forest?

I was going to use magic to check it, but then I noticed that my hand was still joined with Nadi's. I want to separate our hands, but she doesn't let it go.

"Nadi?"

"Err, there, it's separated."

It's rare for the intelligent her. She's really interested with the flower before is she.

I'm worried with her condition, but I have to confirm the safety first.

"■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■ Forest Whisper <<Natural Whisper>>"

The magic spreads through the forest.

『Did some new monster spring up in the forest?』

『Yes, a lot.』

『They're no more.』

『No more.』

『Hero.』

『Was here.』

『Night.』

『Running.』

『Flying.』

『Exterminated the great wild boar.』

The forest little echoes continue to echo.

A hero in such remote forest? There should be some rumor if it was the Saga empire hero, but maybe a hero appeared among the ashgrey ratkin?

I'm slightly interested with it, but since it doesn't seem to be a monster, there's probably no danger.

◇

We finally arrive at the ratkin settlements in the noon, but unfortunately, looks like we're not really welcomed.

The problem is I don't understand their words. Since I'm told that they saved Mia, I thought that they can speak elf language, but my expectation is off.

"How about it?"

"Yes, it's similar to weaselkin language. There are also some that are similar with elf language."

Nadi is speaking in guess while grabbing the cuff of my clothes.

Although I've heard that she's good with language, to be able to interact using unfamiliar language like this, she's truly capable.

I'd like to use the nature magic [Translate] that my granduncle used but I don't have it, it's impossible with my level.

I watch over Nadi who's negotiating.

In the worst case, we might have to push them the memento at least and go back.

The surrounding ratkin people become slightly noisier. Did Nadi make wrong expressions?

Un? My feet is being shaken.

When I look down, the ratkin little children are coiling around the luggage that Nadi and me have put on the ground. Since their noses are twitching, are they smelling something good?

I slowly squat down while being careful as to not stimulate the surrounding and open the big rucksack.

Strong smell spread. This bundle have croquettes huh.

Apparently, the children are interested with this smell. I don't know what's so good with this oily thing, but it's also popular in the city.

Nadi probably has brought it for her lunch, but let's use these to build friendship with them.

There are 10 croquettes in the bundle. There are 18 children huh.

I break the croquettes in half, and share it with the children.

When that happen, several ratkins who look like the mothers appear from the gap between the soldiers, and each of them carries 3-4 children who keep on chewing the croquettes to behind the men.

I give the last one to the ratkin who look here so wistfully. I saw a slightly appealing glance from Nadi. I'll divide you the dried fig later, so don't get mad.

I don't know if the croquettes succeed as the go-between, but since a ratkin that seem to be the patriarch who understand Shiga kingdom language comes, the goal is complete somehow.

◇

"I see, so my brother has died."

"According to the person who was present on his last moment, it was a heroic death."

The patriarch says so as he holds the red helmet from among the memento I've handed. I can feel deep sorrow dwelling on his words.

When I was about to say thanks for saving Mia, and farewell, Nadi cuts in.

"Patriarch-san, why is only the forest around here dying?"

"I don't know the reason, but they've begun to wither since half a year ago."

I see, I understand what Nadi is trying to say. It's not enough with just thank you words.

I go out of the patriarch's straw-thatched roof tree house, and use a magic.

"■■ ■……■ ■ ■ ■■■■■ Summon Forest Maiden (Summon Dryad)"

In accordance to my spell, the spirit of this mountain forest responds.

It looks like a little girl with green hair.

"I have something to ask."

"Elf! It's been awhile."

"Mountain forest."

"Do you want to know why the mountain dies?"

"That's right."

"The reason why the mountain die is~ because a human tried to forcibly operate the ruin."

According to the Dryad's story, it looks like it's because granduncle Touya's ruin has absorbed the earth veins around here. How can that be.

"Measures."

"It's alright. The ruin has stopped anyway, and I've taken a lot of mana from a cute child."

Due to the stimulation of that mana, it looks like she's succeeded in drawing power from far away earth veins.

Even though she looks like that, she's lived for a lot longer than me.

"Thank you very much."

"It's fine~, see ya."

The dryad went to the other side of the summoning circle while saying that.

It's already been resolved.

Since I talked with the dryad in elf language, I tell the content of the conversation to the patriarch and Nadi.

I wonder if my story is difficult, Nadi somehow interprets it for the patriarch.

"Oooh, the village is saved."

"I'm glad for you patriarch-san."

"Yes, we won't have to move to a different mountain now."

The patriarch firmly grabs my hand, and says thanks many times over.

Even though I did nothing.

"Isn't it because you use magic to identify the cause, and report that it's fine already right."

"Is that so."

Now then, the job is over.

I want to go back to the city, and take a nap on the usual sofa.

Intermission: Young Merchant and Orphanage Children

When I went to an orphanage on an errand of my employer, I saw little children playing cards. Those cards are exactly like the learning cards that I've made. However, the designs are slightly different.

"Hey, you guys, where did you get those cards?"

"Tsui-niichan made it."

"You're wrong, it was Yuni-ane who got it from her boyfriend."

"Etai-niichan drew the pictures."

"Tsui-niichan shaved the tree you know?"

"Yuni-ane taught us how to play."

The children answered my question in hoots. If you say it like that, I won't be able to hear it. Since the children began to quarrel, I arbitrated them in a hurry.

After asking for many times, I understand that, "They got the cards from the lover of the child called Yuni", "The child called Tsui supplied raw materials like wood blocks, ink, and brushes.", and "The child called Etai drew the pictures."

Since the learning card, including the prototype were bought by that merchant boy, he's probably the lover of that Yuni. The intelligent looking girl who was with her is probably Yuni.

I guess the children that he wanted to teach are this orphanage's kids huh.

That reminds me, the children said something that piqued me.

"What is the way to play?"

There's nothing like way to play for the cards I've made. You read the letter, and check the back of the card to see if you're correct, that's what the item only is.

"Like this!"

"You line them up."

"In turns."

"You guess the letter right~"

"It becomes yours."

The children speaks of in rapid succession. The "I want to tell"-thought overflow. I patiently listen to the children's words, and arrange them in my head.

You put 100 cards with the letter sides on top on the [Field], and if you can read the letter correctly to match the picture on the back, it become yours. The missed cards are sent to the [Graveyard], and if there are no more cards on the [Field], the cards on the [Graveyard] are put back on the [Field], and the play resumes. When the cards are all gone from the [Field], and the [Graveyard], the one who holds the most cards becomes [Scholar]--the winner.

"Amazing, to think of such play."

"That's right, Yuni-ane is amazing~"

"Didn't she say the amazing one was Aisa?"

"You're wrong, it's Tarisa."

"Wasn't it Maisa?"

I want to meet this child called Yuni. I ask if I can meet Yuni or the other two children.

"Yuni-ane is working."

"Tsui-niichan is also training right?"

"What about Etai-niichan?"

"In his room?"

"No, the elder said he was going to work in the field today."

"Gabo field?"

"No, he said mustard spinach."

"Then, he's at the red roof place."

"Uncle, I'll guide you there!"

U, uncle. Even though I'm still 20 years old.

While feeling hurt by the children's words, I follow them by hand.

◇

The children lead me to the place where 20 boys who are about 10 years older than the one who've lead me here are working in the fields.

The eldest-looking muscular boy looks suspiciously at me who've been guided by the children.

"Hey, nice to meet you, I'm a merchant called Neisen."

"What business does Merchant-sama want? Since the crops are the lord-sama's properties, we wont's sell it without permission y'know?"

I notice slightly sarcastic accent from his [Merchant], and [Sama]. I didn't come here to pick a fight with a child.

"It's not like that. I wanted to meet Etai-kun, and these children guided me."

"Etai is under that tree, fainting. Since he's useless, you can take him if you have some business. You kids, come here."

I thank the boy and go toward Etai-kun.

The children are caught by the boy, and got themselves to help weed the grass. While slightly waving to the children, I talk to Etai-kun.

"Etai-kun, can I talk with you for a bit?"

"...Who? Are you?"

"Nice to meet you, I'm a merchant called Neisen."

"Haa, merchant-san, what are you...."

Looks like Etai-kun isn't good with conversations.

"Actually, it's about the picture you've drawn on the learning cards."

"Those are interesting right!"

"Yup, the child who thought that play is amazing."

"Everyone plays it all night."

"Did no one quarrel?"

"Anyone who does will be made to have the last turn."

"I see, that's a good decision. However, it's hard to wait your turns with just two learning cards sets right."

"No, we have four sets now."

I wasn't able to hide my surprise. It's only been eight days since the [Learning Cards] have been sold. To only take four days to make one set!

Even though the painter whom I asked to produce the commercial cards took half a month to create one set…

"Did you draw it yourself?"

"No."

I breath a slight sigh of relief with that words. The reason was because it took several people to shorten the time. However, that thought is negated with the next words.

"I made the first two sets myself, but the other set was made with the help of other kids who were good at drawing. Thanks to that, we made one in a day."

◇

"Theo, Shual, Olio. This person has something to talk about."

Etai-kun leads me to a hut with three boys and girls. I promptly do self-introduction and get down to business.

"Can you guys draw pictures as good as Etai-kun?"

"That's right."

"Not as good as Etai-ani."

"Etai-niichan taught me~"

After each of them draws a picture, I start the talk.

"I want to employ you guys."

"I haven't properly learned the letters you know?"

"Is it my b, body?!"

"My breasts are still small, do you want to make me your mistress?"

I deny the children's off--the-mark replies, and I explain in detail.

I'm the original maker of this learning cards, and I want to spread it all over Shiga kingdom, not only in Seryuu city, so in order to make a lot of the learning cards, I'm going to employ them.

"How much will you give? Will you give one penny for one set?"

"You, that's too greedy."

"That's right, that'll become several copper coins in one month."

"How many will it become?"

The children's wages depend on their works, but the market price is around 1-2 copper coins in a month. In case of living-in, they normally don't get wages.

I tell the children who have begun to count with their fingers the answer.

"If you can make 30 sets in one month, then that'll be 30 pennies, or six coins in copper coins."

"Four of us can make 40 sets."

"Then that'll be eight copper coins. Each person gets two copper coins."

"Amazing, that's about the same as Yuni-neechan."

"It's true, amazing."

"However, do we have that much materials?"

"I wonder if we can ask Tsui-niichan~?"

The children are fast to become excited, and depressed.

I don't intend to make them work that cheap, but since I don't have the fund for the start up, I'll compensate them later for the margin.

"I will prepare the materials of course."

"Really?!"

"Then, I'll make many."

"Un, I'll work hard~"

Among the children who are in high spirit, Etai-kun alone looks gloomy.

"But, is it fine to do it without permissions from Yuni and Tsui-niichan?"

"Oh right, they're the children who have brought the card, taught the play, and suggested the cards' production aren't they."

"Un."

"Do you know where they work at? I'll go and ask them. If I can't meet them, I'll go back at midnight."

I go out of the orphanage after hearing the workplaces of Yuni-chan and Tsui-kun. Since I've acquired informal consents from Etai-kun and the other children, I'll talk about it with the remaining two children. I must respect the fellowship of the children.

◇

First, I go to the Gate Inn where Yuni-chan is working. I have to persuade the girl as she's the one who created the idea of the play. If I just put a separate manual for that play, it'll surely sell.

"Okay."

I got permission from the inn's girl to talk to Yuni during her work, and the she readily replied it. The girl is different than my expectation. She's not that intelligent-looking beautiful girl, but an extremely common girl.

"The one who thought that play isn't me. It's by my friend called Arisa."

"Where should I go to meet her?"

"She's gone to the labyrinth city."

"I see, this is troubling."

"It's alright, that Arisa would say strange things like [There is no border for play] and would give you the permission."

That girl called Arisa seems like she has a hearty personality.

Since that girl has promised to send Yuni-chan a letter when she's arrived at the labyrinth city, I ask her to write this matter for the permission in the reply letter. It's going to be an approval after the fact, but let's work hard as to prevent it becoming a dispute.

Of course I won't be breaking any law even if I use it on my own accord, but to just use other's people idea like that, it's something frowned upon among merchants. Normally, the merchant guild becomes the mediator.

When I tell Yuni-chan that I will send the reply together with her letter, she accept while looking wholeheartedly happy.

◇

Lastly, I go toward the wood processing plant where Tsui-kun is working. It's directly after the gate on the east street since it's related to woods transport.

"Okay."

I talked to him who's just taken a break, and he answered readily like Yuni-chan.

He replies while playing with the thin shaved wood wastes on his feet.

"It was originally things that Yuni brought anyway, I only got the woods since I wanted one for myself. I'd hate it if you're selling the the cards that are in the orphanage, but if you're selling newly made ones, I don't have any problem. Moreover, you're going to take Etai who's having problem getting works under your care right? It's impossible for that guy to become a soldier or a transporter after all."

He's unexpectedly quite responsible.

"I won't do anything bad to that boy Etai."

"Un, that guy is good at drawing pictures, but if you leave him alone, he'll draw until he collapses."

Tsui-kun nods that he wants me to tell him to be careful.

I should make an upper limit for the number of sets made in a month. If I don't put a limit, those children look like they'll work until they collapse.

When I see the plane and the thin shaved woods that Tsui-kun is holding, I remember certain words.

『What kind of idea are you going to make next? The demands seem to be there, it's the price afterward. Search for cheap materials, or way for cheap mass-production, the various trial-and-errors are fun right.』

I ruminate those words while staring at the wood chips.

"That's right, this is it."

I involuntarily stand up and shouts, the foremen on this place gather their eyes on me.

However, the excited me with the newly found idea doesn't mind those stares, and go negotiate with the boss-san. The thing that I've thought at this time takes form after half a year.

At this time, I thought of using the plywood made from wood chips and glue as the material for the cards, that wouldn't have happened without the great efforts and experiences of boss-san, and tsui-kun.

Learning cards that are made with latticed wood chips glued to become plywoods are worth 2 silver coins, it becomes souvenirs for people who visit this city for the labyrinth, and becomes well-known.

However, that's a story for later.

Until that, the days of making normal learning cards with wood blocks and barely scrap by to return the cost of the material continue for a while.

At this day, the best I can imagine is the figures of Etai and the others who are flustered for seeing a small bag full of copper coins at the end of the month.

Intermission: Arisa's Master

Are you stupid?

Hey, let me say it once more. Are you stupid?

Reading the atmosphere, I stop those abusive words in my chest.

The object of those words is my [Master]. That powerful enemy is acting presumptuous because he's got that much monstrous power and now, he's challenging that.

You will absolutely lose I said, I know that you have secret unique skills, but your level is only 10, you know?

No matter how great your skills are, there's no way it could overcome 4 times level difference!

Moreover, he's hiding his skills even though his level is so low. I wouldn't know what kind of secret technique you've prepared!

"I won't hesitate to turn this into a bloodbath you know?"

The monster says so while pointing his cane to my master.

"It's no good! Master, this guy is too strong."

"Trashes don't have any place to call me 'this guy'."

Yes, I'm doing my best to call for [master's] attention, but the attack is coming here. Ah, this life is going to be over here huh. I want to flirt before I die~.

◇

I still remember the day I meet him.

I was in the shaking slave carriage that had just arrived in Seryuu city. It was depressing only looking at the gloomy slaves in the carriage.

At that time, I felt a gaze from somewhere, and he was there.

Black hair.

Black pupils.

Delicate build.

And, Japanese face.

Yes, [Love], it had been a long time since I saw my right-in-the-center type after seeing only macho in this world.

Particularly, the slightly unreliable easy-to-push-round look is nice. My creative impulse is welling up. My delusional power cannot be stopped, like that.

You seem to be wearing good clothes, why don't you buy me and Lulu.

I deliberately attempted to use chantless charm magic, but the carriage went to the road's corner.

◇

To protect me, [Master] charges toward the monster.

What, what's with that speed!

I thought he had just started to step forward, but he had already slipped into the monster's bosom, driving a blow.

I've seen my country's knight leader and hero having a bout before, he's faster than the hero's rush at that time. Yup, too fast.

But, the monster shrugs off that attack like it's a breeze. The monster completes its chant just like that, and flings the appearing shadow whips towards me.

I hope it's not instant death.

While thinking that, as my last resistance, I chantlessly fire Psycho Bullet toward the shadow whip, but it doesn't work well.

I wonder why did I read the book about mind magic when I was in the castle. If it was light or fire magic, I could retaliate this monster.

However, the shadow whip doesn't reach me. My [master] moves as if he's teleporting and receives the attack with his body.

Even though he's delicate, his back looks slightly wide, and relief surfaces along with anger in me.

Why are you acting so rash!

◇

The next time I met him was several days after. I remember the surrounding was noisy because the missing slave trader had came back.

Since a good customer is here, the expensive girls that would likely sells were to be shown in turns. Apparently the opponent was quite formidable, 10 girls had dejectedly returned.

And then, it's our turn, the six unpopular ones. If the girls before weren't selling, there's no way we would, curse.

And the one who's sitting in the sofa inside the tent is him. He's with three beast kin girls behind. Alright, I'll get his favor!

Nidoren, the slave trader, is saying something, but right now I'm putting power to my eyes!

But, the appeal from this beauty doesn't reach him, he almost leaves from the place. I become panicked and try to appeal with words. Fufufu, receive this appeal attack from me who's accustomed with job-hunting!

However, he's tough.

Even after I explain the merit and convey my feeling, he's completely unwavering.

Can't be helped, I'll use my last resort. I won't let this chance pass, even if it means I have to use heartless means!

Get shaken with chantless, [Charm Person], and [Fret].

Huh~? It's not working.

The magic finally works after I use my trump card, Never Give up.

Who is this person?

His name is Satou, and his face looks Japanese, he must be a transported person right?

Well, let's be happy with this for now.

Fuffuffu, I won't let you sleep tonight.

◇

Something that looks like a joke is happening in front of my eyes.

Is he really a human? He grasp the supposedly untouchable magic restraints with his hands and tries to do something about it.

"It's hard to grasp even though it doesn't have reaction, this stupid

<<fantasy>> things."

He really get away from the restraint even while complaining.

No no, you can't normally do that.

"What is your purpose?"

Mou, forget about purpose.

First of all, we should get away from here in order to live.

It's too bad, but let's give up on Mia.

Mia, I'm sorry. You can resent me however much. I'm helpless with my power.

"Do you have grudges with heroes?"

"Way off the mark."

The discussion breaks off, a lot of shadow whips are coming from under the monster's feet and go towards Mia.

He takes out two handguns from his pocket and shoots down the shadow whips.

Oh! Cool~

Why doesn't this world have digital camera!

I'm having an out-of-place thought to escape from the stress from this hopeless situation.

◇

I've played a petty trick during our contract ceremony. I've mixed, [You can approach me day and night.] With this, as long as master doesn't seriously order against it, it won't be considered a violation of contract.

I'm clever~♪ Arisa-chan great victory.

On the way back to the inn, interesting things keep piling up.

Itadakimasu?

Protein?

This person really is Satou-san huh?

Let's put aside such trivial things.

No matter what happen, tonight is my first night!
I haven't had first night in my previous life!
I'll fully demonstrate you my net knowledge, boy!

I enter the inn room while feeling excited.

We're in the same room.

I understand, boy. A 15 years old is at his peak of wanting it!

"Arisa and Lulu, you two can use that bed."

Does he want to attack us as set?

Lulu is pure, if possible, I want her to have normal loving one.

I was waiting for his attack, 'is it now', 'or now', but he was sleeping on the next bed.

IM-POS-SI-BLE!

I put Lulu to sleep with mind magic and crawl into master's bed.

I feel sorry, but I don't have any regret.

The result was utter failure, but turned out he really is a Japanese.

I don't know if he's a reincarnated or transported, but with that Japanese face, he's probably a transported one. Can't be sure with Lulu here though.

◇

"Arisa! When morning comes, go ask for assistance at the worker's guild manager."

Uwaah~, stupid stupid stupid.

I frantically jump to him who is sinking together with Mia into shadow portal.

But, I didn't reach him.

The shadows that come out slip and graze me.

"Arisa, let's take care of those for now."

Liza plunges toward three shadow stalkers alone.

Doing such reckless attack, even the usually calm Liza is greatly shaken.

While I fight the shadow stalkers with chantless shock wave, Pochi, Tama and Liza are supporting me.

Liza got hurt, but we somehow won.

I give Liza first-aid with the help of my previous life's memory, while Pochi and Tama are preparing the wagon.

I wanted to have Lulu to drive the wagon, but since she can't see well in the darkness, it'd be dangerous so I leave it to Liza and Tama.

"Master is alright nanodesu?"

"Come back~?"

I want to know that too!

But, as an adult woman I can't possibly slap nervous little girls.

"Of course, he' s alright. He's our master remember. Of course he's coming back!"

I declare so while convincing myself midway.

I won't ask him to be in one piece, but at least please come back alive!

◇

When we're waiting for the gate of Seryuu city to open, Tama begins making noise.

"Re~?"

"What's wrong nodesu."

"Master, there~!"

What did you say!

"Is that true, Tama!"

I press toward Tama.

Whoops, the wagon suddenly moves and I fall down.

Although she wasn't complaining before, Liza's eyes are looking very desperate.

This girl might be unexpectedly the most worried.

"He's there desu!"

"Sama~."

"Yeah, master. ...He's safe.

Pochi, and Tama, then Liza who has became emotional is choking her words.

Hey wait, where is he?

"Arisa, there. At hill on the road ahead, in white clothes."

He's there!

What are you doing so nonchalantly waving here.

"...I, I was worried! Mou, promise me to never do something that absurd ever again!!"

I shout and cry on his chest.

He's apologizing so many, many times, but he absolutely doesn't understand.

I will become strong.

To protect this stupid and reckless [Master] from jumping into dangerous situation!

I am Arisa.

Former Japanese, Tachibana Arisha

My love story won't lose to this absurd parallel world (fantasy)!

デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲
3
Honobono tokidoki Serious soshite Harem
愛七ひろ
Hiro Ainana
illustration・shri

6-1. I Want to Practice Magic [Failure Arc]

Satou's here. My karaoke points has never been higher than 60. Yearning for that thing called absolute pitch, Satou's.

◇

I'm hearing singing birds signaling morning.

Opening my eyes, I see faint light from the cloth roof. It's a bit dazzling.

Ah right, I slept in the wagon because the camping ground was wasteland covered with stones yesterday.

While lying down I look down to my chest, and see a hand grasping my shirt loose. I look to the side, a beautiful black-haired girl is sleeping there while hugging my left hand.

I've gotten quite accustomed to it but it makes my heart jump for a bit. If there's no age difference between us, I wouldn't be able to retain my reason.

Next I turn my view toward the opposite side.

There, a girl whose head is being pressed by two gigantic pair of hills is sleeping with unpleasant expression, and the owner of the hills herself is hugging my arm while having innocent sleeping expression on her truly beautiful face.

Since it'd be too bad to wake everyone up, I doze off while enjoying the soft and nice fragrance of women.

I peek at the wide neckline of Nana's pajamas, locking on soft-looking valley is a man's nature. Since I use all my might to suppress the natural phenomenon that happens to man every morning, I'd like you to forgive me doing this much.

"Master, the breakfast preparation is about to complete, so please get up."

Liza who had been on guard duty for until dawn comes to wake me up. Her voice sounds a bit flat, it must be my imagination.

I almost say, "I'm sorry", out of guilt, but somehow I reply back with a good morning.

Lulu and Mia are waking up after hearing the voice.

Lulu is saying good morning while shyly fixes her hair and clothes, and Mia shortly says, "Morning" in a small voice while cruelly shoving Nana who had been hugging her aside.

After greeting Lulu, I hand out a white apron to Liza out of the wagon. Nana doesn't seem like she'll wake up even after getting cruelly shoved.

When I look at my feet, Arisa is asleep while grabbing the cuff of my trousers and on top of her, Pochi and Tama are sleeping while looking like they're holding her down.

I can somehow imagine what happened. Arisa was going to do yobai and tried to move Pochi and Tama out of the way, they counterattacked and they were exhausted halfway through. And then Lulu gained profit from all of these.

Hearing rustling clothes, I turn toward it, and Mia is there with her clothes already taken off.

"Wipe me."

Mia gives me towel and makes me wipe her back. It seems that she's sweaty because Nana hugged her all night.

After being saved from the magician, Mia sometimes becomes dependent like this.

It's not like she's fallen for me, it feels more like a sibling love.

"Mia, don't thoughtlessly undress yourself in front of an opposite sex."

"N."

She's answering briefly while nodding, does she really understand?

Her character would probably get mended when she's old enough even if I leave her alone, so I won't fuss over it too much. It's fine just to remind her occasionally.

Since I've finished wiping her back, I'm giving the towel to Mia. Mia reverses her direction and spread her arms wide assuming, 'wipe me', posture.

She's wearing an underwear of course, but only her long hair covers her upper body.

"Here too."

"Mia, wipe the front yourself."

"...Satou."

"I won't do it even if you act spoiled."

She demands with upturned eyes, but more than this is dangerous. Even if she's flat, I'm afraid that I'd caught little girl preference (curse).

Mia reluctantly receives the towel and begins to wipe her front.

Since it feels indecent if I look at it too much, I wake Nana and the girls up and get out of the wagon.

◇

The outside of the wagon smells of blood---

On a tree near where Liza is cooking, there are 5 animal bodies hung on a rope in order to drain their bloods.

The AR indicates that it's [Brown Wolf Meat]. Come to think of it, they were eliminated by Pochi and Tama at midnight. Since there were just 10 low leveled animals, I just watched over them on the radar. So half of it became, "Meat", huh.

Looking at this state, it means that the breakfast is going to be meat. I do like meat, but I'd love if it's not that from the morning.

"It's going to be done soon, so please drink this for now."

Lulu says so while serving me tea.

Since she's only wearing a simple apron over her pajamas, her body lines visible under the morning light before my eyes, I'm a bit troubled to where I look.

"We have prepared vegetable soup and breads for master and Mia, so please don't worry."

"Thank you, I appreciate it."

If I leave it to Liza alone, it'd certainly become a meat fest, so I'm happy with Lulu's concern.

Mia has somehow quietly sat down beside me before I was aware, snatches the cup from my hand and drinks the tea.

There are usually three little girls scrambling around me, but it's different in the morning. They're going to Liza's, asking to help while tasting this and that, and getting scolded. It reminds me of the nostalgic time when I was a hungry child.

"Master, 'ning."

"Good morning Nana. Morning greeting is [Good morning] you know. Forget strange things Arisa taught you."

"Yes, my lord."

I look up Nana who answered while saluting. Seen this close, her face is hidden by her breasts looked up. Truly a splendid view.

While I'm correcting the strange words that Arisa taught her, we sit on the sheet.

Since the clothes that she wore looked like what a cheap courtesan would wear, right now she's wearing Liza's reserve clothes. At first I wanted to lend her my robe but for some reason Arisa was strongly against it and Lulu also weakly opposed it, so it was rejected.

On the large platter are wolf intestines with fried vegetables and boiled potatoes, vegetable soup for breakfast it is today. There are cut bread and fruits made for me and Mia.

With Liza's instruction, the three little girls are quickly distributing plates and tablewares. Of course they also don't forget to encamp near the platter with meat.

The battle begins after everyone had sit down and said, "Itadakimasu". With Liza as the chief, Pochi, Tama and Arisa aim at the meat platter. Although it has fried vegetables, around 70% of it is meat, and it's disappearing fast. Around 3-4 kilos of meat are eaten up in a blink of eyes, it feels like watching a fast forwarded video.

On the other hand, Lulu is putting meat together with vegetable on her mouth in good manner. She's eating calmly, but her hands aren't stopping so her appetite is probably plentiful enough.

It's nice to be young~. They could eat so much meat since morning. I feel like having heartburn even just by looking at it.

Nana drinks water while watching them.

I'll say this beforehand, this isn't a bullying.

It's said that for approximately half a year after her birth, she can only receive water and magic power. Since the same things is also written in the alchemy book left behind by Trazayuya-shi, it's probably true.

There three ways to supply magic to Nana.

The first is by using a facility called Regulation Tank. When she was with Zen the magician, she used this method.

The second is by doing naughty thing with a man. The so-called bed technique. Frankly speaking, it's sexual intercourse. I was fine with this method, but Lulu suddenly cried, "I'm first!", so I stopped. Her crimson red figure afterwards was quite cute. Of course, Arisa also objected but since it was completely overshadowed by Lulu's impact, there isn't any impression left. It seems that it was a verbal slip, she couldn't look me in the eyes for 2 days after that.

The third and the last is by placing hands near her heart and pouring magic power to her heart which operates like a magic tool. To have a justified reason to touch that splendid hills, I have no complaint--- but, when I'm about to do it, Mia blocks it with a single word.

"Back."

Yes, as long as it's near the heart, it's fine to do it from the back.

Well fine, I'm still enjoying her fascinating nape and the lines of her bare shoulders from the back. Just once, yes, just once is enough, let me do something as I please.

◇

After the meal, I'm supplying magic power to Nana who has her back exposed.

When I strengthen the magic supply, she react ticklishly, it's interesting.

Although, Arisa and the girls are staring here like they're monitoring, so I can't play around. Even though the charming voice of a beautiful woman would warmth my heart, this is too bad.

"Are you going to practice again today?"

"Of course."

Let me say this, it's just a magic practice. It's nothing that would make me feel guilty.

Not only me, Pochi and Tama are also holding short canes. They wanted to imitate me when they see me practicing magic, so I lent them the canes.

"Then I'll give you an example. I will only do it once, so watch it well."

Arisa with a long cane faces toward where there's no one and starts to chant.

"■■■ Breeze"

After the chant is complete, gentle winds shake the weeds.

"Uuu, my head hurts. The burden of using magic without the skill is big after all. It might be using five times more magic power even."

I thank Arisa and begin to chant the magic.

It's a magic with the shortest chant among the life magic and high success rate.

"■▼▲ Breeze"

Like usual, I failed.

"Not good, it's not good at all. Only the first node of the beginning was right. Moreover the rhythm was strange."

Rhythm huh, I'm not confident with that.

First let's do something about the fumble.

"Nyrurireato saru mina ra me ra to oi yoi oi wan"

"Nyururiareto saru ra mina metora oi yoi io nyan"

Pochi and Tama facing each other, are reciting random chants while waving the canes around like dancing.

Of course it doesn't work, but I won't say anything unnecessary since the two looks really happy.

"■◆▲ Breeze"

"■▲◆ Breeze"

"▲▲◆ Breeze"

"No good, it's getting weirder."

I tried for so many times but Arisa keep disapproving it.

"Let's change the approach."

"Like how?"

"Let's see, do it calmly, first why don't you make sure that you get the pronunciation right?"

That reminds me, I've bought books about reciting and pronunciation too.

While reading the book, the practice begins.

When I start practicing tongue-twister, Arisa who was looking at Pochi and Tama's dance interjects.

"Try saying 'kami anime' 5 times fast."

"Kami anime, kami amime, kami ami i, I can't."

<TLN: Kami anime means godly anime, yeah this TLN seems redundant but "godly anime" doesn't sound as tongue-twisting.>

What the heck is this. It's difficult.

"Next is, try to pronounce the vowels, 『a』 and 『i』 clearly."

Fumu, I think I had heard the same thing from seiyuu who act as BGM from the net radio when I was on break in the rest area during my job.

Let's try this.

"Slowly okay."

"Kami anime, kami anime, kami anime, kami anime, kami amime."

"Too bad, only the last one was out, once more! Come, stand up, if you're like that then the lowest seat of celestial maiden is but a dream!"

Arisa is hiding half her face with hair while saying that.

For now, let's challenge it once again.

"Kami anime, kami anime, kami anime, kami anime, kami anime."

>[Tongue-twister Skill Acquired]

>[Smooth Talking Skill Acquired]

Alright, I max out the point for both and activate them.

The me now is able to utter any kind of tongue-twister.

"■◆◆ Breeze"

...I failed.

"You didn't bite your tongue, but your rhythm is wrong."

I tried to practice with Arisa's help for many times, but the chanting never succeed. I have no sense of pitch. I wonder how often did I bicker with sound creators for not recognizing the sound difference during bug report...

Liza is calling since the preparation for departure is complete, so I finish the magic practice.

Unfortunately I can't practice on the wagon.

I almost bite my tongue, and my voice vibrates from the shaking, so practice isn't possible.

I make a promise in my heart to do my best tomorrow, and go on the coachman stand.

I pat Pochi and Tama's head who positioned themselves on both sides of me and depart the wagon.

6-2. Let's Train

Satou's here. Some people said that making cakes are like doing chemistry experiment.

I think that's a big fat lie, I think people who make confectionery have had good tastes from the beginning.

◇

Now then, for several days in this trip, let's activate numerous skills. I wouldn't use up half of my points even if I maximize out all the skills that I've obtained, but since skill like [Appraisal] encompass several other skills in function, I'll exclude skills with questionable or redundant effect.

First, I had wanted to level up Weapon skills, but I already acquired enough skills needed for close combat, so I'll put the other weapon skills to reserve. For once, since I've read useful appliance for Dagger skill from many history and tales, I activate it.

I enable almost all Physical combat-related skills. Since the demerit from [Reckless Courage] skill seems to be high, I leave it inactive. I don't know the usability of Shield Bash so I only level it up to 5. If it's useful then I'll maximize it.

Tactic skills are another ones where I don't feel the actual effects, but I activate them all following Arisa's advise.

I'm told that if I combine commands and cooperations together, the party members could then use combo techniques. Seems that this is an information from the hero yet Arisa herself doesn't know how to concretely do it, oioi you have to verify that.

Although she says, "When we level up in the labyrinth, we'll learn it.", when I consult to her, it doesn't seem like they'll be able to do it right away.

I've already activated most physical-related skills already so I just activate the remaining, Herculean Strength skill.

Although I'm already strong enough to play with a lump of iron like it's clay, so I don't feel stronger. Let's just believe that it'll make a difference when I fight a solid enemy.

The Magic skills branch underwent no change at all. There's no meaning to it until I can successfully chant.

I also think that Resistance skills have subtle effects, but I activate them just to be safe. However, I only level up [Fear Resistance] skill to level 3. This is only a hunch, but I feel that I shouldn't maximize it. It has the same kind of smell as [Reckless Courage] skill.

I level up Production skills, [Carpenter], [Leather Craft],[Weapon Creation], and [Blacksmith] to level 4. Leaving me better than the averages, but not quite an expert. Since I'm scared if I was to drink half-finished medicines, I raise the related skill to the maximum. With these levels of skills, it should be enough for repairing or making things in daily life.

I level up Science skills, [Experiment], [Appraisal] and [Education] to the max,、and [Demon Language], [Ash Rat Tribe Language] and [Green Scales Tribe Language] to level 1, beside those I don't make any other change since they look subtle.

I don't do anything with art-related skills. Confirming it with Arisa, singing skill doesn't have anything to do with rhythm. It seems to be a skill that would make people deeply moved with the thing you're conveying with your singing. I can't understand that at all, but even if I argue I can't refute it.

I can't succeed with the chanting anyway, since I have nothing to lose, maybe I should try raising it?

I level up Commerce-related skills, [Poker Face], [Persuasion], [Bribing], and [Lip Service] to level 5-- expert levels.

I didn't have the chance to use [Bribing] skill in Seryuu city, but according to the travel journal I've bought, there are a lot of people who need bribes for smoothening things up at the towns ahead. That's troubling.

Labor skills are mostly unchanged. I maximize [Surveillance] and [Capture] skills, but only leave [Marshalling] skill to level 5.

For labyrinth skills, [Item Box] is unchanged, while [Trap Usage] get to level 5, but I raise all other skill to the maximum.

In this world, I don't think that I'd be unrelated to labyrinth after all.

The most troubling ones are Specialty skills. Skills that are certain to be useful like [Lip Reading] and [Straining One's Ear] are raised to the maximum, but I'm wondering whether to activate stuffs that are too dark like [Behind the Scene], or [Assassination], and decide to activate the ones that looks usable for scouting and fighting. I was at loss for a moment, but I decided to put aside, [Conspiracy], [Condemnation] and [False Charge].

Of course I leave the Night Time skills alone. It's no good to cheat there right?

Even after allocating this many, I haven't even use 30% of my skill points.

Since I'll need considerably more points when I can use magic, it's fine not to force myself to use skills like [Mowing] or [Transporting].

I also try to appraise the two unusable unique skills, but they're unknown like always. I'd like to have tutorial or help functions. Even though it was available in the original menu screen.

◇

After I've completed my skill activation work, what I should think next is how to learn skills that my companions have.

The skills they have that I don't are [Etiquette], [Thrusting], [Dismantling], [Heavy Blow], [Enemy Search], [Cooking], [Collecting], [Nature Art], and [Spirit Vision].

Among them, the [Nature Art] seems to be the same thing as Arisa's unique skill so even if I'm attacked by that technique, I won't learn it. According to the books left behind by Trazayuya-shi, Homonculus have organs that enable them to use nature arts. It's probably something like a race-specific skill.

Mia's [Spirit Vision] seems to allow her to see spirit, but I can't even imagine how to acquire it so I give up on it. Of course, I asked Mia about it, but I only got these, "I can see it you know?", "You can't?", "Why?", kinds of answers. Let's ask from some adult elves on Bornean forest.

The skill that I need to learn most is probably [Enemy Search]. The map and radar are excellent for searching vast area and specific enemies, but they're not good for fuzzy ones. Even after setting it to look for the familiar like the other day, that kind of threat was still easily escaped from it.

The runner-up should be [Thrusting], and Heavy Blow]. Seems they would increase my attack power in combat.

The remaining ones are [Collecting], [Dismantling], [Cooking], but I don't need them with Liza and the others here. I feel that I don't have particular need for [Etiquette] skill, but looks like it could be used together with [Education] skill so let's plan to acquire it for now.

◇

I decide to learn [Dismantling] and [Cooking] from Liza on the next rest.

I've wanted to learn [Thrusting] and [Heavy Blow] first, but there's no enemy to fight. If I was to practice with Liza, I'm afraid that I would hurt her. Although she could be healed with medicine and Mia's magic, I still feel reluctant. I am also not able to learn the skill that I want most, [Enemy Search], since there is no enemy.

By the way, the wagon is about to leave Seryuu's earl territory and entering the neighboring earl's territory since yesterday. There are a lot of basins in this territory. Right now, the wagon is advancing on one such basin.

There are monsters in this territory, but there is absolutely none along the road, they only occasionally appear deep in the mountain. On the other hand, there are a lot of wolves' packs and hibernating bears. Since there seems to be a lot of beasts in the vicinity we are going tomorrow, I decide to have the combat training there.

Now then, let's put aside the planning for now and begin the dismantling.

Of course there's a reason why I want to learn dismantling now. It's because we've bought fish from the children on a village located near a river we've crossed earlier.

The hurdle of doing it with mammals are too high so when we got the fish I thought that it was a good chance to learn it. Since I've dissected fish before, it's probably going to be alright.

Sharp is better than dull. Thinking so, I take out a magic tool from the storage to use. [Troll Slayer], beside the attached property, it's a dagger without anything special except that it cuts well. Of course it cannot be compared to normal dagger although not to the degree of holy swords. It's carved with [RAZ] signature, I wonder if it's an inscription?

Following Liza's instruction, I cut through the fish without any resistance. I was able to cut it into 3 pieces in an instant.

After that, when I throw away the fish's intestines and head, the quite serious Liza scolds me.

>[Cooking Skill Acquired]

>[Dismantling Skill Acquired]

>[Dissection Skill Acquired]

I allocate points to maximum for dismantling and cooking skills and activate them. Since it's fish, let's grill them with salt and miso.

Since I don't have grill mesh or something alike in my Storage, I reluctantly use skewers made from trees and grill them with bonfire. When they begin to change color, I spread miso on it.

Everyone beside Mia and Nana are staring at me intently, so right when the grilled fish are done I distribute it to them.

"Yummy~""Delicious, nodesu."

"Delicious... It's been awhile since I've had fish, but this is more delicious than the one from my hometown by far."

"It's really delicious desu."

"DE-LI-SH~! rather, what's this, what's this, way too tasty."

They're quite popular.

Mia looks curious with them so I offer her a bite, but she says, "...don't want." with a slightly frustrated voice. Nana looks at me while looking like she really want to eat it, but I can't let her do that, so I endure it. Since her eyes have become teary, I'll fix her mood by dripping several drops of fruit juice for her cooled water.

I also eat it, but it's really too delicious.

I don't actually like river fish, but the flavor is the best. The savoriness overflows or rather, the oil enhances the taste of the white meat just right. I didn't think that the effect of level 10 cooking would be this much. I lament at the fact that there's no cooked rice. I do have 3 liters of rice, but I'm not sure how to heat it. I feel like I could make the best rice porridge, but I feel like I couldn't heat it right at all to make it fluffy.

Next I try sampling the taste of the fish with miso.

...It's tasty, but there's something different. It feels like there's something missing.

The miso fish is well received by everyone, but Arisa has the same impression as me.

"It's really delicious, but unlike the salted fish, there's something not right."

Even if your cooking skill level is high, it's no good if you don't know the recipe huh. I know somehow that the amount and method are perfect, and the miso usage is probably not wrong. I had wanted to make Sawara Miso Grill, but since I wasn't cooking much in the previous world, it might had been reckless of me.

I ask Arisa what I should do, but she says, "I know the taste isn't right, but I completely don't know how to do it right." with her hands on her hips while acting bossy in despair, is she feeling guilty or something?

Among the books that I've bought from the bookstore, there's no cooking books. I've completely overlooked it. Let's look for it in the next town.

◇

After dinner at the same day, I have Liza demonstrates [Thrusting] and [Heavy Blow]. I forwarded the plan because I saw a large beast approaching our camp site not so far away.

"Then, I will do a normal stab, a thrust, and a heavy blow in turns."

Liza says so, sets up a black spear and stabs three times with it. With beautiful stance, she's stabbing the spear more powerfully compared to some average territorial soldiers. I hear the sound of tearing air accompanying each stab. I don't quite understand the difference between the first two stabs, but the last one is clearly different.

Like a bowstring pulled to the limit, she twists her body back and then strongly lunge the spear forward. A single blow that reverberates with the whole body. It's similar to her single blow that pierced through the rhinoceros beetle monster in the labyrinth back then, but it's more polished by far.

Hmm? What was that just now.

"Liza, I'm sorry, but please do the last blow once again."

"Yes!"

She puts the stance like earlier and does the blow that shakes the ground. There really is a red trace-line coming out from her spear for an instant. Checking Liza's stat, not only her stamina has decreased, but her magic power too. It might be an additional effect of [Heavy Blow].

I decide to borrow Liza's spear and try to test it myself.

First let's warm up while using it normally.

Unfortunately, I don't produce powerful sounds like Liza does. It's probably because I'm being careful as not to gouge the ground, but it's lonely to not even make "Gou" or "Shun" sounds.

"Truly splendid stabs."

Liza is praising me, but since they're just stabs without power, I'm embarrassed with the excessive praise.

Next, I try to imitate thrusting. Something's not right.

"Master, please excuse me for a bit."

Is she unable to watch me twisting my wrist several times, Liza hugs me from behind and grasps the spear while explaining.

"To do thrusting, when master stab the spear, master has to half-rotate your wrist for an instant. Loosen master's hand for a moment and then grasp it tightly when master stabs. I will show it slowly, please feel the movement of my fingers and wrist."

Liza puts her hand on top of my hand and demonstrates the timing.

I see, this is something that's hard to transmit with just words.

Liza separates from me and I begin to do as demonstrated.

Yes, this is it.

"As expected of master for mastering the secret just by doing it once."

"It's because Liza is good at teaching."

The fact that Liza's teaching is good is the truth, but I could learn it just by doing once is unmistakably because of the spear skill level 10.

I do it several times until I memorize the feeling.

Still, even though I've become able to use it, I don't seem to get the skill. So it's true that in order to learn weapon skills I have to use it against an enemy.

The same thing happens with heavy blow. It goes without saying that I am not able to get the skill.

I wonder if it's because I don't have the skill, even though I can imitate heavy blow, my magic power isn't decreasing.

I want to quickly learn the skill and let out that red shines.

The blue light from holy swords is good, but I think that the red light really suits Liza.

6-3. Strengthening

Satou's here. There are a lot of RPG where you can create things nowadays.

If you fail, the materials disappear.

◇

On evening of that day, the "Guest" has came relatively close by as expected, so I get up off the bed and go to the place where Mia and Tama are doing night watch.

"Change?"

"Too early~?"

"The change is still a bit later."

I ask Tama to teach me the way to do [Enemy Search].

"Nyu~?"

She folds her short arms while looking troubled looking cute. I want to poke at the wrinkle on her forehead.

"Lots of sound, different sound."

"Same view, different color."

"Nice smell, normal smell, bad smell."

"Lots of sameness, lots of differences."

"So, you understand~?"

I listen attentively to her who's trying hard to convey.

The point is to detect the finer differences from numerous information. "Don't think, feel.", like that?

"I'll go inside the forest for a bit to try it. I'll raise my voice if anything happen, if you hear it then wake Liza up for help."

I tell the two so and make my way through the forest.

I've thought they would follow but it seems they're too sleepy for it.

I'm borrowing Liza's spear since I intend to acquire heavy blow skill when I come into the contact with the enemy. I've properly ask for permission before she went to sleep.

I've said to Tama that I would only go for a bit but the place is actually 3 kilometers away. It's around several hundred meters away from the enemy's location.

Basing from experience, I turn off all sort of indications OFF from the menu.

Next, I relax my body and sharpen my sense while musing over Tama's word.

While half-closing my eyes, I extend my focus.

Moonlight shines through the sparse shades. Ivies and bushes. Silhouette of sleeping birds at branches. Glowing eyes of small animals. Catching glimpse of a black shadow from the gaps between trees far away.

I listen carefully.

Lots of sounds. The sound of trees swaying from the winds. The sound of grasses stepped by small animals. Insects' sounds. The sound of claws of something hitting the hard ground.

I imagine every inch of my body uniting with nature.

The smell of grasses. The smell of soil. The faint smell of water. A different kind of creature's smell like paint dropped on a river.

My sense becomes quietly serene--

Kasa.

Ton.

Hyun.

I move my body matching the change on the flow of atmosphere. I had avoided something that attacked from a blind spot.

After avoiding it, I turn my consciousness toward the culprit, there's a black panther that has just landed slightly further away. That guy doesn't seem to think much of the failed surprise attack and gracefully turns toward me.

I make only the log be displayed.

>[Enemy Search Skill Acquired]

>[Danger Sensing Skill Acquired]

>[Space Grasp Skill Acquired]

>[Mind's Eye Skill Acquired]

I activate the abundance of new skills.

During that time, the black panther is attacking many times but since I can see it, avoiding isn't a problem.

I know that there's another one up on the tree, maybe it's thanks to enemy search skill.

Is it aiming for when I've became tired?

It's hard to use spear for close combat inside the woods but I could figure out the right angles thanks to space grasp skill and freely move as I imagine.

I prepare the heavy blow stance I've practiced this evening, and simultaneously drive heavy blow and thrusting to one of the animal. The quiet blow goes through the black panther's head without resistance.

＞[Thrusting Skill Acquired]

＞[Heavy Blow Skill Acquired]

＞[Penetration Skill Acquired]

Matching the timing with my attack, the panther on the tree assaults me, I evade the danger as if I could see it.

I quickly activate the three new skills, and prepare to hit the panther that has just landed.

Since Liza seems to use magic when she demonstrates heavy blow, I try to put magic power into the spear.

The spear lets out red trace of light when it's feed with magic power.

Quite beautiful.

The spear pierces through the panther while drawing red track of light.

Immediately after the red light appears, I rotate my wrist in reverse rotation converging the spear tip on the panther, the panther's upper half and the tree behind it burst into small pieces.

It was good to do this away from the camp. I had almost disturbed everyone's sleep.

＞[Magic Edge Skill Acquired]

＞[Spiral Spear Attack Skill Acquired]

I didn't think there would be other techniques that could make red light appear like with Liza's technique. But I've acquired useful-looking skills so it's for the best. Of course, I also activate these two skills. The names are kinda chuunibyou-ish, but let's turn a blind eye on that.

◇

Since I've accidentally come into a wide open space suitable for practice, I decide to practice magic edge. The light seems to be different depending on the amount of magic power you put into.

I try putting 1 MP. Subtle light lines appear on the spear.

I try putting 10 MP. Clear red light lines appear on the spear.

I try putting 50 MP. Strong red light line repeatedly appear on the spear. This is usable for illumination.

I try putting 200 MP. Intense red light-- this is bad, the spear is vibrating strangely.

I have a feeling that the spear will explode if this is left alone.

Liza's sorrowful face flashes in my mind.

This is bad.

That's right.

If there's too much, then I can just absorb it.

The moment after I thought that, I extract the magic power on the spear by imagining absorption-- good, the vibration has stopped.

Fuh, I was flustered.

Let's experiment with black steel spear or something next time.

Even though I've absorbed the magic, Liza's spear retain its red light or rather, it has become a pattern. Can't be helped, when the morning comes, I'll apologize to Liza by doing dogeza.

I hope that at least it doesn't get weaker...

Confirming with the AR, the spear's name has became, [Magic Spear Douma]. If I'm not mistaken it was [Black Spear of Cricket] back then. I don't remember its exact offensive power before, but it's certain that it has been strengthened. It was already a bit stronger than the black steel spear before but now it's near three times that. It still doesn't match the dragon spear in my storage, but it has become about as strong as the other magic spears.

This is what they call weapon reinforcement I guess.

Although, it was probably one step away from failure judging from that feel. If it fail, it's easy to imagine that Liza's spear would have broke.

When I look at the log, I've gained several skills.

>[Magic Manipulation Skill Acquired]

But I've been putting magic power into magic tool and Nana up to now....

I guess I have to not only insert but also absorb to meet the requirement.

>[Magic Bestowal Skill Acquired]

>[Weapon Reinforcement Skill Acquired]

In addition, I also acquired this title.

>Title [Magic Spear Blacksmith] Acquired.

Since they look useful, I activate the skills.

◇

I try putting magic into an ordinary dagger.

It's different.

In case of Liza's spear, it feels like pouring water on a shallow plate, while with this dagger, it's like pouring water into a coarse draining casket. Magic power that has been inserted immediately escapes feel.

Of course, it also isn't shining with red light.

This time I take out leg of a flying ant and try putting magic power into it.

It's better than with the dagger earlier, but it feels like a clogged up pipe with water draining out. The poured magic power feel stuck and drained, it's annoying.

Should I try to forcibly insert the magic power?

I try what I've just thought, and it burst scattering away. I guess Liza's spear was one step away from becoming this.

I test again with a new ant's leg. So it really explodes by pouring 10 MP.

Is Liza's spear special or is it because the difference in material?

I decide to try with material that looks more rugged.

I take out a dragon tooth and try it. Although I said tooth, it's 30 cm big.

When I put magic power into it, it feels like with the ant's leg. The difference is the magic endurance, it's fine even with 500 MP, but I stop there since the tooth becomes cracked.

Since I'd feel bad for Tama and Mia if I go back too late, I decide to finish for this evening. Without forgetting to set the menu, I go back.

The angelic figures of sleeping Tama and Mia greet me when I get back.

Tama wakes up when she hears the sound of me leaning Liza's spear on the wagon. Afterward, when she realizes the one who make the sound is me, she slovenly sprawls with "Gude~", but it seems that she isn't sleeping.

She sits beside me, attempts to climb up on my laps, and sleeps there while curling up.

I remember *neko nabe* seeing her figure, it's soothing. I decide to do the watch in place of the two until morning.

6-4. The First Thieves [Revised]

Satou's here. I thought that the three precepts are, "Don't kill", "Don't steal", "Don't violate", but in truth, it wasn't, "Don't steal", but, "Don't burn".

However, even if it's not one of the three, bad things are bad, right.

◇

""Good morning, master.""

"Good morning."

Lulu and Liza who have immediately woken up with the first sign of morning sun give me morning greetings.

I let Tama down from my laps, and take Liza to the spear in order to apologize to her.

"T, this is."

Even Liza is speechless.

Since externally, her important spear looks like it has been scribbled. Let's apologize first before I say, "The performance has been improved.".

After I make up my mind, I step forward toward Liza-- but, she's not looking at me.

Seemingly to check on the spear's condition, she tries stabbing with it many times. The red light that appears when she does heavy blow is stronger than before.

"Master!"

After she finishes swinging the spear, she comes closer to me. I decide to listen to her complaints before I make an excuse. Her voice's tone is a bit high, would be good if she's not angry.

"This is, it must be a reward right!"

Since I don't understand the flow of the conversation, I ask her.

"Arisa was saying to Lulu, 'If you properly service master, you'll get a reward someday.', she said."

Those, "service", and, "reward" probably have different meaning. That Arisa, don't indoctrinate weird things to Lulu.

For the time being, since she looks really happy, let's ride on this flow.

"It's because Liza has always worked hard. How is the spear?"

"Yes, the weight is the same as usual, but it is now possible for my arm to become one with the spear up until the tip."

She looks so happy, she's rubbing her cheeks on the spear, I apologize to her for arbitrarily doing something to her spear after the breakfast before we depart. Liza says, "My spear and I, everything is master's.", but I remind myself not to take advantage of that.

◇

Since Lulu will call me when Liza finishes breakfast preparation, I pick a towel and go to river beside the camping ground. There's a river nearby, so I want to take a bath there. By the way, the water temperature is below 10 degree (celcius), so normally I'd get a cold. Although, I don't feel that cold, maybe thanks to ice resistance.

Rather, I'm more interested with Lulu's gaze which I feel from over the bushes. During the cooking, she occasionally takes a glance over here. I thought the bushes should be tall enough to cover me, but...

She's at an age where she would be interested with the opposite sex, I guess it can't be helped.

Sine it would be troublesome in various ways when Arisa wakes up, I wash my body with a soap quickly.

I see several fish outlines before I wear my clothes, so I throw skewers at them catching around 10 fish and put them into the Storage.

I've thought that grilled fish are a staple of breakfast, but Lulu and Liza have already started cooking, cutting in between them now would be boorish.

I wipe my body roughly and wear clothes.

My hair is still wet, but it should be dried soon when it gets close to fire.

"Good morning, master."

"Good morning Nana. Try saying some more words after morning greeting."

"Good morning, master."

"Yep, that's good."

I pat Nana's head while praising her.

Ye~p. Her outward appearance is that of an adult woman, so patting her head looks really out place.

"Morning."

"Ning~?"

"Good morning nano desu!"

"Good Morniii!"

The other members are waking up. I also greet them back.

Still, what's wrong Arisa?

"Why?"

What is she saying?

Arisa points my wet hair.

"Say something if you want to take a bath!"

"No way. You'll go peep if I tell you right?"

"Of course! It's my natural job as a slave to wash my master's back!"

"Your real motive?"

"A boy bathing at the center of mother nature! Missing that is a regrettable situation!"

When you said that so frankly, I could not punish you.

Usually, before we go to sleep or after breakfast, I go away alone to wipe my body with wet towel and Arisa usually try to peep me which she did once when she managed to escape from Liza's watch. I don't necessarily scold her when she peeps but since it'd be a bad influence to other girls, I'd give her spanking if I catch her peeping.

...How do I say this, feels like our role as man and woman is reversed.

◇

That day, my magic practice ends in failure again, to have a change of pace, I sit at the end of the wagon and make small shields using some wood.

Since I get Armor Creation skill after making one, I put it point to the maximum and activate it. Even though the shields are made of woods, they're made with the highest level technique of armor creation.

Since it's messy, I put a sheet for the fallen wood chips. I present two shields made after I've acquired the skill to Pochi and Tama. There are some shields in my storage but there is none which could fits Pochi and Tama so I have to make them myself.

I've only just made three of it but since the time is almost up, I clear away the tools.

Arisa who has noticed it, faces toward me.

"The guys you mentioned earlier?"

"Yeah, very soon. There are two people on the highway, five people in each forest on the sides of highway, and two people on a tree a bit further. Arisa will deal with the two on the highway, while the five in the right forest will be taken care by Liza, Pochi and Tama. I'll defeat the two on the tree and the five in the left forest. I will leave Lulu's guard to Mia and Nana."

Everyone nods at my instruction. Since I've explained it beforehand, they don't have any particular question.

Everyone is tense, but the enemies are no big deals. On the left side, beside a level 7, the others are small fries at level 2-3. The beast girls could annihilate them alone if they want.

When we enter the forest after a slight curve, there are a man and a woman sitting on the road.

They look like normal villagers. "Oo~i", they call out over here.

When the wagon loosen its speed, the man approach while trying to say something.

"I'm sorry, my wife is,s,s,s,s."

"Fuhn, I have no interest with thieves' acting."

Arisa hit the man and woman with mind magic without asking. She had a hard time choosing a location so our horses wouldn't get swept with her attack. Even though she loves to act a bit dramatic herself.

Yes, these 14 men and women are thieves.

Without checking the result of that battle, I use 2 crossbows alternately to shoot down the bowmen on the tree. They shouldn't be dead.

The beast girls jump out from the back of the wagon and begin their assault in the forest. I also jump from the coachman-stand and charge toward the opposite forest.

In just a few minutes, [Oyu Village Thieves Gang] is annihilated. Half of them are injured but none dies. We hang them on trees while disarming their weapons. I feel wasteful to use ropes on them, so I roll them up with tree vines, per Liza's suggestion.

I've noticed this with the accident faker in the city back then, there is no punishment for, [Injuring] and, [Assaulting] in this world. Just to be sure, I check on everyone's status and their Reward and Punishment hasn't changed.

The thieves have been subjected to Arisa's magic, Sleeping Field to make them sleep.

Just in case, checking on the map, there is no village called, "Oyu Village", in this region.

"By the way, what do you want to do by capturing them? Isn't the earl-san's city still relatively far away? Isn't it faster if we just kill them?"

"Since I was ordered not to kill if possible, I did not kill anyone, but thieves should be killed as soon as one comes across them. If master wants the prize money then their heads are enough. Furthermore, even if ones kill a thief, their Reward & Punishment won't change into [Murderer]."

Arisa and Liza's suggestions are quite brutal, but I wonder if that's just how it is in this world. If I overlook these guys here, they would probably kill or sell merchants or travelers who use this road as slaves.

Even so, I don't want to see the beast girls kill people, and I, myself, don't want to kill. I want to avoid murder as much as possible.

But then, I feel like I would retract that if my companions' lives are in danger. Even if I'm a hypocrite, I am not a saint, if that time really happens I'll give in.

I did kill Zen anyway, even if it was his own intention.

"Let's bring them to the earl's city and sell them as crime slaves. Is it not more profitable than killing them here?"

Even though I don't want to kill them, I have no intention of letting them go. I will have them pay for their crime adequately. Their [Reward and Punishment] stats are filled with [Murder], [Rape], [Theft] and more. There is no innocent one.

Liza has a face that looks like she has more to say, but it seems that she doesn't have any intention to object my words more.

"It can't be helped~ let's do it like that."

While saying so, Arisa shakes her head like some kind of gaijin. I understand that she's worried, but that gesture is slightly petulant.

Then, she points her finger at me, and continues with these words.

"If your life is in danger, don't hesitate to kill the opponent, understand. That is the rule of this world. I won't forgive you if you drag your peacefulness like that country and get yourself killed pitifully!"

◇

Still, 14 people are too many indeed. Even though the wagon hardly has any luggage, more than half of the wagon's back is buried with the thieves. Morever, they stink.

Since it'd be annoying if they wake up, in addition to Arisa's magic, I make them drink sleeping potions that I've made on the first camping night and take them along to the earl's city while they're sleeping.

Although it's just for two days, the thieves' smell and snores are huge nuisances.

If we find another thieves, I'll leave them half-dead. I did not think that bringing criminals away from a remote place would be this troublesome.

6-5. Clean-up and Rumor

Satou's here. The only contact I've had with refugees was with the news or fund-raising commercials, but in this world, I unexpectedly come across ones in close proximity.

◇

It was already late in the noon when we arrived on the street of Nouki town. The disposal of the thieves took more time than I had thought.

This town is the second biggest town within earl Kuhanou's territory, it's situated in a typical fashion of a trading town. Nevertheless, the population is not more than 20000. The land size is also only about a fourth of Seryuu city. 30% of the population are slaves, but most are general or lower slaves, while criminal slaves are quite few.

The thieves--they were confirmed as thieves with the usual Yamato stone--were sold to slave traders that the gatekeeper had called. The men were worth 2 silver coins a person. The ones with bow or weapon skills and higher-leveled were were even more expensive, but the women were cheaper. A middle-aged woman was worth for only 1 silver coin.

As a reward for suppressing the thieves, I was given 10 copper coins per head. Was the price right?

The total amount to 48 silver coins and 140 copper coins. With these much, a lot of bounty hunters would have come instead of me.

The taxes for entering the city are, 1 big copper coin for a commoner, 2 copper coins for a slave, and the wagon cost 2 big copper coins, I let it be taken from the reward.

I chat with the gatekeeper while he's looking for a small bag for containing the 5 silver and 10 copper coins change. He's wearing a shirt dyed blue, I wonder if it's the gatekeeper color here.

"You've really saved us. Nowadays, a lot of refugees coming from other territories are becoming thieves."

"Was there a disaster somewhere?"

Speaking of refugees, it mean that there's probably a war or disaster.

According to him, seems that there are a lot of refugees who run away from the next earldom to become either serfs in rural farm village or slaves in general slaves in the city of this Kuhanou earldom.

People who don't want to become slaves hide in the mountain and live by hunting animals. Seems that they also work in the field, but, as winter comes, a lot increasingly become thieves.

I almost feel sorry to the thieves, but they have [Murder] in their Reward and Punishment, so sympathy is probably unnecessary.

>Title [Bounty Hunter] Acquired.

◇

Now then, we were able to finish our errands on the entrance, but since I wanted to buy various things on shortage, I decided to stay for a night.

The inside of the town is similar with Seryuu city but there aren't a lot of two-story buildings, yet low-rises are many.

The town feel a bit listless unrelated with the population density.

Confirming from the gatekeeper, this town also has strong prejudice against demi-humans, but they're allowed to stay in the inn if one pay extra and they can buy things normally on the shops if they're paying good. Unfortunately, since they're not allowed to get inside where the riches and nobles lives, we are warned not to get close.

After entrusting the wagon in the inn, we're going to buy equipments for all members. In a place not far from the inn, weapons and armors are lined up on display.

First, let's buy armor for five people in the armor shop. They're for me, Nana and the three beastkin girls. Since a whole body armor looks to require too much time to wear, I buy iron helmets without face protector, breastplates with belt fixture, light greaves of the same type, and gauntlets that protect only the back of hand.

The remaining three says that they don't need armor so they don't buy ones, in exchange, I buy some extra shields. Bucklers and Round Shield made from metal, three pieces each.

The armor shop old-man tried to touch Nana's butt when he was measuring her for the armor, but my impregnable guard didn't let him to. I didn't think that crisis perception would be helpful for this. It goes without saying that I used it as the final ammunition for bargaining.

The total price were 30 gold coins, but I negotiate until it was slightly cheaper than the market price, and finally got it down to 14 gold coins.

Next in the weapon shop, I bought bows and arrows for Mia. Since there were only 3 short bows that Mia was able to pull, it didn't take long. I was able to negotiate it down to 1 gold coins with 30 arrows added.

Afterwards, we decided to divide into three groups and move separately after putting the luggage in the inn.

The beastkin girls, Arisa and Lulu are entrusted to buy ingredients, daily necessities and cookwares.

I give them 20 silver coins for the shopping list, and 1 big copper coin each for their allowance. The reason for that much silver coins is because I ask them to buy a lot of groceries.

Like the gatekeeper earlier said, the situation is a bit rough with all the refugees, so I'm buying enough for anticipating the worst situation for self-sustaining if we can't get into the town or village. We have a lot of meat, but we don't have enough vegetables, cereals, salt and seasoning.

Pochi and Tama reply back with, "Meat~", when I give them their allowances. Even though they eat so much meat every day, they still want to eat more huh, that's amazing even for favorite food.

"I'm tired."

"Maybe you get tired from the crowds, do you want to rest at the inn?"

"Nn."

"Nana, I'm sorry, but could stay with her?"

"Yes, master. I will stay beside mother."

"No."

Since Mia is tired with the crowd, she's going to rest at the inn. I feel sorry if I leave her alone, so I suggest Nana to be with her, but maybe she doesn't want to be alone with someone with her face, she refuses with, "Don't need."

Even though Nana herself has become emotionally attached to her, this is sad.

The meaning of calling Mia mother for Nana, seems because Mia is the blood provider. Although it seems that homonculus is different with clone, I wonder if she's still her genetic mother?

Since Mia looks like she really dislike the calling, I have Nana compromise to call her, "Mia", not, "Mother".

"Nana, let's go together. Mia, what do you want as souvenirs?"

"I want a lute."

"I understand, I'll buy it if someone is selling them."

"I've left money and fruits on the table, so eat something if you're hungry okay."

"Nn."

I've put 1 big copper coin and several fruits on the table.

◇

First, we're going to magic tools shop.

This shop isn't just a magic books and magic tools shop, but also an alchemy shop and a bookstore. The shopkeeper is wearing a hood and a thin veil that hide her face, save for her eyes, so I can't see it well. Since the AR indicates that she's 16 years old, she's probably the daughter of the real shopkeeper.

When we go inside the shop, I see the girl is wearing glasses with green lenses, so I ask Nana to wait outside. The explanation from the AR is confusing like always, but since it looks like an inferior version of Yamato stone, I can't risk Nana's race from getting known.

"Hello, I'd like to buy reagents for potion, do you have any in stock?"

"I could sell you three packages. 1 silver coin each. We're a bit short in magic cores, so I won't give you discount. If you don't want to, you can stop."

Oh, it's an old woman's voice. Is she using some sort of weird voice-changing magic tools?

I'm given a small paper, like some sort of prescription from doctors, when I receive the packages. I think her profit is a bit too high, but since the price is in line with the market price according to estimation skill, it's not like she's overcharging.

By the way, the potion reagent is powder that glitter when it's used. It has other various uses too, it's an indispensable material for training.

Come to think of it, monsters in this territory were awfully scarce.

I don't feel like buying with these prices indeed. Since I have books with the instruction, should I just make one myself? Let's just buy the needed materials.

"Then, do you have stabilizers?"

"Yes, if it's stabilizers, I have a lot. If you have magic cores, won't you share it?"

What an abrupt girl. Asking me to sell the magic cores.

Then I remember the main material for potion's reagent and stabilizer.

I take out a magic core from my pocket and estimate its market price on my palm. It's about three times pricier than in Seryuu city. Yet, it's still only 3 big copper coins. I put five on the table.

"You, stop putting magic cores inside your pocket even if you keep them together with stabilizer powder. What would you do if they absorb magic power when you use magic and explode?"

What the, they explode huh.

That reminds me, the ants legs were exploding as well.

I thank the girl for the advice and ask her the right method to keep them. It seems that you have to smear them in stabilizer and then cover them together in cloths.

The girl speaks ill of the magic cores, like, "They're small", or, "The color is light", but she still buy them for 4 big copper coins each. Since it's just right, I buy stabilizer worth of that price.

The girl comes back from the back with about 10 kilograms bag of stabilizer. That bag is somehow lightly floating while following beside the girl.

Ooh, that looks magic-like, or rather, like a magic trick.

"Is that magic?"

"This is self-propelling board <<Floating Board>>. It's not really a rare magic, isn't it?"

Although she's saying that, I could see her looking slightly proud. If I recall right, that magic name does appear in the introductory magic book.

I confirm the stabilizer that she have brought. The AR says, [Stabilizer/Fine Powder of Ugi Leaves]. The market price is 5 gold coins. 1 gold coin is equal to 20 big copper coins, so they're too much for reimbursing the magic cores.

"They're fine powder of Ugi leaves, are they."

"That's right, you know well. These are rare around here, but just before, a merchant brought them in mass as a payment for medicines. Before they're spoiled."

"I think this quantity is too much for 20 big copper coins though?"

"You, you know value of things huh."

"And I don't think I need that much though?"

"Please don't say that, I'll trade it for half the market price, so won't you take it?"

"Are you looking for gold coins?"

I could buy it, but do I need this much?

"No no, I need magic cores rather than gold, won't you share a bit more?"

Well, they're ingredients for making potion reagent so she probably guess that I still have more, but what does she want to use it for?

"You know that there will be a fighting tournament in the Ougock Dukedom next month, right? The participating knights are buying large amounts of potion from the alchemists. So they can't make potion for the sick people."

I see, there's such tournament huh. I don't know if this girl would use it the way she's saying, but it's evident that she's desperate. I have a lot anyway, so it's fine to give 10 more, I guess.

"I would like these and another 10 magic cores of the same level."

"I'm not sure if I have that many, but I'll thoroughly check my stock."

"Please do so, you can bring these stabilizer ahead."

I bring the stabilizer to the wagon and put it away in the storage, then I'm choosing magic cores. Since it'd look suspicious if they're all exactly the same, I mix the 10 magic cores suitably. I blend 1 high level one among them. It's a core that worths 3 silver coins.

I believe this is from a bone golem. I can know the price with estimation skill, but I want to find out the reaction of a professional when they see one.

"How about these?"

"You're fast, the qualities are the same like before, are they. Huh? This one is the only awfully nice core."

It's the strongish core I've blended

"Is it to your liking?"

"Yes, I'm saved. I could make stronger medicine with this."

I see, according to this reaction, I could take out magic cores from monsters with level up to 20 without problem.

It's not written in up to intermediate book, but it seems that depending on magic cores level used, the resulting reagent rank would be different.

"As a gratitude, you can take one from among these."

While saying so, the girl searches the shelves with rustling sounds and bring out three scrolls.

AR indication says, [Scroll, Magic Art:Shield], [Scroll, Magic Art:Sonar], [Scroll, Magic Art:Short Stun]. Each is priced at 5-6 silver coins.

How do I say this, the shop will go bankrupt if this girl keep working here.

Every one of them seems to be an elementary magic art scroll. Shield is the most difficult among these.

"I'm sorry, even though you're especially offering this for me, I already have beginner level magic books..."

"You, do you not know how scrolls are used? These are disposable magic tools. Put magic power into it while uttering the command word to use it, it's convenient when you're attacked by monsters."

Hoo? That's great.

"That means, you can use them even without magic art skills?"

"You can use them. You'll use 20-30% more magic power, but there is no weird repercussion like if a person without skill chants the magic."

I see, that's convenient.

But, they looks easy to abuse-- I guess that's why, it was limited in Seryuu city.

That's right, are there scrolls for life magic?

"Do you have scrolls for life magic?"

"None, if you have money to buy such things, isn't it cheaper to just hire charm users?"

Unfortunately, there's none. It seems since the production cost for making the scroll is no different to other magic, there's no one who make them.

But, Nana can use those magics besides short stun. By the way, in addition with the two, Nana can also use, [Magic Arrow], [Body Reinforcement (Light Boost)], and [Signal].

"If possible, could you let me have the three of them? Of course, I will pay the other two with cash."

"I'm sorry, but if I sell more than one, the officials would get noisy."

I decide to buy [Shield] scroll after being at loss for a while.

Let's try to use it when we get out of the town.

6-6. Tavern and Rumors

Satou's here. On the old computer game, tavern was only useful for changing party members, but on TRPG, it was the place to gather information for the scenario.

Since drunkards are talkative.

◇

"Thanks for waiting, Nana."

"Yes, master."

Uh, did I make her wait too long.

Maybe thanks to the hood she's wearing, there is no weird guy trying to pick her up, but she looks quite bored. Nana picks my arm and begins to walk.

"Let's go, master."

We're walking while linking arms. Umm, Nana-san? My arm is in heaven.

Since the long cane I've bought for Mia at the beginning is being a hindrance, I switch it to my other hand.

"What's wrong?"

"I've learned it when master was in the shop."

What's this, I feel a bad premonition.

"When man and woman walk together, they unite their arms."

She's saying so while having, "How's that" face, I can even hear the sound effect.

<TLN: Google キリッ for more accurate expression ;)>

I understand what she has learned, but there's no particular reason to part our arms, so let's go shopping while being like this.

Since Nana is looking like she really want to get praised, I read the mood and praise her. It's subtle, but She looks satisfied. And I'm also satisfied with the amazing feeling.

First, let's buy clothes for Nana and Mia.

However, there's no shop which sells ready-made clothes except the second-hand ones in this town. It seems you have to tailor them if you want new clothes. I think Arisa has said she could make clothes, so I decide to buy cloth and materials for sewing.

They're selling underwear normally, so I buy shares for the two. These underwear are called drawers right? Feels like I've entered Alice's Wonderland.

Next are tools for manufacturing things.

By asking a pedestrian for the location, I've bought various tools for woodworking, metal carving, leather crafting, and blacksmithing.

I've also bought glue, nails and other materials, but beside nails, they're expensive. I've also wanted to buy some hinges, but they were out of stock.

Necessary things for blacksmithing like furnace or anvil were not available, so I couldn't buy them. Though even if I could, there was no way to carry them anyway.

Since we would be standing out if we bring lumbers to the inn, I pay for it to be sent to the hotel.

"Nana, shouldn't we go to next shop soon?"

"Master, please wait a bit longer."

"Is it fun?"

"Yes, very. It's so fluffy and soft... yes, cute."

Since Nana is fascinated with the wood shaving waste from the wood planing, and doesn't seem to want to move, we spend a bit of time in the wood workshop.

If the workshop old man didn't get her the thinnest and long wood shaving, she might be looking till dusk.

I purchase bottles and containers for putting medicine since I incidentally catch sight of them on the next workshop we've gone. The price around here is cheaper than on Seryuu city. It might be because the woods that act as fuel are cheap.

We go to the general store at the end.

I was taught in magic shop that there might be cooking books there.

Nana who have been restlessly looking around inside the general store, wanders to a particular display case.

"What's the matter?"

"Master, what is this?"

While saying so, Nana pick up something to her hand, it's a wooden barrette.

It's carved with simple design and three pale small stones are fitted in. The stones are not gemstones, but river stones with stripped patterns. It looks like jade so I appraise it, and the result is actinolite. The name sounds as if it could be used as catalyst for light magic, but it's just a pretty stone.

The market price of the barrette is two copper coins. There are 5 other wooden barrettes, but they're all priced the same.

It's a bit plain for decorating Nana's honey-colored hair. I think she'll look better with a silver barrette.

Nana is looking at that barrette without getting tired.

The store's old woman who see that begins promoting.

"Fe, fe ,fe, I also have ones made from silver, or adorned with gemstones, do you want to see it?"

"Right then, since you're offering, let's take a look at it."

She puts out three expensive barrette made from silver, I try putting one on Nana's hair. Yup, the silver one does match her well.

"Oh my, you have truly beautiful wife."

"That's right, I'm still charmed sometimes."

I've certainly got used with the beautiful faces of Lulu and Arisa, but Nana and Mia are quite pretty too. She's not my wife, but I don't need to retort to every lip service.

Nana strokes the first barrette with her fingers in rapture even while we're having that conversation.

You like it that much huh.

I'm sorry for the old woman for bringing out the other things, but I purchase the wooden barrette instead.

I also buy several blue braids as souvenirs since it was placed nearby. It's just right since Lulu usually tie hemp cord on her hair when she's making breakfast. There are also ribbons, but I stop. I've given some to Lulu as present before, but I've never see her wearing it. It probably wasn't to her liking.

Now then, the main thing is the cooking books, but it's different from what I've imagined. Rather than recipe books for what delicious foods from what towns, or what kind of materials are there, it's a gourmet guide book instead. Of course, I buy it, but it doesn't seem usable for improving my cooking.

"Are you looking for curious foods? Then how about some herbs or pickled vegetables?"

The old woman brings out some bottles and jars sealed with string from inside a shelf.

Around 20 kinds of things like, garlic and leeks pickled with oil, pickled cabbage and Chinese cabbage, and yellow powder that looks like dried mustard and others.

Even though so many come out, there's no pickled plum. Too bad.

There are also sweet things like honey, or

green-tea powder-like sugar called Ugi, I'm buying them.

Furthermore, somehow I'm coaxed to buy a tool for extracting fat from meat. Old woman, you're good at business.

Since I've bought so many things, I thought that I'd carry them many times over to the inn but the old woman calls manly man from the shop's back and has him to transport the groceries to the inn.

Right, I almost forgot.

"Do you have a lute?"

"I do."

The old woman points at Nana. It's put together on the same desk as the barrette. Not seeing it even though it's right in front of your eyes, it happens often eh.

I purchase the lute and string for Mia. I try playing the string and, [Tiin], sounds comes out.

>[Musical Performance Skill Acquired]

◇

"Ehehe~ Look, look at these bounties!"

The wagon is loaded with a lot of ingredients and woods and tools I've bought.

The thing that Arisa present are eggs inside a basket. There around 20 of them.

"They're a bit expensive, but I've gotten some duck eggs~ with this we can eat egg dishes!"

"Eggs are fast to go bad, so let's think what to make before. How long can we keep it?"

"It's already winter, so about 2-3 days?"

"We could make something like karaage or croquette."

"C, can you make it?"

"If I know the recipe I could, but I can only vaguely remember the ingredients and the process."

I tried to bring up the subject to Arisa, but it seems she doesn't know.

"Uh, I should've kept trying to cook for myself without giving up."

I barely remember that I should use eggs and flour. No, or was it potato starch?

Since the storage can preserve things, I should just get five eggs inside and do trial and error during the journey.

Later, I'm taught by Liza that eggs can be stored for several months. Don't modern eggs have short expiration dates? I don't know if it's because parallel world, but I won't complain the long-lastingness.

We decide to eat dinner at the tavern on the first floor of the inn that evening. Since there's an empty space on the back, we join two tables and sit there. Mia sits on the chair furthest back. Since it'll be full of people later, she's not good with crowd.

The meal consists of moderate amount of tenderloins with boiled vegetables, fish and radish soup, stir-fried vegetables, dried berry, flat bread made from Gabo fruit, and pickled Gabo leaves. The aren't a lot of meat, but the stomach-filling tenderloins are popular with the beastkin girls.

At the opposite side of me, Mia continues playing the lute that has just been bought even though it's dinner, she probably likes it.

"Mia, it's dinner, so eat your meal."

"Nn."

She nods at my words, but doesn't let go of the lute. Her performance is over, but seems she's wondering whether to continue or eat.

"Aan."

She opens her small mouth while starting to play the lute. Since she looks like a cute young bird, I put a bite-sized vegetable on her mouth.

She chews it hard while playing a song. I wonder if it's an elf tune, it's a tune with wanting to hurry home feeling.

My sleeves is pulled from the side, and when I look there, Arisa is opening her mouth while point her finger there.

"Aa~an"

"Eat it yourself."

"Doing that only to Mia, isn't it unfai~r?"

Can't be helped when you say it like that. I give her a mouthful of pickled Gabo leaves. It's sour and bitter, the taste is unique. She probably won't ask for another with this.

She's saying, "Mugu", and, "I want something sweet please.", but she doesn't say she want another, so it's a success.

"Satou, Aan."

"Aa~n?"

"Aan, nano desu."

What comes into my view is Mia, with Pochi and Tama who are sitting on each sides of her opening their mouth. When the three are lined up like this, they really look like young birdlings. I put a mouthful for each one in turn.

Following them, Lulu also doing, "Aan", while looking shy. I want you to stop opening your small mouth while pining your hair and closing your eyes, I would imagine something different. Liza is also doing, "Aan" since it looks interesting, but I have no comment. Since she doesn't look uncomfortable, there's probably no problem.

My sleeve is pulled again.

I thought that it was Arisa again, but it was from the opposite side. Over there, Nana is doing, "Aan", while presenting a dish.

I see, since Nana couldn't eat, she's serving it instead.

Umu, I'm fine with feeding little girls, but if they look like adult beautiful girls, the destructive power is high. I eat the dish while feeling bashful.

Violet-san on the opposite side seemingly can't stand my attitude, and she's saying things like, "Flirting is forbidden", or, "Riajuu should just explode.". Since those kinds of slightly peevish protest came out, another, "Aan", is prohibited.

The one who took advantage of this in the first place is you, Arisa, you know?

Mia is concentrating on eating her foods with Liza's warning. I'm a bit shocked that she's paying heed to Liza's word than mine--I might be spoiling her too much--the dinner continues while I'm feeling like a father.

Mia who finishes her dinner first starts playing some musics. The beastkin girls and Arisa are eating their second round of meal.

At first the music was calm but then it turns cheerful after a request from the drunkards. Even though Mia is playing with expressionless and uninterested face, she still receives the drunkard's impulsive request.

Once Mia musical begins, the visitors begin to increase until it's full house, even though it was empty when we just got here. Arisa is judging the drunkard request properly. She's doing it while having meals, skillful.

And then, when they've finished eating, Arisa leads Pochi and Tama to match the song and sing together cheerfully while joining shoulders. The three are wearing hoods, so they look subtly suspicious. I thought that I remember this song, it's the anisong Arisa sung during our trip.

"What a fun song huh."

"It's a song from the hometown of those girls."

The merchant-like man on the seat behind starts talking to me, so we're chatting while putting sake to our cups. I'm drinking normal juice, not sake. The sake here (ale), is too sour, or rather, it's acid it's undrinkable.

The stories in our chat are mostly harmless, but there are also some interesting ones. In summary, the chats are like these.

"I've just been through baron Muno's territory and I was offered to buy slaves from several villages there, it was terrible."

"The harvest this year isn't bad, I wonder why."

"Speaking of slaves, if you bring out slaves from baron Muno's territory, you need to pay tax. Farmers who want to go to other territory also need to pay tax. Was it emmigrant tax. The border soldiers even specially inspect for it."

The merchants exaggeratively shiver for almost buying slaves themselves.

I thought it was supposed to be marquis according to that travel journal, so I asked.

"Don't you know young man? They were certainly marquis up until about 20 years ago but the whole family of marquis Muno were attacked by large flocks of the dead, and the castle and the soldiers, everyone were massacred."

"I forgot the title, but it was even made into books and drama."

"At that time, it became an uproar and was thought to be an attack from the demon lord, the groceries and medicines prices went up and I made a big profit."

It's an imprudence story, he seems to be an unscrupulous merchant.

"I also remember to feel relieved that the king had ordered the holy knights to dispatch, limiting the dead army from overflowing to other territories."

"All related families of marquis Muuno, including the collateral family who married into another families, died of mysterious cause. The current baron supposedly has absolutely no relation to the old one. He's either a nephew or younger brother of the neighboring duke, he has succeeded the family name to manage the territory."

That story sounds familiar. What comes to my mind is his (Zen's) bleached bone face.

I've become a listener, while properly chiming in sometimes and pouring sake, I press them to continue.

"There's a strange rumor about that dukedom. There's a man who will buy corpses of anything."

"Isn't that just a simple rumor? There's a forest which became a place for burial custom due to some faith, and the rumor started from someone who saw the proceeding they said."

"Is that what it is, so they're traveling on the highway where monsters and wolves appear for several days while carrying corpses, faith is an amazing thing."

"Something that can't be said to merchants like us."

However, "Corpse Buying Man", that looks like something that would become a novel's title.

Speaking of the duke, I've heard a rumor in the morning.

"It seems that there's a fighting tournament on the dukedom, is everyone familiar with that?"

"People surely gather there, but merchants do too."

"Thus, merchants' number are reduced in other place. I intend to fill that gap for my business."

I've thought that this is a world where the money circulation takes time, but it seems there are many ways to gain money.

Mia's performance has stopped before I notice. The surrounding are urging her, but looks it's too much, she says one word, "Tired.", and sleep on my lap. I think you don't need to go as far under the table though.

We take that chance and go back to the room. Arisa says, "We got a lot of offering~.", while showing a bowl with a lot of coins. They're mostly pennies, but there are some copper coins mixed in. Quite generous, those drunk old men are.

I let Mia sleep in the room. There's no 8 person room as expected, so I rent two 4 person room. The three beastkin girls and my room, and Arisa and the others' room. We had various disputes during the room's distribution. I'm afraid that I'd think something impolite if I see Nana innocently sleeps on the bed.

I've thought of doing something on the night town stealthily, but I'm prevented by Pochi and Tama. "Let's sleep together nodesu." with gleaming eyes, they bind both my hands. The wire-puller is Arisa without a doubt, but I can't shake off the two who approach with innocent faces.

I pass on the adult's night once in a while~.

6-7. I want to Practice Magic [Cheat Arc]

Satou's here. The impulse to use the thing you've obtained is probably no different regardless of ages or places.

Even in parallel world, it still is.

◇

"■▼▲▲ ▲■▲▲ ▲▲ Shield"

A transparent shape that looks like a Shield appear in front of me who's holding a short cane. The size is large enough to cover my whole body.

"Here I go~ Psycho Ball."

The invisible magic ball fired by Arisa got repelled by the Shield and disappeared.

Oh, a new indicator has appeared below my HP bar, [Shield HP], it says. The HP is 100, and it has decreased by one from Arisa's attack earlier. I wait for a while, but it's not restoring back.

"Is it alright for the next one?"

"Come at me."

"Here I go Tsubaki-kun! This is, my Overdrive shoot!"

Arisa fires Shock Wave while parodying something. The Shield shooks from that attack, but it's repelled just like with the psycho ball earlier.

This time the Shield's HP decreases by 3 points. So it doesn't decrease by fixed value, but depends on the spell huh?

"Then, next, please use Magic Arrow, Nana."

"Yes, master."

A magic circle appears before Nana's forehead and the magic arrow is shot from there.

The magic arrow disappears accompanied with sounds like metal clashing. The Shield's HP only decreases by 1.

"Next, Mia, please."

"Nn. ■■■ ■■ ■■■■ Water Shoot"

Mia creates Water Shoot from the water inside the jug beside her, and then fires it to me. At the moment of impact, the Shield shooks a bit. The magic is dissolved and the water splashes under. The Shield's HP only decreases by 1 point.

"Mia, do you have any area attack?"

"I do."

"Then, please do that from the front."

"It's dangerous."

"Do you have attack that would be safe for everyone but me?"

"I do."

"Then please do that one."

"...Satou?"

"I'll avoid it before it hit me."

"Nn. ■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ Acid Mist"

White mist hits the Shield. The mist is prevented by the Shield, but the grasses around me are dying. The Shield's HP decreases by 3 points.

So direct attack magic is 1 point, while area attack magic is 3 points huh. Isn't this Shield too strong?

"Tama, please throw some stones. Aim at the area around my stomach."

"Aye!"

Swoosh, the stone tears through the air, and just like all the magic before, it's prevented. The stone bounces back unlike the magic. Tama is getting better at stone throwing, Her throw has gotten quite faster. The Shield's HP only decreases by 1 point.

"Alright, next, Pochi. Shoot with a crossbow, since it's dangerous, shoot from around there okay."

"Understood, nodesu~."

The short arrow that Pochi shoots has different aim, she accurately shoots at my left foot that my finger has pointed out. Of course, the arrow bounces back before it hit me. The Shield's HP decreases by 1 point, just like with Tama's stone-throwing.

Now then, next is Liza, but honestly, I'm afraid with the serious Liza who will be using [That Spear]. I cancel the Shield, and put it up once again. I understand that it's actually not necessary, but it's a problem with feeling.

"Liza, after you fill the spear full with magic power, please do heavy blow and thrusting with all your might."

"I understand, master. Please be prepared!"

No no, that line is scary.

Bang, the sound of Liza's rushing, she thrusts out the magic spear.

The magic spear pushes the Shield, but just as it's about to hit me, it gets knocked back. At the same time, something invisible is pushing my body. I see, it seems the Shield is suitable to hold back mass attacks huh.

The red ripple that appears between the spear and the Shield disappears.

As soon as the ripple disappear, Liza pulls her spear. Let me make this clear, even if Liza spear pierced through the Shield, it would slip through my armpit.

The Shield HP decreases only by 3 points. Even though it was flashy, it's the same as area attack huh.

"Liza, next, try to attack me thrice."

"Yes."

Each attack decreases the Shield's HP by 1.

The next experiment will be the last.

"Lulu, please throw a pebble."

"Y, yes, I'll do my best."

However, contrary to Lulu's spirit, the stone flies toward the day after tomorrow. Right, she isn't used to hitting people, unexpectedly it won't fly straight.

"Lulu."

"I, I'm sorry master. Eii. Eii."

Probably thinking that she'd get scolded, Lulu desperately tries to throw stones many times over with upset face. Aah, that's a waste for her beautiful face.

"Lulu, calm down."

"Y, yes."

Maybe thinking that she's disapproved, Lulu falls dejected. Her troubled face is cute too.

"Lulu, take a pebble under your feet."

"Yes, I got it."

"Then, walk three step forward from there."

"Yes.... Umm, isn't this too close?"

Lulu is approximately 1 meter away from the Shield.

"It's fine, throw the stone like you're discarding it using both your hands."

"Yes--Ah, I hit it."

"Yep, you did well. You're great."

Make things easier by removing the impossible condition. 4 more stones hit the Shield, but its HP isn't decreasing. So it really invalidates damage up to certain extent.

◇

Unfortunately, it's not like I've became able to chant.

As for the chant earlier, even though I read the words properly, the rhythm was all over the place.

I activated Musical Performance skill and tried to chant in high spirit, but it was no good. "Uu~n, it's better than before, but it's wrong. Be like Nadami-chan, a good musician who doesn't need to read the sheet.", so said Arisa. It's really frustating.

The trick for solving the puzzle is the [Shield] scroll that I got from the magic shop.

After we left the town, when I used it during our first rest, [Shield] was added on the Magic column in the Menu. At that time, I also got unlabeled [Magic Art] skill, but I wonder if [Magic Art: Foreign World] is a special case?

The magic that I used earlier was selected from the Menu. The chanting was a camouflage, that said, I also slightly wanted to pretend myself being able to chant magic.

Of course, Arisa found out that I wasn't able to chant properly, but since she knew about Menu, it probably was no problem.

Mia seemed unconcerned about it, so there was no problem.

However, the inspection continues.

Next is Nana's turn. Her MP has only decreased by 20% so she should be fine. I'll refill it when this is over.

"Nana, please put up Shield."

"Yes, master."

In front of Nana, a magic-made Shield appears. It looks just like the one I've created.

"Then Arisa, shoot a Psycho Ball at an angle where it wouldn't hit Nana at the Shield."

"Okay."

The Psycho Ball is repelled by the Shield and disappears, just like it was with me.

However, the Shield's HP has decreased by half. Although I don't know the exact value, the Shield's HP amount and hardness are probably different. It probably because of differences in level or skill level.

◇

"Alright, the experiment is over~ let's eat!"

Since the experiment took quite a bit of time, I also participated in the cooking along with Liza and Lulu to help. Moreover, I'm in charge of the main dish, steaks made of wolf meat.

I prepare the wolf meat in turns for the shares of several people excluding Mia and Nana. With Liza's advice, I cut a line on the tendon with a knife and mix salt and pepper in it.

Then, I put oil in the frying pan, stir it, and put sliced garlic inside the oil to let it fry as small dishes. While listening to the sound of oil, I quickly roast the meat. Besides Arisa and Lulu's shares, the meat are to be rare. It seems Arisa and Lulu prefer medium.

For mia's plate, I cut three different kind of fruits and dress it with honey and green sugar.

For Nana's water, I put several drops of fruits juice from Mia's fruits. I want to have a meal together with Nana quickly.

We begin eating with, "Itadakimasu", like always, but it feels more intense than usual. How do I say it, Single-minded, perfectly illustrates their eating.

"Another please!"

Arisa sticks out her steak plate while saying so. Pochi who has finished eating licks the plate, and looks dumbfounded for a while, then she presents her plate, "A, a, another please! nano desu!", she urgently says so.

"Another please!"

"Another please desu!"

"Umm, I also want another serving please."

Slightly late after Pochi, Tama and Liza also present their plates, and ask for another serving. Seemingly following them, Lulu also reservedly ask for another serving.

Well, the meat is still plentiful, but if you eat too much it'll be hard to move you know?

But, it's not over yet.

"Another please."

"Master, another please."

Over there are the figures of Mia and Nana who hold out the empty fruit plate and glass.

I don't have the courage to refuse anymore, and give another serving for everyone.

When I handed it over, I didn't forget to warn that this is the last one.

When they've finished eating, they look supremely blissful, but please stop looking at the plate so eagerly.

It'll be okay if it was Pochi and Tama, but everyone has the same manner, I almost want to ask if they're making jokes.

Afterwards, I was demanded to cook in every meal, but I asked them to only let me do it for lunch.

Since you'll get fat if you eat too much at night.

>Title [Magician of Dining Table] Acquired.

6-8. Fashion Show

Satou's here. If I find one G, there would be 30 more, so I always spray insecticide around and round up the whole herds.

<TLN: G=Gokiburi=Cockroach. He wrote the 'G' in alphabet>

It would be good if you could do the same with thieves...

◇

After we left the town, it was peaceful for three days, but for two days after that, we were attacked by thieves three times.

Since they were just small scale thieves with 7-8 people, we had Arisa did preemptive attack with Shock Wave, and the beastkin girls to defeat the thieves.

At the first battle, Mia attacked with Acid Mist, but it was too gruesome so I made her use Blind Mist and Mustard Mist on the next time instead.

If I fight right away, I could make short work of them, but since it looked sufficient with just the beastkin girls fighting, I was just standing by while watching them and being ready to cover them anytime if needed. And since the beastkin girls had the advantage of level and fighting experience compared to the thieves, my turn never come up.

We didn't bring the thieves to where people lives after we learned the lesson from the last time. We made them sleep with Arisa's magic, stripped them from all their equipments besides their clothes and leave them tied with ivy rope. If their equipments are taken away, they probably won't be able to continue their thief business. If they tried to force their way, they would get killed instead at best.

I teared off their outer clothes and bandaged them so they wouldn't bleed to death. The earl territorial cavalry who are going on patrol would come across them in several hours, I'm keeping them alive for that sake.

Just in case, I put a paper written with "Thieves" on them.

"We're not getting into the template situation eh~."

"Templa~?"

"Is that delicious nodesu?"

After the second encounter with thieves today, Arisa's mood turns bad.

While grumbling, "I'd like to eat Tempura~", after hearing Pochi's word, she's lazing around on the wagon's floor.

"What kind of template?"

"Usually, shouldn't the theory be the thieves attack carriage with beautiful women or rich man and we come to save them while looking cool?"

I don't know that kind of theory.

"Arisa."

"What is it? Mia."

"Rich man."

Mia points at me while saying so.

"Beautiful women."

Mia points at the girls.

"A blind spot! We are the people who should be saved according to the template!"

Arisa groans while holding her head. Mia looks satisfied after looking at that reaction. She looks expressionless like always, but when I look closer, her mouth is slightly smiling.

Pochi, Tama and even Nana mimic Arisa by holding their head while looking troubled. Nana looks awkward, but let's leave her alone.

◇

"Master, it's the blue men."

Responding to Lulu who's calling me, I go outside to the driver seat. What Lulu means with, "Blue men", are the earl's territorial soldiers. Seems she calls them that since their clothes are all blue.

"We're the knights of Kuhanou-dono, bring me your representative."

"I'm the representative, my name is Satou."

"Hoo, you're young. This highways is often frequented by thieves. It's dangerous to travel without escorts. Go back to the town, and hire some guards."

"Thank you for your concern. We have excellent bodyguards, so it's fine."

I open the wagon's curtain and Liza shows her face.

Liza, please stop that carnivorous smile, it's scary.

"Fumu, quite strong looking escort you have. But, you should keep your escorts outside the wagon so they could see if any thief comes."

After giving that advice, the knights asks for my ID and returns to their patrol after looking satisfied.

◇

"Jaa~an, am I cute?"

Arisa spins around in front of me while saying so. She's looking cute while wearing one piece arranged with frills on its sleeves. When she's wearing that and coupled with her violet hair, she really looks like a character from a fantasy movie.

"Yup, you're cute."

"Ehehehehe~."

She probably has not thought that she would be honestly get praised, she looks surprised and then becomes bashful while looking happy. That feels slightly fresh.

"Cute~?""Look~ nano desu."

Pochi and Tama appears with the similar clothes as Arisa while asking. They spin around like Arisa.

"Pochi and Tama are cute too."

"Wa~i.""Yay~ desu."

It looks like they find the floating skirt fun, they spin around until they become dizzy

"Since you've bought some fabric in the town, I tried adding frills on the clothes we have."

"You're quite skillful."

"I'm experienced with making clothes myself for some events back then~"

It's better not to ask what kind of events are those. She's decided on her pose.

Arisa who's looking proud, suddenly freezes. Nana is posing when I look behind.

"Master, am I cute?"

Cute, or rather, a sight for sore eyes.

"Nana! Wear some clothes, clothes!"

Lulu picks clothes that Nana has left on the ground and cover her with it.

She wears drawers like everyone on her lower-half part, but upper-half has brassiere. They're sewed half-cups. I didn't see anyone selling them in the city, so it was probably something Arisa made.

"Arisa, you're really skillful."

"W, well yeah."

It seems Arisa is weak with getting praised.

"Master, am I cute?"

"You're cute, or rather, sexy. Nana, don't thoughtlessly take off your clothes in front of an opposite sex."

"Yes, master."

I tried as hard as possible to say that calmly. Thanks to Poker Face skill which I've leveled up to expert level, I've succeed on not leaking excitement in my voice.

Nana seems to be satisfied with, "Sexy", comment and obediently wear the clothes that Lulu gives her.

If Lulu didn't react, I would probably fixedly stare at her without moving. If the two of us were alone, it could be dangerous. That's why, I should not hold grudge with Lulu's fast reaction. Though, it would have been nice if she were slightly slower...

"Did you only make clothes for three people?"

To keep up my appearance, I talk to Arisa getting back to the topic.

"Yup, it's impossible to make ones for everyone at once. Since Tama and Pochi were looking at my prototype with gleaming eyes, I made for them first."

"Next, for me."

"Yes, yes, the next one is for Mia. Lulu and Liza will be after that, it's fine right?"

"Yes, it's fine."

"I wouldn't look good with such fancy clothes."

"It'll look good I say. Right, should I add frills on your apron? You'll look like a young wife~."

It's rare to see girl's talk happen. It relaxes me.

While listening to the voices as background, I go back preparing lunch. My repertoire has increased after Liza teaches me. You'd get bored of the wolf meat steak no matter how delicious it is if you eat it everyday.

"Carefully scoop it after the lye comes out. Since it'd be wasteful to throw away the soup, please use this cloth to filter it into the the container and put it into the pot."

I thought that you would just cut the ingredients properly, but it's unexpectedly labor-intensive.

Thanks to Liza's teaching, the result tastes quite good.

I've asked Lulu to make steak in place of me, but losing to the appealing looks of Pochi and Tama during the meal, I decide to make the steak later.

Okay, let's check the effectiveness of education skill by teaching Lulu the secret of grilling steak on the next lunch.

◇

"Satisfied~?"

"It was delicious nodesu~."

"Haa, blissful."

The three are lazing around, while I'm compounding beside them. Recently, Nana and Mia have been helping with the clean-up, so they're not around.

I crush a magic core with my fingers, and put it inside the mortar. Normally, you need nutcracker-like tool to crush it, but this tool is really not user-friendly, so I don't like to use it. Nowadays, I crush cores with fingers in secret.

I thoroughly grind it with the pestle and put it inside a bottle. I sort them inside bottles of various shapes and colors reflecting the effective ranks of the magic cores. I didn't forget to put labels on them too.

Since the magic shop girl has said that even in powder form the magic cores are unstable, I'll try to test how unstable they are.

I put an ear pick worth of powder on top of a wood plank and load it with magic power. Just when I load 1 point of magic power to it, "Pon", it explodes. The three centimeters thick of plank is perforated until the bottom.

Pochi and Tama who were dozing off jumped up and looked over here blankly. Arisa reproaches me with her sight. "I'm sorry for surprising you.", I said and went back to the experiment.

Still, I think it's more powerful than gun powder even with the same amount. Though, the only gun powder I know is from fireworks or firecrackers, so my comparison might be flawed.

Certainly, a normal person would die if one of this explodes.

I put a red powder made from magic core on a plate and mix it with stabilizer. Since the stabilizer is white, it becomes sakura-colored.

I put a small cut of paper on top of a magic bestowing stand, and then put about 1 gram of the mixture powder on top of it. I operate regulator at the edge of the magic bestowing stand, and set it according to the textbook. After this, I just need to put magic power to the magic bestowing stand.

The reagent is complete in about ten seconds for each. Seen from AR, it's Reagent 1(+5). I wrap the completed reagent with paper like origami as instructed in the textbook, and then put it inside a small bag. I'll put them in the Storage after I've gathered enough.

Since I've gotten the knack, I put 10 grams on my second try and continue on.

I stop after making 100 reagents in 10 minutes.

Next I use those reagents to make recovery potions of magic power, health, stamina, 10 of them each. Since I could make five at once, and I've made other materials besides the reagents beforehand, it doesn't take long to finish.

"Arisa, put these away. Use it whenever you need."

"Ho~i"

I put half of them inside Arisa's item box.

Pochi and Tama who see me tidying the imbuing tools begin to prepare the wagon.

It's Liza's turn to be the coachman this afternoon.

Since there doesn't seem to be any thieves or beasts that are going to attack the wagon, I guess I'll re-investigate the method to make scrolls.

At the time when I got [Shield] magic in my magic column, I immediately searched for the scroll creation method inside the magic books, but I couldn't find it.

I had not only searched in the magic books from Seryuu city, but also the books from Arisa, Zen and Trazayuya, but I still couldn't find it.

When I changed the search words, I did find ways to create magic tools and golem but, there's nothing about magic scrolls.

The next day after that, I always read through magic books looking for hints of magic scrolls creation. There is absolutely no clue so far, but I've became knowledgeable in type of chanting and magic theory.

Of course, I also have interest with magic tools and golem, but since they need large-scale facilities, it's unreachable for now. There are recipes for magic tools with simple structures, so I'll challenge myself by trying making that on the next break.

I'd like to quickly increase my repertoires, not only for cooking but also magic.

6-9. People of Baron Muno Territory (1)

Satous's here. It's hard to work under an incompetent superior. Though, the superior might be thinking the opposite...

If it was just a job then you could just change your workplace, but the territory people could not do that.

◇

We've just entered the territory of baron Muno, so I perform [All Map Exploration] like usual.

It seems that there's a soldier garrison on the pass slightly ahead. There are 20 soldiers around with level ranging on 3-7. Coming out of that place is a flat terrain with sporadically situated small mountains and forests. The area is wider than Kuhanou's earldom. However, the whole population is only around 40000, about 1/3th of Seryuu city.

There is only one big city in the baron's territory, while the rest are just small villages with less than 1000 people each. The town where the baron lives is populated with 20000 people and seems to be called Muno city.

In that Muno city, there's a demon. Level 30. Hiding in the city means it's probably doing something fishy. Since it looks troublesome, I would stay as far away as possible from it.

But, didn't Arisa say that demons which had crossed worlds are executive class? I don't think that it's an executive with this level. I wonder if demons could be born in this world?

Next, I examine monsters in this territory. There is no low level monsters, on the other hand, there are several monsters past level 10 in various place. Even nearby, there's a level 24 monster called War Mantis lurking.

Furthermore, there are also something peculiar, although they're not monsters, in a forest near Munoo city--a 30 kilometers diameter wide, with 20 kilometers at the shortest, huge forest--there are wood giants in the interior. Although there are only 10 wood giants, the strongest one is at level 39. Their levels averaged at 30.

Another notable thing is that there are a lot of thieves. Although I've expected this, most of them are grouped in 10-30 people. The biggest group has around 200 people. It seems that they build their base on the outer edge of the forest where the wood giants live.

Since there are a lot of outlaws, this probably means the public order of this territory is quite bad.

I'd like to take a detour out of this baron's territory, but that means we'd need to circle around to the royal capital, and if we take longer detour, then we'd have to get to duke Oyugock's territory. It'd take roughly two months. Furthermore, according to the traveler's journal, if we get caught in the winter, we wouldn't be able to move until spring.

◇

"Good afternoon, soldier-san, are you not feeling well?"

"Faa, it's nothing, I don't feel like moving today."

"Is that so, thanks for your hard work."

"Umu, you can go through."

The soldier said so while lazily sitting down in front of the military post, and let the wagon through without inspecting it.

His clothes is slovenly worn too, an uninformed person would likely mistakes him with bandit, but he properly belongs to the baron Muno army.

"Hehehe~ Ennui Field is quite usable right~."

"Yeah, we're saved."

Arisa proudly said so while leaning on the driver seat of the wagon which had started running. How long are you going to put the stamina recovery potion bottle on your mouth, that's bad manner you know?

The soldier before was that languid because Arisa casted magic to make the entire garrison's soldiers became tired. Although, since it was morning, there was a high possibility he would be like that anyway even if we didn't use magic.

There's a reason why we deliberately used magic.

From the result of my prior investigation, the soldiers in that garrison had things like [Murder], or [Rape] in their Reward and Punishment, just like thieves. I understand that they're people who do as they like.

I neutralized them in advance rather than getting tangled in counterattack. If possible I wanted them to not realize that they were attacked with magic. That was my plan, so Arisa used Over Boost, coupled with Ennui Field from afar to make the soldiers became languid.

If they had magic detection item then it could be a problem, but it looked more troublesome if we got entangled with those guys, so I picked the relatively low risk method.

It might be problematic if we leave bad guys like them alone, but since the War Mantis is closing in the garrison, their fate is probably already sealed.

I confirm Arisa's status just in case, but her Reward and Punishment hasn't changed.

◇

Afternoon on the same day, when we're passing through a road near a village populated with 300 people, we're called by a man on the side of the road. There are three thin teenage girls beside him. Their faces are quite alright, but since they look fatigued and disheartened, they don't look their ages.

"Sir, won't you buy these girls?"

"I'm sorry, but I don't need slaves."

"Each of them is just 1 silver coin, if you bring them to a big city they would sell well."

The man is promoting with listless voice.

He probably knew that ones would need to pay tax if they want to bring slaves outside the territory.

"Only if there's no tax, furthermore, I don't deal in slave trading."

"Is that so, then, how about becoming your attendants, for 2 big copper coins."

That's cheap.

I won't buy them though.

"I'm sorry, but they're not comparable."

I point at Arisa and Nana who've showed their face after hearing word, 'attendants'. Although they wear hoods, their good looks should be evident.

After the man saw them, he gave up.

"That so, I'm sorry for taking your time."

"I'd like to talk for a bit."

"What is it?"

"Did your village fall into poverty because of bad harvest?"

"It's not that, it was certainly smaller than usual, but we didn't have bad harvest."

Then, was the tax too high?

If the situation continue and they keep selling humans like this, won't the workers gradually run out and the village disappear?

"Even if the tax is high, we could still barely last through winter with the little crops we have."

Is there some kind of unplanned expenditure.

"Was it because of thieves?"

"They're former farmers, we won't be careless enough to let our winter saving get stolen."

The farmers would fight back to death huh.

"Then, did some monsters appear?"

"If that happen then we'd give up. It was congratulatory gift for the baron's daughter wedding, we had to give 30% of our winter saving."

The man exhales heavily while saying so.

This baron is terrible. Although it might be an arbitrary act of the tax collector official.

"Did you not send petition?"

"If we do that, the whole village would end up as serfs."

"That can't be."

"It's true, do you know Tonza village? Everyone in that village was forced to become a serf, there's no one who lives in that village anymore."

For a moment, I thought that he was talking about Oyu village but when I checked the map, there was a place called Oyu village around 20 kilometers from here.

Certainly, there is no village called Tonza, but there's place called [Ruin of Tonza Village]. Is the baron here a tyrant on top of being a fool?

Since I feel a bit curious, I passingly ask.

"Do you know the partner for the baron's daughter wedding?"

"According to the story of the tax collector, it's the hero-sama."

Hero?

I've searched through the territory, but there is no one who have hero title.

The man who seemingly accept my silence talks as if making an excuse.

"It might be an impostor, but the tax collector really said that. You could ask the village head if you want."

"If she's really marrying the real hero, why would they torment the people?"

"Hah, a lower class man who's nothing but a tax tool like me wouldn't know how the big-shots think."

I can't deny that.

However, if he's really the same hero, [A straightforward altruistic fool], like Arisa has said, then we could just ask about the daughter to resolve this question. If I'm not mistaken, that hero has weird preference right.

"I have one more question, how old is the daughter?"

"I'm sure they're 19 and 24 years old women."

"I see, thank you. It's trifling, but here's a compensation for the talk."

I said so while pushing several silver coins to the man and went away with the wagon.

◇

Arisa comes out to the coachman's seat.

"Hey, you seem to have noticed it."

"Yeah, it's an impostor."

Yes, the hero that Arisa has told me, Hayato Masaki, has awkward fetish. He's a lolicon.

I don't think a man like that would take a 19 or 24 years old woman into his wife.

He might have a change of heart, but then he would be swayed with his beautiful women attendants instead.

"The pervert might has been cured, but that Saga Empire won't make a blunder like letting him marry with a small-time noble from some foreign land."

A shotacon like you probably doesn't have the right to call lolicon a pervert.

Just in case, I try narrowing the search term on the map to check if there's any other hero besides Hayato Masaki.

A person with [Hero] title--Does not exist.

A person with [Unknown] skill--Does not exist.

A person with [Self Status] skill--Does not exist.

A person higher than level 50--Does not exist.

There's no applicable person besides us.

There's no one who could possibly be a reincarnated or transported person either.

There's a fake hero, or there's a hero from another country inside this territory, I wonder which one is it.

I'm guessing that it's a fake hero. I can't help but feel that the demon in Muno city is the one behind this.

However, I don't intend to get involved.

It may be heartless, but I don't want to expose our girls with danger if I try to eliminate the demon and the fake hero.

I decide to circulate anonymous documents if I get a guilty conscience.

6-10. Magic Circuit and Rose Engraving

Satou's here. I've made various electronic circuit boards when I was a college student, although I neglected it when I became a working adult.

I didn't think that I would make them in fantasy world...

◇

I don't know if the fake hero really exist, but when I regularly check the baron castle's map, I've narrowed down the most suspicious candidate.

The fake hero's name is Hauto--one character difference with the hero, Hayato Masaki--he's a level 7 young man with one-handed sword and shield skills.

There are also other people who seem to be his companions which are a level 10 swordsman, a level 8 magician, and a level 9 priest. It's a party with good balance, they would've been successful if they earn their shares from labyrinths.

The demon is most likely involved. It's often near the fake hero, Hauto.

However, this demon slips out of the castle at night, and goes to the neighboring forest where the thieves are.

"Master, the replenishment is complete."

Damn, I've wasted this blissful morning time thinking unnecessary things.

Nana who has refilled her magic fix her clothes.

Satou, you'll get another chance on the next break.

...I convinced myself so.

◇

Today I'm making wooden swords on the shaking wagon.

I feel like Pochi's and Tama's battle forms have become sloppy lately, probably because the thieves' level were low, so I'm preparing these for their exercise. I don't want to see them suffer from letting their guard down.

I roll several layers of leather on the wooden swords for safety so they wouldn't get hurt.

"Is it okay to have this~?"

"Pochi also wants to have that nodesu."

Pochi and Tama said so while holding Nana's rapier. The sword is engraved with cute patterns from the guard to the grip. It seem they want to have the wooden swords to have the same kind of patterns as the rose engraving there. These two unexpectedly like cute things.

Do I have to make this?

The two's eyes are full of expectations.

"Is it alright if the design is a bit simpler?"

"This one no good~?"

"No good nano desu?"

Uuh, now it's upturned eyes huh.

"I understand, I'll try it for once."

"Yay~."

"It's going to be okay since it's master, nano desu."

"Work hard~ master."

Arisa cheered on me who had irresponsibly promised them. Dang Arisa, don't look so amused.

Since it's impossible to engrave the design on the completed swords, I decide to shave new ones.

Afterwards, the two are finally satisfied with the engraving after nine tries. Since I've only shaved the guard to the grip part, the blade part is still rod shaped. I should be able to shave the blade parts before the next rest if it's only for two.

>[Engraving Skill Acquired]

◇

"There's no prey nodesu."

"I picked nuts~."

After we've entered this territory, Pochi and the girls only net few hunts. Birds or beasts that could be hunted are scarce along the road. Even with this condition, Tama still shrewdly gather fruits and acorns. In some survival manga, they would cook acorns or insects, but since we're not in food shortage, I keep Tama's harvest for now.

Now then, it's about time to prepare for lunch. Lulu is beside me while wearing different clothes than the usual. She ties her hair with the blue braid like yesterday, but her apron now has frills making her cuteness goes up by 50%.

"I've prepared it."

"Alright, then, put the oil on the frying pan and raise the flame."

"Yes!"

I'm teaching Lulu the secret of steak today. I wonder if she's nervous, she makes a lot of excessive movements. Her face has turned bright red.

"The garlic is enough with that much. Put it on this plate."

Going according to the instruction, Lulu awkwardly use the spatula to move it to the plate. The spatula is made from wood. Since it was inconvenient when I'm making steak without one, I made it myself.

"Listen closely to the sound. Don't close your eyes though."

Lulu performs my instruction, but it seems that she's nervous because our faces are close. It looks like she's not used around men, so I give instructions from behind her shoulders.

"When you hear this sound, it means that the heat is enough, so put the steak in."

Even though she's tense, she's doing it properly, excellent.

"Wait until the the side becomes brown. Turn the steak when you smell this. It's easy to understand when to turn if you utilize the sound and the smell."

I said so with air of superiority, but it was thanks to the skill.

When Lulu has finished grilling the steak, I cut and sample it. Yep, it's a bit inferior compared to the one I make, but it's at the level where she could charge money for it. Lulu also tries it, she's surprised with the meat she has grilled herself.

Since Pochi and Tama are drolling beside us, I cut the meat and feed it to their mouths. And since even Liza and Arisa wait for their turns, the trial steak quickly disappears. You girls have too much appetite.

◇

At a slightly remote place, Pochi and Tama are training using the wooden swords.

Without their usual goofy attitudes, they look very serious.

Pochi attacks in straight line, Tama avoids it while moving relatively more erratic. Using the chance when Pochi stops moving, Tama successfully hits her with small attack.

Sometimes Tama fails to avoid Pochi's heavy blow, so the damage is comparable.

Still, even though this is a training, aren't they way too serious?

Liza who was washing the dishes volunteered to be the umpire since she was worried with the two.

Even though I've taught them to stop before they hit before the training began, looks like they completely forget about it. Let's tell them again later.

◇

After the meal, I'm taking a break from chanting practice.

Today, I'm experimenting in magic tools creation. What I'm doing now is making preliminary preparations.

Roughly speaking, Magic tools are tools for recreating effects of specific magic without chanting. Magic circuits are embedded on magic tools as a substitute for the chants. For simple circuits, you could make them without special facility, but you'd need exclusive workshop if you want to make magic tools with complex circuits. It might be easier to understand if I say that it's like the differences between [Miniature bulb and copper-wired battery], and [Electronic circuit with semiconductor].

In order to compose the magic circuit, you need to use circuit liquid to draw specific patterns. Depending on the purpose, you could possibly need circuit liquids with different magic resistance power, but let's go with the orthodox for the first time.

I draw a circle on a wood plank with ink.

Next, I use a pick to lightly carve out the circle.

Then I just need to pour the circuit liquid here and it'd be complete.

I want to make the circuit liquid, but it was written in difficult elf language, it's probably by Trazayuya. It can't be helped, I maximize the elf language skill. I'd have liked if it was written in simpler elf language.

For the making of this circuit liquid this time, you just need to simply mix melted copper with powdered magic core and stabilizer.

First, I melt some coppers. For this I use the magic tool that I've bought from the metal carving workshop. It's a burner where you can raise flame by pouring magic. Burning without fuel, truly a magic tool.

>[Metal Carving Skill Acquired]

Since it looks like I would need this from now on, I put points and activate it.

I mix some powdered magic cores and stabilizers inside the pot where the melted copper is.

With light plopping sound, red smoke lightly rises from the pot. It has no smell.

Next, let's pour the circuit liquid into the wood carving. I smell burning woods when I pour the circuit liquid.

Maybe I should have waited until it's a bit cooler.

>[Magic Tools Creation Skill Acquired]

So imbuing was from different category.

Of course I activate it.

"What are you making~."

Arisa who has finished washing the dishes calls me from behind my shoulders.

"A magic tool."

"Eh? Is that something that you could make yourself?"

"Seems so, do you want to try it?"

"Is it fine?"

Arisa pours her magic power, the brown circuit liquid begins to glow vermilion gold.

"Okay, it's good already."

"And, what will happen next?"

"When you put magic power into the circuit liquid, the magic power will flow on it."

"Yep, yep, then?"

"That's it, the magic power goes around, the end."

"Ehh~~~."

"Don't expect grandiose thing from a first timer in magic tools making."

Arisa looks very dissatisfied.

In the first place, I can't make anything else beside circle poured with circuit liquid without special facility, you're expecting too much.

6-11. People of Baron Muno Territory (2)

Satou's here. There were some TV programs about survival in uninhabited island or deep in a forest, but I would refuse if I was asked to participate.

I'd eat through all the the nuts and edible plants in a matter of weeks.

◇

"Master, there's someone ahead nodesu."

"There~."

Pochi who's occupying my lap finds traces of someone ahead. I've confirmed it on the map, but I can't see it yet.

"Ah, it went inside the forest."

It seems scout-kun had gone to call its friends.

They're thieves, but this time it's a bit different. They're children ranging from 9 to 14 years old. There are three boys and six girls. Their Reward and Punishments are just [Contract Breach]. Since their titles are [Runaway Slave], they're probably children who have ran away from villages. Their stamina are all less than half.

Indeed, it'd be pitiful to beat them up right?

"What's on there?"

"Group of boys thieves."

"What's that, I'm burning up!"

I consult to Arisa and Liza about their reward and punishment.

"Runaway slaves is it? Then, our reward and punishment won't change even if we kill them, so I think there's no need to worry."

No, Liza-san, I don't have such worry.

"How about ignoring and going through them? Or do you want to get more little girls?"

This is enough, I'll pass on getting more.

"Right huh, runaway slaves probably don't have projectile weapons, let's shake them off."

...It was no good.

◇

Three girls are laying on the road, blocking it. We can't exactly run them over right?

The wagon barely stopped in time just before hitting them, but the girls didn't move even after that. Since they were not tied, their body might had been frozen in fear. They're too reckless even if they want to stop the wagon no matter what.

"Don't move! We have ten archers aiming at you in the forest."

Strange voice with raised pitch threatened us.

Since it's troublesome to play along with the bluff, I'll put aside the girls and quickly advance the wagon.

I leave the wagon's back entrance to Pochi and Tama to guard, and the driver's seat to Liza.

"If you value your life, leave your food here."

He's making demand with utmost effort, but the back chorus isn't helping.

"I'd like some potatoes."

"Stupid, we have to demand dried meat here! Right?"

"I want to eat bread."

"Anything's good as long as it's not weeds."

"Stupid, you guys keep silent."

"You're the stupid one calling other stupid you know?"

"Just shut your mouth."

The demands became chattering of young children, ruining everything.

I seize one of the small girl who's blocking the road, and gently toss her to the other children in the forest. She's abnormally light. The children who are thrown at are panicking while catching her.

"Uwah, what are you doing!"

"We'd shoot you with arrow."

No one is coming out of the forest.

Do they not have weapons or are they afraid of Liza?

"Do you want to walk to the forest yourself, or get thrown there?"

"J, just run me over. If we don't have food, we'll die starving anyway."

She insists with trembling voice, I'm not sure if she's bluffing or being serious.

She's the same age as Lulu, but she looks as old as Arisa. She's a girl with semi-long red hair and red brown pupils. The arm which I grab to make her stand is thin like a dead branch.

"L, let go of Totona!"

The boy who has been negotiating with us since now comes out of the forest after seeing me grabbing the girl's arm. The red-haired boy looks similar with the girl. He's holding a club on his hand.

I force the girl to stand, and push her toward the boy. The girl stumbles and is caught by the boy.

"Liza, go."

I jump to the driver seat of the wagon which has started running.

"Okay, here."

Arisa holds out a big bag while saying so, and throws that to the forest. The content of that bag is vegetables and food that Tama has gathered like fruits. Since it wasn't prepared in advance, she probably did it when she heard the boys' conversation.

"You're probably thinking that even if I give them food, it won't solve the root of the problem right? When you're starving, you don't think of tomorrow. The most important thing is to quell the starving right now. Just that."

◇

"Is it still bothering you?"

"No, it's not that."

It didn't bother me at all. After taking two deep breaths, the queasy feeling on my stomach completely disappears.

What I have in mind is the things ahead. There's a narrow river ahead of this road, and five old people are there.

They're neither thieves or runaway slaves. Are they fishing?

"Don't think unnecessary things when you're hungry! Let's eat a lot of delicious steaks and cheer up!"

"Cheer~?"

"Eat until full nodesu."

I'm thankful for your worry, but you girls are absolutely thinking about the steak more right?

We've arrived at the creek after a while.

The elderly are just sitting on the bank and staring at the river. I'm thinking of camping near the river, but what do I do about this.

"Good afternoon, the weather is nice today huh."

"Oh, are you a merchant, do you have some businesses with this old man?"

"I'm sorry for disturbing you. When I was stopping by the river to get some water, I saw your figures, so I thought of greeting everyone here."

"That is, quite polite of you. Just think of me like a pebble on the roadside."

"That's right, we don't have anything to do beside staring at the river in sorrow until we're called by the god."

<TLN: He/she means dying>

"It's preferable to be called by the god here rather than have our grandchildren be sold."

"We're not welcomed in the village even if we go back."

"If you want to give us foods, I'll accept it anytime you know?"

"Hey, if you eat now, you'll get called by the god late."

"That's right huh."

It seems that they're abandoned here on this river.

You should treasure the elders!

"Don't make such face, it's fine."

"That's right, for the sake of decreasing the mouths needed to be feed, we got out of the village by our own volition."

"Right, if the old people are decreased, girls who sell themselves would probably decrease too."

"Nowadays, merchants weren't buying slaves and the village headman was grumbling."

Since there's no one who would buy their daughters, they sacrifice the elderly now huh.

◇

Since the old people seem to be harmless, I decide to camp slightly away from them. We're located downwind from where they are.

Usually, Pochi and Tama hunt and gather food, Arisa and Mia collect firewoods, Lulu and Liza cook, and Nana helps them cook, but since the old people would likely die faster if we scrouge the plants and animals on this area, I decide to refrain.

"We're not going to look for firewoods or preys today. Liza, I'm sorry, but since I want to treat the old people with foods, I want you to cook more today, I leave you with the food choice."

"I understand, since heavy stuff is impossible for people who're fasting, let's make cereal porridge."

"Need help?"

"We have enough hands, but let's teach you on this occasion! It's not only Mia, Arisa, you too."

Lulu readily accepts Mia's offer, and takes Arisa by hand to the place where the cookwares lay. Arisa resists by saying, "Cooking is my bane~.", but today Lulu is forceful and she keeps pulling her.

Pochi and Tama look around restlessly, so I tell them, "You girls can go ahead and play", but somehow it has became a battle training. Moreover, it's me versus Pochi and Tama.

After the signal, Pochi rushes forward like an arrow.

I smoothly avoid the wooden sword's thrust.

Using that chance, Tama sweeps my feet with her wooden sword, I avoid it by jumping.

I counter by lightly kick Tama's wooden sword.

Tama who loses her wooden sword jumps at me while making small growl.

I change her trajectory by scooping her stomach with my palm, and gently throw her away.

While eluding Pochi's attack twice, I confirm Tama has landed after spinning on the air from the edge of my vision.

"Can't hit~?"

"Strong nodesu."

The training continues while being like that, and when I purposely get myself caught at the end, it somehow looks like we're flirting.

"I caught you, hamumunyanoresu."

<TLN: She's biting him.>

"Nihehe~ caught~?"

And then, the last punchline has to come from Arisa after all.

"I'll join in too~."

While saying so, Arisa jumps at me, but--

"Arisa~ Joining~."

"The next prey is Arisa nano desu!"

--Pochi and Tama brilliantly intercept her.

6-12. People of Baron Muno Territory (3)

Satou's here. Scene of people crying while eating their meal is a wartime or post-war time tale, but if I have to say, that only reminds me of the time when I'm consoling a broken-hearted friend who went into binge eating, Satou's.

◇

"Gramps, we got some foods."

"It's not weeds today~."

The children whom we meet in the afternoon come storming in when we're eating cereals, vegetables and wolf meat together with the old people. I've heard about these children from the old people, but since they don't know when they'll come back, we've started our meal ahead of them.

"Ah, it's the people from earlier."

"Did they come to get the food back?"

"They're waiting for us."

The children hide anxiously behind the leader's back.

Do these children not see the peaceful atmosphere of this meal?

"We have lots of porridge, why don't you eat with us?"

"That's right, you children eat too."

"Hey now, quickly sit down kids."

The children are cautious with my invitation, but since the gramps are also calling them, and above all, they're captivated with the presented porridge, before long they've joined the meal with us.

"T, tasty."

"It's not weeds?"

"Uwah, there's something smelling nice."

"There are boiled meat here."

"You're lying?"

"It's true, it's meat~."

"Really delicious.... Uuuu"

It's good that you're delighted, but please stop being moved to tears.

Pochi who has finished her plate the fastest starts the war with few words.

"Another please~ nano desu!"

With those few words, the tension is raised on the children.

Probably only feeling that tension subtly, or maybe none at all, the always expressionless Nana asks for another serving.

"You kids don't need to be reserved. Go eat more."

"We still have a lot, so if you want another helping, you can ask without reserve."

They're cheering after hearing Arisa's words, leaving my words unfinished. The children's eating speed becomes faster. The old people scold the boys who choke their food, "Chew your food well."

Since it looks like the food will not be enough, I go back to the wagon to boil potatoes.

I peel about 20 potatoes and boil them together with Lulu who has came to help. Hearing rustling sounds, I see to the side to find Mia.

"Satou."

"You also want another helping, Mia?"

Mia shakes her head lightly.

"Humans... why."

She tries hard to put words together.

"Throwing away... children... elders?"

When I ask her in detail, seems that the elves cherish their children and elders, so she's shocked with this situation.

Let's leave this kind of heavy topic to Arisa-sensei.

"Have you asked Arisa?"

"Nn."

"What did she say?"

"I don't understand. Things like the riches and the poor, or social structure."

Dang Arisa, don't use difficult words to muddle your way.

"Mia, races that produce a lot of children, not just humans, are fundamentally weak."

"Nn."

"Since they're weak they struggle hard, and will save oneself even at the expense of many."

"All of them?"

"Yep, since they can't all be saved, they let one section becomes sacrifice."

"...That so."

It's good if she's convinced with that, but I myself haven't put much thought in it. Even most of the talks from just before were nothing more than informations I got from net and TV.

"If someone like master becomes a king, it would be really peaceful."

Lulu says so while smiling, but she's overestimating me. If someone like me become a king, the whole country would immediately go bankrupt, the end.

◇

"Hou, I was wondering why she wore hood during the meal, she was an elf huh."

An old woman comes to here alone. Mia quickly cover herself with the hood even though it's too late.

"She's shy around people."

"Is that so, young lady, I won't tell others so please forgive me."

"Nn."

Mia nods, and lightly runs behind Lulu's back who's keeping the pot.

"Did I get myself hated?"

"She's just shy. Rather than that, is there anything wrong?"

"It's painful to only accept your kindness and eat, so I'm thinking if there's anything I can help."

"Since we've just began boiling more potatoes, we have enough hands."

"I thought that you were just about to tidy up, is it fine? I don't have anything to pay you back even after you treat us this much."

"It's just a simple whim of mine, please don't mind it."

The old woman looks lost for a moment, but as if she's decided on something, she continues her words.

"Merchant-san, won't you make those children your slaves?"

"I'm sorry old woman, I have enough slaves already, I don't need anymore than these."

"One or two of them is fine, please take them. If they're left alone here, they would die from starvation sooner or later. I don't mind if it's old bones like me, but it's painful to see the children pass away."

I'm sorry for the old woman, but I refuse.

To be frank, journeying in this world is too dangerous. If I need to protect just Lulu and Nana then I could do something about it, but if the people who need to be protected increase by the nine kids over there, I won't be able to.

To calm my heart, I put aside the food for a bit.

"It'd be good if the children could grow their own vegetables isn't it."

"That's right, it'd be nice if there's a field where we could grow vegetables."

"Is the ground around here not good?"

"The sun's exposure is good, but the soil is too brittle, so it's no good."

Mia is listening to Lulu's and the old woman's conversation without doing anything, but then she pulls my sleeve.

"What is it?"

"Forest."

"Yup, it's forest alright."

Seemingly annoyed with my reply, Mia pouts.

"No, humus."

What'd you say, you can use leaves from where rhinoceros beetles live

"They're good."

"Come to think of it, Arisa said something about that too."

"Is it about agricultural reform?"

Yes, that. If I'm not mistaken, she said that an outbreak of large quantity of insect monsters happened.

"Insect monsters?"

"Yep, Arisa said that large quantity of it were springing out when she tried it."

"No, superstition."

"Is that so."

"Lia said so."

Lia? Isn't she Mia's mother?

"In other words, we should clear the forest and cultivate farming land there?"

"Nn."

"That's nice, if we could do that, then the children and us would work hard on it."

The old woman is saying that but she doesn't look to be serious. If we have heavy machineries, then clearing the land wouldn't be hard at all, but of course there is no such thing. Even if we successfully cultivate the land, they could only harvest after 1 year while suffering during that period.

"Right, there are crops which could be harvested fast, but only Gabo could in this season. That one could be harvested in one month. Although, anyone but the nobles in their manor is prohibited in cultivating plants, so we can't acquire the seeds."

The old woman has experience in cultivating Gabo fruit when she was forced to work in a manor.

"That thing can grow disgustingly fast. That's why it's classified as a weed."

They just need to have enough food until spring, is there really nothing we can do?

"If there's such method, we old bones wouldn't get thrown out of the village."

"I don't mind even if it's absurd."

"Right, then we could go hunt the spider bear in the forest. If we have just three spider bear bosses' meat and smoke them, we could live leisurely until spring."

It's a monster living deep in various places of this forest. There are 5 monsters with level around 24-28.

Still, is it a bear or a spider, be firm about it.

<TLN: In Japanese, bear is kuma, spider is kumo. The monster's name is Kumo Kuma lol.>

"Don't seriously think of going okay? I know that your slave girls are strong, but they won't win against the spider bear inside the forest. When I was a child, there was subjugation expedition with the knights, samurai and soldiers leading the way, no one came back."

Rather than the problem with fighting inside the forest, I think it's simply because of level difference.

"If little elf lady here grows up, with the forest magic from the fairy tale, she could move with ease along the large trees and help farm the land in the forest."

"Muu."

Mia is sulking after being treated as a child.

"Old woman, even though this girl looks like this, she's older than you."

"Oya oya, is that so. Elves sure have long life."

Mia's mood isn't recovering, but when the old woman blows leaf flute to soothe her, she looks interested on it.

Since Mia is also coming from forest, she has blown various leaves flutes there, so her musical timbre and power of expression are world apart from the old woman even though they use the same leaf. This might unexpectedly be the result of study in her long life.

Everyone gathered around Mia before I'm aware, but then Mia stops and the leading role changes to the potatoes. In the end, it was not enough with just potatoes, and we ended up cooking cereal and porridge once more.

6-13. People of Baron Muno Territory (4)

Satou's here. There's saying that there's a great difference between seeing and hearing, but I think there are a lot of things you don't know until you actually try for yourself, Satou.

◇

"U, umm, thank you for the delicious meal."

"You don't have to mind it, everyone has thanked me earlier too."

"Also umm, I'm sorry for the afternoon."

It's the red-haired girl from the afternoon. She's called Totono if I'm not mistaken. She's personally coming to our camping ground to meet me, does she have some business?

The girl is looking downcast, but after she glances a bit at Lulu, her face becomes determined.

She grasps her skirt with trembling hands, and seemingly decides something.

It can't be another, "Please buy me.", situation right.

To be frank, I'm fed up with that.

However, the girl's action is a bit different.

She takes her skirt off. I've said skirt, but her clothes is a one piece, so I could see her ribs--

--or I should be, but Lulu covers her with an apron in a hurry from behind, so I couldn't see it. Let's leave this as it is.

It doesn't seem like she'd wear her clothes back, but she also doesn't brush off the apron.

"T, this is an apology and thanks. We can't do anything, so..."

"You'd pay with your body?"

"Un, my big sister said, 'If you're given something, give something back.', she said that it's no good with just words..."

I don't think that person meant it like this when she said that.

"It's fine to return a thank you to wealthy people. Although I'd like it if you don't take it for granted."

"But"

"Your sister surely meant to say that when you've become a person who lives her life to the fullest, you should share something with other."

"I, is that how it is..."

Since she falls silent, Lulu helps her wear the clothes. I don't have any interest with little girl's body of course, so I avert my gaze.

After Totona has put her clothes on, Lulu invites her to drink a tea. Mia who should have been on watch duty with me is leaning on my back, sleeping. Sleeping even during this uproar, this girl is not fit to be on guard duty.

"Um, this is?"

"It's a blue tea."

"Is it fine to drink it?"

"It's delicious you know."

With Lulu's words, Totona concentrates on the cup while looking awfully surprised. Her cheeks loosens, I wonder if she finds it delicious.

I'm watching that scene while preparing Liza's spear.

"This the first time I've drank something like this."

"Maybe no one drinks it around here. It's master's favorite tea."

It's probably something that only wealthy people could enjoy considering this area.

This tea's name is [Blue Ruby], it's easy to drink like Darjeeling, although they're completely on different level. The tea lets out slightly bluish color when freshly brewed, but it looks like a normal tea when it's cool. I can't help but become curious with how it works.

Totona seems to have calmed down after she has finished drinking the tea.

Since it looks like she's going to try to sell herself this time, let's get ahead of her.

"Totona, won't you lend me strong kids for helping me this morning?"

"Un, if we could thank you with that, everyone will go."

"I'm counting on you, I promise to give two big bags of potatoes to the elders. You guys also need it to survive right?"

"Un, un, thank you, Onii-san."

Totona is saying thank you while crying, Lulu wipes her tears.

Although, two big bag of potatoes are probably not enough for even half a month.

I don't have obligation or reason to help them further than this, but I'll try to do something without giving me trouble. That line of thinking is hypocritical huh.

◇

Right now, I'm away from the camping ground, deep in the forest.

At first, I've thought of hunting the spider bears for the children and elders, but I change my mind and check the forest's terrain.

The old woman said that a good place should be beside a river with a lot of humus and well-lit.

I use a holy sword taken out from storage to briskly cut the trees and put them inside the storage. Since the trees are cut down without any resistance, and I instantly put the fallen tree inside the storage, it doesn't feel real. I've cleared 300 meters wide area in 10 minutes.

I did it without lumbering skill somehow.

The outlook has became much better.

Next, I activate Cultivation skill I've acquired before.

I pull the stumps one by one, but this is quite difficult. I can pull the stump easily, but the reaction force makes my feet sink into the soft ground.

Therefore, I give up on pulling the stump, instead I cut away the root with the holy sword after I raise it. This work took more time than I expected, around 1 hours.

Next, it's the removal of weeds and bushes. Since the weeds break apart when I pull them with all my strength, halfway through, I delicately control my power with difficulty. I got, [Gathering], skill when I was pulling the weeds. It seems that there are some herbs mixed in with the weeds I've pulled. Is this the difference (effect) of [Mowing] skill.

I'd have loved to use fire magic and shout, "Mow it down."[1]

<TLN: Nausicaa's reference, not sure what's the actual phrase used in the English release>

When I've finished removing the weeds, I pull the remaining tree roots. It feels strange like pulling string buried in the ground. This is also the same with the weeds, they break easily if I pull with force, so I have to control my power delicately.

I found some huge rocks and stones halfway through, I put them inside the storage. They'd become hindrances for the field.

Now then, I guess the land is good enough for cultivation?

I feel like I'm missing something, I wonder if this is an effect of Cultivation skill.

I haven't read much manga about cultivation.

Since I don't know what is it even if I stare at the ground, I take out a hoe from the abandoned village back then and try to plow the land.

"Hum~m, it's normal."

After plowing for 10 meter, I feel like hitting something hard.

There is a stone in the ground. The stone is about as big as a fist. Afterward, I hit stones whenever I plow for a bit. The edge of the hoe becomes slightly bent.

I adjust the search range of the map and search for stones. First, let's display the ones in 30 cm deep underground. There's a lot of them. I activate gathering skill to the maximum and begin gathering the stones. I gather the stones so fast that it's as if I'm in a gag manga. Sometimes things that look like gemstones or raw ores are mixed in, but they're probably just beautiful stones like the actinolite back then.

After I've roughly completed the removal of the stones, I try plowing the ground. Since I've only did this once when I was a child on my grandpa's countryside, I don't know if I'm doing this right. If I just make the ground soft enough, then the old men could probably direct the children well.

I pile up about 10% of the weeds that I've gathered at the edge of the farmland. It'll be usable for fertilizer.

I also clean off branches from 10 felled tress and pile them on three different locations. Then I cut them into 20 parts in easy to use sizes.

I wrap gabo fruits with cloth and put them below the timbers. It shouldn't get damaged by beasts like this.

"Fuh, it's tiring after all."

My stamina has been decreased by 20%. The stones removal was the most severe.

"Now then, I've reclaimed the land, but what should I do about it."

Yes, it'd look unnatural for workable fields to materialize in one night.

I'll leave this alone, and hope that the children would find the place when they're looking for food. Since it's only 2 kilometers away and near the river, I'm expecting them to find it.

At that time, a spider bear that the old woman were talking about during dinner comes out of the forest.

It's coming to get itself hunted, what a laudable monster.

◇

About this spider bear, it's a spider with the body portion looking like bear's. To be frank, it's disgusting.

There are 5 spider bears which appear, I lure them back into the forest. I could eliminate them now, but since I have some things in mind, I'm going to take one monster back to the camping ground. First, I obliterate four monsters soundlessly and put them into the storage.

The remaining one monster is chasing my back without even realizing that its friends have all disappeared.

In accordance with crisis perception, I leap to the side.

Thus I evaded an attack from the spider bear's claw which had its body hanging upside down like a pendulum. Seems that the spider is hanging by using its thread on a big tree.

The spider which has reached the top of the pendulum separates from the thread and makes a landing ahead. The tree behind which has been used as the fulcrum is breaking apart.

The spider bear ahead lifts its forelegs making a threatening pose, I kick it while being careful as not to kill it.

I run past it to the highway.

The spider bear comes out of the forest a bit later. Since it'd be troubling if it loses sight of me, I throw a big lumber at it while purposely missing.

I dash to the camping ground and call Pochi and the girls who are on guard duty.

I'm planning to raise everyone's level while procuring food, killing two birds with one stone.

"Pochi, Tama, get ready for battle. Nana, after you hit the monster with Magic Arrow, wake Liza and Arisa up."

"Enemy~?"

"Fainanoresu." <TLN: Fail "hai nano desu." lol>

"Yes, master."

The spider bear lost a bit of its HP from the magic arrow unleashed by Nana. It could cause damage even with so much level difference huh, this magic arrow is quite an excellent magic.

With a short cane to cast Shield, I stop the spider bear.

The spider bear tries to reach behind the shield with its long leg, but Tama prevents it with her stiletto.

"Thank you, Tama."

"Nou puroburemu~?"

<TLN: She tried to say this in English>

Pochi is going at the spider bear from its behind diagonally, she thrusts at the leg joint with her stiletto. Seems that she hits it, but the attack is unable to break the joint.

A red light pierce through the monster's body from the opposite side.

The spider bear loses 10% of its HP with that one blow from Liza. It seems she wakes up in hurry since she's only wearing something that looks like long t-shirt without armor.

The spider bear changes its target to Liza. I must attract the monster's attention.

"Over here, you spider thingy!"

I provoke the spider bear while hitting it with the shield. Is this what they call shield bash? Its HP decreases. Oh no, it'd die before Arisa and Mia come out.

>[Provocation Skill Acquired]

I immediately activate Provocation skill. After that the battle becomes a cinch. After all, the hardest attack of the enemy is only coming at me obstinately.

With this skill, it should be easy in the labyrinth.

After Arisa and Mia who come out late unleash their magic, it becomes a one-sided battle of the beastkin girls.

Since we're fighting near the camping ground, the old people and the children who have woken up are watching from a distance. The children raise their voice whenever Mia use her magic or Liza's spear lit up.

At last, the spider bear lays down and stops moving after receiving Liza's attack, raising conspicuously loud cheers from the children and the old people.

6-14. People of Baron Muno Territory (5)

Satou's here. When I went to the countryside during my childhood, I played by the riverside a lot. I remember keeping beautiful stones like they were treasures. Right now, I wonder if they're still being kept in the closet of my parent's house along with my memories.

◇

"Liza, I'm counting on you for the recovery of the magic core. You can leave everything beside the magic core as it is."

"Yes, master."

First thing first, I hand a dagger to Liza who holds nothing but her spear and ask for the recovery.

"Wait a minute, you went alone to do some dangerous things weren't you."

"Since I wasn't able to sleep, I went to gather some herbs and got attacked."

"Didn't I tell you not to go alone? Even though you've got shield skill, you could still easily die if you're careless!"

After apologizing to Arisa who has teary eyes, I face toward the old people who are looking at us from afar.

"I'm sorry for the disturbance in the middle of the night."

"We don't mind it, but is that monster a spider bear?"

"Yes, it's a spider bear you've mentioned in the afternoon, it might be a stray who've lost its way."

"Your luck were bad huh, it usually only gets to human habitation once in every few decades. This is the first time, I've seen one in my life."

"Is that how it is, it could have been dangerous if our capable girls didn't do their best."

Maybe it came out because their prey were hunted to exhaustion by human?

I thought that they appeared this time because of the land reclamation, but they were originally monsters which didn't get close to human habitation huh. If I didn't reclaim the land, these people might became victims someday.

"Say, is the one with red light a magic weapon?"

"Those onee-chan were using magic~."

"What are you saying, that person's shield is made with magic!"

"It did block all the monster's attacks~."

"But, even that red spear was BOOM, like that."

"I'll become a spear when I grow up."

"It was amazing right, like VROOM."

<TLN: Satou used Shield magic, not shield equipment in ch. 6-13, sorry for the mistake, it's been amended now>

The attack from Liza's spear during midnight is really eye-catching. The children who notice Mia's and my magic are only a few. Still, little girl, what do you mean by becoming a spear.

"I thought you were a merchant, turned out you were a magician huh."

"I'm only a beginner on both, leaving that aside, about this spider bear, I don't need anything else besides the magic core, so everyone can get the meat or the fur."

"That's the best thing I could ask for, but is it fine? If you take it to the town, you could sell it for high price you know?"

"It's troublesome to carry something that big."

The elders who are hesitating decide on it after this words from Arisa.

"Old man, you don't need to hesitate. Rather than trying to keep some queer appearance, it's your top priority to ensure tomorrow's food!"

"You're right. Then, I'll accept it with gratitude."

We leave the spider bear body while the blood is draining out, it will be dismantled tomorrow.

Next, I'm praying that while they're surviving with this monster's meat, they would discover the farm land.

◇

"Onii-chan, this is, thank you."

A little girl who comes together with Totona gives me a small bag with a lot of pebbles inside. The pebbles are beautiful stones seemed to have been picked from the riverside. This must be this little girl's treasure. I'm okay with this kind of normal gratitude.

I pick one and return the rest to her.

"I'll only pick this one, you should treasure the rest."

"Un."

The little girl bashfully hides behind Totona.

Cheers are raised at the place where the spider bear body is hung. It seems Liza has started the dismantling.

Since Totona and the girl are fidgeting nervously, I urge them, "Go take a look at it."

The thing that I got is an opaque red pebble. I didn't pick the most beautiful pebble, but when I appraised it, [Snake Blood Stone] was shown. Where does the snake come from.

Since this stone is one of the ingredients for [Antidote: All-Purpose], this might be a lucky find. I check on the riverside at the reclaimed land, it turns out there are a lot of the same stones there.

There's still time before breakfast, I guess I'll go pick them. Today, the breakfast is being handled by Lulu, Nana and Arisa. Lulu strives to teach Arisa how to cook.

"Mia, I want to take a walk along the river, do you want to go together?"

"Nn."

I invite Mia who has just came back from washing her hair and body with hot water. I wonder if the scolding from Lulu works well, recently, she's not loitering around when she's nude.

Mia hands me a towel and makes me dry her hair. Arisa shouts, "You're too sweet with Mia! Dry my hair too please~.", from afar, she's the same as always. Didn't I dry it just the other day?

I go toward the opposite of the river by jumping across stones that are scattered around on the shallow water.

"Satou, hand."

Since the gap is a bit wide among the scattered stones, Mia extends her hands and I catch them to pull her.

Maybe I used too much force, Mia fell on my chest. If Arisa sees this, she'd likely say something again.

While picking up the intended stones on the riverside, I gaze at the river. Taking a stroll while listening to Mia's leaf flute play, this is truly an extravagant time. Yup, really calming.

"There's no fish."

Mia who were looking at the river while playing the leaf flute, muttered so. There isn't even shadow of fish in this river. Not even other aquatic organisms like crabs in the riverside exist. They were probably caught by Totona and the other and the neighboring villagers.

"It seems there are some birds."

The smaller birds seem to have cleverly survive. I continue picking the stones while we take a break.

We're enjoying the quiet stroll until Pochi calls us.

It was a bit hard to stop Pochi who came and tried to jump in the river since she wasn't able to cross the stones. Thanks to that, the languid atmosphere completely disappears. As expected of Pochi.

◇

It has been two days since we left the old people and the children. We've meet thieves three times already, but we only left them half-killed since they were just common ordinary thieves. It has just been thrice, but I feel that the thieves' equipments are too good here. Back then thieves were using things like bow and arrow, woodman's hatchet, and daggers which can be said to be tools for everyday life, yet in this three occasions, they were using equipments like straight sword made from properly casted bronze. Furthermore, the leader-looking man even had breastplate and shield made with metal.

Although, even if the thieves had better equipments, they're still nothing against the beastkin girls. They were easily defeated without the girls even breaking a sweat.

"Master, a carriage~."

Tama who sits on top of me driving the wagon points at a meadow with her left hand. I can't see it since Tama rests her feet on my shoulder. Since it can't be helped, I turn my whole body to look there. One part of the carriage is peeking through the meadow. There's no one around there according to the radar.

It's probably a victim of thieves. I should make them some graves, but since I don't want to see gruesome spot, I decide to ignore it.

"I wonder if it was attacked by thieves."

"It probably is."

"Thieves should be beaten back nano desu!"

"Beaten back~."

Arisa and Pochi who were piqued with Tama's voice appeared from the back. I'll overlook her for casually holding my arms, but since her hand is reaching to my thigh, I take a poking stance.

"Master, I'll return this book, so please lend me nature magic book next~."

Arisa who protect her forehead changes the subject while lightly glares at me, I receive the book.

I put the book into the bag, take out the nature magic book from there, and give it to Arisa. By the way, it's not from the storage. Since I got advanced magic books from Trazayuya, I put the introductory books I got from Seryuu city that Arisa gave back into the bag and left it there. I usually use it as a substitute for pillow.

As for the literacy rate, everyone has became able to read the 100 pieces of learning cards. Only Arisa and Nana are at the level where they can read books. It seems Nana has been able to read characters since the day she was made. Lulu and Mia can read simple picture books. Everyone sure learns fast.

Pochi and Tama are stuck with the difference between written and spoken language, so they can't read well. Since they've became able to read numbers, I'll teach them arithmetic next time.

"Master, this schedule, what is it?"

She shows me a paper taken from the nature magic book. It's the paper I've bought from flea market that was worth 100 gold coins.

I took a look at it during a break before, but it was just a paper mostly composed of date and schedule. It's interesting that the schedule look like it's printed, but since sometimes there are scribbles with random line and numerics drawn like spiderweb, I can't see its worth. So I thought that it might have some secret, and tried doing various things like looking at sun through it, but then I neglected it.

"Biopsy?"

Arisa said so while looking at the paper.

"There's nothing like that written there right?"

"If you read it vertically, that's what it says you know?"

Vertical reading? There's something like bulletin board even in this another world huh.

When I look at the paper, it surely reads that.

I put the paper into the storage, sort it by date, and read it in turn. I see, it's certainly possible to be worth 100 gold coins.

"Arisa, you're great!"

"Fufun, if you want to praise me then I'd like you to show it in your attitude~."

I leave the reins to Tama, and hug Arisa. "Uwaah, so sudden, nnnoo~", she's letting out weird sounds, but well, it's fine.

I want to read the content of that paper in detail, but since we're going to encounter thieves in about two hours today, I leave it for later. The thieves this time is a group of 30 people.

Furthermore, there are four people from the knights of baron Muno territory heading here from that direction.

The thieves should be able to easily defeat those knights, but they don't look like they're going to attack the knights, I wonder if they don't want to fight knights even though they have advantage in number. The knights also seem like they don't notice the thieves, they're going straight here. Just in case, I arrange Liza to protect the wagon's rear, and Pochi and Tama to guard the front.

"The merchant over there, stop. The great me is a senior knight of baron Muno, Elal."

"Well well, knight-sama, nice to meet you, I am Satou, a merchant."

Since I don't know the exact etiquette, I go down the wagon and bow.

>[Etiquette Skill Acquired]

...was my etiquette until today not enough, or was it wrong--Let's not pursue the reason too much.

"Did you see any luxurious-looking noble-riding carriage? Or did you see a beautiful woman riding a white horse?"

"I came from earl Kuhanou territory, but I didn't see anything that look like that carriage or that person. I did see a carriage that looks like it had been used by merchants in a meadow just beyond this."

"You have no lie in that words right?"

"Yes, of course. Trust is the most important thing for merchants after all."

The knight is threatening me by gripping the handle of his sword, I calmly answer back. It's nothing compared to Liza's spear.

"Alright, sir Bezz, Sir Donoza, you check that carriage and then deliver the order to the guards at the border just in case. We will report back to baron."

The knights parted in two group and went away without even thanking for the information. It looks like the thieves are attacking the knights, maybe they find the decrease in number to be a good chance.

They're not people I'd want to save, but since the thieves are already lured out, let's accept this opportunity.

6-15. People of Baron Muno Territory (6)

Satou's here. When I tried western games for the first time, I was surprised how easily it was taking away other people's life. It's cute to call it culture gap, but it can't be taken lightly in parallel world.

◇

Seems that the thieves toppled the knights with ropes and casting net, and attacked them. When the knights come into our view, they're desperately struggling to fight back from inside the net. The net looks easy to cut with sword, are they amateurs?

The thieves are also frantically attacking them, but since the knights are wearing full body armor, the attacks aren't quite getting through.

Since there are only three archers of the thieves, Pochi and me split up to take them down from the trees. I wonder why they're always on the tree. It's a mystery.

The thieves who have noticed us are coming toward us, but they've already been reduced by half when they're around 200 meters before us. Mia attacked with Mustard Mist, and the thieves who were coughing in fit got quickly incapacitated by the beastkin girls. Nobody seems to have died for the time being.

I leave the wagon to Lulu, and ask Nana whom I've casted with Shield to protect her.

I also use Shield on myself and head toward the battlefield along with the beastkin girls.

I cut the net restraining the knights with a dagger while the beastkin girls are keeping the thieves company.

"You did well, merchant! You damnable thieves, became prey for the great senior knight Eral-sama's strong sword!"

After the other knight silently nods, he follows the knight Eral, and they raise bloodbath with the thieves. Even though the two are only level 9, their equipments and battle skills are far apart, so it becomes one-sided slaughter. They make sure to kill the thieves who are lying on the ground after they've been neutralized by Liza and the others . They're really merciless.

"Oops, sir knight, stop right there."

A bearded daruma who seemed to be the thieves' leader came out of the forest. The minion on his side is holding a woman in traveling clothes hostage. The woman is tied with a rope.

<TLN: Daruma is a traditional Japanese doll, I can't think of any English equivalent. Try to google it and you'd be able to instantly imagine how the thief leader looks like.>

"Hum, a hostage huh."

What's this, my crisis perception is terribly warning me. Is there an ambush somewhere? I keep my attention on the surrounding.

No.

It's coming from the knight Eral.

The knight Eral is going to stab the hostage woman together with the man behind her, I throw the dagger on my hand to repel his sword.

Fuh, I made it.

While confirming the safety of the woman, I avoid the blade of a thief who attacks from behind. It seems the knight Eral can't determine if he should attack me or the thieves.

Jeers are coming from the bearded daruma.

"Ceh, you don't care with hostages huh, are you really a knight?"

The bearded daruma, a thief, is more of a humanism than the knight...

The bearded daruma ward off the knight Eral's sword with his axe.

The other knight cuts the man who hold the hostage from behind. What's with the knight in this world?

"Toruma!"

That scream comes from the woman who was made hostage. What's this? Is the neutralized man not a thief. The knight who hears the man's name uttered seems to have judged that the woman is also a thief, the taciturn knight raises his sword toward her. I place myself between them, relying on Shield.

"Knight-sama, you're attacking the wrong opponent. This person is not a thief."

I don't know if the taciturn knight believes my word, but he leaves the woman alone.

The knight Eral's battle with the bearded Daruma ended in a flash after the taciturn knight went to help him. The other thieves are going to run when they see that the bearded daruma is going to lose, but Pochi and Tama throw stones at their feet, arresting them.

"You coward."

"Fuhn, fool. It's unthinkable for the honorable knight to fight mere thieves in equal footing. Good grief, they always spring up no matter how many of them we rid of."

After they're finished dealing with the thieves, the knights finish off the ones who are tied with ropes behind the wagon. I can only see this as excessive slaughter. I was going to protest at the knights, but I was stopped by Arisa who had came beside me before I knew it.

"Fuhn, it's a waste of food to let thieves alive. I thank you for your assistance. You can feel honored. I'll leave you with the thieves equipment, it'll be usable for your trade."

The knights went off after leaving words that didn't really feel like gratitude.

By the way Toruma-shi is alive. Since he didn't die instantly, I made him drank a health potion, and his complexion returned in a blink. This immediate effect is unpleasant even after seeing it so many times. His breath is steady even though he's still unconscious.

Hayuna-san--the name of the woman hostage--tells us that the baby of her and him is being kept in the hiding place of the thieves inside the forest. They couldn't go against the thieves since their baby was made hostage.

I make Hayuna-san who wants to go together to the hideout sleep with Arisa's magic.

◇

Mia, Arisa and me are going to attack the thieves hideout.

I wanted to go to the hideout alone, but Arisa insisted on going together no matter what, and Mia who was feeling sick with the smell of blood took the opportunity, so it was decided that we're going together.

The hideout is only about 100 meters away from the highway. After we make the thieves sleep with Arisa's magic from the outside, we leisurely save Hayuna-san's baby.

"Al~right, baby rescue mission clear!"

"Nn."

I leave the baby to Mia since Arisa is calling me.

"That baby has a gift. It's quite rare."

The baby has an unusual skill, [Oracle].

"What kind of skill is it."

"The skill has the same effect as getting oracle from the gathering of a lot of priests and miko from the temple praying for hours."

"That's convenient."

"However, since you could die if you thoughtlessly use it too much, looks like it can't be abused."

I guess it's like some kind of god's hot channel. I somehow imagine a working salesman holding a cellphone.

"Now then, putting aside the baby, what do we do to these thieves."

"It's probably alright just taking the weapon and armor, and leaving them alone. They probably can't continue thieving business after their friends have been eliminated right?."

There were 3 thieves inside the hideout. I had thought that they were prisoners at first since they all delicate looking men who seemed to have never been in a fight, but their affiliations are the same thieves gang as with the bearded daruma earlier, so it's probably not wrong.

"You're sweet as always eh. Well, it's fine. Still, there are only delicate men huh. I wonder if they're lovers of the bearded daruma earlier? Since it somehow feels like BL, I'll forgive them."

I don't care with the thieves' preferences or virtues, so I leave the gathering of their equipments to Arisa who's letting her delusion comes out of her mouth.

"Found treasures."

I thought that it was some kind of erotic item since it was coming from Arisa, but it was just a normal necklace.

It has a small jewel that looks like lapis lazuli attached.

"It's an amulet. It's probably a stolen good, but it's quite good of a magic item. I don't know the type though."

The search is over soon, and we've collected not only normal sword, but also armors, daggers, arrows and bows among various things. As for the food stuff, we only take luxurious food like sake.

When I check the map, there's a storehouse hidden within the wall in the boss room. When I check inside it, there are assorted jewelries and money totaling at 5 gold coins, a lot of high-grade liquor, and several ill-matched books.

"Heroes' tales isn't something that a thief should carry. And there's even a love story between a knight and a noble girl..."

Even though he was a bearded daruma, he could read words? If anything, these would probably sell well in shady pawn shop huh.

"Ja ja~n, look at these."

"Good job, Arisa."

Arisa shows me two scrolls wrapped in first-class looking cloth. They're Shelter and Remote Arrow, but unfortunately Shelter has already been used.

It's probably carried by a traveling merchant or a noble for self-protection.

"What, you're only seeing the scrolls? Notice this cloth too~."

I try to appraise it. Looks like it's a kind of magic tool. From what I understand, it's a material called Yuriha fiber which I haven't heard before, it has high defense against physical and magical attacks. If it doesn't have any strange effect, then I'd make something for Lulu from it, even though it was a man's.

"Looks like it has magical properties huh. Since I don't understand the explanation of the special effect, let's put a hold on making equipment from it."

"Uu~n, I wouldn't want if it's cursed and can't be taken off. Even though it's a waste, it can't be helped."

In addition, there are three horses tied in the back of the hideout. I look at the shed nearby, but I can only find one harness for the boss' share. I put the harness to one horse which has the only different breed.

"Ara, they were sure prosperous thieves."

"Looks like it, there's only one harness you know."

"I'll ride."

Mia rides on one of the horse without saddle. Seems that she's used with playing with wild horses in her birthplace.

Learning from Mia, I also mount the horse. Of course it's the horse with saddle. I put my foot on the stirrup and get on in one breath.

>[Horse-riding Skill Acquired]

>[Mount-riding Skill Acquired]

The latter seems to be skill for things besides horses. Since it's pitiful to let only Arisa walks, I put her in front of me. It's fine that you're leaning your head on my chest, but I want you to stop pressing your butt on me. Since Arisa is holding the baby, I'm only warning her, but it'll be punishment time when we get on the wagon. Of course, not in sexual way.

We get to the wagon while holding the baby in the arms, the thieves corpses are lined up on the roadside there. Looks like their equipments have been successfully retrieved.

"Master, I haven't cut the head of the corpses, what should I do?"

"It's fine to leave it alone, there's still two days before the next town, they'd smell bad if we take them."

I definitely do not want to journey with 30 severed heads.

6-16. People of Baron Muno Territory (7)

Satou's here. In my childhood, I couldn't help but found magnet which floated because it's meeting another magnet with the same polarity to be mysterious. Magic show was popular back then, so I thought for a while that the floating magnet was magic.

In a parallel world, magnet might be considered to be a magic stone.

◇

The inside of the wagon which usually has a lot of space is now full of luggage.

I make this camouflage in order to prevent Hayuna and the man become suspicious. I lay around cookwares, boxes and barrels containing two days worth of food inside the wagon. Keeping them from collapsing was hard.

During this time, I feel thankful for having Item Box.

Of course I've made sure to leave space just enough for people. Mia complains, "Cramped.", but this is probably still pretty spacious compared to a normal carriage.

As expected, even the indifferent Mia asked, "Where did you take those from?", after this, but I showed her magic bag <<Holding Bag>>.

Putting aside Mia who will part way with us in Bornean forest, I don't mind telling other members about Item Box, but I want to avoid situation where our girls get kidnapped because the rumor floats around, I'd rather the harm comes my way. Of course, I don't think that these girls would spread the rumor, but there's no denying the possibility of someone overhearing them when they're talking between themselves.

It'd be safer to keep this a secret until everyone becomes strong enough to fend themselves even if they get into trouble.

In that respect, if it's magic bag <<Holding Bag>>, then the aim would be the item, so even if it got stolen, it wouldn't be particularly troubling.

◇

"Should we wake them soon?"

"Right, let's leave them alone until the next camp. If they're weird people, let's leave them before we get to Muno city."

"Okay."

For the time being, we're not going to encounter thieves or beasts, so I leave the driving to Lulu. Liza is training horse riding. Mia is on her side, she teaches Liza how to handle a horse. Of course, Liza is riding the horse with saddle.

"Master, I want to touch the cheeks of this young organism. I request permission."

"Don't touch the baby."

"I appeal for reconsideration, master."

Nana fixes her eyes on the baby while asking, but it's NG to touch the baby without the guardian's permission.

When I prohibit it, she strongly turns her face toward me in protest.

Her impact is reminiscent of horror, so let's postpone the problem.

"Let's ask for permission when the mother wakes up."

"Master, I request permission to stimulate the wakening of the mother."

"No, don't wake her until she naturally does."

"...Yes, master."

Nana consents while looking a bit sorrowful, but when she looks at the baby, she sits on the floor, hugging her knees, and she puts her chin on her kneecap while looking ecstatically at the baby.

Arisa is not here, she's with Lulu on the driver's stand. It seems she doesn't want to be near Toruma with his sweaty smell.

Pochi and Tama look quite interested with the baby, but they don't get close to her. The two seem to be a bit gloomy somehow, I wonder if they're not good with babies?

When I asked what's wrong, they only answered back with, "It's nothing nodesu."

It doesn't look like nothing at all, so I'll got talk to them after the meal later. When you're full, you'd feel better, and your worries would become lighter.

◇

Pochi and Tama who have been looking down earlier rush off in high spirit after we get to the camping ground while saying, "We will hunt big prey today nodesu." Do they want to show off to the baby?

Arisa and Mia are going to gather firewoods.

"Arisa, the long cane would be a hindrance when you're gathering firewoods."

"I want to test some new magic, it's hard to use new magic for the first time with a short cane you know."

"Finally huh, what kind of magic have you decided to learn?"

"I'm still undecided. I've narrowed my pick to three magic, so I thought of picking one after trying them. Since it's a wasteland beyond that cliff, I won't set the forest in fire even if I fail at it right?"

"It's alright." <Mia>

"Even if it burns, Mia will extinguish it she said."

"Leave it to me."

"Be careful not to get Pochi and Tama caught on it."

"Okay."

"Nn."

I give the permission while feeling exhausted toward Mia who's giving V-sign with her expressionless face. Nah, I guess she's not expressionless, her cheeks look a bit red, she might feels a bit embarrassed.

It seems that she's still minding the failure of magic testing yesterday which had gotten the camp flooded.

Today's meal are being prepared by Lulu and Nana, I'm going to teach Liza how to take care of the horses. From what I've read in some manga or magazine, you would bond with your horse if you brush it after riding on it. I'm also thinking that Liza should learn horseback for the sake of warding the thieves.

"Liza, are you doing well with the horse riding?"

"Yes, I've done something similar to a mount beast called Lineback back in my hometown."

I could somehow can and cannot imagine the creature from the subtle name. Let's not pursue it.

I tie the horses on the tree nearby and give them some grains and straws. The three of them eat quite heartily. I don't think it's because of hunger since they're not that thin. It might unexpectedly be because of the fodder.

◇

Since we've gotten more horses, I'm thinking of putting them in practical use.

I've thought of putting more pulling horses for the wagon, but I'm worried with the suspension system of this second-hand wagon if it becomes faster. I'm afraid that the axle would break since the road is rough. I've also thought of making suspension, but I don't have the equipment for making large-scale spring, so I give up.

If I could make a magic tool that could replicate the floating magic that the magic shop girl have demonstrated, our transportation capability would go up. It'd be like a linear motor somehow.

There is a method to make magic tools that could reproduce similar magic inside the books from Trazayuya, but since it needs large-scale facility and nature magic user, it's unreachable. It looks like the blocks at the maze were moving by using the same principle.

In the end, all the three horses are to become mounts. If the beastkin girls ride on it while armed, it likely would ward off thieves.

First, I decide to try making harnesses for horseback riding. Fortunately I have a lot of leather, so I make them while checking the sewing and cutting method from textbook. I shave woods for the stirrups since it's can't be made with just leather. I have samples, so it's easy.

I've completed it in 30 minutes, and I immediately try putting it on the horse to check the fit. Yup, there doesn't seem to have any problem.

I should make small harnesses for Pochi and Tama.

When I'm taking off the harness, Nana calls for me. Seems Hayuna-san has woken up.

"Thank you very much. You even used magic potion for the sake of Toruma."

"I don't mind it, there's no substitute for human life after all."

Although it was a magic potion, the one I used was the cheapest to make, but that doesn't need to be said.

Hayuna-san takes of her hood while saying thank you. She's a woman with reddish blond hair. She's relatively beautiful, but she doesn't look like a 25 years old with her childish eyes. Even so, she looks like a proper mother as she cuddle the baby. Her breast are larger than most, but she couldn't be called "Kyonyuu", though her waist lines are nice. Her level is 3, she has [Cleaning] skill.

The man who's sleeping beside her, Toruma-shi, is a 30 year man with unreliable looking impression due to his tall and thin figure. His hair is light brown, no beard. His level is 4, he has [Social] skill.

When I'm having a quiet friendly chat with Hayuna-san, Arisa sits beside and asks me in whisper with anxious-looking face. She's wearing her hood, probably because Hayuna-san and the man are here today. Her hair which could be peeked from the hood looks to be golden-colored. Since she isn't going through some kind of awakening, it's probably a wig or magic.

"You don't have interest with married women right?"

"I don't, adultery is fruitless."

"T, that's right huh! You understand don't you."

I face toward Hayuna-san since it's rude to talk in private.

"It looks like you're going on a journey, where are you heading?"

"Yes, we were eloping, but we had been forgiven by the parent's house, so we were going back to the capital city of the dukedom."

Isn't eloping a word you'd want to hide?

Oh yes, this Toruma-shi, is a nephew of the duke. Arisa shouted, "Template, kita", when she looked at this person. I was glad that it happened when they were sleeping.

"Ufufu, you guys are really intimate."

"Today, they're strangely attached."

Hayuna-san is smiling while looking at us. Arisa and Mia are sitting on my sides since some times ago for some reason. At first, it was only Arisa, but midway, Mia imitated Arisa and also joined. What are you girls plotting.

The chat with Hayuna-san moves to when she was caught by the thieves. Apparently, they were captured three days ago.

"Yes, I didn't think that we would be alive. The merchant who was driving was killed and the five mercenaries we hired as escort escaped as soon as they saw the thieves."

"That was harsh. Even though the thieves number was a lot, the ones in this area aren't that strong."

"We disparaged the mercenaries, 'Betrayers', many times at that time, but it was too reckless to challenge dozens of opponents... "

Normally you wouldn't know how strong your opponent is until you fight, so I guess it can't be helped. It would look like you'd lose against armed people double your number.

"Even so, it's good that you come out safe."

"Yes, Toruma used a self-protection scroll to cast magic."

"Hoo, that's amazing. What kind of magic was it?"

"It was really amazing, after the magic was used, wall of light appeared covering the carriage, the thieves weren't able to get close."

So the one that Toruma-shi had used huh was the Shelter scroll from the thieves' hideout. That means, the Remote Arrow scroll that came together with it might also be Toruma-shi's belonging. Although I don't intend to give it back in the first place. According to Arisa and Liza, the things taken from thieves elimination are to be divided to the people who participate on the elimination. In this case, it's fine officially too since the knights have given the permission.

"Did you not escape after you put up the wall of light?"

"The magic didn't allow us to escape from that place, so it became a staring contest with the thieves for two hours."

Naturally, that would make you feel more dead than alive. During that time, they survived after they frantically persuade the thieves, "You can get ransom money." They were forced to became hostages since the opponents were knights at that time.

"Ransom money is it?"

"Yes, Toruma's parents are noble, so Toruma wrote letter asking for ransom and gave it to the thieves along with his ID."

I see, so the luggage only contains Hayuna-san ID.

"That reminds me, when you were held hostage, you didn't call for help to the knights?"

"The thieves threatened to kill our daughter if we uttered even a word."

However, I don't understand why they brought Toruma-shi along. They should made the delicate men in the hideout to do it. Well, whatever.

When we're having that talk, Toruma-shi wakes up.

"Ha, Hayuna!"

"Toruma, you've woken up. It's alright now. Look, Mayuna is also safe."

"I'm so glad, I'm so glad, Hayuna, Mayuna."

I have to say, please give more thought for your child's name.

Their reunion scene continues until Hayuna-san's baby bursts out crying.

6-17. People of Baron Muno Territory (8)

Satou's here. During the time when I was working, I've won intense arguments when we had difference for the requested source, but now that I'm living a calm life in this world, I've grown a bit dull.

However, I wonder if living humanly is nothing but illusion for the people who lives in this brutal world.

◇

"Here's the luggage we have recovered from the thieves."

"Oh dear, you even got our luggage on top of helping us."

Hayuna-san says thank you while receiving the luggage. Toruma-shi peeks into the luggage, and asks after hesitating.

"Have you seen a dagger inside the luggage?"

"Those were the only things in the hideout. But there should be many of that from the thieves' belongings."

"It's a dagger with white leather sheath..."

"If it's that one, it was held by the leader-like bearded daruma. Wait a minute."

While saying so, I take out a dagger from the toolbox on the edge of the wagon. Of course, I took it out from the storage. The dagger's shear is relatively simple, but there's a beautiful family crest design placed at one point, it's quite fashionable. The blade is not a magic tool, but it's made from mithril forged by dwarves.

"Is this it?"

"Yes, that's it!"

Toruma-shi who's going to receive the dagger from me is stopped by Arisa's words.

"Wait, that's our appropriate reward for exterminating the thieves. We've even acquired permission from the knights. If you want it, you have to present something with equal value."

"This has a crest of my family engraved. I can't hand it to others."

"So what? You, I know that you're emotional from the reunion, but you haven't even said thank you for the saving right? Moreover, you even have the gall to claim other people's possession?"

"You need to be more polite toward adults."

"Sorry, but that's for when the negotiation is over. During a negotiation, I'll talk in equal term even if the opponent is a king, that's my style."

It really does look like she'd talk in that tone even to a king.

Toruma-shi cannot retort to Arisa's harsh words.

Hayuna-san who's unable to watch this is putting a good word for

Toruma-shi.

"Dear, first, please say thank you to them. This person had used expensive magic potion to save the dying you. Furthermore, he protected me from knights and thieves' sword saving my life. On top of that, they sneaked into the dangerous thieves' hideout, and even saved Mayuna. Now, let's tell them words of gratitude."

"You're right Hayuna. I was wrong. Merchant-dono, this Toruma am truly grateful for your kindness."

Toruma couple bow together.

"However, I'd like you to return this dagger no matter what. Of course, I'll give anything I'm able to."

It seems he has recognized that the property right belongs to me, but it's still, "Return it to me.", rather than, "Please give it to me."

"Is anything alright?"

"M, my daughter and wife are off limit."

Toruma-shi frantically covers his wife and daughter. I think it's rude that he covers even my line of sight. Perhaps, he's thinking that I'm a man without honor.

Though I guess it can't be helped if he thinks like that to a person who's journeying together with seven girls of different types.

"Right then, you don't have money or jewelries right?"

"Umu, everything was taken away by the thieves."

"What about magic tools?"

"Those were also taken away by the thieves."

Arisa shrugs exaggeratedly.

She's probably aware of that from the start, but she knows about his connection to the duke--in other words, a nephew of big noble, so she's probably attempting to weasel rewards from his parent's house.

"It's impossible right now, but if we get to the dukedom... no, I'll pay if you let us go with you until the castle of baron Muno."

"What? Are you acquainted with the baron?"

"Yeah, he's my second cousin from my father's side. You, I can't commend your calling, add the 'sama' suffix."

Arisa plainly ignores Toruma-shi's words.

"Then, how much is this dagger worth?"

"It's an important heirloom, so it has never been valued. As a gratitude, I'll give you 5 gold coins."

Arisa glances to me, exchanging looks for a second.

By the way, the dagger's market price is 30 gold coins. The price is extraordinary among non-magic tools. For now let's exaggerate the information I've got from the AR.

"Toruma-san, I've evaluated this dagger just before, with the nicely designed sheath along with the beautiful mithril-made blade forged by the famous dwarven artisan, Dohar-shi, it would not worth less than 30 gold coins."

"If we get it to a connoisseur duke, or other nobles who like to compete for their interest, it could be more expensive right."

Arisa is speaking quite a vicious thing.

"T, that would be troubling. However, even nobles would have hard time raising such large amount of gold coins.

"Right~, since our master doesn't have money problem, you could pay it with non-cash."

"We ran away from house, so even if I go back to my parent's house, I have no great item to give you."

"Oh right, I've heard from your wife that you were using scroll to defend yourself from the thieves right?"

"Yeah, my parent is managing a scroll workshop. When I was leaving my house, I was given many scrolls to protect ourselves."

"Hoo, scroll workshop huh, I'd like to observe it by all mean."

"Yes, If you pay a visit to the capital of the dukedom--Oyugock city, please visit us."

I unintentionally cut myself between the talk, Arisa is glancing at me as if saying, "Don't disturb the negotiation."

Still, scroll workshop huh, if I learn how to make them, I could mass produce them myself. It's probably full of secret, so normally they would refuse a visit, I'm lucky for this.

When Arisa asks the price of scroll, '3-5 silver coins' comes back as the answer.

"Our master is a collector of scrolls. He could chant spell for magic himself, so when we get back to our mansion, he would explain about scrolls like from what age or from which workshop this and that scrolls are to the servants."

Arisa is quite a good talker huh. If I'm a magician then I have no need for scrolls to cast magic, and if I'm a collector then I probably wouldn't resell it. Moreover, he wouldn't give me only the same kind of scrolls.

"Oh, I thought that you were a merchant, turned out you're a magician are you."

"I'm still an amateur who could only use a few magic arts. Rather, I'm more active as a merchant."

"Scrolls distribution is regulated by law, so I can't sell you one if you're going to resell them, but if you're a magician then there's no problem. I'm saying this just to be clear, but it's impossible to sell intermediate magic scrolls as decreed by the army."

"Yes, it's enough with beginner class. However, since I'm a collector, I wouldn't be pleased if you only give me the same type of scrolls, so I prefer that you give various type."

"It might be difficult to find as much as 30 gold coins worth of scrolls with no duplicate, since we usually only make the well-selling ones of around 20 types, I might have look in the warehouse."

"Ara, we could just ask the people from scroll workshop to make one with the requested spell right."

"Ah, that's right. Of course, it would take several days. Satou-dono, are you fine with that?"

"Yes, the contract is established then."

I nod to Toruma-shi, and is going to give him the dagger, but Arisa stops us again.

"Verbal promise is no good. I'll make a written contract, please put your signature and make an inscription wax from the seal on that dagger's pommel."

Arisa holds out the written contract to Toruma-shi. Written there are, [As compensation for the dagger, Toruma-shi is to pay Satou with scrolls worth 30 gold coins],[The price of the scrolls shall follow its retail price], [The scrolls cannot be duplicate], [If there is not enough variant, Satou will choose beginner spell to be made into scroll], [In case the scroll need to be made, Toruma-shi will be bear the cost for the order], and lastly, [In case of contract breach, Toruma-shi and his family will serve Satou as slaves for 30 years].

"Would you erase this last entry?"

Toruma-shi puts a bitter expression, but Arisa persists.

"No, but, okay then. Is the present head of your parent's house a viscount? Or a baron?

"It's viscount. Viscount Shimen."

"Then how about, 『In case of contract breach, in the name of viscount Shimen, Toruma-shi will pay 90 gold coins』, that?"

"90 gold coins?! That's too much."

"Ara, it's just a what if scenario. When you fulfill the contract by giving 30-40 scrolls, that'd be the end of story. Or are you going to give up the dagger?"

Arisa is smiling very badly. She's really enjoying it. Arisa is surely an S. No doubt.

"It can't be helped, the latter is fine."

In the end, after groaning for a while, Toruma-shi signs the contract that Arisa has written. She even prepared a marked copy. In her previous life, I wonder if she worked in the law firm?

◇

"Birds~"

"Prey are few nodesu."

Pochi and Tama brought back two birds about the size of pigeons, and five small eggs. They also brought beech fruits, wild grasses, and edible wild plants inside the bag. I wonder if they were taught by the old people and the children, they brought back more variety of wild grasses. I give appreciation for the two who are dropping their shoulders since they cannot find many prey. I'm going to boil the eggs and give half for each members.

"All of your slaves look strong."

"Yes, according to the soldier of Seryuu city, they're comparable to senior knights."

"That's amazing. But, if that so, then I could understand how you could exterminate that many thieves."

"That's because there were two real knights with us today."

"Those knights!   Are their your acquaintances?"

As expected, even a mild, or rather a weak-willed person would lose their cool when it's about the people who've almost killed him.

"No, it was our first meeting. Seems that they were knights of baron Muno."

"What, they were knights of cousin-dono huh, I can't believe that a knight would go after person from behind even in my wildest dream."

"Yes, they also almost killed the madam."

"Is that true?"

"Yes, it was good that I made it in time."

While we are having that chat, the meal's preparation has finished. We arrange the seating for the meal like usual. Without the large platter, the menu today are fried bird meat with vegetables on individual tureens, potato soup inside the mugs, and two boiled potatoes for each.

"Hoo, these are quite grand."

Toruma-shi licks his lips dropping his cheeks, but it seems he's not pleased with the plates' number.

"Huh? Are you going to let the slaves and servants eat together with the master?"

"Yes, they're my journey companions. We'd deepen our solidarity by eating together. Isn't it also like that in the army?"

"However, what if we catch illness by eating together with slaves."

"Dear, these children are quite clean. We ourselves smell of sweats."

I've never been in an army though.

Toruma-shi looks dissatisfied, but he's convinced by Hayuna-san. I didn't think of it because Zena-san acted like normal, but a noble-related person would not want to eat together with slaves after all huh.

Still, saying things like catching illness if we eat together is rude.

I divide the seating during meal into two. Rather than for Toruma, I did it because it seemed that our girls wouldn't be able to enjoy their meal.

Since it'd be rude for me as a host to isolate Toruma couple, together with Nana, I sit with the couple.

6-18. People of Baron Muno Territory (9)

Satou's here. It's said that ability to read atmosphere is indispensable, but it's different in parallel world, there are unexpectedly a lot of people who behave as they wish here.

If I forget about the difference in social standing, it seems that I would make various mistakes.

◇

When Nana takes off her hood, her blond hair unfolds. Toruma-shi is dazzled by her, Hayuna-san elbows him. So he's really being kept on a short leash by Hayuna-san.

Nana is holding the baby on her arms after receiving permission from Hayuna-san. She looks completely content. Looking as if she's a holy mother--if she doesn't talk.

"She's so fluffy, and soft nano desu. Master, I want to have a young organism too."

"Let's talk about that after this journey is over."

"Masuta?"

"It's my nickname."

<TLN: Nana says "Master" in English (Masuta), not "Goshujin-sama" like the other girls.>

Afterwards, the Toruma couple were interested with Nana's eccentric way of speaking, but when I told them that she lived a sheltered life in a distant land which made her poor at Shiga language, they assented. I told them that her meal was only water because her body was weak. Toruma couple seem to be thinking that Nana and I are a married couple. I leave that misunderstand alone since there's no particular harm anyway.

"This is delicious. It's full of rural taste, but the abundant meat is nice, and it even has peppers on top of salt!"

"Thanks to the chopped peppers put in the fried food, my body is warming up."

These two, even though they're saying things as if they're reporters from gourmet program, they're eating intensely. I guess it can't be helped that they're greedy since they probably haven't had good food at the thieves' hideout.

Pochi and Tama are quiet today. They would usually go, "Another please nano desu~". I peek at them, they eat slowly while chewing thoroughly today. They've only eat about half their portions.

Huh? They stand up after finishing half their meal and go toward here. Was it not tasty?

"Meal sharing~?"

"I'm giving half nodesu."

The two offer their plates to Hayuna-san. I wonder why they're presenting it while having very earnest, if not painful, faces.

"Oi oi, no matter how delicious, we won't eat scrapes from demi-human slaves you know?"

Toruma-shi's jeer aren't exactly loud, but the timing is quite bad making it permeate through them.

Hearing that, Pochi's and Tama's ears fall down.

Toruma-shi's remark might not be as harsh if it didn't contain discrimination against demi-human.

However, I cannot let his jeer toward the two who had good-will pass.

Let's ignore this KY Ossan who can't read the atmosphere around him. I won't call him Toruma-shi anymore, from now on he's Ossan.

<TLN: KY=Kuuki Yomenai=can't read the atmosphere. A Japanese slang, it's written in alphabet. Ossan means middle-aged man.>

Oops, rather than talking about Ossan, it's Pochi and Tama.

"What's wrong?"

"It's for the sake of the breast milk for the baby nodesu."

"If she doesn't eat a lot~ the baby will die~?"

I don't quite understand what they're saying, but the reason why they look gloomy since some times ago is this huh.

"Master, there was a baby of a leopard-head woman at the previous owner's place back then. The mother's milk didn't come out because we rarely got food, so the baby died of starvation. During that time, the demi-human slaves were cooperating together to share half of their food, these two remember it."

"I see, Pochi and Tama are kind. There's no need to worry, we have enough food, so you two go ahead and eat. You can ask for another serving like always too."

I understand after listening to Liza's explanation. Considering how the people from that brown rat guild were, I wouldn't be surprised with that treatment.

After hearing my words, Pochi and Tama look at each other and say, "Yatta", happily, while holding their plates with both of their hands on top of their heads. As expected of them for not dropping the vegetable pieces.

Hayuna-san says, "Thank you for worrying.", to Pochi and Tama, but the KY guy is saying, "Then, I will help myself with another serving too." Of course, not only Liza, Lulu also splendidly ignores him. Ossan is wandering around unsteadily with his plate, but since no one responses, he dejectedly get out of the stage. It's pitiful that even Hayuna-san didn't back him up.

It doesn't seem like he's reflecting on it though, when Hayuna-san asks for another serving, he also puts his plate together, asking for another. I give it to him, not out of sympathy but because it's annoying hearing him grumbling on the sideline.

◇

After the meal I go inside the wagon with Nana since Hayuna-san is going to breastfeed the baby. Nana had wanted to go see the breastfeeding, but since it's embarrassing for me, I take her along.

I'm going to replenish Nana with magic power now.

"Master."

"What is it?"

"I also want to give breast milk to the young organism."

"It won't come out right?"

I could see Nana touching her own breasts since I'm currently supplying her with magic power from behind. Yu~p, they're big.

The milk should comes out when she has a child, but I don't know if a homonculus like Nana could give birth.

"What should I do?"

After we're finished with the replenishment, Nana turns around while asking that question.

Ooh.

This is, good things.

I inadvertently extend my hand, but I suddenly get swatted from behind and fail to do so.

"W, what are you doing, you two!"

"Dirty."

It's Arisa and Mia. Still, when did Arisa make a paper fan anyway.

"'What' you say, I'm just supplying her with magic power."

"Back."

"That's right, didn't we decide that you'd be doing magic replenishment on her back."

"Of course, I did it on her back. Nana had suddenly turned around."

"Is that so?"

"Is it true?"

"Yes, affirmative. I was requesting master to make me produces breast milk."

W, wait Nana-san? If you said such turbulent words...

"Seiza."

"Nn."

I obediently sit in seiza while objecting, but they don't let it pass. It might be because they noticed my gaze to one part of Nana's body midway.

I was almost made to rub Mia and Arisa breasts in order to make them grow big, but I evaded it somehow. That was dangerous. I prefer fighting wagahai-kun to this.

NSFW

◇

After I've finally been released from Arisa and the girls, I go back to where the couple are. It seems the feeding is over.

Looks like the baby was locked in the cellar since her crying was noisy back in the thieves hideout.

When were chatting, Lulu brought tea for the three of us. It's not the blue tea like usual, but herb tea. Lulu says that the blue tea is not good for the mother, or rather, the mother's milk given to the baby.

Hayuna-san and me say thanks to Lulu while receiving the tea, but Ossan asks "What's this, it's not a sake? Is there no wine? Ale is fine too", instead of thanking her. He looks like a drunken old man who harasses a cabin attendant. When he's told that there's no one who drink here, he looks disappointed.

"Still, there sure are a lot of thieves in this territory."

"You're right, we've met many even before we got caught by those guys.

At that time, they were outnumbered so they ran away before they fought."

So it's true that thieves would avoid you if they can see mercenaries' presence.

"Furthermore, I was surprised at how many villagers were trying to sell themselves."

"If the harvest is bad, isn't it normal?"

"They said that they didn't have bad harvest."

I tell him that the cause is the wedding of the baron's daughter, but Ossan says something unexpected.

"Hee~, that day dreaming Soruna is getting married huh. Which noble is her partner? He must be quite manly to take a bride from cousin-dono."

"Her partner is the hero-sama it seems."

Hearing that Ossan bursts into laughter while rolling on the sheet like there's something funny.

Even so, I think there would be many noble who would want to marry a lord's daughter, even if he's just a baron. I want to ask what he means by manly, but it'll be going off topic, so let's ignore it.

Hayuna-san who can read the atmosphere reminds Ossan. I wonder how did she marry this person.

"Dear, what are you finding interesting? We don't understand if you just laugh."

"Ha, ha, no well, cousin-dono is famous for liking hero, but I never expect that he would have his daughter marrying hero. This will be a good tie with Saga empire."

"Is Baron-sama fond hero?"

"Yeah, his hobby is collecting books about heroes' tales. There was even a rumor among merchants that he specially built theater in Muno city just to have theatricals about hero."

I see, so that fondness for hero is used.

"Actually I have a merchant acquaintance close to royalty who has meet the hero directly, and the face, figure and features of the hero that he has told me don't match with the hero who's currently staying with baron-sama."

"Hoo? Then Satou-dono, are you saying that cousin-dono has been deceived by a fraud?"

"I'm not saying that much. I cannot think why would a hero be away from Saga empire beside for subjugating the demon lord in this time nearing the demon lord season. Furthermore, there was even a public disturbance in Seryuu city involving sir silver mask who resembled the hero. I'm worried that baron-sama might receive damage too."

I don't actually have a shred of concern, but it's fine like this.

Next, I should naturally mix the thing about the demon in our talk.

"I've also heard rumors about a demon with bat wings appearing near Muno city. Back when I stayed in Seryuu city, a senior demon attacked there, so the rumor『Isn't Muno city also being targeted by demon』is floating around among the merchants."

Mix lies in the truth, even a Russian novelist said so.

"So there was such rumor huh. That explains why we never pass by merchants' carriage as soon as we entered this territory."

Ossan looks convinced while saying so, but I say that's because of the bad public order. On top of that, if you hire people like those at the border, people will avoid this territory which has nothing but bad things. People who don't have urgent business in the dukedom are probably going to avoid passing here right?

I wonder if this talk would reach some influential person, even though it's in the form of rumors. I can't expect anything from this unreliable Ossan, but since Hayuna-san has also heard it, I'm anticipating that it'd flows well through the wifes network.

6-19. Golden Holy Sword and Magic Tools

Satou's here. I don't have memories of taking a bath in my own house at midnight after I've become a working adult, probably because of working late. I mostly found myself taking hot shower after waking up early in the morning.

I've only been able to leisurely take my time soaking my body at the grand public bath when I'm staying over.

◇

The night has been cold for the past few days, so the couple are sleeping inside the wagon. Leaving aside Ossan, it'd be troubling if Hayuna-san catches cold and infects the baby.

The combination for the night watch duty today is different than usual.

Usually, Mia, Lulu and me are the first, then Pochi, Tama, Nana for the second, and then Liza and Arisa for the last, but today, Mia is replaced with Arisa.

"What are you making?"

"It's Circuit Liquid."

In most textbooks they're only called magic liquid or Liquid.

The one I'm making now is different from normal Liquid. I'm making the recipe hidden in that bundle of papers.

Yup, even though the raw materials are different, the way of making it is the same as normal Liquid.

"Fuh~n, huh? Isn't it usually shining red?"

Arisa is quite observant eh. I don't answer Arisa since I'm concentrating right now. I continue putting magic while watching the Liquid shines blue.

I pour the finished Liquid into the Circuit carved on one half of the wooden sword.

Since I've let the Liquid temperature to be cooled down, it's not burning like with the wooden pedestal before.

"It's black, is it really a wooden sword?"

I affirm it by lightly nodding since it's pitiful if I ignore her too much. Even though Lulu is watching quietly, this girl is noisy.

I spread thin glue on the remaining half of the wooden sword, and then wrap it with strings. Then I put the sword on the magic bestowing stand, and slowly manipulate the Liquid on the wooden sword using the stand, drawing small intricate pattern.

It seems that Arisa is tired from looking, she lies down sideway hugging her knee while biting a jerky. She's looking here while remaining in that posture.

Lulu who's beside me gently wipes the sweat on my forehead with a handkerchief. Lulu's girl's power is surely around 530.000.

I try putting magic into the finished wooden sword. The magic flow is worse than Liza's spear, but it's quite good in itself.

The wooden sword's whole body is shining blue.

The light remains even after I stop putting magic power, although it's a bit dimmer.

"Hey, hey, isn't magic sword that shines blue... Th, that can't be it right. There's no way that could be made so easily."

Unrest appears in Arisa's words. It seems that she has noticed the true nature of this sword.

I put magic into the wooden sword once again.

The blue light is pretty.

"Hey, is that really it?"

I wait until the afterimage melts into the darkness, and answer Arisa.

"Yes, it's a holy sword."

◇

"W, wait, holy sword you said?"

"To be exact, it's a pseudo holy sword."

The thing that Arisa had discovered with vertical reading on the paper back in the afternoon was a record of a man's study about the making of holy sword.

The main subject is how you need special Circuit Liquid to make holy swords. You need raw materials like Dragon Powder, powdered jewels, gold nugget *etc*. I blew 15 gold coins to make the prototype earlier. If this was an MMORPG, a lot of people would give up on raising this skill.

The original part is just that, the rest is just like how you make a magic sword. That particular part is explained inside the books from Trazayuya, so I refer to there.

There's a reason why I called it pseudo.

The wooden sword made earlier is a success, but I'm not able to make holy sword from forged swords. I can't carve precise circuit on a forged sword since it's made by striking hot metal. It's a success this time since wood is a comparatively soft material.

The casting process during the making of magic swords requires someone with high level magic arts skill like Trazayuya, so for something like holy swords, it probably needs even more complicated ritual.

"Pseudo? But it's glowing the same color as the holy sword that the hero (Masaki) has."

"It could exert the same power as the original if the opponent is weak and without substance, but it's still a wooden sword after all. I don't know the Circuit to increase sharpness attack power, so for now, it's nothing but a wooden sword with holy attribute."

Contrary to what one may imagine, the man who left this recipe is not from Saga empire, but Shiga kingdom.

It seems that he was a former researcher of the royal institution who lost in dispute and was driven away to the border. This was also hidden with vertical writing in other papers. Most of the papers contain grudges, but one of them details about the success of the creation of a holy sword with the help of a person called Elf Sage. The sword's name is also written, but since it's quite extravagant, let's not talk about it.

As for this wooden holy sword, it'll break in one hit if it clashes against even the weakest holy sword in my storage, Gjallarhorn. It's probably not even as strong as Liza's spear and only about equal with Pochi's and Tama's short swords.

This blue Circuit Liquid--the research papers refer

it as Blue--does not only possess holy attribute on its blue light, but also draws magic power from nature even if the user isn't putting magic power into it. When I tell Arisa about that function, she shouts out, "Perpetual motion Kita!". Rather than perpetual motion, it's more like a wind or solar generated power, I think it's quite convenient. Making it in large-scale is probably NG since it could cause destruction of nature like it has done to the mountain where that Dryad is.

"Let me borrow it~"

Arisa hold out her hands while saying so, I give it to her. Let's make her a matching wooden magic sword later. I could imagine the figure of Arisa holding the sword with both hands while saying some chuunibyou lines.

Arisa is enjoying the blue light while putting magic power into it.

Halfway through, she begins to rapidly pour magic power into it, I don't know what she's thinking. What'd you do if it explodes. I take it from her before the crisis perception kicks in.

"That's dangerous, what would you do if it explodes."

"I'm sorry, I was curious how much it could absorb, and I couldn't stop. I didn't reach the limit even after putting 100 points."

I'd like to find out that limit, but it looks like Arisa wouldn't let me go walk in the dark now. I decide to wait for the opportunity since I don't want to hurt anyone in the camping ground.

Might as well play along with this.

I paint the wooden holy sword's surface with golden paint. I carve rose pattern on the hilt and apply powder from crushed sapphire to it. In addition, I put a sapphire that looks like a flower petal on it. I thinly paint the blue liquid (Blue) below the sapphire and when I put magic power into it, it shines blue.

Since the blade part looks desolate, I draw arabesque pattern on top of the golden paint with the blue liquid.

When put with magic power, the golden blade glows blue light, it's glittering and pretty. The rose part on the hilt looks especially good.

"Master, it's lovely desu."

"Uwaah~ what's that, looks like ornament that would make an upstart cries with joy."

Certainly, it's too gaudy huh. Let's make the wooden magic sword silver.

◇

Now then, since the verification is complete, let's begin the trial to make a magic tool for the future. I've already finished the design during the leisure time when we were moving. There are already several samples, so I'm just going to easily join together the parts among them.

First, I draw pattern with the type of Liquid that generates heat on the overly thin copper plate that I've made by pressing copper coin and stretching it during the afternoon today.

Next, I make a propeller the size of a fist by shaving a block of wood.

I put a hole on the center of the propeller and compose circuit that would make it rotate when poured with magic.

The sample for rotating Circuit is easier than I've thought, I just disassemble the spinning top that I have bought before and examine the circuit. The circuit is as simple as expected since it only consumes little magic power. The total cost is roughly one silver coin.

I've easily made this, but looking at the rate of spread, people who are able to create magic tools are probably quite few.

I insert the completed part to the cylinder, and attach the handle as the last touch.

"It can't be!"

"Yes, it's the thing you'd want after you wash your hair."

I leave the trial run to Arisa. The propeller begins to move as she put magic power, and the heat is generated, flowing together with the air.

"I didn't think that the day I could use drier here would happen."

By 'here' she probably means parallel world, you'd want convenient things yeah.

It's going to get cold soon, I should make heating system next. It might be good to make water boiler before Lulu's hands hurt from washing laundry in cold water.

The dream is expanding.

6-20. People of Baron Muno Territory (10)

Satou's here. I've heard that you can see fragments of your memories inside your dream.

Although, ever since I led a life of brief sleeps after I became a working adult, I never dream anymore.

◇

Pochi and the girls come to change place with us since the time is up. Arisa says, "I'll be watching you so you don't go out in the night." and takes up the position beside me to sleep together. Usually I would toss her, but since she's done well during the negotiation with ossan today, I'll let her off for once, though this is not a reward.

Of course I warn her that if she tries to sexually harass me, I'll tie and hang her on a tree.

Since even Lulu is taking the position on the opposite side while saying, "M, me too, I'll watch too.", requesting while fumbling her words, we end up looking like character for river.

<TLN: River=川>

I hope 5 years passes fast.

Contrary to my expectation, Arisa went asleep without trying to do anything funny.

If she's always like this, I'll let her sleep together anytime.

I check on the demon's movement before I go to sleep.

It's loitering around at the castle and the thieves in the forest like usual, but sometimes, it produces a level 1 split body (Splitter) and lets it wandering around in the city. I tried monitoring it for the whole night before, but since it didn't seem that it killed anyone, it was probably a split body used for gathering information.

There is also another suspicious movement from elsewhere.

The thieves around Muno city are merging with the large thief group in the forest near the city. There are also quite a lot of serfs who have escaped from nearby villages mixed in, they've became a group of around 500 people. If the smaller groups who're moving join with them, it would become 700 people. A revolution could probably takes place.

Furthermore, from northwest--about on the right from where we are now, a bit away from Muno city--armies of demi-goblin are entering the territory. There were only 50 of them in the evening yesterday, but they're nearing 1000 now and are still increasing coming from outside the territory.

Still, I wonder if they have 'demi' because they're subspecies of goblin. Surprisingly, they're not demi-humans but more or less monsters. I'd like to look at them since I've never seen one in person yet.

I've also never seen orcs, but since they're written on this world's tales, they surely exist somewhere.

The one that knight Eral was looking for during the noon was probably the second daughter of the baron. Why I would think so is because she's currently at the base of the large thief group. She might have been kidnapped and became a hostage. I wonder if it's because of her parents.

Looks like tomorrow, our journey is going to be peaceful, thanks to the movement of the thieves. Since the unnecessary troubles would be decreased, let's strive to reach Muno city at the morning of the day after tomorrow.

I went asleep after I've finished the general investigation.

◇

I had an unusual dream.

I'm dreaming of me playing with the girl who's my first love from the countryside on the grounds of a shrine during my childhood.

If it's just that then it would just be a nostalgic dream, but the scene is different and her personality is also different even though I'm sure that she's the same girl.

I cannot remember the girl's name, but I wonder why do I have this dream during the time when I'm embraced by Lulu and Arisa.

◇

"Like I said, I can't accept with only river."

Arisa gets up while shouting some strange words. She's been grinding her teeth which let out a loud sound since a while ago. In addition, her fingernails on her hands which are grabbing my arms are painful. It's recovered even before I take damage, and it only redden my skin so I leave it alone, but painful thing is painful.

"Good morning, Arisa."

"Good morning? I'm Arisa, your darling."

"Almost there, the last one was wrong."

She only answers by repeatedly pretend-hit me, but there are traces of tears on the area around her eyes. What kind of dream did she have.

Lulu is still sleeping, but she also has traces of tears on her face. When I lower my line of sight, Pochi and Tama are sleeping while curling up like balls on my stomach, saying, "I hate cold~", "I hate hunger nano desu.". It looks like they're having nightmares.

Since everyone seems to be having nightmares, I wake them up by pinching their noses in turns.

"Master? Thank goodness!"

"Morning~? Nyau, it's warm nodesu."

"Good morning nano desu. It's time to prepare for breakfast nano desu."

The three seem to be still half-asleep, they're rubbing their faces on my chest and shoulders with sleepy eyes. It's rare to see such state of Lulu. Usually Arisa would have took this chance to jump in, but she's gone to wash her face.

I'm thinking that an incubus might have came but there's nothing when I search for it. If it was really incubus, my crisis perception would have kicked in earlier.

Mia and Liza were also dreaming about their hometown. It seems that Nana didn't have any particular dream. So she did not see something like electric sheep or magic sheep.

There is nothing attacking us that day as expected, it's a truly a peaceful day.

It just that, Pochi and Tama become excessively clingy to me while rubbing their face on me today, I couldn't make anything during the travel. Since they look really uneasy, I play card and shiritori with Pochi and Tama for the whole day today.

I invite Hayuna couple since they look bored, but it seems Ossan gets addicted to the games, he becomes really frolic. I wish Hayuna-san infuses him with her elegance.

◇

That night I have the continuation of the dream from yesterday. And sure enough, everyone also had strange dream when I asked them the next morning.

I thought that it was the work of the demon, but after seeing the demon's skill and its tribe's innate skill, it doesn't seem so.

The demon is from a tribe called Short Horn, it seems they have short horn with bat wings, and look like gargoyles. Its skill are, [Ghost Magic], [Mind Magic], [Transform], [Bewitching], only those fours.

This demon has been staying in the neighboring forest since the noon yesterday.

The gathered thieves were peaking at more than 700, but the number is only in one digit now. I don't understand how it could decrease so sharply during the time I wasn't looking, but after seeing zombies which keep appearing with the demon at the center, I understand the situation.

The demi-goblin lot are also coming near the zombies. They've stopped increasing, but they've became 3000 strong in the end.

Sometimes the zombies' number decrease, in exchange skeletons appear, I don't want to know what happen.

The baron's daughter who seemingly was kidnapped by the thieves seemed to have successfully escaped. She's running into the forest depth together with a man with conspicuously high level among the thieves, I don't know if he's charmed or if they're acquaintance from the beginning.

Inside the baron's area, the territorial army has gone toward the thieves' forest early in the morning, it looks like the rescue operation for the daughter has begun. They're numbering in over 1000. Apparently, they've also employed local mercenaries and slaves.

The hero isn't among those in the army. Looks like he's inside the baron's castle.

With these many flags standing, even without crisis perception skill, I get premonition for great tumult happening.

I must evacuate everyone to the safe place as soon as possible.

◇

We've finally arrived at Muno city, but the gate is sealed shut, we can't get in.

Right now, we negotiate by showing Ossan's dagger, but since none of the guards are familiar with the seal on the dagger, we've been invited to the castle.

"I will go with Toruma couple to meet the baron. I'd like everyone to go to the village up ahead with the wagon to do something."

Ossan invited us all, but if I'm careless here, the couple could die and I wouldn't be able to visit the workshop.

Even though I'm going to meet face to face with the baron, I don't really have the intention to tell him to do something to his territory. I feel sorry for the people like the children and the elders I've meet back then, but it's not at the degree where I want to save them no matter what. Even regarding the fake hero, I only feel that I should help in some way or other.

Therefore, I want to ensure the safety of Liza and the girls.

"Master, what should we do?"

"Un, there's a village up ahead. I want you to gather pebbles that look like this at the river beside the village. I want you to ask the village's chief to request everyone to collect those pebbles."

"Tama will gather~"

"Pochi will work hard too nodesu."

I continue the talk while putting my hands on Pochi's and Tama's head who take firm poses with "Swoosh."

"Un, I'm happy for your eagerness, but we should give the works to the villagers."

I explain it to everyone in detail.

They have to gather 100 pebbles. I'll buy the pebbles for 1 copper coin each.

I leave the judging of the gathered pebbles to Tama who has gathering skill.

I'm entrusting Arisa with calculating the money and negotiating with the village's chief.

Liza will be beside the wagon so that the villagers won't underestimate them.

Nana will be the master, while Lulu and Mia will be the servants.

"What should Pochi do nodesu?"

"Pochi will act as bodyguard for Arisa when the pebbles are exchanged for money."

"Roger~ nano desu."

Now then, the explanation is OK with this. I should join with Hayuna-san and Ossan.

Arisa catches my clothes before I can get off the wagon.

"No, absolutely no."

Tears accumulate on Arisa's eyes, and she refuses wholeheartedly.

Huh, does she really not want to be the negotiator? I think she's more suited for that than anyone else here.

"Then, would you swap with Lulu?"

"No, I don't want to let y, master go alone."

<TLN: She was going to say Anta>

It's fine of her to call with anta, but she used the stiff goshujin-sama huh.

"It's not like I'm going to a battlefield. I'm only accompanying Toruma couple to the baron's castle, I'm only thinking of seizing the chance to meet with the baron face-to-face you know?"

I try to sound as carefree as possible with some jokes.

"I've thought of appealing to him about the people if he's a person who's easy to talk into, but I will prioritize my safety first, so it's going to be alright."

However, sensitive Arisa doesn't seem let this pass. She presses on me while raising her shoulders.

"That's a lie, the fact that you don't take us into the city is the proof."

You're spot on.

Now then, what to do.

6-21. People of Baron Muno Territory (11)

Satou's here. Split body (Bunshin) is a staple of Ninja, but when I was a child my juvenile mind thought, "If you could move that fast to make bunshin, you should've attack like that instead."

It might be the right choice when you fight against firearms.

◇

"I promise, it won't be dangerous."

If it's just me alone then it'd alright. The opponent is just a level 30. Moreover, I have magic attack and magic shield, not only physical now.

"No, I'll go with you."

That's bad. The demon is in the forest right now, but I don't know when it's going to be back. I want to leave Arisa in safe zone.

"If you say further than that, I'll use『Order』."

"Try it, my maiden's heart won't lose to such thing like『Order』."

It can't be helped.

I didn't want to use 『Order』 as much as possible.

"Arisa, this is an order. Go to the village I've said earlier and ask the mayor about the work. Wait in the village until I get there."

After telling so, I go down the wagon.

I hear something falling on the ground behind me along with Lulu's short scream.

When I turn around, I see Arisa crawling here while her face becoming blue.

"I w,will absolutely go with you. This time... I wont... Let you go alone... Ha."

By disobeying my order, she's not only tormented by the magic from the contract, but it seems that the slavery collar on her neck also harms her physically. The collars on the beastkin girls are just decoration, but the ones on Lulu and Arisa are real magic tools. They were attached from Kubooku kingdom.

No, this isn't the time to think that. Arisa would die if I leave her alone.

"Arisa, I cancel the order earlier."

Arisa is gasping painfully. What a rash girl. I wonder what makes her go that far. The collar has left red mark on Arisa's neck.

"Good grief, you're really a rash girl."

"Who's the rash one here. You jumped into the shadow to save Mia, and even just the other day, you lured out a monster almost twice your level to secure food for the children... I'm worried about you, stop doing unreasonable things alone."

Arisa says so while shedding tears.

I've noticed something from those tears and "Almost twice your level."

Dang.

I didn't expect this at all.

I thought that Arisa who had shrewdly noticed that I hid my skill would had also realized that I falsified my level, I thought that she was playing dumb about it due to my misunderstanding.

I can understand Arisa's unnatural state up until now when I consider so.

She would certainly be worried if a level 10 guy picked a fight with a level 40 undead boss which had unknown unique skills.

I'm sorry that I think you're like an overprotective mother.

However, this is troubling, if I tell her that I'm hiding my level right here and now, Arisa's pride would collapse.

I can't exactly clown around Arisa who's genuinely worried too, I guess I have no choice but to take her along.

It's my penalty for pointlessly worrying Arisa. It'd be hard to protect her, but if it's just Arisa alone, I would protect her no matter what.

"I understand Arisa, let's go together."

"R, right, you should've said so from the start. You'd have the strength of hundred me with me around!"

Even while wiping her tears with her sleeves, Arisa boasts, she's back to her usual self. Still, her vocabulary is old like usual.

Arisa gets back to the wagon to change her clothes that has been covered in mud.

Now then, I wonder who should I choose to replace Arisa. Among them, Liza is the best choice, but considering her tribe, it would be difficult to negotiate with insular villagers.

Which means, the next candidates are Lulu or Nana. I can't imagine the whimsical Tama to negotiate, and the silent Mia negotiating would be as probable as the sky falling.

I want Lulu to do the negotiation if possible, would have loved if she acquires interpersonal skills, but since she's shy around people, it might be impossible.

Then, Nana is the only one remaining huh.

She normally has eccentric behavior and her way of speaking is flat, but she'd be in "my pace"-mode whoever her opponent is and her appearance is a beautiful woman.

I guess I'll ask Nana to bear the brunt, and Liza to follow-up her.

"Nana."

"Yes, master."

"Have you ever done negotiation before?"

"No, I am a virgin. I have no experience."

...who ask you about sexual experience.

<TLN: Japanese joke, negotiation:交渉, intercourse:性交渉.>

When I see her expression and atmosphere, I've thought that she's just naive, but I have some doubt, "Weren't you being wrong on purpose?"

Let's tell her more in detail.

"I want to ask you to negotiate for employing the villagers, do you have any knowledge about doing something like that?"

"I have not."

"Okay, then I want you to cooperate with Liza to deal with it. Nana, you become the front during the negotiation while Liza is the one who's actually doing it from the back."

"Yes, master."

"I will exert the fullest of my ability."

Liza's reply is stiff. Is she nervous?

"Liza, you don't need to get so worked up. I don't mind even if the negotiation fails. If that happen, I want you girls to stand by on the river near the village."

"I understand, master."

It seems that strength leave her shoulders. I'm worried that she might have interpreted it as, "I don't expect anything from you.", but it seems that I'm just imagining things.

◇

Arisa who has came back is wearing clothes that she's made after the fashion show back then. The skirt is equipped with frame made from wire inside, making it expands in three dimensions. She's wearing blond wig.

That's good and all, but who's the little girl with brown braided hair behind?

...No, I can see Pochi's appearance as a double.

"Is that Pochi?"

"Ara, you did well to know. Arisa-chan version 2, Pochi human form."

The two are taking pose energetically.

Even though they've dressed in cute clothes, taking power ranger pose ruins it.

"Version 2 whatever, how did you do that to Pochi?"

"Don't whatever it! I can't forgive that nonexistent reaction toward blond twin-tail, even though it's not drills."

Twin-tail look good with figurine or 2 dimensions, but in real life, I think having twin-tail only makes you look more like children though?

"I've received Arisa's magic nodesu."

"A~ah, didn't I say to keep it a secret. I create illusion using light magic. It's originally a magic to create split body, but I've arranged it for a bit."

I see, so it was light magic. However, to arrange magic in such short term like this, this girl is like some kind of protagonist from light novel.

Pochi human form looks exactly like Arisa if we exclude her hair style and color.

"Although if an illusion magic with bigger scale touch Pochi, it'd get exposed, and if I'm not near her, the spell would be broken. She might not be allowed to enter the castle if they know that she's a dogkin tribe."

"Would it get past something like magic detection?"

"Even if she gets exposed, I'll make Toruma cover her. I'm sure we'd only be scolded. Moreover, I want Pochi who has high offensive and enemy search skill to be around."

It feels like Arisa is optimistic that Pochi's cover will be blown. Also, I think Tama has higher enemy search skill. Although, Pochi was probably chosen because Tama would not be suitable for infiltrating.

"You know, during the dream yesterday, I saw that demon is disguising as the baron. Master was able to very narrowly avoid the demon's attacks, but you were finally cornered... Of course, I know that it's just a dream. However, if it was a prophetic dream..."

No, rather than optimistic, she wants Pochi to go even while taking that risk huh. Putting aside what I see myself, it seems that the members are excessively worried because they were having bad dreams.

Arisa is about to say something before stammering and stopping, then she's shaking her head as if she shakes off some kind of anxiety. Her swaying hair is hitting Pochi's face, Pochi holds her own face.

"It's okay! Even if it was a propethic dream, we'll get through it since you're with Pochi and me."

"Yes nano desu. If master is with Pochi, we're invicible nano desu!"

It's incomprehensible since the expression of the illusion isn't changing, but I can picture Pochi full of motivation in my mind.

◇

The dream that Arisa has seen is probably just a mere dream.

However, Arisa's worry is genuine. Her excessive worry is like some kind of loyal retainer like samurai, it's a bit scary.

When I find the opportunity after it becomes safe, I should do some actions that would blow away her worry, while making sure it would get seen through by Arisa.

Even though it can't be helped in Arisa's case, I actually want Pochi to be with Liza's team, but I can't think of any excuse in this situation.

I think I'm becoming unable to think for myself thanks to Arisa.

It can't be helped, I don't want to expose Arisa and Pochi to danger, but if an accident happen, I'll carry both of them and do something about it.

There's no one with appraisal skill that could see other's people stat in the city. Also, there aren't anyone who has magic skills from detection branch. It's convenient for us, but those people might have been eliminated by the demon to protect its secret.

I'm worried that the combat force is reduced for Liza and the girls, but it should be okay since we're not the target this time. Even if anything happen, the village is only 10 kilometers away. I can rush to get there in 90 seconds.

6-22. Battle of Muno City (1)

Satou's here. They've said that the punishment for traffic law breaker is light, yet here, the situation seems to be slanted toward the opposite of expectation.

I'm keeping safety in mind when I'm driving a wagon.

◇

Two horse-drawn carriages have come from the baron to pick us up. Either of them is a two-seater carriage. The doors are carved with relief that looks like it'd make stylish nobles happy, and also adorned with golden stones that seem like jewels.

Hayuna couple get on separate ride from us.

I've known it from preliminary check already, but this city is too deserted. Even though it's almost twice the size of Seryuu city, the population is only around 1/6 of it. Houses are standing in row as we leave the gate, but in the middle of the way, series of vacant lots covered with weeds unfold.

"There are many vacant lots huh."

"Sir, are you familiar with the incident 20 years ago."

"Yeah, although I don't know how much of it is true, I've heard the general rumor."

"Most of it is probably the truth. The vacant lots were the result of the king's armies setting fire in the city to destroy the many undeads who were attacking."

The coachman answered my question while facing the road. His voice is loud, not losing to the carriage's noise.

"King's armies?"

"Yes, after the undead had extracted their revenge by killing the entire lineage of the old noble, they remained inside the city without moving. So the king had wanted to do something before they would move. The commoners who died from the fire set by the armies are several times more than from the undead since they wouldn't get attacked by the undead if they stayed inside the house."

At least, "Set the fire after you evacuate the commoners.", or maybe they didn't know about the actual site?

"Because of that, there were a lot of people who left this territory. Now, there aren't even 20% left of the people from 20 years ago."

"It's good that the city doesn't disappear even after that."

"That's because this city has a wall protecting it. The wall was made in the time of ancestor king and was enhanced with fixation magic, even if monsters attack, it wouldn't move an inch. A city simply cannot be made in another location if it's not by a high-ranking noble."

I see, no wonder the wall looks splendid in spite of the poor territory.

◇

I hear crashing sound and people's scream ahead the carriage. After a bit of pause, our carriage shooks a bit as it gets across something.

"Sir, and madam, I'm sorry for the shaking. Some poor people were jumping "Stop at once" in."

Arisa orders so as she interrupts the coachman's excuse. As expected of a princess, she's used with commanding words. The coachman reflectively stopped from Arisa's order.

The horse-drawn carriage had ran over a little girl.

I jump out of the carriage and run to the girl. The girl's HP is decreasing rapidly.

"Make ways!"

It's irritating to get through the people who swarm the girls with my footworks. However, I made it barely in time.

I take out a magic medicine (potion) from my pocket while sitting beside the girl and make her drink it. It seems she has fainted, her breathing has stopped. The medicine spills out from her mouth because of that. Her HP has stopped decreasing for a moment, maybe because she's drunk a bit of it.

I've wanted to press her chest to do artificial respiration, but it probably has been hit by the carriage, her chest is depressed. It's impossible like this.

I take another potion from my pocket, and drink it to her mouth-to-mouth.

Maybe because the effect is weak, the girl's HP bar fluctuates for a bit, then it begins decreasing little by little.

Even though Ossan who was fatally stabbed by a sword was saved, is it no good for this girl. Or maybe the damage continues on because the broken rib is piercing her.

Should I use the medicine with unknown effect in the storage even while knowing the risk?

Arisa who has finally caught up grabs a short cane from my waist.

"Let me borrow the short cane, ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■■ ■■■ Light Healing"

It's a healing magic from light huh. Arisa is doing good.

However, it's just a temporary relief.

"It's no good, it's not enough with just light healing magic."

"We should take her to the temple priest."

The people around us deny those words.

"There's no priest who can use holy magic in this city. Everyone was caught after they were accused of made-up crime like corruption and thrown into the prison."

"Either way, she can't be saved with those wounds. Let her go without suffering more."

Not only her chest is depressed, her arm is bent unnaturally too. Her physical strength that has been fluctuating also begins dropping slowly. Her HP is already less than 10%.

When I've decided that giving her medicine with unknown effect is better than letting her die, the scene of me making the magic medicine (potion) flashes in my mind.

The differences between normal and magic medicines are in the reagent and the presence of magic power.

The reagent is just a thing to fuse the magic power with the drug.

Then, the immediate effect of the medicine is due to the existence of magic power.

I put the magic potion in my mouth once again. And before I drink it to the girl, I pour magic power into the potion. I have skill for bestowing magic, I should be able to do it.

I pour it three times the amount of magic power usually used to make normal magic potion.

"Wa... wait, is that some kind of skill, you're glowing you know."

I'm bothered with what Arisa is saying but let's think about that later. I make the girl drink the magic strengthened potion mouth-to-mouth.

Immediately after she's drunk it, her body becomes wrapped in red aura, but it soon disappears as if sucked in.

She hasn't completely recovered, but it's working. Her depressed chest and broken arm have been restored too. Her HP is stopped at around 40%, but it's not decreasing when I watch it for a while.

>[Magic Healing Skill Acquired]

>Title [Doctor] Acquired
>Title [Healing Specialist] Acquired
>Title [Saint] Acquired

◇

"Did you save onee-chan?"
"Yeah, she's alright now."

"Oh my, magician-sama is really great. I can't believe that kind of grave injury could be healed."

I give another potion to a little girl who looks to be the injured girl's little sister, she's clinging to her.

"If she doesn't wake up after 1-2 hours, give her this medicine."

"Un, I understand."

An old lady who seems to be an acquaintance with the little girl talks to me while looking hesitant.

"Magician-sama, thank you very much. However, lowly citizens like us cannot pay you back."

"It was my carriage that ran over the girl. I'm not expecting compensations at all. Rather, it should be the girl who should seek reparations."

I change the subject since it looks like it would have steered toward selling themselves again.

However, the expressions of the old ladies are poor.

"We can't possibly ask reparations. It's a crime to obstruct the path of noble's carriage like this girl has done after all."

"That's right sir, even if you save her now, she'll be caught by the soldier to become a slave or get hanged."

The coachman adds on the words of the old lady.

Oi oi fantasy, isn't that too severe.

I've saved her after much effort. I'll save her with any cost even if it's just for my own self-satisfaction.

If by being saved means she'd become slave or executed, let's make it so that she's not saved.

The surrounding people seem to be allies of the girl anyway, the only real witness is the coachman.

Let's coax him somehow.

He might betray me later by telling what happen here to the baron, but rather than being suspicious of everything, let's use whatever method available.

"Now then, I've finished taking care of the poor girl who had been ran over by the carriage. Let's not make baron-sama wait any longer and go."

I make the coachman grips a silver coin.

The girl died despite the treatment. The girl's name remains unknown.

"Righto, sir. The girl who was ran over is pitiful, but it can't be helped eh."

This man can read atmosphere quite well. I'd like Toruma ossan to learn some things from him.

Looks like the coachman rides on the farce with the bribe. Even so, is his underling-like way of talking instead of the polite way from just before also a part of the farce?

The adults around also participate in the farce by pretending to cry. What sociable people they are. The little sister who can't follow the story has became flustered, but after the old lady whispers something to her, she immediately understands.

We get back on the carriage, and advance to the baron's castle located at the elevated ground.

At that time, the battle between the 1000 baron army and 3000 demi-goblins begins. At the moment, it seems that the baron army is advantageous.

>[Acting Skill Acquired]
>[Tact Skill Acquired]

>Title [Poor Actor] Acquired
>Title [Clown] Acquired

6-23. Young Lady and Knight Thief

"Father and sister are being tricked desuwa."

How many times have I told this to them. Yet, my words didn't reach anyone. And now, those vulgar ruffians are strutting this castle like it's their own.

<TLN: As you may have inferred, this chapter is told not in Satou's POV because there's no 'Satou's here'. She uses "Watakushi" to refers herself, by the way.>

Maybe that's why. I feel like something is calling me, and I've strayed to the old, old collapsed building inside the castle.

It's an old building that has been around in this marquis Muno castle since 20 years ago.

It has already been 15 years since my father received this territory. My mother, sister and me arrived in this castle 16 years ago, we've never left even once since then. The time when uncle Toruma came to play during my childhood was the most fun time.

Even though it's called castle, there are small forest and pond inside its ground, maybe it's to show the power as a marquis, so I don't really feel locked up.

I've searched through the inside of the castle, but this is the first time I'm here. Usually the maid will not let me inside saying, "It's dangerous."

I wonder if this is because I've entered an unfamiliar place. I think that the floating dust lit by the sunlight is beautiful, I feel pleasant. It seems that I would cough violently if I don't enter while covering my mouth with a handkerchief.

There's a throne in this room, I wonder if it was an audience hall of the marquis. The light spilling from the crumbled roof creates illusion that makes this room looks like a sacred place.

And then, I meet my destiny here.

◇

"O girl, do you desire power."

"Yes."

I answered the words that suddenly came out from the direction of the throne.

Even though I'm reflecting on it, I assert that I don't have any regret on the rash decision that I've made this time.

"Very well! Then, I will give you!"

Silver light that appears from the throne wraps me. It feels like it coils around my hair and body. When I'm assailed with anxiety, elegant bracelets appear knitted with silver thread on both my wrists. I feel something odds on my ankles, and anklets with the same design as the bracelet are there when I look.

"O girl, the contract has been established. Wisdom and bravery are yours to take."

"Where in the world are you? In addition, won't you kindly tell me what these accessories are?"

Even though I could hear him closely, I can't see his figure. I desperately try to keep myself calm and talk to the invisible gentleman.

"There is a large mirror behind that curtain. You should see there."

I go to the mirror guided by that voice. A tiara has appeared on my head before I was aware of it.

"The accessories on your head, hands and feet are my forms. I had ran alongside my master to the battleground, and finally accomplished my long-cherished wish. My master had left me here and said, "Help a person who wish to crush unreasonable power."

"Oh my, how wonderful. What a noble-minded person."

I wonder who is this the master of this tiara. I have never seen a talking magic tool beside in the fairy tales.

"Tiara-san, is it fine to call you that?"

"My previous master called me Raka. It was a name associated with the most famous knowledgeable magic tool <<Intelegent Item>> that came out in tales of his hometown. If you don't have any name you want to particularly use, I'd like you to call me Raka."

"I understand Raka-sama. As for myself, please call me Karina."

"This is pleasant. Karina-dono, you don't need to politely use "Sama" for magic tools. It is fine to just call me by the name."

"Then Raka. I want to borrow your power."

"It is inevitable. I will assist you whether the opponent is a hero or a demon lord."

"Oh my, how reliable desuwa, the opponent is a hero."

When Raka-san talk, the tiara is glowing blue, but is he at loss of words? The blue glow has stopped.

"Is there anything wrong?"

"No, it's just that, I'm just thinking that the master this time is firm, it's excellent. Particularly, master "It's Karina desuwa" Umu, Karina-dono."

"Yes."

"Since the opponent is a hero, does Karina-sama have any experience in magic and swordsmanship?"

"No, I'm good at embroidery and poem, but I leave the fighting to the knights."

"Fumu, is that how it is. My previous master was a hero."

"What is his name!"

I've done a shameful thing. I involuntary bumped against the mirror. This is also something I got from father. He's been talking about heroes since I was small, so I've also gained interest on heroes desuwa.

"I'm sorry, I cannot remember trivial things like name or appearance. Wielding a holy sword, he cut down thousands of demons, he was the owner of tremendous swordsmanship. Even though he couldn't use magic, he could cut the demon lord's magic and subjugated the demon lord. He was an absurd existence."

"That's right, hero-sama has to be like that!"

I involuntarily put power in my fists. A hero has to be strong beyond common sense above all, If not, he's not a hero.

That self-proclaimed hero who has gained favor of father-sama and onee-sama could only narrowly win against a weak knight, he's just a small fry desuwa.

As the proof, he was always eluding the fight against the strongest knight in the castle, sir Zotor.

"Karina-dono, it's painful to say, but I can only reinforce the power that my master has. I, myself, have power to read mind and use simple magic arts, but I need to use my master's magic power to do so."

"Then, am I to remain unable to do anything?"

"Right, you'd be able to win against average knights, and I can give you physical ability enough to jump across roofs. If the opponents are the like of thieves, then you could obliterate them as long as you have magic power."

"Oh my, that's wonderful."

How wonderful it is. It's like the chivalrous phantom thief, Sharururuun.

"However, that is if the opponent is normal."

Hearing Raka-san's words, my fluttering heart hardened as if wedged.

"Is it no good?"

"Even if I could increase my master's power by one hundredfold, if my master's power is 1, it could only become 100. It's appropriate to call an existence called hero as unreasonable."

"Didn't your past master fight against that unreasonable power?"

The blue light is flickering, and Raka-san says something as if he's found a breakthrough.

"It is so. To be admonished by a baby, this is a good day."

"My, I'm an adult even like this."

I feel a bit shocked at my own words. Before I knew it, I'm at the age where I can participate in society. Onee-sama might have unexpectedly knew about the fact that the hero is an impostor. That man only looks like hero on the outside.

◇

"That man is hero desuno."

"Fumu, are you sure?"

"Yes."

I somehow feel the blue light from Raka-san flashing.

His next words are shocking.

"That is an impostor."

Even though, I was insisting about it, I might have believed it (that he was a hero) somewhere in my heart. Then, just what is the sword that he has which lets out blue light like a holy sword.

I went out of the hiding to convict him, but Raka-san's word stopped me.

"Wait, Karina-dono, who is the man beside that fake hero."

"Are you talking about the consul?"

"That man is a demon. He's most likely many times stronger than the fake hero. We cannot win."

N, no way! I was shocked to learn that the self-proclaimed hero is an impostor, but it was even more terrible to hear that a demon had been acting as the consul.

Demons are existences that have to be attacked with army. The only exception where an individual could win against the demon is only a handful of existences like the real hero.

"Ra, Raka. W, what should we do."

"Please calm down, Karina-dono. If my last memory is correct, this is the territory of marquis Muno right."

"Today it's baron, but yes, you're right."

"Then, there should be a community of wood giants in the depth of the nearby forest. If you're with me, we could get their assistance. However, I can't approve of a woman going deep into the forest alone."

I hate to dirty my dress, but a real hero wouldn't hesitate.

"Could the giants win against the demon?"

"Umu, they're not as strong as the hero, but they shouldn't lag behind a common demon."

"Then, let us go."

"It's reassuring seeing your prompt decision. Karina-dono could very well be a great supporter for the hero."

I try to remain calm as much as possible even though my heart is in festive from Raka-san's words, I head toward the forest.

◇

Guided by Raka-san, I leap over the caste's center and borrow a horse from the stable in front of it to go toward the forest.

When I tried to save a Unicorn who was caught by the thieves, I got caught instead, but I reunited with someone unexpected there.

"Milady, what are you doing in this kind of place."

"Sir Zotor, you too."

I didn't think that the strongest knight in this territory who had ran away several years ago would became a thief. Moreover, according to his story, the thieves are going to rebel against father.

With encouragement from Raka, I confide him about the fake hero and the demon consul.

"That, I've thought that he was suspicious, but to think that he's a demon."

"It is the truth. I swear on the honor of my previous master before Karina-dono, I do not tell lies."

I had thought that he probably got a lot of question while listening to my words. But he anticlimactically accepted the talk just like that.

"I feel bad for the chief of the wanderer that had accepted me, but I will leave here. Karina-sama, please allow me to accompany you to the giants."

"I allow it, knight Zotor."

This is wonderful desuwa. It's like in the tale.

I ride on the unicorn's back and go together with knight Zotor to the wood giants' village deep in the forest.

I do not know if I could obtain their cooperation.

No, that's not it.

I will obtain their cooperation no matter what.

By threatening, or defiling this body, I will accomplish my purpose. That is noblesse oblige.

I have the sword of sir Zotor, and also the wisdom of Raka-san who has spent long years.

Yes, right now, I have companions.

"Now, I am not afraid of anything."

I cheer myself so, and, toward the gate of the village of wood giants in front of me, I take a step forward.

6-24. Battle of Muno City (2)

Satou's here. Back then, a friend of mine has said that moe will save the world. Admiring cute things would heal you, that's no different no matter the world.

Moe might would unexpectedly save the world.

◇

I knew that the baron's castle is wide from the map, but after I actually went inside it, it's more vast than I've imagined. There are a forest and a big pond that occupy about three times more area than the castle.

People only occupy a few percents of the whole area, won't the maintenance be hard I wonder?

Hayuna-san and co. had been separated with us since they didn't get involved with the trouble.

We're heading toward a four-story big mansion on the hill of the same area, not the castle. There's no problem since Baron, Hayuna-san and the others are there.

Of course, the fake hero is also near the baron.

The split body of the demon is also there, but it doesn't get close to the baron. The real body is inside the forest like usual. Seems that it doesn't participate in the battle and only let the goblin soldiers to do it. I wonder if it's enjoying them killing each other?

The carriage enters the rotary in front of the mansion while I'm thinking so.

Although there is no red carpet spread, around 20 maids are lined up on the left and right to greet us.

Although I say maids, they're not wearing aprons or white brims, but just plain navy blue dresses. It's probably a uniform since they all wear the same clothing.

I can feel Pochi looking around restlessly behind me even though I can't see her. I leave it to Arisa who has warned her in low voice.

"Welcome, I'm happy to have you here. Magician Satou-sama and the ladies."

A single man in butler uniform greets us. I also say thanks for the grandiose reception.

I want ask him why he called me magician not merchant.

"If you have luggage, let me carry them for you."

Since butler-san said so, I hand him over the bag, knife and short cane from my waist. This knife is an ornamental thing to match my clothes, giving off strong feeling.

Butler-san receives only the bag, and gives me back the knife and the short cane.

"Satou-sama, it is alright to bring the dagger and the cane for self-protection."

"Isn't it rude to bring weapons before the baron?"

I check it for the time being, but butler-san slowly shakes his head denying it.

"There is no need to worry. It's an order from the consul. Furthermore, a truly reliable person is on baron-sama's side. Baron-sama won't be hurt unless it's the demon lord who's attacking."

"Hoo, that's amazing. I want to meet that person by all mean."

"I'm sure that you'll be surprised. Please look forward to it."

The one whom this person talks about is surely the fake hero. However, to even permit people who visit bringing sword, I think they're too trusting to that fake hero.

Or maybe the demon's purpose is to let someone harm them?

We follow butler-san who's leading the way. Two maids are following us. I've thought that they might be knight ladies who are monitoring us, but seeing their levels and skills, they're real maids.

However, I wonder what is this faint incongruity I'm feeling?

◇

We arrive in front of the baron's room guided by butler-san, Arisa tightly clenches her fists. Is she worrying about the dream?

As soon as we enter the room, Arisa sees the baron, and then she relaxes while plainly looking relieved. With this, it seems that she has confirmed that the dream is not prophetic.

Thanks to her relaxing, I've also calmed down a bit. Due to the hit-and-run case a while ago, my mind had been occupied with ominous thought as to how to confront the baron.

Let's confirm the person himself first before making judgment.

"Hey, you're finally here. Cousin-dono, let me introduce them, Satou-dono the magician, and Arisa-dono the merchant. Err, the one over there is Arisa-dono's little sister I guess."

When we get into the room as guided by butler-san, Toruma-shi (ossan) who's in sight, introduces us to the baron.

Come to think of it, I've never said that Arisa is a slave huh. Her collar was hidden by the clothes too, there was no way this KY guy would realize it. Still, from his standpoint, Arisa is a merchant huh...

However, I'd like to praise him for not ignoring Pochi.

"Nice to meet you, I am an inexperienced magician and a merchant, Satou."

I was a bit lost, but I decided to emphasize on the [Merchant].

Arisa bows while holding up her skirt without giving her name. Pochi also bowing imitating Arisa after looking around restlessly.

There are 3 other man and women inside the room aside from Ossan's family. There were two maids at the corners of the room, but they're not counted.

First, the man who looks to be the baron, he's a plump man with black hair and mustache. I was expecting that he was a typical detestable guy who's sitting back with outstretched legs arrogantly, but instead, he's sitting with smiling face.

The second is a black-haired woman who has calming atmosphere, looks like she's the daughter. Although she has black hair, her feature doesn't look Asian, but more like a Greek. If I have to say, she is beautiful, but she doesn't have special characteristic beside a mole on the corner of her eye. I cannot see her figures since I can't see it from our position.

And the last one is a macho man who sit on the sofa while leaning to the woman, he's a handsome young man with black hair and black pupils. This young man is the fake hero of course. You can only see him as a refreshing young man on looks alone. He has a straight sword with blue sheath on his white knight clothes. From outside, he's hero enough alright.

His companions are in different building together with the split body (Splitter).

"I see, so you are the young magician-dono who commands the strong demi-human slaves. Thank you for saving Toruma's life. I can't thank you enough no matter how many times I say it.

This territory is only vast and can't be called prosperous, but I'd like you to peacefully rest your fatigue here. It pains my heart that I cannot give you significant service, but I would welcome your stay however long you want."

The baron expressly stands up and goes near me to say thank you.

This is strange.

Normally, nobles are arrogant, yet he's awfully friendly.

On the contrary, that friendliness is too suspicious. I wonder if this person an impostor too?

I confirm by AR, but he's the real one no doubt. There is no abnormal status too.

"Father, I know that you're excited in meeting a brave young man, but can you sit at least? I feel sorry for the little ones."

This time it's the baron's daughter chiding the baron. Her tone is as calm as her appearance suggests. Her voice is childish unsuited for her age.

Is this how these people usually acts?

With these down-to-earth people ruling the territory, why are the territory people going through such difficult time?

No, they are nobles after all, this might be an act. There might be skills that could make it happen, although the possibility is low, I'll stay cautious for a bit more.

◇

"Oh my, what adorable girls kashira."

The daughter stands up by borrowing the fake hero's hand, and walks toward Arisa and Pochi.

Tayun.
<TLN: たゆん, probably onomatopoeia for swaying, jiggling. Also a Japanese meme it seems.>

Yes, there is no more appropriate representation for it.

My eyes aren't focusing to the baron who's speaking friendly in front of me, but toward the it that sway at the time when the daughter stands up.

Big--No, it's enormous breasts (Bakunyuu) word represented in real life.

The daughter slowly steps forward, and matching her, it sways and shakes, captivating me.

It's truly an art. Brassieres are not wide-spread in this world, so how do such masses are contained, I wonder. Don't tell me, it's magic? It must be magic!

Ouch.

Arisa kicks my leg while I'm thinking stupid things. Arisa glares from below.

"Hello, little lady. I am called Soruna, can you tell me your name?"

The daughter lower her waist to match Pochi's and Arisa's line of sight, and begin to talk with voice that seemingly has musical notes attached at the end. Arisa obstructs my view on the valley with her whole body.

No well, I think right now, it's more important to prevent the young lady from carelessly touching Pochi.

"Pochi nano desu!"

"Cute! I want this kind of girl!"

Pochi introduces herself with the usual "Swoosh!" pose, maybe unable to endure it, the young lady suddenly hugs Pochi.

Arisa tried to pull Pochi from the side, but she didn't make it in time. I could have blocked it faster, but since it looked like it'd end up in a situation where I would have a hard time making up excuse in different sense, I hesitated. Even if I made it in time, her hand would go through the illusion, exposing it.

Pochi who's being hugged by the young lady tilts her head to the side. Pochi who's hugged, happily hugs back while still wearing the expressionless face of the illusion.

"Ara? She feels different from her looks?"

The young lady's hands have gone through the illusion. Excuse is already impossible. Let's use this opportunity to see the true nature of the baron family.

I ask Arisa to release the illusion on Pochi.

"My, the girl turned into a dog girl-san! How cute kashira, she looks like a stuffed toy desuwa."

The daughter who has seen Pochi's figure hugs her without looking disgusted. Tension falls off me and Arisa, Pochi remains to be hugged by the young lady. No wait, it looks like Pochi finds the pressing breasts curious, she's having fun by repeatedly pushing it from below.

How enviable--No, outrageous!

"Oi oi, Soruna, your valuable dress will be full of hair. Moreover, what would you do if you stink of beast?"

"I hate uncle who says such thing desuwa."

Ossan made a rude remark like usual, but lady Soruna curtly refuses Ossan by "Pun", rather than "Tsun", matching her childish gestures.

Ossan is asking for support from the baron, but...

"This is, what a lovely child. Is the appearance up until now a magic?"

The baron lightly ignores Ossan's word, and asks. There is no blaming tone in his words. Rather, it strangely feels pure. I'll leave Ossan to Hayuna-san, and concentrate on the baron.

"I'm very sorry. I've heard a lot about how nobles find beastkin unpleasant, so I considered to at least make her looks like human."

Even though it's my own excuse, it's extremely noncommittal. Normally, you won't even bring her before thinking of disguising with magic.

"I'm sorry that you had to mind that. However, I didn't know that dogkin girl was this cute. I've only seen them at the royal capital and arena, and they all look fearsome like wild beasts. I'll have to revise my thinking with this."

The baron's eyes are fixed to Pochi who's being cuddled by the daughter.

"By the way, Satou-dono."

"What is it?"

"I too want to pat the head of this dog girl-san, may I?"

Pochi shakes her head down while being hugged by the daughter.

I nod at the baron after getting Pochi's permission.

"Oh, isn't it fluffy! Her hair is so nice."

"Besides, she smells really nice. Is this fruits smell? I don't know such natural perfume like this."

Hmm? Fruits smell?

I asked Arisa who's next to me in low voice.

"Mia made sachets filled with fruits peels, and put it together with our clothes."

I see, I don't know well, but it's something like pot-pourri I guess.

I did know that Mia was collecting fruits peels, but I had surely thought that it was for snacks during midnight when she's hungry. I have to be careful not to say this out loud. I would be made to [Seiza] again.

Our meeting with the baron family has unexpectedly ended with cozy feeling, but at that time, rapid development is occurring in the forest.

Even though the baron army should have been advantageous, suddenly victims from their side greatly increase together with the victims from goblin's side. Furthermore, the people who haven't made contact with the enemy are also falling victim one by one. Did the enemy have set up trap from the beginning?

Speaking of something strange, 10 split body had appeared near the main demon body and then, they flew around aimlessly on top of both forces.

I've thought that it might be using poison, but when I check on their status, I understand the cause.

Great majority of the soldiers are suffering with [Confusion], and [Enraged] condition.

I see, now I understand why Arisa had said, "Despised mind magic" before. It's a standard magic in game, but there's probably few magic that could compare to magic that has no means to be opposed, yet very effective when used against groups.

I'm sure that this method was also used to annihilate the large thieves group.

6-25. Battle of Muno City (3)

Satou's here. A friend of mine who was at his wit's end with job-hunting got caught up in a suspicious seminar, supporting it until he was on the verge of financial disaster.

The history of brainwashing is old. It also happens in the parallel world, but the method is a bit different.

◇

Thanks to Pochi, we've become closer to the baron family, and with Ossan's help, I'm checking various things with the baron, but...

"Then, you didn't issue order to collect congratulatory gifts from the people?"

"Of course. I've heard from the consul that this year we have bad harvest. If we do such things, the people would starve."

In fact, the people are abandoning the children and the elderly.

"Do you know that every village is selling their people to the extent that merchants even avoid them?"

"Fumu, I can't say that every village is prosperous, but we aren't collecting tax to the point that they would starve. And this year, in accordance to consul's suggestion, we should have had shared food to them though?"

The villagers that I've met are all thin, from the serf to the village head. I don't think that the village head is embezzling food.

"There was a girl who jumped out in front of our carriage today. The coachman said that carriages were not to be stopped even if it would kill the civilian who got ran over, is that true?"

"Unfortunately, that's the truth."

Oh, he's affirming it.

However, the baron's face turns gloomy. It totally doesn't look like an attitude of, "Commoners are garbage."

"Satou-sama, there's a reason for that. The year before the last, the carriage that my sister and me got on had crashed into a child. We immediately got off the carriage and went to help the child, but we were surrounded in an instant and almost kidnapped."

"Are you talking about the time we meet? Weren't the children and the people who surrounded you parts of thieves group called Muno Rebel and lurked in the city? It was the consul who told me later that they were thieves though."

"You were wonderful that time."

I'm ignoring the daughter and hero who start to flirt. Moreover, according to the daughter, the same situation happened again for five times afterward. The daughters had only directly involved in the same incident twice, the rest happened to the maids and high ranking officials. Particularly for the last incident involving a high-ranking official, his carriage was deliberately toppled by an attack from the side.

That's strange, although they might have been exterminated already, there is no one who's affiliated with organization called Muno Rebel in this whole city. Of course, since there are underworld people here, it's hard to judge if they're thieves by just looking at their Reward and Punishment, but there isn't anyone who's affiliated with [Thief].

"Is the immigration tax a suggestion from the consul too?"

"Actually, there were incidents where this territory's children and girls from villages got abducted and forced to become slaves in other territories. Per suggestion of the consul, it's decided to put heavy tax on people who aren't legal slave traders or don't have permit from the village head to prevent the crime."

So it was out of good will huh? Any noble wouldn't want their population decrease, so there's probably that utility aspect too.

"Come to think of it, I didn't see soldiers or knights on the gate?"

"Umu, we've received appeal from villagers and merchants about the increasing victims from thieves, so we've sortied the whole army to subjugate them. Since the consul has said that there'd be no problem even if the thieves attack if the gate is closed shut, I approved the plan."

Okay, doubt.

Didn't he just said that thieves had attacked the carriage inside the city earlier.

Right now, there aren't even 10 soldiers inside the city. There's only person who is a knight. The remaining force is too few, even if the whole army go for subjugation. To be frank, it's unthinkable.

"Is it fine with the thieves who are hiding in the city?"

"It's fine since the consul has said that it's fine."

"Moreover, no matter how many thieves are attacking, I'll exterminate them with this holy sword."

The fake hero follows up the baron's words. After that, he begins to flirt with the young lady again, I ignore it.

The consul huh. He's quite trusted.

Hmm? Now that you mention it, the one who everyone calls [The Consul] could only mean that.

I search the consul on the map. For the whole territory, not just the city.

"If possible, I'd like to meet that consul-sama in person."

"But of course, he's just a bit busy now. He's working in a separate building next to this one. After he's finished with the job, he probably would show up his face."

The separate building huh, there's no consul there. That means, the one they call consul is most likely the demon.

I'll ask his name for the time being and check if he's in a jail or not.

"Everyone has been calling him the consul since awhile ago, but I'm wondering what is the name of the consul?"

"Fumu, what was it I wonder? I'm sorry, I always call him consul so I forget the name. It's one of those things taken with ages."

I try to ask the daughter.

"I should have called him with his name during my childhood, but I often call him consul these days, so I don't remember it."

"I'm sorry, I've always called him consul from the beginning, so I don't know."

The maids don't know either.

Situation like this is normally impossible. It'd be understandable if the one they're forgetting is a person with not much presence, but it's too unnatural that no one knows the name of a top administrative person.

And the strangest thing is--

I look at the people who have answered my questions.

--There's no one who thinks it's unnatural.

◇

"Hmm? What's that?"

The fake hero looks at the opposite side of the balcony and asks a question.

There are a lot of doors as tall as a person leading to the balcony in this room, and they're all open. Since the room is at the top floor of a building on elevated ground, it should have been cold, but it seems that the air flow between the room and outside is blocked with magic called Air

Curtain.

It's not only blocked, I wonder what's this strong feeling of being locked.

And, the view on the balcony presents the entire center street from the castle gate to the main gate straight unobstructed.

What the hero wanted to say is probably about the black shadow that look like people looking like grains gushing out at the central street.

Did something happen?

One of the maid says, "I will ask about it", and leaves the room.

From what I see on the map, about 10 skeletons have appeared at two graveyard sites each.

Of course, all the demon's split bodies are in the forest beside the one in the separate building.

I searched the city and found the culprit. There are people who can use [Ghost Magic] near the skeletons.

Since those people don't have abnormal status, they probably have been bribed by the demon who posed as the consul to cause uproars.

It seems that the skeletons are just goading the citizens, they don't kill them even though they're attacking. Yet, a lot of people have noticed the skeletons and they're running from them toward the main gate or the castle gate.

It probably can't be helped considering the history of this city, but there's no doubt that it's also because there are certain people who are leading them among the people.

The others are also coming to the balcony as if lured by the hero.

Next, we are also going to follow the others to the balcony.

Arisa is pulling my sleeves.

"Hey, don't you think that the consul is the one behind this?"

"I do. Incidentally, that guy is a demon."

"De, demon? Your source?"

Dang, I was lost in thought so I answered without thinking.

Well, it's fine.

"There is no consul in this castle. Instead, there's a level 1 split body of the demon."

"Level 1? That's impossible, the main body must be close by."

I might as well tell her the situation.

"The main body is in the forest near the city."

"Wha"

"The 1000-strong baron army was fighting with 3000 demi-goblins there, but they were annihilated due to them killing each other roused by the demon's mind magic. The other 10 Splitters are in the forest creating zombies. There are around 100 zombies marching toward Muno city in group. Furthermore, the ones hiding in the forest are turning the thieves and beasts into zombies."

"Seriously?"

"Seriously serious."

It's been a while since I use that phrase.

I think I've told Arisa about the map and search... but maybe she has thought that it's only effective for hundreds of meters.

I didn't tell her that it could cover the whole territory since I didn't want her to guess that it's a unique skill.

Oops, I need to tell her a bit more. I convey the details about the demon in succession.

"Th, then, were you going to nonchalantly march into the place where there's a level 30 demon alone?"

Arisa raises her eyebrows and draws near me.

"No well, I'm already doing that, and the main body is in the forest right?"

"Did you forget about the skeleton guy back then? Splitter is split body right? What would you do if the main body has the ability to change place with the split body."

I intend to defeat it when that happens.

"Well, we have a holy sword for that time. Since there are the fake hero and his friends."

"If you're depending on such people, you should have brought Liza-san and the other along too, we could do something even if we're attacked."

"Demons are well versed in magic attack, so I'm worried that Liza and the other would get manipulated."

"Mou, didn't I say that rather than us slaves, you should prioritize yourself more!"

I pacify Arisa who's angry from her worry.

During time like this, I should avert the subject, and steer off the argument.

"Arisa, even if the demon is the mastermind, don't you think that everyone's condition is strange?"

"About that, it's most likely caused by the demon's mind magic."

"But, no one is suffering with abnormal status you know?"

"That's the part, that's the reason why mind magic is forbidden."

Come to think of it, that demon is the first thing I've seen which has mind magic since Arisa.

"If you repeatedly use mind magic like Trust, cognitive inhibition (Jamming), and common sense manipulation (Lurk) for a long time, it's possible to brainwash people."

"Brainwash?"

"Let's see, if you use magic instilling [Crows are white] to people, eventually when you ask [What's the color of crows?], they'll answer [White]. Lies could become truth if you form easy to believe groundworks with magic. Though of course, there are individual differences."

Rather than fantasy, it's more like some kind of a new religion.

"Is there any way to undo it?"

"That would be difficult. It could be done if we spend our time patiently. It's impossible to remove it with magic in one blow."

It seems there are magic to cancel consciousness manipulation, but it looks like it's hard for magic that has distorted your sense.

Even though there seems to be a way to brainwash in reverse, it would take time.

6-26. Battle of Muno City (4)

Satou's here. If you travel to a foreign country without learning the custom there, you're getting yourself into trouble.

It's a bit more severe in a parallel world.

◇

I hear Pochi saying, "Bones are chasing after people nodesu.", while still she's still hugged by the daughter.

"Bones? Are there skeletons inside the city?"

"Yeah, it seems there are some people who could use ghost magic. The elderly are probably scared of undead because of their experiences with the No Life King's army encirclement during the time of marquis Muno."

"It can't be helped then. It's not like we can help them from here."

"Since there are only 20 skeletons inside the city, I'll do something about them with Remote Arrow, thought it might be futile. I won't aim at the ghost magic users since they would likely die if hit."

I come out to the balcony using different door than the baron and the others have used.

The magic, Magic Arrow which Remote Arrow is derived from is written in the beginner magic book that I've bought.

It is said that [『Magic Arrow』 is the basic and ultimate of magic. The more you master it, the further away it could travel, and the more you could release. If you master it to the limit, and have unlimited magic power, you could destroy the entire army of the whole country with 『Magic Arrow』].

Of course, it's probably exaggerated, but still, when I, who have skill level 10 on it, use it, I could use my map to lock-on the enemies and shoot them. Since the power of one magic arrow is still far weaker than a punch, one arrow could only defeat one level 5 enemy at most. I could shoot 1-125 arrows at once. It consumes at least 10 magic power, and the consumption increases as the number of arrows increases and exceeds certain range. To be frank, it looks to be inferior compared to something like explosion or fireball magic as an anti-army magic.

"Wa, wait, don't tell me you're going to use Remote Arrow?"

"Yeah, I'll shoot it secretly of course."

I stretch a short cane from the position where the baron couldn't see and generate magic arrows to aim at the skeletons. The arrows look like they're made from glasses.

The marks that signify the skeletons on my map are followed by lock-on marks that look like the ones you usually see in aircraft fighter simulators.

Lock-on mark is nice. No matter how many time I see it, it stimulates my male instinct.

I set the trajectory of the arrows so it would not enter the field of view of the baron and the others, and launch them. Soon enough, the skeletons in the map are annihilated. Magic sure is convenient huh.

"Hey, hey."

Arisa's voice is trembling.

Dang, is this kind of long-distance shooting normally impossible?

"Don't tell me you could only shoot 20? How could you think of fighting a level 30 enemy with that. Know your place."

Her way of speaking is unusually prickly considering she's Arisa.

Was the number of arrow too low. Looking at the arrow's power, I could easily win just by shooting 20 arrows, but I wonder that since the opponent is a demon, it'd be easy for it to resist elementary magic.

The arrow's number depends on the skill level according to the textbook, so should I just tell her half of my level? Though it's not like I have to keep it a secret, I could just tell Arisa [Hide it] if she looks like she's going to run her mouth. If level 10 could generate 125 arrows then I should tell her that the level is the same as her mind magic skill level, but since that's the level of an expert, if I say that the level is 4 then being able to generate 50 arrows shouldn't be strange. 10 arrows are enough to defeat the opponent even if it has magic defense anyway, so this excuse should be good enough I guess?

"I could shoot 50 arrows at most. If I'm attacking while drinking MP recovery potion, I could probably defeat it by repeating about 10 times right?"

"Right huh~ if you shoot that many, it's alright huh."

Arisa goes back to the room without saying anything, I pretend not to see her stomping the floor, and she glares at me from inside the room.

Tears come out of her dauntless eyes.

The baron and the others are still viewing the city on the balcony. It doesn't seem like they would pay attention here.

"You, by any chance, are you hiding your level?"

Huh? So it was a leading question?

I wonder where I did wrong, I thought that it shouldn't be a problem since firing 50 arrows with each consuming 1 MP should meant that I had 50 MP which should be good enough for level 12.

Well, this is just right for coming out I guess.

"Yes, I'm hiding it. Wasn't it Arisa who told me to hide it?"

"Right, that's right, but to think you could hide level on top of skill."

"But you've guessed well, I only need 50 MP for 50 arrows, there's no strange point in it right?"

Arisa's face freezes, and she lets out a sigh while putting her hand on her forehead. She pauses for a bit, and scolds me in a whisper that sounds like it's been squeezed out. I feel like I'm always scolded by Arisa.

"This careless man! Know this world's common sense better."

"I understand that I've failed, but which one I did wrong? Even the magic books say that the arrow could be shot infinitely you know?"

"That's only the『Theory』. Right now the best magician which is also the founder of this country can only shoot 49 at most."

It's that few huh. Let's only shoot 30 in front of people from now on.

"I could just say that one is an error."

"Not only that, it's impossible to only use 1 MP for 1 arrow."

"It uses at least 10 MP for each shoot. It's just that I only need the same amount of MP until the number of arrow reach 10."

"That's the strange part. An attack magic with the same efficiency as magic arrow among light magic use at least 15MP for each shoot. According to Nana and magic art scientist that I'm acquainted with, it generally needs 5-10MP per shoot. Furthermore you don't even use a long cane, but a cheap short cane that doesn't have magic amplifying or magic power usage reduction effect, if anyone tell me about it, I would have thought that they're just bragging."

"Then, let's make it so it need 10 MP for each shoot."

There's so much difference huh. Then I have to pretend running out of gas after shooting 12 arrows in front of people. This is a bit troublesome.

It seems she doesn't like my answer, she seizes my robe and rub her head on my stomach while saying, "What do you mean by 'then'~". Please stop it since it plainly painful.

"And also! The range is strange too! The 49 arrows magician that I've said earlier is able to shoot enemies 2 kilometers away, but that's only in grasslands with good views. I've never heard anything like sniping enemies with pinpoint accuracy in this kind of urban area."

"The sniping could be done integrated with the map."

"Ceh, unique skill. I've thought that you're plain, but you have such features hidden. I can't make light of you indeed."

Although she's letting out some questionable remarks, it seems that she has seen through my high level, so it's turned out alright.

"So yeah, it's like that, I've also hid my level, I'm actually high level."

"I understand, I won't ask the detail. I mostly understand from the talk just now."

She did huh, as expected of Arisa. Let's ask in detail next time.

But, it was good that I didn't tell her that I actually could shoot 125 arrows. It looks like she'd feel bad somewhere rather than relieved. She'd think that shooting one arrow more than the best record is a margin of error. Transported people are generally cheat anyway.

However, I was made to promise to sleep together with her for 1 week as a compensation for all her worries up until now. I've firmly said, "No ecchi.", to make sure, but seems like it'd be difficult to hold the virtue firmly for 1 week.

◇

Yet, the citizens are still gathering near the main gate and the castle gate. Even though the skeletons have been eliminated, do the instigators remain there?

"I, it's terrible! Undead monsters are attacking!"

Butler-san from earlier barged into the room with different expression on his face.

"Calm yourself, Meyer. If it's the Skeletons that have appeared inside the city, it looks like they've been exterminated by the townspeople."

"No, it's different. Swarms of zombies have appeared from the giant forest."

"My, it's scary desuwa."

Are you really scared, daughter-san.

"It's alright, Soruna-hime. I will protect you."

"Yes, my hero-sama."

I'm leaving this stupid couple alone.

The baron and the others go to the balcony that faces the forest, and check the condition over the wall.

"They're coming faster than expected huh. Let's quickly escape from the city. We're too outnumbered. Your magic could do something with hundreds of zombies, but if there are thousands of them, it's impossible right."

"Wouldn't it be easy if we just smash them steadily from inside the wall?"

"There's no way the demon would wait for that. There must be its minions among the people who will lead them to open the gate from the inside, no mistake 'bout it."

Looks like Arisa's prediction is correct. People are fleeing from the main gate. Seems that someone had opened it from inside. I tell Arisa about that matter.

"The demon and its group are heading here."

"Right, it's finally the decisive battle huh."

"Before that, the splitter would get here first. The knight Eral from back then is together with it."

"Who's that?"

"It's the knight who was going to kill Hayuna-san when she was held hostage."

"Uwah, that guy huh. Then won't he cut you if you attack the splitter?"

"Perhaps. I'll prevent it."

"Let's leave it to Pochi. If it's that girl, she could handle attacks from that level of knight easily. You'll be watching the baron's family for any chance of ambush."

"How about I neutralize the splitter with a knockdown?"

"Un, since physical attack might not work on the disguise, I'll do it instead."

"Understood."

I call Pochi, give her a dagger from the Item Box and brief her about the situation. By situation, I only said, "If the knight attack, ward him off." to her.

And then, as if waiting for our preparation to complete, the door opens without even a knock.

"Baron! Consul-sama is coming in."

"Sir Eral. Call baron-sama properly, not me."

Baron comes back from the balcony and see the two who have entered.

"Ah, we've been waiting for you consul. It's terrible, undead monsters are attacking from outside the wall. Maybe No Life King has been revived?"

"Baron-sama, I've arranged a high-speed carriage. Please go together with hero-sama outside of the baron's territory."

"But then, the people will..."

"It's alright, I'm going to stay in this castle and do something about it."

It'd be troubling if it gets too close to the baron. I should start soon.

"Then, you'll turn all the citizens into undead monsters in the end right, Short Horn demon consul-dono."

Arisa attacks the consul (demon) who turns around with startled face with shock wave.

The consul (demon) helplessly crumples to the floor.

Its figure is that of dark skin with bat wing, truly the figure of a demon.

But, even after seeing that figure, knight Eral shouts.

"You bastard!　What are you doing to consul-sama!"

Knight Eral draws his sword.

The split body (splitter) rises.

The daughter screams when she sees the split body.

And the baron and ossan who can't stand up.

The fake hero covers the daughter on his back and pulls out his sword from the blue sheath.

And Pochi, with her dagger, skillfully wards off knight Eral's great sword aimed at me.

With Space Grasp skill, I've understood the things happening in this room.

Right when knight's Eral great sword get stuck on the floor, I kick the blade and break it. Since knight Eral's big body is a nuisance, I knock him out unconscious just like that.

At the present, it doesn't seem like there's any ambush from the baron family.

Arisa has taken out a long cane before I knew it and point it to the demon.
It seems like she can't make her move since the fake hero is fighting the split body (splitter).

"Uuh~ since they're moving around the place, I can't aim with Light Dagger."

Really? They're stopping aplenty you know?

The split body (splitter) stops the fake hero's sword with its claws. It's strong even though it's just a level 1.

"O holy sword Gjallarhorn! Now is the time to grant me the power to defeat this demon!"

I almost burst into laughter unintentionally. Of all things, it has to be that name huh.

The fake hero cuts the split body (splitter) with his magic sword which lets out indigo light. He's succeeded in cutting the claws, but the demon is still going strong.

6-27. Battle of Muno City (5)

Satou's here. Fake and Real, there's this TV program about recognizing the real one, but in a parallel world, since there are skills and magic, it's difficult for the impostor and the identifier.

◇

"Gjallarhorn he said? Don't tell me, it's the real thing?"

Arisa is astonished.

Is that twisting holy sword famous. I'll ask what kind of anecdote it has next time.

The fake hero's sword is also named Gjallarhorn when I see it with AR, however the type is not holy sword, but magic sword. The explanation is the same as the one I have even though it's just a magic tool. Needless to say, it's a counterfeit. It's only as strong as a normal iron sword, and the appearance is also just a normal straight sword.

"Hero, you dare to strike me with the fake sword I've given to you! Foolish."

"Shut up, demon! Where did you put the real consul!"

I see, so they interpret it like that.

I'd like to stop doing this farce and deal with it as soon as possible, since there's a high possibility that the split body (splitter) is connected with the real body. If I eliminate it with overwhelming force, the real body could be cautious and conceal itself somewhere. It'd be annoying if that happens.

Looks like Pochi is impatient with the fake hero's fighting, she's pulling the hem of my robe.

"Can Pochi fight too?"

Even though the opponent is a demon, it's just level 1. From the look of thing, it's stronger than a normal level 1, but Pochi should be able to neutralize it while unhurt.

"Alright. Be careful since the enemy can use magic."

The demon screams even though it shouldn't have heard my word. However, the effect of the magic doesn't materialize.

"Tou! Nano desu."

Pochi who shouts out her fighting spirit slash through the split body with her dagger. She aimed at the shoulder like she's always doing with thieves.

And then, right after the split body (splitter) HP becomes zero, it turns into black dust and disappears.

Pochi sure is strong.

Or rather, the splitter's HP is even less than thieves' so it's over in one hit.

"Amazing desuwa. Pochi-chan."

"To think she's this strong even though she's so cute! The beastkin who has saved Toruma is Pochi-dono right!"

The baron family are praising Pochi.

However, Pochi's ears are fallen. She's coming toward me with heavy step as if she's a remnant of a defeated army. And then, she looks at me with upturned eyes. Little tears are coming out of the corner of her eyes.

"I'm sorry, nano desu. I've killed the dark person."

Wasn't it similar with the gargoyle we had defeated back then?

Perhaps, she might have thought that she's also not allowed to kill strange-looking things.

Though I guess it's also ambiguous for me. I don't want to kill people or demi-humans, but I'm fine with obliterating demons. I guess it's because how they look after all?

I should have dealt with it using Remote Arrow than having Pochi shows such face.

"It's alright, Pochi. Thank you for protecting everyone."

I hug Pochi close and comfort her.

After this disturbance is over, I'll make her eat extraordinarily delicious steak until she gives up eating it, "I can't eat anymore nodesu~."

◇

"Right, we have to save the real consul!"

"That's right desuwa, I wonder where is the consul being held."

Even though it transformed in front of their eyes, the interpretation still became like this. How should I persuade them.

I whispered to Arisa to give her permission. Many records of mind magic that have been successfully used are appearing on the log. It's the same magic used by the demon for making people believe easily. They say to fight fire with fire.

"The demon earlier is the real consul you know."

"What stupid things are you saying?"

"There's no way it's true."

"That's right desuwa."

No one believes the facts spoken by Arisa. Did they resist it?

I should follow up.

"Everyone has been manipulated by the demon's magic. As a proof, no one remembers even the name of the consul right?"

"That is so, but."

"But, if consul-sama isn't here."

"To think that consul-sama was really a demon. Even though he was the first person who recognized me as a hero..."

Oh? They're accepting my opinion now even though they readily denied Arisa's words? Even though the contents of what I said weren't much different. I wonder if this is the effect of negotiation or persuasion skills?

"Then, do you remember since when was the consul appointed?"

"I don't remember. Was it 10 years ago? No, there was gramp at that time. When did gramp disappear?"

"He was there when Karina came into age."

"Rondol-sama wasn't the only butler. Since when I wonder, the people who were attending here have mostly gone."

Butler-san is also going along with the baron's confusion. Looks like their manipulated memory has been slightly ripped apart from the information and it's starting to come back to them.

I find an underling of the duke in the gaol, and confirm the name to the baron.

"Baron-sama, are you familiar with a honor-viscount called Nina Rottol?"

"Umu, I do. She's a consul candidate which was sent to our territory along with the letter from the lord duke 5 years ago."

He answered smoothly. And then, baron's expression harden after he finished answering.

"Why was it candidate. Our territory already had a consul. But, viscount Nina died of accidental death and I asked the consul from previous generation to take her place..."

"Perhaps, the demon utilized the time when Nina-sama was going to be inaugurated as the consul and used mind magic for manipulation."

However, no one questions why do I have those informations. Unexpectedly, they might be thinking that I'm a subordinate of the duke. Maybe it's the effect of deception skill.

"To tell you the truth, I've got information from the intelligence shop inside the city back then, it's said that Nina-sama and priest-sama have been thrown into the dungeon by the demon."

"How terrible! Viscount Nina!　We have to save her immediately."

Baron-sama instructs butler-san to save them each.

Now then, the domestic affairs of this territory should manage somehow with this. I pray that the person called Nina-san is an able person.

◇

Then next, I have to deal with the flood of people who rush out to the gate now. The best way to do it is by asking Arisa with her mind magic, but there should be agitators planted by the demon inside the people. It doesn't seem like they have some strange assassination skills, but I'm afraid that they would cause panic to the crowd and make them stampede her to death.

It won't be a problem if I go with her, but it's certain that the demon would quickly try to go back here from the forest after the split body died. I don't want to leave this place for the sake of thoroughly deal with it. I could aim it from anywhere with Remote Arrow, but if by any chance it could defense against it, it'd be hard to shoot again, so I don't want to leave this place for the sake of ensuring the next attack.

Of course, I have no plan of sending only Arisa and/or Pochi to the crowd alone. I'm sorry for the citizens, but I put the safety of Arisa and Pochi more than the citizen's.

Let's ask the fake hero to take the full brunt here.

It's originally his role anyway, let's make the people from baron's side to work hard for this part.

"Hauto-dono, if you want yourself to be called hero from now on, I'll have you show the proof. Give courage to the people who have been chased by the undead and gathered in front of the castle's gate."

"I understand. I have no intention of being used by the demon to the end. I will become a hero with my own power. I'll become a man befitting of this Gjallarhorn."

The fake hero replied my high-handed words with passionate speech.

"It's wonderful, my hero-sama."

"Ah, my love. You're still calling me hero."

"Yes, ever since you save me from the mob, you've always been my hero desuwa."

"Then, let's go together! To calm the citizens!"

And then, the two leave the room together, is that fine? To take the ojou-sama before the wild citizens.

"Satou-dono, the citizens in front of the castle gate is being taken care of, but what should we do about the monsters outside the wall."

You're asking that to an outsider, baron.

"Cousin-dono, there's no way we could win against such army. Let's get away with the high-speed carriage that the consul earlier, no, was it demon, has said."

"I can't do that Toruma, even though I'm called useless, I'm still the lord of this territory. There's no way I would escape and throw away the citizens."

Even Hayuna-san doesn't know what to do, she's holding Mayuna-san while looking very anxious.

What Ossan has said is normal view, but that carriage has been used by the hero's companions to escape. It looks like there's a hidden passage for escaping. There are a lot of zombies at the exit of that passage, but I let them to do something about it themselves.

"Shouldn't there be weapons or magic tools for defense in a castle this big?"

"They existed during the time of Marquis, but they were destroyed during the incident 20 years ago. When the territory became of Baron, there were many plans for revitalizing, but they were postponed because we're not fighting against other country."

"Then do you have tactical scrolls?"

"We had been given them from Toruma's house, but by the suggestion of the consul, they were sold to buy food that were to be distributed to the citizens."

Darn you demon, so thoroughly prepared.

Still there's a person who would buy tactical scrolls which should be for war. I wonder if it was other noble?

"Then, please signal the army that have came out for thieves subjugation to come back somehow. Let's keep the citizens inside the castle until the army come back."

The army has been annihilated, but the baron doesn't know such thing and I don't intend to tell him. For the time being, the citizens should become less anxious if they're withdrawn inside the castle.

The baron tells the maid about the matter to signal the army to come back.

"I understand, the inside of the castle fortress is the safest. Let's evacuate the citizens there. The hero should have calmed down the citizens before the castle gate. I will go there and tell the people that I'm accepting them to the castle. People should feel relieved to see a coward like me remain right?"

"Alright then cousin-dono. I'll go with my family and the servants to the fortress first and make preparations there."

"Thank you, Toruma. Please persuade people who have been freed from the gaol to remain in the fortress."

"I understand. Satou-dono, you lot are coming too."

Baron and co leave the room while saying so. I tell Ossan who's late that we will remain here.

The maids bring manservants to carry the fainted knight Eral away on their shoulders.

"Then, what would you do? It'd be impossible even with your magic since the opponents are too many right? I'm not able to use ranged light magic, so putting aside an opponent that's simply strong, I don't have enough power to fight against so many enemies you know?"

"It's fine, reinforcements are coming."

I tell Arisa who has wondering face that the giants from the forest depth are coming here.

"Something like giants, where are they appearing from."

"They have a village deep inside the forest."

"That's not it, aren't they the demon's forces?"

"They're probably different, it seems that the second daughter that knight Eral was looking for, requested for the reinforcement. She's together with them."

I point at the forest while saying so. If you see it closely, the trees are shaking.

Looks like the zombies have reached the main gate, and the crowds are rushing from the main gate to the castle gate. Fortunately the zombies are slow, so there's no citizen who get caught up and killed. Please pardon me real zombie movie. I'm weak against gross thing.

I stealthily deal with fast zombies of beast or birds mixed in the zombies flock with remote arrows.

Since the forest trees are shaking awfully, I check on the giants' conditions which have became [Confusion]. Please no fighting against each other happening to even the giants.

However, there's a more pressing matter than that.

"Arisa, something bad has happened."

"What is it now, did the demon lord attack too?"

That one might be emotionally better for me.

"Liza and the others are closing in the zombies on the main gate."

6-28. The Girls' Battles

◇Lulu◇

Hello, Lulu here.

What should I do. Liza-san is acting strange since awhile ago.

"Call the village chief!"

"Who are ya. I ain't getting ordered by a beastkin."

Liza-san strikes the ground with her spear wrapped in cloth.

Even her wagon driving to this village was rough. I think she really wanted to go together with master like Arisa after all?

The villager-san with big body is trying his best to oppose Liza-san, but it seems that only his word is big without courage. His feet and voice are shaking.

Thankfully, a boy is leading a gentle-looking man here while running. That kid was the kid who ran toward the village earlier. It looks like he's called the village chief.

"Well then, what exactly is your demand? As you can see, our is a poor village, we're short in food let alone treasures."

Exactly like chief-san has said, the children, and the man earlier look famished.

"We don't need treasures or food. My great lord desires stones that look like this. Prepare 100 of it immediately."

Mou, Liza-san, it's already completely not on the level of negotiation. Nana-san too, please don't only look from the side and do something about it.

I desperately try convey it with my eyes, but it doesn't reach Nana-san. She looks over here and tilts her neck. Mou! It's unfair to be that cute on top of being a beauty.

I turn my head at the back to look at Tama-chan and Mia-san who are the remaining ray of hope, but....

Mia-san! Please don't play around with Tama-chan! Moreover, isn't the string you're using to play the matching one that master has bought! Ah, Tama-chan's nails are, aah, mou!

When I'm agonizing over that, the negotiation is over. Village chief-san is directing the children and the young people carrying baskets and the like toward the river.

To think they're doing the collecting after that, what kind of magic did Liza-san use?

◇Tama◇

Muu~n. Liza is tingling nyan.

That end-sentence Arisa's taught has became a habit. What to do, if I say it out loud, master would worry.

Seems she's worried for master who has gone to the place of that monster called noble or something.

Liza and Arisa are such worrywarts.

Even though it's alright, since master is the strongest of the strong. No matter what kind of monster appears, swoosh, he'd move, zudodon, he'd beat it.

Flop, I lie down and Mia hang a string in front of my eyes.

How rude. I'm not the same Tama who's always, always lured.

Chorochoro.

Piku.

Choro. Chorochoro.

Endure. I'm the onee-san. I must endure here.

Shururu~n.

Tou♪

Hah ah, I've been entangled in the string when I noticed.
Mia's string technique must be the secret art of fairies, no doubt.

◇Village Chief◇

Good grief, I shouldn't have have married into the village chief's house.

I've grown used with sending away thieves, brown-nosing the tax collector, and letting off the territorial army's coercion though.

The eyes of that scalekin are like fangs. I thought that I'd be eaten from the head.

Moreover, when she struck the spear on the ground earlier, the cloth came loose. My heart was grasped just looking at that. That's a magic spear for certain. Back then, the merchant that came--I knew that he was actually a thief in disguise, and he let everyone off if I just gave him offering--had said.

There's a demi-human scarier than monsters hunting thieves on the highway.

It was a scalekin wielding a magic spear glowing red accompanied by two beastkin subordinates. It seems they could tear through any kind of trap, and crush ambush no matter where it was hidden as if they could see it.

I was trembling in fear thinking that she would consider this village which was doing transaction with thieves the same as them, but it looks like that's not it.

The girls tells us to give her 100 pebbles.

"Even though you say that you want pebbles, it's not like pebbles are our local specialty products so... "

"No more dialogs. It can be gathered at the river ahead. It's the same red pebbles. I will wait until noon. Prepare them immediately."

I ask the kid who's looking here curiously, it seems that the pebbles are lying around the riverbank and the riverbed. If it's not a rare thing, let's quickly gather 100 of it and have them get out of the village.

I order the children and the serfs to collect the pebbles at the riverbank. It could probably finish in 1-2 hours if there are 20 people.

To prevent angering the quick tempered girls, I have to be here until after the pebbles are collected.

Ach, my stomach hurts.

◇Lulu◇

"Okay. No. No. Okay..."

Tama is selecting the pebbles in front of me.

The villagers have gathered more than 100 pebbles after 1 hour, but they're not only bringing the right one, there are also red stones that only look beautiful mixed in. They've only gathered around 30-40% of the intended stones.

"Achoo."

I turn toward the sneeze sounds, and see a girl with violet lips and her whole body trembling . When I look closer, her hem and feet are wet. They're probably entering the river in this wintry sky to look for the stones.

Apparently they've been going to the river 2-3 times to collect stones for Tama-chan to see. Everyone looks thin and seems to not have stamina. I'm worried that they might catch cold, suffer from pneumonia and die.

That's right! Let's treat them with risotto that master has taught me some time ago. That should be good for warming and filling them up. Master has said that we're free to use ingredients in the wagon, so there's no problem with it.

However, the pot is too small maybe.

"Na, ma'am, Liza-san. I'd like to treat everyone from the village with risottto, is it fine?"

I've almost said Nana-san like usual out of habit. I'd like to be called ma'am too someday. Of course the husband is--

"Lulu? We can't use the food without permission from master... No, we've been given permission have we. However, if the ones eating are us then it's fine, but aren't you interpreting the permission too broad by treating other people?"

"No, I think there's no problem if we treat the people cooperating in collecting the pebbles."

"I understand. Na, no, ma'am, how about it?"

"Execution is permitted."

Looks like Liza-san almost called her Nana too. It's easy to be mistaken there right.

Nana-san is the same like always.

With Liza-san's help, we make stove by lining stones, and put the pot on the fire. At first the villagers are looking at us suspiciously, but after the smell of the boiled cereal spreads in the air, they begin to surround while watching us in a distance. I put assorted cereal and vegetables, small slices of dried meat, and lastly cut the cheese in long thin shaving and melt it, it's complete.

I put the risotto in bowls that Nana-san has asked the village chief-san to prepare. I pass the bowl to the children who bring the pebbles, they look shocked.

Ara? I wonder if they don't like cheese?

"Do you dislike cheese?"

"I've never eaten one."

"It's delicious you know? Eat carefully since it's hot."

When I said that, the child repeatedly look at the bowl and my face and finally look to village chief-san to ask for the decision.

"Even if you give us such luxurious thing..."

"There is no problem."

"It's thanks for these red pebbles."

Nana-san quickly answered vilage chief-san's question. After village chief-san approves, the children begin to sip the bowl. I forgot to pass the spoons.

"Hot, delicious."

"It's warming me up."

"I don't get to eat this even during festivals."

"Un, delicious."

The children are eating vigorously as if their mouths are burning.

The adults have also gathered before I'm aware of it. There's also a person who said, "Oy, give father one too.", among them. That's no good you know? Taking the children's shares.

"Hey, jou-chan. If I gather the pebbles, are you going to give me those porridges too?"

"Yes, it'll warm you up."

The adults begin to run toward the river after hearing me. Seeing that, the children give the bowl that has been licked clean back while saying thank you, and begin to run toward the river.

Err, I wonder how many people are there.

I'm worried if we could do it, but Nana-san negotiates with the village chief to allow us to use the kitchen in his house. We have plenty of the ingredients, and it looks like the village's housewives are going to help too.

Now, let's do our best to make the meal.

6-29. The Girls' Battles (2)

◇Tama◇

Meal~?

Risotto is tasty, but I think the meat that master grills are the best.

Always tasty steak of wolf meat~

Stir fried vegetables with chicken meat, more meat~

I want to eat grilled frogs again♪

What's tooooday's meal I won~ der~♪

...Nyu? Today's meal?

Nyu, nyunyu?

Ah!

I understand Liza's worry maybe.

As it is now, noon will pass, while master is still away~?

Unyu~

At that time, if I didn't use scissor for janken, I could had gone together...

Aah, today's lunch is.

The meat that master makes~~~!!

◇Nana◇

The reasoning circuit reports that the probability of completing the mission has broken through 100%.

On the command queue, there is no next directive given by master.

Let's go back to the normal routine.

Self-diagnostic.... No problem. There is no need for MP supplement--there should be no need to, but master's face floats in my mind. I wonder what is this loop in my logic circuit.

It's alright. I've learned that if I look at Pochi or Tama when this happens, the loop will be canceled.

Tama is rolling around while watching Lulu's cooking. She's very cute. Is this cat-rolling? Cat-doting? Unfortunately it seems there's no fitting vocabulary in my preset.

After I've finished delighting myself with Tama, the disorder with logic circuit is fixed, I move to the next sequence.

Diagnosing each individual member...

Mother is stable.

There's also no problem with Lulu who's currently cooking.

Tama is cute.

Liza is.... Error.

It seems Liza has been accumulating stress after she's separated with master.

This stress has something to do with that thing called nobles. They were the top elimination targets of the previous master. I've never seen one, but I could deduce that they're like monsters.

However, according to my logic, there is no chance that master would fall. He's the master who won complete victory against the strongest iron golem of that maze in the blink of an eye. Even if he fights against the army, he would probably come back unhurt.

I cannot understand the reason for Liza's accumulated stress, but I know the solution to relieve it.

"Liza, go to where the master is."

"But then, I will go against master's instruction."

"No, master's instructions are, 『Give works to the villagers』, 『Collect 100 red pebbles』, and 『We do not collect the pebbles ourselves』, only those three points. After we got the cooperation of the villagers, the mission's completion is only a matter of time. There is no problem even if Liza go to where master is."

"However, the wagon's guard..."

"What master wants to protect at all cost is not the wagon, but Lulu. I will stay to guard Lulu, so bring Mia and Tama along to aid master."

Liza hesitates for a bit, but then she goes to the city riding horse together with Tama and Mia. I go to Lulu to support her.

I am Nana. The seventh generation homonculus cultivated in the seventh adjustment tank.

Cooking, sleeping together, babysitting, shopping, inspecting workshop.

Even inside the library of the previous generations before No.7, there are no experience this varied.

I wonder what kind of experience I will have under master from now on.

That is, yes, I'm truly looking forward to it.

◇Tama◇

"Tama, Mia, let's go to master's place. Prepare in 30 seconds."
"Nn."
"A~ye."

Yay, today's lunch is going to be grilled meat that master makes.

Bururun, the horses are spirited too.

Looks like the horses want to eat master-made meal too.

I stand on the stool and put the saddle on.
I'm already used to it hum.

"Tama, the girdle of that saddle is loose. You'd fall like that."

Liza's check is harsh like always.

◇Liza◇

I lead Tama and Mia to leave the village.
If Nana didn't push me, I probably would be still feeling irritated while

staying in the village. I have to thank her somehow next time.

Of course I know that master is strong.

He led the three of us who were nothing but drag through series of battles inside the labyrinth, and even taught us how to fight monsters.

However, nobles are different. They're not enemies that could be fought with simple power. Even my father who was the strongest in my tribe got deceived by nobles and fell into slavery regardless of his accumulated techniques.

"Liza~?"

"Ahead."

I pull myself together after hearing Tama's and Mia's voice. There are 10 cavalry soldiers a bit further away from the entrance of the village. They're not wearing full body armors like knight, but they're wearing breastplates like Tama and me and helmets. Their outfits are too uniform for mercenaries, their disciplines look good too. I wonder if they're with the army?

They're in the way.

◇Mia◇

"Let's force our way."

"Nn."

I nod to Liza's word, but isn't it impossible? It's impossible right, there are so many of those cavalries. What should we do? What should I do, it seems that Liza intends to break through the soldiers to the forest, but won't the horses get pushed down? They're going to get pushed down right, I should somehow move them aside I guess? That's right! There should be a way to repel them.

It's the one from when I played magic with Arisa--

"■■■ ■■■ Water Cast"

"■■■ ■ ■ Balloon"

Thanks my smooth-talking practice with Satou, it feels that my chanting has become neat. It's become neat right?

I create water belts from the water on the water bags, and stretch them toward the soldiers. I make the magic that looks as if it's chasing something to [Evaporate].

The soldiers' route slightly shift since they're being pressured by something invisible.

Did it work? It worked! Arisa is amazing for arranging something like this for the sake of drying her wet hair. But, this spell for drying wet hair is a secret to Satou alright? It's a secret. I mean, I like having my hair dried with towel by him.

"Liza, now."

"Understood! I'll break through the column."

I apologize briefly to the soldiers on the side Liza is breaking through.

But, what should I do? The cavalries are chasing from behind. Are they angry for being pushed? They're angry right.

Mou! Please don't chase us with scary faces!

◇Karina◇

"Karina-dono, it seems that zombies have appeared on the front."

"My, they're in this forest so close to the city's wall, I'm surprised desuwa."

"Umu, the demon most likely is planning something."

『There is no need to worry, o small one. In front of us, they're no different to fallen leaves. Trampling them down is easy.』

My dialogs with Raka-san is replied by the head of wood giant--Ishizuchi-san. I've asked his name, but it's really, really long, it's rude and it looks like he'd hit me if I shorten it so I call him with that nickname, "Ishizuchi-san". This person's speak in very heavy low voice, it vibrates my stomach. I've never heard the language, but thanks to Raka-san, every word is heard in Shiga language to me. Raka-san is really great desuwa.

Raka-san and me are riding on the shoulder of Ishizuchi-san. It's almost like I've become a child, it's fun desuno. Sir Zotor is riding on another giant's shoulder. I've been told that the reason why they don't let two people ride on both shoulders is because it'd be hard to recover if they lost their balance.

This is the first time I see something like zombies, it's sickening things. Ishizuchi-san and other wood giants eliminate them by trampling them as if they're ants.

Ara? When I look closer, aren't those armors of baron's army?

I wonder why, Ishizuchi-san who should be reliable suddenly looks hateful.

Ah, why do I raise my arm?

And then, toward Ishizuchi-san who should be my ally, from the side, my fist is--

◇Mia◇

"Coming ahead~"

Is there anything in front where Tama points? Says it. Eeh, you're lying, lying, a lot of people are running on the road as if clogging it? No, not that, they're escaping.

What should I do, what should be done? Swelling is no good, no good I say. If I use that magic, some people will get hurt right? They absolutely will.

Is there nothing? There should be something. That's right, I should ask for help from the forest, it's a small forest, but Lia has said that we're connected with forest, that's right, Raya has also said that.

Then, let's ask it immediately? No, Lia also said some other things.

『You can't ask for help from the forest until after you've become an adult and have learned forest magic alright? You'd get your magic power sucked dried by the gluttonous dryad you know?』

That's right, I'm sure she's said that. Ah, but, we're going to clash like this, Liza will surely go straight at them. That girl would do anything in order to meet Satou.

There's no time is there, there is no time.

"O forest, please!"

I ask as hard as possible. I don't want to have my magic power sucked dry, but I'll ask Satou to supply me with it like Nana. It's hard to throw away the idea to have magic supplied by mouth-to-mouth method like Arisa's said.

『I'll comply~, you can leave the charge for later, little bornean-chan.』

Childish voice is heard from the trees as if drowning others', a road between trees appears beside the crowd.

"Liza, forest."

With just that, Liza turns the course there. She's turned. She believes my words earnestly.

Now, let's go meet Satou.

6-30. The Girls' Battles (3)

◇Knight◇

"Oy oy, dividing the forest like that, what the heck are they."

"Captain."

"I know. Oy, you guys, follow the ladies before the forest closes."

"""Understood."""

My subordinates answer with good spirit to my words.

I've heard rumor before that says elves are able to freely make paths on forests. I thought that it was just some stupid drunken talks, but looked like it was true. This is just right, I'll make use of it to slip through that crowd.

Still, what's happening to baron Muno's territory? Looking at the appearance of those crowds, there's no mistake that they're people from Muno city.

Do hordes of monsters attack from the forest?

If it's that then they should have barricaded themselves inside the city, what actually happen anyway.

By the order of the duke, I've thought that this would be an easy job of just meeting his nephew couple, but feels like this has become an unthinkable military outing.

◇Tama◇

Nyu!

Path springs out of the forest~?

It looks like secret art of fairy, I'll ask Mia to teach me next time.

I'll be taking lots of prey freely~♪

When I stand on the horse to dance, "It's dangerous, sit down.", I've got scolded by Liza.

Could Liza see from her back~?

Huh?

Ahead, at the opposite side of the forest, I could see dark people behind the people who are running away on the highway?

Ah, an old woman fell.

A dark monkey-like thing bares its fang, bullying the old woman.

Don't bully the old woman.

I throw a stone from atop the horse.

Aah, the dark person's head disappeared.

Will master scold me?

Green blood are coming out of the dark person, looks like it's a monster.

Safe.

◇Liza◇

"Mia, to the highway."

"I understand."

Mia connects the path to the highway.

I want to quickly go to master's place, but I wouldn't want to show my face in front of master after abandoning people of the same race as master.

Master even gave mercy to thieves. He probably would not abandon innocent people.

I put magic power into the magic spear. After master reforges it, it feels like an extension of my arm. It feels as if my nerve is connected until the tip, I could wield it freely.

"With me holding this spear, I won't let you through."

A small fry which has passed through with its fast leg is already being dealt with by Tama. I'll leave that side to her.

The enemies are swarm of zombies.

"Mia, bow and arrow don't work on these things. Please support me with magic."

"Nn."

The magic spear slays the zombie which are swarming in group like it's mowing them. Normally, this is not how you should use spear, but thanks to the effect of magic blade that manifests when the magic spear is put with magic power as in accordance to what master has taught me, I could cut them as if they're dead trees.

If it was a normal spear, this careless handling would had broken it a long time ago.

"We're helping ya, scalekin nee-san."

Looks like the cavalries who have been following us from behind are going to participate in the battle.

It's fine as long as they don't get in the way....

◇Karina◇

<TLN: Sorry, I've mistranslated the part where 'arm is raised', it should've been Karina who does it, not the giant, she's going to hit the giant instead of the other way around. Really sorry about this.:(>

My fist was stopped before it hit Ishizuchi-san.

"Raka-san, why are you stopping me?"

"Karina-dono, it's an attack from the demon's magic. Come back to your sense."

When the magic tools of Raka-san shine blue, the hatred inside me disappears as if being washed away.

Besides me, it seems that young wood giants and sir Zotor are affected by the magic.

The giants who are affected by the magic are pinned down by other giants.

Sir Zotor is violently raging while being held upside down by his feet.

I'm a bit disappointed.

"Ishizuchi-dono, hit to the front left."

『Acknowledged.』

Ishizuchi-san hits a tree nearby hard.

It was surprising.

Several dark people who have bat wings emerged from the place that should had been empty. Later when I ask Raka-san, it's not that the demons become invisible, but they disguise themselves as trees. It seems that it's called mimicry. They're like insects desuno.

"Kuhahaha, young lady, some unthinkable reinforcements you"

In the middle of the demon's talk, BAM, accompanying that sounds, the demon is sent flying to outside the forest.

Giants are short tempered. A female giant beside Ishizuchi-san hits and sends all the dark demons flying using an enormous club. It's as if the woodcutter beskyuu that comes out in the folklore.

Most of the dark demons have become dark rubbish after the attack, but one of them recovers and stands still in the air.

"That's the real body, Ishizuchi-dono, let's go!"

『Yeah』

However, the situation advances even before Ishizuchi-san moves.

Many little light that come out of nowhere are surrounding and bustling around the demon. It looks very beautiful, although my impression may be out of place.

"Ridiculous, it's impossible."

"Raka-san, what is going on?"

"That's a tactical level magic that belongs to advanced grade of magic art. Karina-dono, is there an exceptional magician working under the baron?"

"No, there's only one person who can use intermediate level magic, but there is no one who can use advanced level."

From the opposite side of the glittering light, a blue light dazzle for an instant. And then it immediately disappears to the horizon while drawing blue trace of light.

And then, the demon which should have been inside the glittering light is lost.

"Did it escape?"

"That's not it."

Raka-san answers with a voice that sounds as if it's squeezed out.

"Is it not?"

"The demon has been destroyed. No, it was destroyed from the attack of the holy sword just then. Ridiculous, unbelievable."

Holy sword?

Is the sword of that impostor really a holy sword after all?

No, that can't be possible. Or maybe, the real hero has rushed here?

"Maybe it was the real hero?"

"I do not know, but the problem is not about that, Karina-dono. The attack from the holy sword earlier wasn't normal. That was a forbidden technique of making magic tools ran wild by supplying it with excessive magic power in order to increase its attack power. It's unthinkable to make holy swords disposable. Just who in the world is it."

<TLN: Also known as broken phantasm in nasuverse :p>

I am bothered by the thing about holy sword that Raka-san has said, but more than that, it's about the hero-sama. There are two holy swords in this country, but there's only one hero in the entire world. I think it's important to know if the one who has used the holy sword is the hero or not. I wonder what kind of person it is?

"Can't Raka-san see it?"

"It's too far so the power to see through can't reach it, but it seems to be a person wearing a silver helmet. Moreover, he has a golden sword, that's probably a holy sword."

That impostor didn't wear something like silver helmet. Furthermore, the sword that he had shown was letting off blue light that didn't have the feeling of mystic. It was vague at that time so I got deceived, but that sword can't be the twisting Gjallarhorn. If it's about holy sword, I could easily talk for three days straight you know?

"Raka-san, let's find out his true identity!"

"Wait, Karina-dono. First, we have to eliminate zombies that have overflowed the city's outer perimeter."

『Don't mind it, we have no more duty after the demon is destroyed. You can leave the disposal of the zombies to us and the knight.』

I take advantage of Ishizuchi-san's favor and let him take me down on the outer wall of the city.

However, was there a holy sword with golden blade?

◇Knight◇

"Oy, that scalekin's spear is the real deal, the heck is that?"

"It's amazing eh, it's used like an axe even though it's a spear. Moreover, looks like that light is from the magic blade."

"Uhhya~, just like the duke's imperial guard huh."

"Not just that, look at the horse of that little one. What is that? The little one is throwing stones that always hit its target while standing on the saddle, and the horse moves on its own to near the zombies and kick them."

"Isn't that normal for a war horse?"

"There's no way that fatty a war horse right? That's Gontsu species usually used for cart you know?"

"Oy, this isn't the time to be careless, something really dangerous has appeared from the interior."

My subordinates are properly defeating the zombies even though they're bantering, but we should brace ourselves since a dangerous enemy seems to have appeared.

If I remember right, that should be a hydra. Since it looks like a zombie, it'd be good if it could not use breath.

"Donovan, breath might come out, please use Air Shield if that happen."

"Understood, though I'm just saying that it'd be just a temporary measure against breath."

"I don't mind, better than nothing."

◇Mia◇

Mou!Just how many are they?　Even though Liza and the cavalries should have defeated around 100 of them, they're still coming. It's really coming.

"■■■ ■ ■■ ■■■ Water Screen"

Dangerous. Really dangerous.

Behind the zombies, a snake with lots of neck was breathing fire. Surprising, I was really surprised.

But, but, I had wonderfully prevented it with water screen. Prevent you know. It'd break if I defended against it straight, so I had just warded it for a bit. I came up with it when I saw Pochi and Tama warded off Liza's spear. I had just put it into practical use you know?

◇Knight◇

The fire breath from hydra destroyed Donovan's Air Shield like it was crumpling paper, but a water screen casted from somewhere and formed in the interior repelled it.

"Oy, oy, yer' losing to that child over there."

"That one's an elf you know? She has lived several times ours even though she looks like that, she's a proper lady even though she's small."

"You don't mind even if you lose huh?"

Even while they were bantering, they kicked the pseudo-goblin zombies which was attacking from below.

Even that girl's magic won't be usable indefinitely. It gradually declines every time it receives the attack. There's no choice but to use Donovan's Air Hammer to secure the gap before the Hydra.

6-31. The Girls' Battles (4)

◇Liza◇

There's no end to this.

I probably have defeated dozens of zombies already. Even though I could defeat many with just a swing of my spear, their number is beyond expectation.

We've reached the place where I can see the city's gate after some struggling, but there are still more than 100 zombies infesting the area until the gate. It's easy to deal with goblins or thieves zombies, but it's a hard fight against bear or other monsters zombies that sometimes get mixed in.

On top of that, there's even such thing!

The multi-headed snakes that appears from behind the zombies, it's most likely not just big. It spits out fireball as if a dragon.

Thanks to Mia's magic, we're narrowly saved, but it's probably not something that could be defended for many times. I have no choice but to make the first move and take care of it quickly. For that to happen, I have to cut the distance to the multi-headed snake.

"Mia, the road!"

Mia should understand that. Mia uses the magic that she has used to push aside the soldiers earlier to push the zombies away and make a path among the zombies.

I load every ounce of the small magic power I have into the magic spear--

◇Lulu◇

I could hear noises from the direction of Muno city.

I wonder if Liza-san and the others are alright?

We've gathered 100 pebbles just a bit ago. No, it's nearly 200. Everyone seems to have been really eager for the risotto.

Right now I'm learning cuisines of this region from the housewives who have helped me. I will surprise master later.

"Was it okay to have offered so much food for us?"

"There is no problem."

When I was tasting the finished food, the tall and thin village chief came. Nana-san is supporting me. I'm really still not good with other guys beside master.

"Chief! It's terrible, refuges are rushing here from Muno city."

"What'd you say!"

"For now they've stopped in front of the village, but there are more than 100 people."

It seems that Arisa's worry has become real.

What should I do.

◇Knight◇

The scalekin nee-san begins her assault followed by red afterglow.

What great courage.

"Oy, let's widen the path the elf lady has opened."

"Righto."

"Vice-captain, go assist nee-san."

At any rate, that's the magic that we have got struck by, but I have no idea that you could use water magic like that. Some secret arts of elves huh.

"Donovan, there might be other hydra around, search for it with magic."

"Yes, captain."

Hopefully, it's just an unfounded fear.

◇Liza◇

I pierced the body of the multi-headed snake with an attack that used my whole body accompanied with roars.

I had the spiral spear attack that master had demonstrated to me once in mind while performing the attack, but as expected, I couldn't do it overnight.

Even so, looks like I've succeeded in neutralizing one of the multi-headed snake's head.

However, I cannot be discouraged.

My magic power has been depleted, my forged body body is the only thing remaining.

Pierce.

Parry.

When I see a chance, I deliver a heavy blow.

I was dubious since the attack from the snake was few, but before I knew it, a soldier wielding two sword was handling two of the snake's heads.

Some rotten goblins jumps out from under the flank of the multi-headed snake, but stones that flies from behind hit their heads, crushing it. Seems that Tama is also covering me firmly.

The two-swords soldier is quite skillful for a human.

Of course, he's still far away compared to master, but he wields those swords like he's dancing.

"Liza, here."

Mia who gets down from the horse passes me a bottle of potion. I still have no use for health recovery potion though?

"Magic power recovery."

I see.

I gulp down the bottle, and swallow the slightly sweet liquid. Is this how it feels when you recover your magic power. It feels a bit different from when you recover your health.

With my magic spear, I parry the multi-headed snake that has attacked after seeing the chance. One of my arm feels slightly hot sensation.

Looks like Mia casts balloon magic from my side. Green mist bursts out from below of the multi-headed snake's abdomen, toppling it down. It seemed that she made use of the multi-headed snake's blood that was on the ground.

Magic blade--wrapping the magic spear with red light.

While shouting with spirit, I drive the magic spear to the weak spot of the multi-headed snake that Mia has exposed, its stomach.

That big body wriggles for several times, and then it stops moving. This powerful enemy was not defeated with my power alone. Friends' power are great aren't they.

◇Mia◇

As expected of Liza nano. Liza is great right.

She could defeat such big multi-headed snake.
It's alright even without Satou. It's alright.

Yes, I was thinking such thing.

But reality is terrible. It's terrible!

Three similar snakes have appeared from the other side! What should we do? What should we really do. It was that hard just to beat one of them!

◇Knight◇

"Although vice-captain did great too, that nee-san defeated the hydra hey."

"Let's work hard until we reach the gate."

"But those swarms of zombies are continuing until the opposite side of the outer wall."

"Good grief, just where are they coming from."

"It can't be that No Life King has been revived right."

However, the room for our mundane chattering is over.

"Captain, three of them are coming from the interior."

I grimace at Donovan's report. Why does my bad hunch have to be proven right like this?

Three hydras come out from the interior.

"I, when this job is over, I will marry Pina-chan from the kitchen."

The fool is already escaping from reality.

There's no choice but to retreat here. Since Donovan is already tired of firing Air Hammer, we have to retreat in one stretch.

◇Liza◇

Those are impossible indeed.

Even though I could have reached to where master is in just a bit more....

I have force myself here as to not let Mia and Tama get injured.

I'm worried whether the human soldier earlier has escaped far enough, but we have no choice but to withdraw here. However, I wonder if we could get away safely with such enemies?

Let's preserve magic power for now.

The red light on the magic spear that I've stopped supplying with magic power grows dim. As if reflecting my weakness, I feel unpleasant.

◇Tama◇

I'm covering the last line of defense together with the horses.

It's another fire-spitting snake. This time there are three~?

If I'm not mistaken, it's said that if they're turned into kabayaki, it's delicious. What's kaba I wonder?

<TLN: See kemm's excellent explanation in the comment section.>

Haah, my stomach is hungry~.

The light from Liza's spear has disappeared, Mia is breathing roughly.

Pinch?

But, it's okay.

Toward the snakes that were going to spit fire to Liza and the others, lot, and lots of transparent arrows are descending.

See?

Whenever Tama and the others are in danger, master will always protect us nyan.

I want to eat meat quick~♪

◇Knight◇

"Am I dreaming?"

"Maybe it's support from baron's army."

"Stupid, one could fire at most three magic arrows right? Just how many dozens of people would be needed for that kind of number."

Moreover, the arrows aim toward the zombies that are going to disturb the spearworks of nee-san, and this happens not only once. I think that it's probably a companion of nee-san, but just spare me from misfire okay?

Good grief, I've had enough of absurdity today.

"Please look at that, giants are on the other side of the outer wall."

Heads of giants could be seen on the other side of the city's wall, it looks like they're not destroying the wall, but attacking something on the suburbs. I'm not sure about it, but they're most likely defeating the zombies on the other side.

I've heard that baron Muno is a carefree happy-go-lucky person, but is he employing even the giants? Impossible, story where giants helping humans only happen in heroic tales.

I'll say this again, I've had enough of absurdity already.

6-32. Mortal Combat with the Demon?!

Satou's here. For my work, I had put together a bit of disposable scripts once, but when I got accustomed to it, I could make one in less than 10 seconds.

New recruits were surprised when they see it, but they became able to do it themselves 1 year later. That is if they're still around after a year.

◇

"Where are those girls now?"

"They're right outside the city's wall. Looks like they're surrounded by zombies."

"Really? We have to help them!"

"Ah, we won't make it even if we run. I'll support them with Remote Arrow."

I tell Arisa so, get out to the balcony that faces the city and use the magic. I change into silver mask costume as a precaution if there are any witnesses.

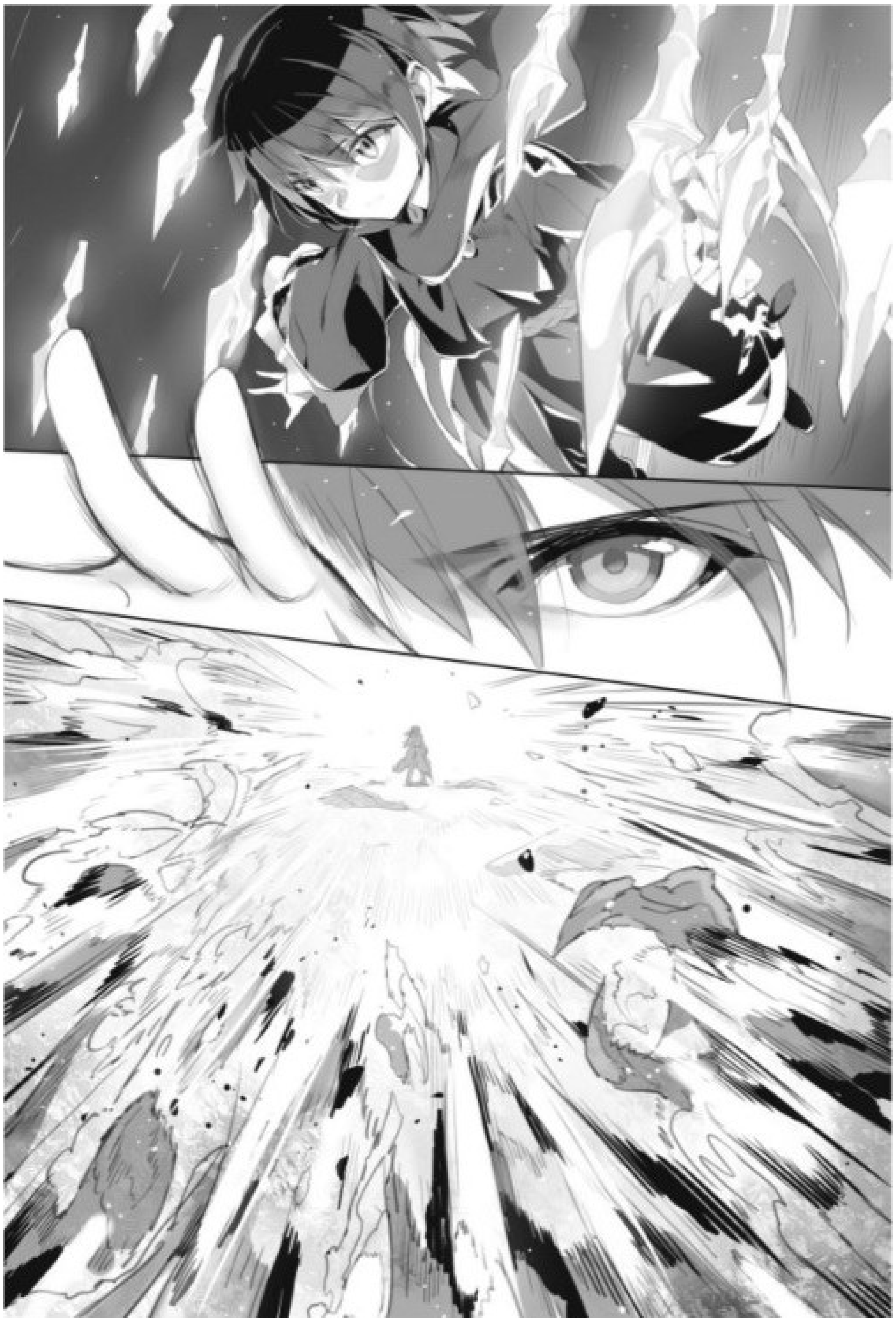
"Uwah, transform? Transform skill?"

"It's just a skill for changing clothes fast."

I wonder if quick clothes-changing skill is rare?

While feeling slightly weirded out with Arisa's bizarre tension, I set up a short cane. I'm fine even without using one, but I'd probably look more like a magician with one.

I fire 3 successive shoots with 50 arrows for each shoot.



<TLN: Remember LN-WN difference, this could also works as the pic for when he used it against skeletons few chapters ago but I forgot. :p>

For some reason my head is tapped from behind.

"What's wrong Arisa."

"Magic isn't something that you can rapidly fire. When you're in front of people, keep around 10 seconds gap for each shoot."

I see, I've learned new things from Arisa-sensei.

For now, I have to get Liza and the others out of their predicaments. I'll let Liza and the others to finish off the lower 20s-leveled monster, so that they would gain experience, but their safeties come first.

I'm worried about the knight from duke Oyugock near them witnessing it, but they probably wouldn't think that the magic is shot from here, so it's probably fine.

There doesn't seem to be anyone who hang around in the city. Although, it looks like there are thieves around, I mark them for now. I'll leave them alone even if they're in danger.

It seemed that the people who weren't rushing to the castle gate were taking refuges in their houses.

Zombies who get into the city are heading straight to the castle gate.

Looks like the baron and the others have somehow able to move into the castle's stronghold. Even though the fake hero and Ossan seem to be hurt, since they're alive, there's no problem.

◇

"Hey hey, what is that clothes? Cosplay? If you just had said it, I could had made cooler costumes than that unfashionable one! Something like cosplay of red comet, or black noble troupe, I want to make you wear many things~."

I'm fine as long as it hides my identity, but I don't want to become Arisa's plaything. She's saying something like, "Mask is romantic after all right.", but I ignore her.

"The forest is strange nano desu."

Pochi pulls the hem of my clothes.

That's right, I had put them off since I was worried with Liza's and the others' safeties, but the giants in the forest were in a pinch.

Fortunately, since giants who are affected with confusion are few, it doesn't seem to have ended up in friendly fire. As expected, It's probably easy for the high-leveled ones to resist the magic.

Now then, while I finish off foes which give Liza and the others hard time with Remote Arrow, I take out the wooden holy sword from the Item Box.

I'd like to try how usable this is against the demon in actual combat. In truth, I wanted to try it against the small fry demon like the Splitter, but since this weapon is too conspicuous with many people watching inside, I gave up.

Even if it doesn't work, I could just use another holy sword.

"You, don't tell me you're going to use that wooden sword?"

"That's right?"

I return Arisa's give-up face with a straight face.

If I say that I do have other trump card, she'd surely scold me with, "Fight with the strongest one from the beginning."

I've used the strongest holy sword when I was fighting Wagahai-kun, however, since the enemy this time is not the type who fights straight, but one who plays dirty, I'm scared to think of the counter if I attack with something that's too strong.

◇

I ask Pochi to watch the urban areas and the castle gate, while I go to the balcony that faces the forest.

Arisa was also going to come along, but I stopped her.

"What?"

"There's someone who has see-through skill in the forest. I don't know how powerful the skill is, so I want to avoid situation where we can be seen."

"Are you fine yourself?"

"Yeah, I've hidden my name so it's fine."

"Wha"

After the incident with Zen I was checking the skill and took the opportunity to investigate the menu further, then I noticed that I was also able to alter my name in the exchange column.

I couldn't do it freely without limit though, just like with Title, I could only change it with names that I owned. In my case they're, [Satou], [Ichirou], [Ichirou Suzuki], [(Namae Nashi)], one among four of them. I've decided to use, [(Namae Nashi)], when I change into silver mask.

<TLN: Namae Nashi means no name, and there's a reason why I don't translate it directly.>

"Your menu is really a cheat huh."

"That so?"

Even though she's said that it's plain, it looks like the evaluation is getting better.

I think that you could do it with magic art anyway, and there are probably skills like, [Conceal Name], or [Alias] out there too.

Reflected on the radar, indicators that denote demons are suddenly rushing out of the forest quickly.

Don't tell me, surprise attack?

I immediately make Remote Arrow to stand by.

"W, what."

"It's the demons, they're jumping out of the forest."

Hearing that word, Arisa readies her cane from the middle of the room.

No, looks like that's not it. The demons are not jumping out, but blown away by someone. As a proof, the split bodies (Splitters) are annihilated the moment they've gotten out of the forest.

The demon's real body who's gotten blown out of the forest is floating in the air while facing the forest.

I can't see it since it's too far, but it's probably floating with magic power. When I look hard at it, some skills become available. Might as well activate them.

>[Distant View Skill Acquired]

>[Bird's Eye Skill Acquired]

>[Seeing at a Distance Skill Acquired]

What's the difference between Distant View and Seeing at a Distance skills? Later when I ask Arisa, it seems that distant view lets you see far away things while they're still looking small, and Seeing at a Distance lets far away things look to be closer. Looks like the former narrows your view, while the latter let you see details in far away things.

"Uh, my magic could had reached it if it was closer."

I guess it's about 2 kilometers away.

"Won't it reach if you you use Over Boost?"

"Nope, nope, it would reach, but if it's that far, the power would be too thinned out."

A little idea hit me, I take out a bolt and a crossbow from the Item Box. About the crossbow, I tried dissembling it once to understand how it worked--since it was boring to reassemble it back just like that--I remodeled it. Liza wasn't able to pull the bowstring since I went too far with the remodeling.

"Wait, if you're using normal arrow, even if it reach it won't deal significant damage you know?"

"Is it like that?"

I cut the bolt in half using the Troll Slayer dagger. I feel that Arisa would scold me if I casually use a holy sword for that, so I use this one instead.

I engrave the same pattern as holy sword on the remaining half of the bolt and pour the blue liquid that I've used to make the wooden holy sword. Since I've stored it in the Storage, it's still fresh.

After I've finished pouring the blue liquid, I put it on the magic bestowing stand and complete the process. It may be the result of me doing it once that I've done this far without even taking 30 seconds.

"You, you're making it as if you have production skill related cheat huh."

I put glue on the bolt and attach a thin piece of metal on it.

Alright, holy bolt is complete.

The cost is about 20% of holy sword. This might be more usable than that.

I put magic power into the Holy Bolt.

Since Arisa has had put 100 MP into the the holy sword just fine, first I'll put around 50 MP.

It's fine.

Continuing on, 100 MP.

The demon seemingly has noticed the light leaking from the window, it turns toward here.

In order to restrain it, I make the standing-by Remote Arrow to encircle it.

"Demons aren't something you can defeat with beginner class magic."

"It's just for restraint."

Oh?

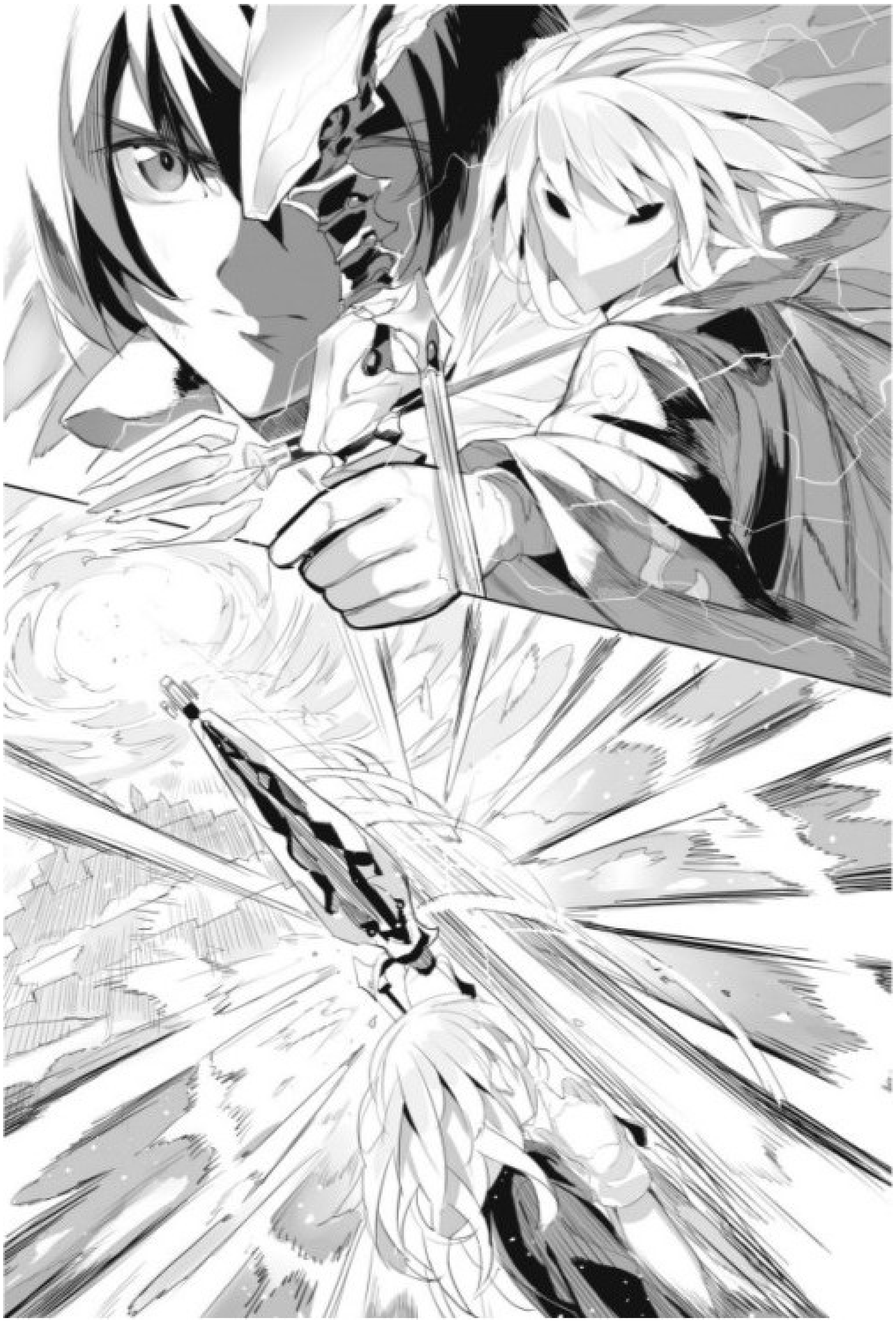
Even though I've said that it's for restraint to Arisa, the demon's health is gradually decreasing from the remote arrows that hit it. Looks like it doesn't have instantaneous recovery like No-Life King. It might be unexpectedly beatable with rapid firing of Remote Arrow.

When I put 200 MP into the Holy Bolt, it begins to shake. It's the same pattern like with Liza's spear. It would probably explode if I put more.

Now then, I wonder how much damage will it incur?

Since the restraining Remote Arrows are encircling the demon like a cocoon, the demon is already doing everything it could just to avoid the magic arrows.

I've decided on the aim, and shoot the holy bolt.



And then, several hundred meters away after the shooting, the holy bolt causes a small explosion--

"Aah."

"I guess it's impossible for a such hastily-made thing."

From there, it rapidly accelerates and flies.

Drawing blue tracks of light, it sucks up the demon--

"Huh?"

--It flies away beyond the empty sky while leaving several circles that looks like black mist.

It was too anticlimactic of an end, but since the log displayed, [Short Horn Demon is Defeated!], I did have properly defeated it.

I watch the black mist disappear while tapping the golden wooden holy sword that doesn't get its turn.

"Hey, what about the demon? Is it coming here?"

From Arisa's point of view, it only looked like a small explosion.

"I've beat it."

I clown around for a bit, but it doesn't fit my character. Arisa is befuddled. Good, it was really good that I didn't attach, "Tehee."

"Holy weapons really work well against demons huh."

I deceive her with a straight face.

"Wha!? This cheat guy~~ what about my turn~."

Arisa flops down on the carpet exhausted, but I won't say to her that, being a reincarnated person with unique skill that she is, we're the same kind.

The giants are dropping off a person who looks to be the young lady on top of the passage of the city wall. I can't see the magic tool with the see-through skill called Raka-san or something. It probably could either becomes small or transparent.

I'm getting a hunch that this will be bothersome. I lead Arisa and the other away from this place quickly.

6-33. End of Turmoil

Satou's here. There's a saying that, "There is no younger brother who surpasses his older brother.", but a "Younger sister who surpasses her older sister." does exist you know.

◇

Well, now that the demon has been dealt with, let's meet up with Liza and the others.

Lulu and Nana are remaining in the village, so they're probably fine. Both of their HP haven't decreased, and also Nana's MP and Lulu's stamina are at no-problem level.

"Now then, Arisa, Pochi, let's get out of here."

"Yes, nano desu."

"Okay."

What's wrong Arisa, you look awfully tired.

"Are you tired?"

"Yeah, I really am."

"I'll piggyback you nodesu~."

It looks like she's not pleased with the instant-kill of the demon with the holy bolt earlier. I should have not taken Arisa's turn to shine after all.

Since Pochi seems to want to carry Arisa on her back, I leave it to her.

When Pochi is running down the the stairs, Arisa shouts, "N, No, I'd rather master to carry me instead~". Looks like she's unexpectedly energetic.

Before I knew it, she had started to call me, "Master" again, instead of "you". Since I don't particularly care, I let her call me whatever she likes, but that Arisa obstinately calls me "Master" only when she's exhausted.

I lift off the silver mask costume that I've forgotten to.

Of course, I also clean-up the wooden holy sword and the remains of holy-bolt creation without leaving any trace.

>[Evidence Destruction Skill Acquired]

It's a skill reeks of crime, but after I activate it, I perfectly clean-up the traces once again.

I feel like I could do perfect crimes now.

◇

When I'm joining with Pochi and Arisa who are in front of the deserted mansion, I notice that the second daughter of the baron is coming here quickly.

Even though the destruction of evidences takes time, she has just been at the wall, she's really fast. She likely have used magic.

The lady appears from behind the tall hedges.

Demonic.

"You people there, where are hero-sama desuno?"

"Hero-sama had gone with baron-sama to the castle's stronghold."

"It's not that imitation. I'm talking about hero-sama with the golden sword desuwa."

Demonic.

"The hero-sama I know is only that one. I don't think there's anyone else inside the mansion?"

"Karina-dono, this girl seems to have said the truth. Let us go upstairs."

"Where's that voice coming from nodesu? I can't see the jii-chan nodesu."

"Don't tell me, it's an intelligence item?"

<TLN: Jii-chan means gramp, with chan.>

Demonic.

Yes, those are somethings that only exist in 2 dimension (Fiction).

"I understand, young ladies, thank you for the information desuwa."

Demonic breasts (Manyuu)--an existence that has surpassed explosive breasts (Bakunyuu)--Supported by silver locket-shaped ornament, they're hanging, the girl with proportion that looks like a joke runs up the stairs.

"What happen, you've hardened like a stone since awhile ago."

Thanks to Poker Face skill, my glances weren't exposed.

It was too kyonyuu, I had stopped thinking. Even in my wildest dream, I didn't think that there was an existence that surpassed that girl's big sister.

It'd be hard to oppose if such human approaches you.

In a sense, she's more dangerous than the demon.

"I'm sorry, I was surprised to see an Intelligence Item for the first time."

"You're lying. You were probably ●REC-ing that manga-like kyonyuu right?"

Looks like Arisa could see through my lame excuse.

Oh right, rather than that.

"Arisa, can you create figure of my cosplay earlier with your magic?"

"I could do it if it's just an image seen from eyes."

I see, an image huh.

"Then, create the illusion on the window of the mansion's top floor and have him jump around like a flea toward the castle wall, to the urban area."

"Like that, it'd be out of the range of my magic--Is it really necessary?"

"You don't want the kyonyuu beauty from earlier to follow us along right?"

Her appearance is totally in my strike zone, but I feel like the personality is the type I'm not good with.

"Okay. I want to avoid that with all my power."

Violet magic circle appears on Arisa's surrounding. It's Arisa's unique skill, [Over Boost].

I've made sure that there's no one in the vicinity already, even though there's no one in sight on around 2 meters away from the hedge, it may be a bit careless of her to use it outside in the middle of the day.

The illusion of silver mask appears on the mansion's balcony, and casually jumps out from the window. While carrying the golden sword on its shoulder, it's jumping around like pyon-pyon, in straight posture, and then disappears in the city.

The movements were a bit disgusting, but it seemed that the people in the stronghold had properly noticed it, it was a good performance.

Slightly after the illusion goes to the city, the lady shows her face on the balcony.

I've thought that she would come out a bit faster, but the inertia of those breasts are probably really great indoor making her unable to run with all her might. I've hoped that she would witness it when the illusion is out of the see-through skill range, but since there are other witnesses around, there's probably no problem.

Arisa who is exhausted after using Over Boost tries to coerce me to drink her stamina potion mouth-to-mouth, but I pinch her nose and thrust the potion bottle on her mouth.

◇

Now then, before I meet up with Liza, there's one final work that I have to do.

With Remote Arrows, I crush the zombies who are coming out of the passage that the companions of fake hero have used and litter the road with corpses. And of course I also close the entrance near the castle by bending the iron bars near it and tie them to it.

Even though the fake hero's companions are badly hurt, it seems that there's no one who dies, they're moving toward the territory's border using the side road.

For some reason, knight Eral--It's the guy who's tried to stab Hayuna-san--is also moving behind them. When did that guy escape. His health and stamina are in critical condition too, but this type of guy is usually hard to die, so he probably would live.

Looks like the giants and knight called Zotor are blockading the front gate. Liza and the others are taking care of the zombies inside the city while heading toward the castle gate.

Since the zombies who have invaded the city are consisted of thieves and goblins, they're weak on the whole. I've not fired any support shoot since awhile ago since the opponents are too weak for Liza and the others.

◇

There aren't only soldiers on the top of the castle gate, but also several servant-like people, they are shouting something to the people outside.

Liza and the others are going to arrive soon. The three's levels have been raised. As expected, they would after that many battles. Pochi has become the lowest leveled one among the beastkin girls. Next time, I guess I'll take Pochi to a monster hunting date at midnight.

I lead Arisa and Pochi to climb up the tower beside the castle gate. There's a door that goes toward the castle gate halfway through the tower.

I wonder what is this smell spreading inside the tower. It really stinks. Pochi put both her hands on her nose as if it's really painful. It's quite a cute gesture.

"Ugeh, what's this kendo's guard-like smell."

"Stinknodesu."

We get out of the dark tower to the top of castle gate. The light is dazzling.

"Oh! she's defeated the last one."

"Yer' amazing, demi-human knight-san."

"Now, people who've bet on the scalekin knight-san for defeating the last one! Receive your share."

Air of delight is dominating the top of the castle gate.

It seems that Liza has just defeated the last zombie. They're about 300 meters away from the castle gate.

"Liza! Tama! Mia!"

I call the three of them while waving my hand.

Liza who noticed me lead the other two to come here while riding the horses. About 10 Oyugock knights are following them from behind.

What's with the subordinates-like movement.

"Are they subordinates of magician-sama?"

The one who ask is wearing soldier-like clothing, but it's actually one of the maid that I've met on the mansion. Since she had rolled up her hair and wears a helm, I did not noticed.

When I affirm it, she says, "I'll make arrangement immediately", and conveys something to an important-looking man. It seems that he's one of the few survivors of the regular soldiers.

With his instruction, one of the door for horse riders is opened, and Liza and the others go inside the castle.

"Satou."

Someone jumps from the unsaddled horse, it's Mia. I catch her and holds her sideway. She's as light as ever.

"Tama."

"Pochi."

Beside us, Pochi and Tama firmly hug each other. Since the two of them were always together, they might had been lonely.

However, Liza is still cautious even after she gets inside the castle. She's moving her line of sight vigilantly.

"Thank you for your hard work too Liza, there's no enemy inside the caslte, it's alright."

After I assert so, she finally removes her vigilance, and dismounts.

However, her tension is still high. She's probably tense since this is inside the baron's castle.

"You don't have to worry, baron-sama and his peers are open-hearted good people. Pochi was loved too."

"I've received baked sweets nodesu~."

Pochi takes out baked sweets from her pocket and shares it to Tama and

Mia. Come to think of it, she was fed on something when she was sitting on the daughter's lap.

"Master, it is most reassuring that you're safe."

"Un, I'm glad that Liza is safe too."

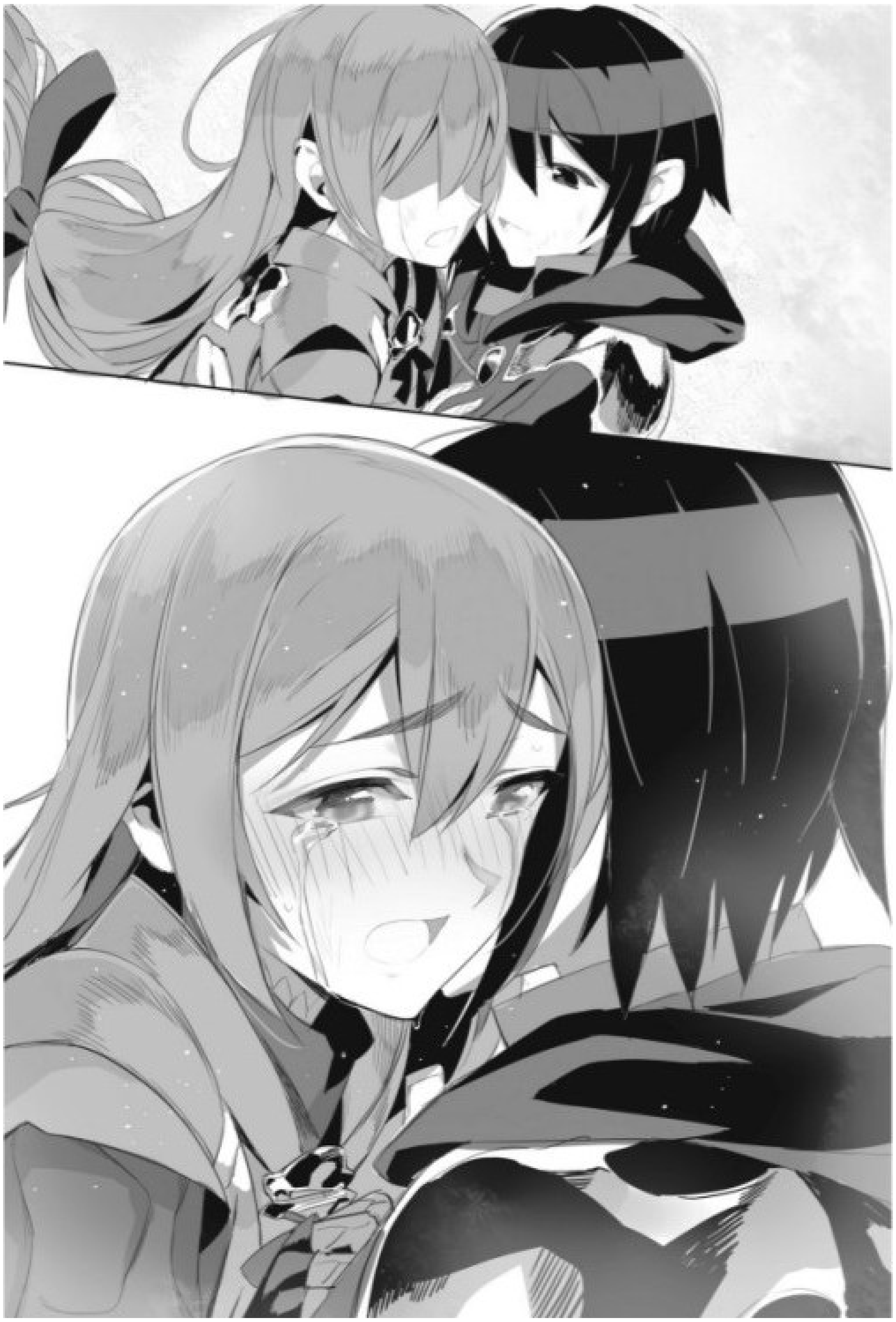
Since there's a small wound on Liza's arm, I heal it with the magic that I've just learned today. Fumu, it uses 10 MP for such small wound huh, looks like potions are more efficient.

Liza is apologizing for leaving her position and coming to the city that has resulted in exposing Tama and Mia to dangers.

It seemed that her action was because she was anxious that I would be imprisoned by the noble. Looks like she's worried about me, with different reason than Arisa.

I'm thankful for the worry, but tonight, I will tell Liza that it's just an imaginary fear.

Meanwhile in alternate reality



This Illustration Comes From Volume 4 Light Novel Version.

The Event Where Liza Cried In Web Novel Version Happened In The Equivalent Of Ln Volume 2.

Please understand the difference between LN and WN.

[TL : Maybe I should stop posting Pic at all if people still keep insisting to "fit" it to the WN's flow of the story.]

6-34. End of Turmoil (2)

Satou's here. In my childhood, the word "fiancee" was present in many stories. It has become obsolete before I know it, but I've realized that it's not actually that fun when it befalls me, Satou.

◇

"You're Nee-san's master huh?"

"It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm Satou, a merchant."

The young knight with three scars on his face talked to me. He's the captain of the 17th knight squadron of the dukedom that have followed Liza. Even though they're knight of the dukedom, the captain doesn't hide his social status, the vice-captain introduces themselves. Both of them are commoners. Maybe because of that, they feel more like mercenaries than knights. I've thought that a knight would be a ranked noble, but it doesn't appear to be so.

The vice-captain beside him is wearing helmet, so his face can't be seen, but his tribe is the rare panther-headed clan. Of course, I'm not going to deliberately touch upon it.

"Hoo, she wasn't the guard of a noble but a merchant huh. At any rate, you've hired someone really capable, she can even use magic blade. You're probably a heir to a very large merchant family right."

"No, far from being large, I'm a merchant who doesn't even have a store on his own. This time we've just had chance to meet with baron-sama."

"Sorry, the captain is the type who speaks first before thinking."

The vice-captain covered the last part of the captain's talk, but I heard it. The vice-captain covered for the captain, but I think it wasn't something to hide at all.

While we were chatting around, the maid earlier came back and guided us toward the stronghold.

◇

"Aah! How dare you deceive me back then!"

When we were dismounting the horses inside the stronghold, a high-pitched voice resounded. It's the second daughter of the baron (Karina) from earlier.

"She comes out, that oppai lady."

"That is enemy."

Arisa and Mia spoke abusively in low voice. Since there's something like lese majeste, do speak in quietly okay?

Swoosh, along with the sound of wind tearing the empty air, the lady's fist has penetrated through the place where my face has just been.

Huh~? Suddenly battling huh. Is there any reason for me to get twisted in like this?

I try to hear her reason while avoiding.

"Why"

I avoid a jab.

"Am I"

I turn over her hook.

"Being attacked?"

I handled the barrage of attacks from the lady who moved as if she was a fighting game character.

I couldn't help but always got my awareness robbed by the shaking mountains that shook whenever she moved, but I tried to look desperate in avoiding her as much as possible. However, isn't it painful when those things move that much?

I caught a sight of Liza and Pochi who are going to jump on her. Looks like the other three had controlled themselves from jumping in. I wave my hand when my eyes meet theirs.

"What's with that composure desuno."

After a slight lag, she tries to sweep my leg and I jump to avoid it.

Oops, we were in the middle of battle.

"Impudent desuwa."

"I'm just good at avoiding."

Come to think of it, since I've only been looking at her breasts, I don't realize it before, she's not wearing dress but some kind of horse-riding pants. Her hair has a lot of braids too, if it's only by look, she's like an elegant young lady from horse-riding club who's enjoying her holiday.

"Mou, how capricious!　Fight fairly if you're a hero."

"The hero-sama is over there. He's standing next to Soruna-sama right?"

I talk while avoiding her attacks, this could make me bite my tongue.

Her older sister, lady Soruna is coming here together with the fake hero. Rather than looking surprised with your hands on your mouth, I'd like you to stop this wild horse instead.

"It's not that! You were the one who annihilated the demon right!"

That was dangerous, if I didn't have poker face skill, it would have appeared on my face.

Even if she had witnessed the demon's destruction, the distance between us was several kilometers, even though the magic organism (Raka) had see-through skill, I couldn't believe that he could see me.

However, based on their conversation with Arisa earlier, it might have way to judge truth from lie. I have to be careful as to not have my wit overtaken.

"I remember that it's said that no normal human could defeat a high-ranking demon though?"

"That's right desuwa, that's why you're hero-sama. If that's not true, then say it."

I confirm the title on my status. Yup, I've taken off the title of hero. Of course, the title column on the exchange menu is alright too. Right now, I'm not a hero.

"I am not."

After receiving my answer, the tiara on lady Karina's forehead blinks. So the silver ornaments she's wearing like that tiara are the true form of the magic organism (Raka) huh. They look like reinforced arms.

"Raka-san?"

"Truth."

"...No way."

The lady is shocked after hearing the voice from the tiara.

"There is no mistake Karina-dono, he is not the hero."

"Then, just where has that true hero with golden sword gone to!"

Since she's throwing a tantrum, I'm moving away.

Looks like she's not so well educated. Considering it's that baron, she probably has been brought up indulgently.

"Karina, the silver masked person with golden sword appeared from the mansion's top floor and disappeared in the direction of the city you know?"

"Is that true, onee-sama?"

"It's true Karina-sama, I've seen it too."

"I didn't ask you."

She frankly believes the words of her older sister, lady Soruna. She's cold against the fake hero. Live strong.

It doesn't seem like lady Karina is going to go after it to the city.

She apologizes for attacking me by mistake, even though it's partly because the older sister has reprimanded her. Her gesture is so ladylike to the point that I'm thinking if the battle-junkie manner earlier is an illusion.

Since I've enjoyed the wonderful shaking in close proximity, and the peanut gallery around us should have been too, I accept the apology without complaining.

◇

We're being guided to the audience hall inside the stronghold by lady Soruna. Somehow, lady Karina who has sulky looks on her face is also following us. Of course, the duke's knight captain also follows.

It's fine that they do but--

"Even sir Zotol wasn't able to defend half of my attack, I couldn't believe that he could even avoid my surprise attack."

"However, he's not a hero, no mistake 'bout it."

"But, those moves didn't look like a beginner."

"Those moves were certainly amazing. I'd like to be taught at least once."

"Someone like you won't even last a match. Stay out of it."

"Karina!"

"But, Soruna ane-sama."

Not only was the the lady complaining by while muttering, even the hero asked me to teach him. I'll talk to the fake hero, so the lady won't bother me.

"I'm only good at avoiding. By the way hero-sama, what happen to that face?"

"Ha ha, please stop calling me hero. I was just set up and used by the demon to be one, I wasn't up to the caliber. The bruise on my face is the proof. There were people hired by the consul, no the demon, mixed in with the people who got inside the castle gate. I was hit when I protected baron-sama."

"I see, it's a honorable injury is it."

"That's right, the reason why I wanted to be a hero was to protect someone. The demon made use of that feeling, but my desire to protect hadn't changed."

Fake hero, what the heck are you talking about?

"I'm going to be the knight of Soruna-sama."

"Ufufufu, that's wonderful desuwa. Since the family's peerage will be inherited by my little brother, I could marry anytime you know?"

"Soruna-sama, I will be your knight without fail!"

Since the two have begun to get excited without minding the place, we leave them alone. A maid steps forward as a substitute for the guide.

◇

In the audience hall, there are a woman of around thirty lying on a simple bed and also baron-san, hayuna-san and her family. The woman is Nina Rottol, a viscount. Her cheeks have been drained, but the light of will on her eyes are strong. From the story before, she should have been locked in the gaol for more than a year, she's probably quite a resilient person at heart.

I don't know the reason why the demon didn't kill her, but it was probably nothing decent.

"I'm sorry for this look. I'm the new consul, Nina."

Her voice is powerful and husky.

The duke knight captain and me return the greeting.

"It looked like you were able to see through the true form of the demon."

"Yes, I had got various informations from my fellow merchants, and then I confirmed it with fathoming crystal."

Today, the deception skill is having its field day too.

Raka which can see-through lies is with Karina who's having reunion with the baron, so it's not paying attention here.

"Furthermore, on top of eradicating that demon, you've also exterminated the monsters which have gotten inside the city right."

"It was my companions who did that. Moreover, according to lady Karina's story, the demon's real body was annihilated by a mysterious silver mask."

"Companion? Ah, achievements of your slaves belong to your achievements you know."

What kind of reasoning is that.

In addition, captain-san also praises Liza and the others.

"Nina-dono, his companions also did another deeds. They protected the people who were running away from flocks of demon on the highway outside the city, and no one was hurt. We were also assisting them, but without their leadership, we would have not been able to prevent some deaths."

Since that's the first time I've heard it, I listen to his story carefully.

The three have did wonderfully.

Even baron-san who starts to listen to the story midway lets out exaggerated surprise. It feels like listening to a bard rather than a knight captain.

After the captain has finished telling the success of Liza and the others, Nina-san is whispering something to baron-san. Baron is nodding up and down. Somehow, Nina-san looks to be the superior here.

"Magician Satou-dono, do you have someone whom you serve?"

"No, there is none."

I inadvertently answered frankly, but I had a bad feeling from this flow.

"Then, would you like to serve this territory's baron? You'd be only given honorary knight title at first, but there's no one like that among generation of Muno-sama's vassal. He's surely a baron for now, but he's a respectable lord. It has been determined that he would be promoted to be an earl before he gets a grandchild. Depending on your work, you could advance your rank as you please you know?"

"I'm really sorry but--"

Of course, I refuse Nina-san's offer. My purpose is to go on a sightseeing, not becoming a noble and succeed in life. Afterwards, Nina-san continues to aggressively solicit me for about half an hour.

While evading her, the story about the annihilation of baron's army and the clean-up of the demon outside the city by the giants get mixed in.

"Apparently, you really helped this baron's territory which had been in the brink of ruin to survive. It might be better if you marry with baron-sama's daughter and join the family."

"You're overestimating me."

The second daughter over there comes out with an explosive statement.

"Then it's fine for him to be my fiancee. Then his achievements would become baron's family achievements right?"

This woman! She absolutely spoke that only to harass me.

"How about it? Are you going to be the fiancee of a beauty or a honorary knight, you could also take both you know?"

"Umu, it might be fine to leave Karina to Satou-dono."

Even baron-san is agreeing while nodding. I have a feeling that if I'm to marry lady Karina, he thinks that Pochi and Tama would follow along too.

I like her looks, but judging from her action and speech, I don't think that we'd lead a satisfactory life.

"N, no, something like fiancee."

"No."

After hearing the problematic remark of lady Karina, Arisa and Mia who had been grinning and looking as if spectators intruded.

Liza has been spreading intimidating aura on her surrounding behind me since awhile ago.

I don't know since when, but Pochi and Tama are being fed by the maids with baked sweets on the corner of the room.

In the end I lose to their forceful push, and take the route of becoming a honorary knight. I will have no duty but in return, I won't get salary or pension.

Even though I would become a noble, even if it's of the lowest rank, Arisa doesn't assist me as if agreeing with it. Looks like her stance is that of 'as long as he doesn't become lady Karina's fiancee'.

When Liza, Pochi and the others are offered to become the baron's vassal for their achievements, we refuse it but in exchange we ask for the like of Totona and the others and also serfs who have ran away to be promoted to become commoners. We also get the permission for the development of the reclaimed lands to be handed to their villages. Of course, it was Arisa who was negotiating.

In the end, we had to settle various affairs, and we could only leave the baron's territory after two weeks.

Intermission: Lulu

I had always been an unwanted child since I was young.

My mother worked as a maid in the castle, so since childhood, I was taken care by my aunt who lived in the castle town. I don't have a father. When I was younger, I heard something about my father, but it was left aside.

"You're really ugly. Go draw water so I don't have to see that face."

It seemed that my aunt hated my face, I was often told to do works outside the house.

My aunt and her husband had two boys and one girl of the same age as me. They're Jido, Bado and Kuku.

Jido disturbed me by kicking me when I was just about to pull the water from the well.

Bado tripped my feet when I was carrying the bucket.

I was usually cautious toward them, but I didn't see their figures today, it was a failure.

Since the water splashed onto soil, I had become full of mud.

"Yay, muddy Lulu."

"Hehen, mud make-up looks better than your normal face y'know~"

I wept as I was more vexed that I couldn't deny them more than getting myself muddied. It was a fact that people were gentler to me when I was covered with mud and my face couldn't be seen than when I was just simply soaked.

When I was washing my body near the well, Kuku came. She was with her usual sarcastic friends.

"Ara? What a waste of your special make-up."

"Right right, wouldn't it better if she wear mask anyway?"

"That's good! Kuku, you're a genius!"

The girls weren't using violence like Jido and Bado, but their words hurt me all the same. At a time like this, I wonder how would Arisa retaliate? If it was Tama-chan, she would likely throw mud balls toward those girls for their own make-up.

It was generally like these when during my childhood.

◇

When I was 9 years old, my mother took me to the castle together with her. I was to be the princess's playmate. It seemed that the fourth queen's daughter was quite a sickly person. Moreover, she was really hard to please, noble daughters couldn't keep her company for more than three days, so they turned to me.

Normally, for a commoner like me to meet a princess, I would have to take etiquette lesson for about a year first, but it seemed they gave up in 2-3 days, so the lesson was abbreviated.

"It's Lili's daughter this time? Mou, I've said many times that I don't need playmates, if they insist, then bring me a scholar or a bureaucrat instead."

What I heard from the other side of the door was a child voice with tired and proud adult words that didn't suit it. I'm not welcomed here either after all.

The princess that I met for the first time was a very beautiful girl with mysterious violet hair and pupils. Furthermore, her eyes were really calm like an adult.

Pushed by my mother, I awkwardly introduced myself, the princess glanced at me and then briskly stepped toward me and push up my bang. I always covered my ugly face with a bang so it wouldn't be seen.

I prepared myself for the abuse that the princess would throw at me. But the abuse was different from what I expected.

"Cih, this riajuu face, winners have it all since they're born."

"Arisa-sama, even though this girl can't be said to have superior look, she's a good girl that's calm at her age. Please don't hate her."

Riajuu face? I've never heard those words.

Arisa-sama leaned her neck to the side after hearing my mother's word and murmured, "Poor look?" That's the kindness of a mother. She couldn't really say that her own daughter was ugly.

"What are you saying? Lili. If you tell me that this bishoujo face is poor, that'd mean this country doesn't have any beauties you know?"

At this time, I had thought that Arisa's words were an indirect sarcasms, but she told me later that she was serious.

Thus, I became the playmate of the princess.

◇

The princess that I served was a slightly strange person.

She ordered the servants to cultivate a field on the castle's garden, and she went inside the library and treasure vault in the castle to read many difficult books. Even though she made her unusual clothes herself, she couldn't do embroidery or knitting, she had many imbalances like that. Moreover, she was also not good with social dancing and poem reciting.

"Did you look at the new playmate of the taboo princess?"

"I saw I saw, what's with that ugly girl."

"Hey, they'll scold you if you say that."

I heard such backbiting from the the maid's room. It seemed that taboo princess was about Arisa. Looked like, those violet hair and pupils were considered to be bad omen.

I didn't tell about it to anyone, but the women were gone in the next day. The princess said, "Fufun, it's impossible for malicious gossip to skip my sharp ears." It seemed there was a magic tool to hear far sounds, it was called voice pipe.

At the following day, princess Arisa told me a children story called "The Ugly Duckling".

Princess Arisa had told me many stories, but I liked this story the most

I wasn't as naive as to think that I would become like the swan in reality, but I thought I was allowed to dream a little.

◇

Hectic days continued after that.

What surprised me most was the fact that I was the older sister of princess Arisa from different mother. It seemed she heard it with that tool called voice pipe from the other maids' talks. It should had been a secret, but princess Arisa already knew about it.

"With this, there are 12 siblings. There are probably more if I look in the castle town. I'd hate a country without entertainment. That's right Lulu."

"Yes, what is it Arisa-sama."

"I'm banning the 'Sama'."

"Yes?"

"Like, I, said, when it's only the two of us, don't use it. Since we're sister, I'm banning the honorific."

The face of pri--no, Arisa which had turned away looked red.

At this day, we became sisters, no, the best of friends.

◇

Arisa wanted to do agricultural reform to make this country prosperous.

However, I was worried. The minister's son was supporting Arisa's agricultural reform, but from the gossip of the maids, it looked like he wasn't a decent human being.

"It's fine, men aren't trustworthy in the first place, but that kind profit-seeking type is surprisingly usable. Above all, this country only sees women as tools for giving birth. If I don't have a puppet like that then I wouldn't be able to meddle in the politics."

However, after this day, the cogwheels of our plan began to go out of order little by little.

The mountain died, monsters came out of the fertilizers, and the fields' harvests dropped sharply.

But, I personally was more worried about Arisa than the country. Even though she was called, "The Wise Salvation Princess" just the other day, now as if flipping hand, they called her, "Country Destroying Witch", or "Mad Princess".

Then the king finally confined her inside one of the spire in the castle. It seemed that our country had been occupied by another country, although I didn't know the detail since I was only looking after Arisa while being confined with her.

The kings and his companions were executed, and we became slaves.

Arisa was looking like a doll with her lifeless eye and lethargic condition. She's not like the usual stout-hearted Arisa, but she's still a 10 years old girl. It is not unreasonable.

The strength in Arisa eyes came back after a year, when we were moved to the royal villa from the prison, it came back a bit. In the evening with full moon, the royal capital sank into flame. The two of us ran away to the mountain. We were surviving while being frightened by the wolves sounds, endured starvations by eating nuts, and drank water collected with leaves.

When we ran out of strength on the highway among the mountains, we got caught by a passing slave trader. If we had not got caught at that time, we would probably die of starvation or fall victim to the wolves' fangs.

◇

"Guhehehehe~."

I felt cold shivers on my spine when I heard creepy voices from Arisa.

Aah! It seemed that the stout Arisa had finally reached her limit.

Even though I'm clumsy and good-for-nothing, an older sister is still an older sister.

I don't know what kind of person our master would be like, but I would protect Arisa until the end.

Even though I had such grim determination--

That Arisa, she was just laughing after finding her favorite type of young man! Mou, that Arisa, mou!

It was several days later that the young man became our master.

My first impression on that person is, "He looks like me."

He's not ugly like me, but his features are similar. His lines are slender, his colors are also not white, but black like me.

But, I don't think that he's as pretty as Arisa make him up to be. I wonder what does Arisa like from him?

◇

"It's quite tough."

"What is?"

I was surprised when I heard Arisa's story. That Arisa! She was crawling inside master's bed in nude herself to get his favor. She's too bold!

But, master didn't seem to touch Arisa. Master should be only 2-3 years apart from Arisa, it was strange that he didn't lay his hands on her when someone as beautiful as Arisa approached.

I wonder if master likes men?

◇

Today, I talked a lot about Arisa with master.

I noticed that I was talking too much in the middle, but I couldn't restrain myself as I didn't feel tense like I would with other men.

But, master listened me to the end without showing unpleasant face even once.

Furthermore!

Furthermore desu!

He didn't look disgusted from seeing my face.

It might be the first time this happened beside with Arisa.

It might only be my misunderstanding, but I felt like he was looking at me gently full of affection. Even if it was misunderstanding, it is fine.

Since the only one who could cook was Liza, I offered myself to help her. I also had things I could do. I would work hard to become something that was needed, not only as a freebie from Arisa.

<TLN: Like she's an extra Satou gets from buying Arisa.>

Ehehehe~.

I got master to praise me, "Tea made by Lulu is delicious."

This might possibly the first time I had been praised by a person.

◇

"Yes, listen to the sound well."

Impossible. It's impossible, master!

Y, you can't whisper so close to my ears.

Aah! I feel too happy, I would likely get a nosebleed. As a girl, I cannot live if that situation happen. I'll endure with spirit.

But, it was not a whisper of affection. I earnestly asked the secret of the really delicious steak that master had made yesterday.

But it was not the time to listen to the oil at all when I was being embraced from behind with our hands stuck together holding the frying pan.

Even so, I still managed to grill one somehow.

When I sampled the meat, even though it was absolutely no match against the one that master grilled, it was many times tastier than the one I made yesterday!

As a proof that I was not mistaken, the plate became empty in a blink of an eye.

◇

It was exposed to Arisa.

I wonder how did she knew that I was attracted to master. It's mysterious.

But, master is very popular.

Not only to Arisa, but to Pochi-chan and the others too.

Furthermore, this time, even the the elf princess!

"I, I will also work hard to gain your favor."

"Yes, yes, you're cute Lulu. However let's wait the favor until you refine yourself as a woman in 5 years okay."

Cute he said!

Just now, he said that I was cute right?!

Ah, I can die of happiness.

To think that the day I got called that so naturally would come, it was such an absurd thought even in a dream or a delusion.

Even though the rivals increased, we had got to share bed together, we even did "A~n" like lovers, it was full of happiness.

Becoming master's wife or mistress are too unrealistic of a dream, but if some kind of mistakes happen, I would bear master's baby.

When I talk about it to Arisa--

"It's alright Lulu! When I become the legal wife, I will absolutely make Lulu the second!"

Arisa is very reliable.

But, I can't keep relying on Arisa.

I can't match with my face no matter what, but I work hard every day to make my figure suit master's liking. I'm still doing [Bust-up Practice] that Arisa and Mia have given up in three days.

And also my cooking! I will improve my cooking to be equal for standing next to master.

And then, he would say "Lulu, you're cute." once again!

It's an audacious ambition, but I will absolutely make it comes true.

Intermission: Muno's Past

This is a saloon on the corner of the royal palace. It's dim even in midday due to the numerous thick curtains covering the light from outside, magic tools illuminate from below. Curtains are hanging from the roof and decorative plants are set to divide sofa sets as if to obstruct the views.

For that reason, the identity of the people in this place aren't known--That's how it is.

Furthermore, the gaps between each sofas are large, magic tools for changing voices are used and they talk in whisper to the point that the other person sitting on the next seat can barely hear it.

This is the place where gossips from all over Shiga kingdom are gathered.

It's an important place for the nobles to not only talk about scandals, but also to exchange informations revolving national defense that have been transmitted using magic.

◇

"Have you heard about it?"

One gentlemen sits down while greeting someone in secret.

Publicly, the person shouldn't be known, but everyone knows who's the one who can sit on that sofa set. They only pretend to not know.

"Is it about marquis Muno?"

"Oh, you're quick."

"Right now, everyone is talking about that story. Like how undeads are attacking Muno city."

"Half a day after the initial report from the royal palace emergency room, there's no more additional information, it's worrying."

"I can't imagine the elites of the marquis fall to something like undeads. They've probably been repulsed already, but it'd be a good opportunity to get the right of the marquis' territory depending on the damage."

"Well, everyone, please calm down. Why don't we let him tell us the latest information."

The high class people who have been talking turn toward an old man with good build.

Everyone are seemingly hungry of new informations, the buzz suddenly stops at once.

"Territory of marquis Muno has been defeated by the undeads army."

From that words, the bustling is revived from the silent.

"That can't be."

"They should have golem corps and even magician corps there."

"Moreover, they should had just bought a lot of tigerkin slaves from the weaselkin and made large battalions."

"They should have been one of the strongest five forces in this country."

"What actually happened?"

Their surprises are natural. Marquis Muno holds a very vast territory that produces many gold, silver, and even mithril and magic ores from their leading mines. Backed by that assets and various luxuries that even the king lack, the marquis had amassed armed forces that could even fight against the king's armies.

"We have to wait for more reports to understand what actually happens, we've only received the report that『The marquis capital has fallen』from the the birdkin of duke Oyugock's intelligence unit."

Silence dominates the room, but then the oldest gentleman who holds a cane starts to talk.

"I'm sorry but I have to go see my physician soon. Excuse me for leaving."

"Is that so, it's also the time for me to play with my gradnchildren."

"My chronic pain is aching..."

The older gentlemen are leaving their seats one by one, the only ones who remain in that place is the young gentleman who has brought the news and a middle-aged gentleman. Of course, the two understand that the words of the people who are leaving are just mere excuses.

"Everyone is shrewd for profit huh."

"The kingdom army is most likely going to depart for the extermination of the undeads. Since there are many way to profit from it if the campaign is large-scale, it can't be helped."

"Is it fine for you?"

"Yes, I've already arranged something in the house."

"As expected of the right-hand man of the majesty."

"Your excellency, prying for identity here is"

"Ah right, sorry. I'd like to get my hand on the list of nobles with no legitimate child from you, no, from a certain bureaucrat-dono, would he be willing to help?"

"That's wonderful. Other people's happiness are my happiness. I'd be glad to be the deliveryman."

And then, two months after he brought the informations, the largest gathering of kingdom army ever recorded in history departed to marquis Muno's territory.

◇

"Then, all relatives of marquis Muno have died of unnatural causes?"

"It doesn't end only in that. Earl Bobi that had married with the marquis' little sister and all their children, every one of them die from a drowning accident."

"Is that true? I've also heard that misfortunes have befallen earl Muzuki?"

After the triumphal return of the kingdom army who has gone on campaign to the marquis Muno's territory, the whole family of marquis Muno have died unnaturally, no one remains from either direct or collateral family.

Thereupon, for the sake of succeeding the marquis, it seems that the nobles have sent out the one who have married into the marquis family, but they all die of accidents or mysterious illness, such reports are coming in succession to the royal capital.

Such stories also appears many times among their talks.

"If it's like this, the one who will inherit the territory might be marquis Ashinen or earl Fudai who don't have territory of their own."

"No, the territory of marquis Muno is too wide. It's possible to divide it into 4 or 5 territories."

"Oh dear, right about this time, there should be a lot of nobles who are raising money for the bribes."

"No wonder there are a lot of applicant for loan this month."

And then, half a year after this day, blood relations of marquis Muno up until the seventh degree of kinship have all died out. The rumor among the people is that it's the curse of the undead king.

◇

"Fuh, after marquis Ashinen, even earl Fudai died of unnatural death huh."

"Putting aside earl Fudai who has died of drowning in his house's pond, isn't the marquis Ashinen who has been killed by a spear in the downtown area not an unnatural death?"

"However, the guards who were with him didn't even notice when he was kidnapped in an instant, wasn't he fallen to the hand of the undead king?"

"Oy oy, nobles, of all people, shouldn't believe the irresponsible rumor of the street people."

"Well, even if we put aside the rumor, with this, there have been five influential nobles who would have succeeded Muno's family that dies of unnatural death consecutively."

"How many candidates remain now?"

"There is none. Every one of them has withdrawn."

Everyone, including the one who asked that question, already knew. The atmosphere is full of sarcastic smiles of people with obstructed faces.

"Even though they had bribed, no, spent entertainment expense to the brink of bankruptcy, they withdrew because they got cold feet from the rumor huh."

"No, two people among the five were active labyrinth explorers during their youth. It might be wise for them to withdraw."

Afterwards, a lot of lower honorary nobles full of ambition instigated by their guardian for their own profit also appeared, but the ones who bore the full brunt weren't only the lower nobles, even the guardian nobles died of unnatural death, so the candidates completely dried out.

And then, as the reward for the subjugation of the undead city, the mines of marquis Muno are given to the adjacent lords, starting with duke Oyugock.

Since there are a lot of dissatisfied voices from the knights who have participated in the battle, it's decided that the for the next 10 years, from the yields produced by mines that the feudal lords have obtained, 20% of it are to be given to the king, and the remaining half are to be shared among the knights.

Due to this, the value of marquis Muno's territory has fallen sharply.

With the profit gone and only risk remain, years where Muno's territory is without a feudal lord keeps piling.

◇

"Everyone, do you know that the feudal lord for the undead city has been decided?"

"Oy oy, you, don't call it undead city."

"That's right, there should be around 20-30 thousands people who live there."

"Oh, I apologize."

The young noble receives a cup of wine from a maid and wets his mouth with it.

"So it should be either the fifth prince or the honorary Earl Toldora, which one is it?"

"Since it'd be bad if a member of royal family death, it would be honorary earl Toldora right?"

The young noble who has started the matter only listens to the talks of the nobles around amusingly without opening his mouth.

Seemingly impatient, a middle-aged noble representing other nobles urges him to continue the story. However, the name that the young noble lets out is unexpected by anyone.

"Does everyone know honorary baron Donan?"

"Now then, that's an unfamiliar name."

"No, wait, I've heard it somewhere."

"Wasn't he from the branch family of duke Oyugock."

"Ah, that good-natured small man huh. He gave a self-compiled hero's book for the celebration of our seven year olds daughter's birthday."

"Ah, that man who's famous for liking hero huh."

"However, I don't remember him being a brave person who would risk his life by becoming a feudal lord like that?"

Yes, from what they remember, the incompetent man is fit to be called 'forgettable'. He didn't look like a man who had ambition to raise himself at all.

He was a straight harmless man--that's the common view among them.

"That would mean that he was likely recommended by duke Oyugock."

"But, the guardian nobles were dying too. Do you think that cautious duke Oyugock would do such thing?"

"That's right, since the mines have been distributed to the neighboring lords, marquis Muno's territory is only large without any specialized industry from its people, it has been reduced to poverty. There shouldn't be any profit for the excellency duke to be involved now."

It can't be helped that they're puzzled. Excluding the area directly under the king, the duke holds the largest territory. And it's not just vast, it's also the leading territory that produces things like rice, salt, silk and glasswork. Moreover, he even got himself the mines from marquis Muno territory and the right to deal with the set mines that the dwarves have occupied. No one can think why he would want a territory that's only wide now.

"Actually, about that honorary baron Donan, he has been living in the city of the marquis Muno territory for the past five years."

"What? Weren't even honorary nobles and lower nobles killed in Muno city?"

"That's right, the only nobles in Muno city now is the associate baron and his family."

"He's bringing his family to such place huh."

"It looks like they're people ignorant of the world."

"Fumu, rather than incompetent, his insensitivity can't be saved."

"Since his wife is a commoner, their noble blood is thin, that might be the reason."

Thus, in the following year, honorary baron Donan succeeds the Muno title, and becomes a baron inaugurated as the feudal lord.

◇

Let's change the place, to the baron main building inside the castle. 10 years after the inauguration as the baron, it's the mansion that has finally been completed with the assistance of duke Oyugock.

"Then, the marriage for the princess is indeed...

"Yeah, since the ceremony was postponed for many times, I had anticipated it, but a messenger with official refusal notice had come."

"Good grief, how deplorable. If they wanted to refuse, then the fiance-dono should had come himself."

The baron soothes the consul Jii who gets mad for his sake. He lost his anger after the surprising outlet of the anger earlier.

"It can't be helped, Soruna doesn't look to be interested anyway, and even their ages are 10 years apart."

"However, if this keeps up, her marriageable age would pass."

The words is unreserved since they've been together for many years, the baron smiles wryly.

"I don't mind even if it's a person from the street if Soruna has chosen."

"We can't let that happen. As he would inherit this territory, he should not be lower than vassals that have served master for generations. Moreover, it's also important to marry the neighboring lords. You can't be negligent in this matter."

Even while nodding to Jii's words, the baron has halfway given up about the engagements of his daughters. Until the time when he was inaugurated as the feudal lord, there were more than 100 nobles who died while aiming to become this territory's lord. Furthermore, it didn't only befall to the person himself, sometimes even the parents until the grandchildren terribly fell victims.

Even if they are escaping from their own difficulty, there is no guarantee that they would not fall into calamity if they marry the daughter of the cursed territory's lord. There are many nobles who think so.

Even the partner who had declined this time had only become the fiancee because he was promised to become the lord at the beginning. In fact, lady Karina is going to be an adult next year, but she still doesn't have a fiancee even now.

It's five years later that lady Soruna meet her new fiancee, and a year before the worst calamity visit baron Muno's territory.

Intermission: Muno Castle's Servant

"Then there is no objection, we will change to this clothes that Arisa-dono has proposed starting this spring."

After the head maid said so, the 20 maids inside the room cheered in joy at once.

But, that can't be helped I think. It's a brilliantly cute clothes that can't be compared to the dark grey plain work clothes that we have worn until now.

"Umm, head maid."

When I look at the person who's asking, not only me, everyone's faces stiffen.

It's Meeda who's always saying unneeded things at bad times.

"Is there a budget to arrange such expensive looking clothes for everyone's share? If there's an extra budget, then I'd be happier with bonus."

I'd like money too, but there's no way that bonus would come out.

After the head maid glares at Meeda with eyes like ices, she replies seriously.

"There is no extra budget."

What'd you say?!

"Chevalier Satou-sama will bear the expense for the production of one set of maid uniforms including the matching aprons for everyone."

Uhya, if it's for the shares of 20 people, I wonder how many gold coins it'd be?

I've had a guess after seeing Pochi-chan and the other's hairs and equipments, but he's really rich huh. What does he see in this kind of poor noble's place that he'd serve under it?

I guess he's really aiming for Karina-sama's knockers?

Get destroyed you big-breasts lovers.

◇

"What's today's dinner I wonder~."

"Haa, I'm hungry~."

My coworker, Talna, and me enter the dining room. Since the work in the morning got dragged on, our lunches were also delayed.

Usually our meals consist of only boiled potatoes and salted soup, but it can't be helped that we're looking forward to it for the past week.

Pochi-chan and the others said, "Prey nano desu~.", and went on to hunt birds and other beasts. They put professional hunters to shame, but are all demi-humans this amazing?

"Oh, Talna, Erina. You've come at just the right time."

The master of the kitchen, Gelt-obasan, called us.

Oh?! If she's here that would mean that!

"Don't tell me, chevalier-sama is using the kitchen?"

"That's right, looks like he's doing trial and error to make a dish called Karaage or something."

Yes!

Talna's and my eyes meet, savoring in joy.

It's unbearable if we get driven out of the dining room if we make noise here.

"Hey hey, Gelt-san."

"I know, wait a bit more."

So even Gelt-san is also looking forward to it.

When the door opens, chevalier-sama's slave girl is carrying a plate with small dark brown lumps on it. What's this girl's name again? Was it Lili. Her face is a shame, but she's a good girl with no strange behavior.

"Thanks to Gelt-san's advice, it has come out well. Umm, although there are some from chevalier's trial mixed in, if you'd like."

"Yeah, those starving maids over there will take care of it, no problem."

"Yup, yup, if it's chevalier-sama's dish, I'd eat it no matter how much~"

"Yep, yep, I'm envious with you girls who could eat it anytime."

I stab the karaage with a fork and carry it in front of my mouth. It's a bit bold of me since it's the first time I've seen this kind of dish, but if it's chevalier's dish, it must be delicious without doubt.

I put it in my mouth and bite it. Hot. But, it's delicious. It's different than grilled or steamed meat. What's this I wonder, I think the inside is chicken meat, but I'm not sure what's the crispy thing outside. But, it's delicious.

When I'm thinking of eating one more and put the fork on the plate, there's already nothing remaining.

"Erina, you sure can eat well."

"Mou, Erina, I want to eat a bit more too."

Oops, I thought of eating just one more, but I had already finished half of the plate myself.

Lili is giggling. That laughter must be because she's thinking that my way of eating is similar to another person. I've thought so.

◇

"That's why the shortcut to increase the earning is by gathering population!"

"Even if you say that, what should we do about food supply."

"We're back to our talk earlier for that. Let's readjust the land on this uselessly wide city, and put farms inside it like Seryuu city. According to master's survey, it should be possible to make fields on 70% of the city."

I'm putting tea and tea-cake sweets on a place that doesn't disturb lady Arisa and consul Nina who are engaging in heated discussion.

Still, this girl really doesn't look like a 10 years old.

To talk politics in equal term with Nina-sama, she's surely a genius. Even Nina-sama and Baron-sama call her with [Dono] honorific even though she's chevalier's slave. On top of that, it seems that the prototype for the new maid uniform is made by her, amazing person is amazing in anything. God is unfair.

"How long does that man intend to sleep? Arisa-dono, aren't you working your master too much?"

"No way, we sleep together even today."

Dangerous, I almost made a sound when I put down the cup.

What? That person is sleeping together with this child. To think that his range isn't limited to the beautiful blond wife with big breasts, but also to this small girl. That's unexpected.

◇

"Erina, you're backing away. Talna, don't hold back."

Today, we're training together with new recruits inside the city. Talna and me were originally soldiers, but they were searching for people who could stand up against thieves from the baron's army, so we changed jobs to become maid and guards for the ladies.

I wonder if it's because of that that I don't really feel sad to hear that baron army is almost annihilated. If I didn't change job, I would had become zombie and ended up flattened on the sole of the giants.

"Tou! nano desu."

"Nyu~ naive~?"

In a slightly separate place, Pochi-chan and Tama-chan are having a match with wooden swords.

Pochi-chan's charging speed is amazing, but Tama-chan who could avoid it is also amazing. If it's 1-on-1 Sir Zotor is stronger indeed, but if it's 2-on-1, they'd likely win. Even though they're so cute, as expected of beastkin.

Well, these two are still far.

"Well then, here I go."

"Yosh, come at me anytime."

The scale tribe woman thrusts her spear together with red glow while screaming full of fighting spirit. Sir Zotor wards it off with his shield and the spear slips away.

The scalekin woman seemingly has read that and attacks with the other end of the spear aiming at Sir Zotor's arm, but it's repelled with his sword.

The level of these two's fight is too different I can't make it into reference. Or rather, why are they using magic weapons during training?

"I've found you! I'll have you fight me today!"

Ah, again.

The way Karina-ojousama expresses her love is really childish.

Chevalier-sama who is cheering for Pochi-chan and the others suffers from the challenge to battle.

Well, those breasts that sway as they pleases are really popular among male soldiers.... Mou, please just fall off.

Karina-sama's movement is different than from the past, it's already not in the realm of human. It looks like it's the effect of an amazing magic tool called artifact or something.

But then, the chevalier who's always able to avoid those attacks, isn't he actually quite amazing?

◇

While being healed from the sound of reed flute from somewhere, I am doing the laundry. I don't know who's playing, but it's a nice melody.

Together with the melody, nice sweet smells arrives.

Kuh, please stop the smell since I'm starving.

When I turned around, there's an elf girl who's holding a reed flute on one hand. She's one of chevalier-sama's mistress if I'm not mistaken. Even though that person looks harmless, he's keeping seven wives and mistress for himself.

Something smells good, it seems that it's drifting from the bread-like thing that this girl is holding on her other hand.

"Drool."

I wipe it while panicking after the elf girl points it out.

I'm sorry~ it's a really delicious smell after all.

While saying "Nn.", the elf girl presents me a thin bread. I don't know what you're saying with those few words. I wonder if all elves are this taciturn?

If she didn't continue with "Mouthful", I wouldn't have understood what she was saying until the end.

I bite the corner of the bread while being careful not to open my mouth too wide.

De-li-sh--!

What's this. It's too delicious. Although the karaage back then were also delicious. I don't understand how should I express this. It's soft and sweet, ah, I'd like to know more vocabularies. It seems that it's called a crepe.

"Thank you, it's very delicious. It was chevalier-sama who made it right?"

"Nn."

I see, so it's really that person.

Should I seriously try to marry into the rich household? I'm fine with being the eighth.

◇

"Erina, are you free now?"

"Yup, I only have to fold these laundries."

"Then put that aside for now, please get the carriage out."

"Un, it's fine. Which official is going out?"

"It seems that chevalier-sama has some businesses in the city."

Ooh, this is a favor from heaven!

"Leave it to me, I'll have the carriage ready at the entrance quick."

"Please do."

I was naive.

He's going to be with his wife when he's going out alright. Satou-sama is not alone, he's together with Nana-sama, the wife.

Unfortunately, the plan to marry into the rich doesn't seem to be able to be realized soon.

Intermission: Dream of Summer Day

<TLN: This chapter is kind of surreal. You've been warned.>

That is dream, things that happened a long time ago, dream of distant day.

◇

"You too, let's go play together."

I was interested with a girl of the same age who was looking bashfully from behind the offering box of the shrine, so I gathered my courage and invited that girl to play.

"My name is Ichirou. How about you?"

"I am •••"

"Hee~, the name really sounds like a shrine girl."

I lead the girl by hands, taking her to the shrine ground where my cousins are playing. At first she was quiet, but after we began playing song and hide-and-seek, she lets out bright smile that wouldn't lose to her beautiful red hair while laughing.

Fun time quickly passes. The sun is already hidden between the mountains.

"Everyone, let's go home soon. You too, •••, let's go home together until the middle."

"My house is here."

The girl said so while going back to the shrine.

I had certainly heard the girl's name, but I couldn't remember it no matter what.

◇

"Right at that time, the prince appears, and defeat the bad dragon with one swing of his sword."

"I don't like that story."

Looks like she didn't like the picture book that I tried hard to read.

The girl who sulks a bit plays with her with reddish-orange hair while pouting.

"This shrine is dedicated for a dragon god. Her name is Mizuhana-hime."

The girl sticks out her chests while looking proud.

This shrine worships a god called Ama-no-Mizuhana-hime.

"Then, then. Mizuhana-hime crossed the rainbow and came here. She was angry at a young man of the village who went to see her dancing on top of the mountain of this shrine."

"Why was she angry?"

The girl pouts because she can't remember it.

"Uu~ dunno. She was angry surely because it was not good! Don't look at the practice she said."

"She's shy huh."

"Yes, she must be!"

The girl who awkwardly folds her slender arms is nodding as if convinced by her own story.

"And then! The angry goddess-sama turned into a dragon and flew to the sky, bringing rain that continued for three days and night."

"Eeh~, wouldn't it just fine to forgive him just by poking his forehead."

"Uu~ it's alright! Because this is a legend!"

Seems that excessive retort is forbidden.

"The young man who saw the dancing on top of this mountain desperately apologized to the goddess. And then, the goddess forgave and married the young man."

I don't understand it.

What? that rapid development. The story must've been shortened huh.

◇

Inside the shrine's office, we're eating watermelons while listening to the cicada's sound until our ears hurt. Eating energetically to the point that it ruins her face which is slightly older than me, she bites the watermelon and spouts out the seeds.

"Hey, you're a girl, so get it in your hands and put it back on the plate."

"Ichirou is stupid! It's more delicious to eat watermelons like this! Only children like us are allowed to do this. Stop saying those garish words."

She overreacts while messing with the green hair that has the same color as watermelons on her shoulders.

The girl is always energetic.

◇

Night at the shrine ground, we're enjoying fireworks while being accompanied with the smell of mosquito repellent.

I throb when I see the girl who wears yukata looking like an adult with her light violet hair knitted and put on the nape of her neck, making her looks amorous.

"Do you know Ichirou-kun. The deity enshrined in this shrine, Ama-no-Mizuhana-hime. She married a young man a long time ago. However, since he was a human, he passed away before long. When he was dying Mizuhana-hime promised him. 『When you're reincarnated someday I will come back to your side』, she said, isn't it romantic?"

The girl whispers as if enraptured while looking at me in sitting position.

I throb looking at the girl who's far older than me showing a mischievous child-like smile.

"Does something like reincarnation even happen?"

"It does."

The girl firmly affirmed so, replying my question.

"But, it's no good if he's just reincarnated. The life span of gods are different than people. They'd be separated again."

"Isn't it fine if she just makes the person she likes become a god?"

"Even gods aren't almighty enough to grant divinity as they like."

Her words are unusually passionate for the cool her.

"It's not enough with the soul of a single person, it'd need a lot more."

I'm a bit scared with those words.

◇

I'm bringing the dog called Satou that grandpa keeps as a pet while climbing the stairs to the shrine ground.

It's a dog with strange name. Seemed that the person who gave the dog to grandpa is called Satou-san. It's really like my family to give the dog name like that.

I pass through the shrine gate with no red stone and enter the shrine ground.

"Ou! Been waiting, Satou."

"I've said to call me Ichirou when it's not in the game."

"Fufun, I was calling the dog."

"Is that right, then let's not do the game today and play outside with the dog."

When I tease the girl, her bossy attitude breaks apart and she gets flustered.

"W, wait, if we're not there, who would save Trojan Union from Akaia Empire."

"Okay okay, let's look for a shade for the place to play."

We sit in line on the shrine's open veranda with a nice shade at the shrine ground. Satou the dog that got his leash unfastened is running around the shrine ground without losing to the summer's heat.

I take out two portable consoles from my bag--I pass one of the Jiopoke to the girl.

The girl loves to hear the clicky sounds from when the buttons are moved. She always have fun by clicking it with her small fingers before the power is turned on. We connect the two game consoles with link cable and turn on the power.

"Oh, it begins."

The game is a space war simulation game with Trojan War as the motif.

Despite being a product for children, it has the concept of searching for enemies and supply replenishment.

"Muu, another surprise attack from outside the range of enemy search. That's why you're Satou nanoja."

<TLN: She refers herself with "warawa" and almost always ends her sentences with "Ja".>

She said something really unreasonable.

"Then, I'll let you use『Map Exploration』once on the next map as handicap."

"Yay, nanoja. Might as well let me use『Meteor Bullets』then."

"Eeh,『Meteor Bullets』is forbidden. The situation would get reversed instantly."

"That's the good part! Just once. Kay? It's fine with using it once~ I want to use it."

I eventually give up to the girl who pleas until her indigo hair got disheveled. Even the lord of the manor can't win against crying child they say. I don't know what lord of manor though.

"Fuhahaha, take this nanoja."

The girl happily use『Meteor Bullets』and annihilate my main force.

And then, her face looks overjoyed when she captures my main battleship who has lost all its forces.

"Aah,『Meteor Bullets』is satisfying. Thanks to it, I even get myself the battleship as a souvenir."

The girl is in high spirit, but when she takes the battleship to her field, it changes into shock.

This game takes after Trojan War as motif. Of course, that includes the [Trojan Horse] tactic.

"Uwah, robots are coming out of the battleship. Ah, even though that carrier has just been completed. No don't, don't attack that factory, no~~~."

After the robots destroyed the supply equipments inside her army, my main force that I had hidden attacked. Although it's close, it's somehow my win in the end.

"Uu, you're cruel. You don't hold back against a small girl."

"Look, isn't it rude to not fight with all my might in a battle."

"Fuhn nanoja, I hate Satou. I'll put a curse so you'll always be with flat-chests for all your life."

That's a harsh curse even for a joke. Kyonyuu idol is the most popular girl in my class.

Let's take out another game here and change the conversation.

"Yes, yes, shall we play different game next?"

"What kind?"

"This is called RPG, it's a game that have you start weak, let you get stronger by defeating small fries, and defeat the demon lord in the end."

It's a blunt description if I do say so myself.

"Ooh, defeating demon lord huh! That's great! By the way, can we defeat demon gods?"

"There are various types of hidden boss in this game, and since there are gods and demon gods too if I'm not mistaken, we should be able to."

"That's good! Okay, let's do it Satou! Quickly start it!"

Her tension is always high, but today it's unshakable. I keep the girl company playing game until nightfall that day.

Play game only one hour a day, you could not possibly do that right.

◇

The girl is reading a thick book on the bank of the small fountain at the corner of the shrine ground.

"Good morning, what are you reading today?"

"Umu, there was this [God is Dead] writing when I was half asleep so it perked up my interest."

"Heeh, can gods die?"

"Umu, they can. However, it's just dying. If you leave them alone they will get revived. Since gods are undying."

<TLN: Same kanji as Satou's immortal/undying.>

"Can you say that as dying? What are other state of deaths?"

"Well, they do die physically. Once they die, gods become spirit bodies, they prepare their own soul, make new body, and complete the revival. Although if it's high-ranking gods, then they don't need go through such annoying procedure. Even if they die, they would get instantly revived since they're universally recognized in the world."

There, the girl laughs, 'kufufu'.

"It's just like you."

My eyes become round toward that unexpected words.

"Yes, you are Ichirou no matter what the era or the worlds. Omnipresence as if exceeding the space-time, no matter how different I am, we always get in contact and become friend."

Before I could hear the meaning of her words, the voice of her mother calling her can be heard.

"Fumu, it's time."

The girl's mysterious blue hair turns black as if it's dripping ink.

It looks like I'm the only one who see her hair in different color.

And then, the girl with black hair talks to me politely as if she's stranger like usual.

"Hey, Suzuki-kun. If it's fine with you, would you see my Kagura dance?"

Kagura dance? Ah, Kagura dance huh.

She bashfully pulls the edge of my shirt, and I, who's charmed by her shy smile, follow her to the stage inside the shrine.

The girl changes her clothes to shrine maiden attire and begins to dance on the stage.

"Hikaru's dance is getting better right?"

"Yes, she looks like a professional Shrine maiden-san."

"Ufufu, it may not be a job since she's not getting money, but that girl is a genuine shrine maiden. The dance is for the sake of descending god to the body. Look well and burn it to your memory, Satou. It will be useful for you someday."

The one who sits beside me who is concentrating in watching the dance; I don't know if it's the girl's mother, or if it's something else.

Rather than listening to such enigmatic words, I watch the dance of my childhood friend with my whole body.

◇

I was watching my dream from bird's eye perspectives.

Even though I can't remember her name anymore, my childhood friend should have had black hair. Her age should be the same as me too.

My past memory must be mixed with the galge that had shrine stages I made myself during the college year. It's normal in a game to have characters with such colorful hairs.

However, I wonder what's with the line that has nothing to do with games?

『Forget it Ichirou, until the time it's needed. Put memories about us deep inside your heart.』

Overlapping voices of many girls whispered to me.

My consciousness sinks into deep sleep hearing those nostalgic voices.

Intermission: Satou's House Name

"House name is it?"

I was called to Nina-san's office to have me decide the house name for myself as I had been granted honorary knight.

"Isn't honorary noble title only applied for one generation? Is house name necessary?"

"Yes, it's certainly only for one generation, but there are surprising amount of honorary noble house which continue to produce more honorary nobles successively."

"Even though honorary nobles are only limited for one generation, most of them are wealthier than fallen nobles or poor nobles. They could pay for education of their children, and depending on the territory, one could buy titles with money."

Arisa who always hang around Nina-san's room during the day joins the conversation between her documents work.

"It is like that. If it continues for 10 generations, then your house would be bestowed normal chevalier or baronet title."

That's long.

"It's impossible to decide immediately right? We'll do it in 2-3 days, so decide carefully during that time."

"I recommend Tachibana."

If I'm not mistaken, the family name of Arisa past life is Tachibana.

"I'll refrain from that."

"Right, I believe there's already a chevalier called Tachibana. Please check if a name is usable for your house name or not on Yuyurina the civil official. She's more knowledgeable about it than me since she's studied them in royal capital."

"I understand, if I get the candidates to some extents, I'll check on her."

I've talked to Yuyurina-san several times before, she's a calm and taciturn official with brown braided hair. I was vigilant since she was flat, but fortunately the flag wasn't raised.

Since I catch the sight of lady Karina walking on the corridor toward here, I say my farewell to Nina-san and proceed to leave the room.

"Satou-dono, I understand that you're running away from lady Karina, but you're still a noble even at the furthest end. Stop going out from the balcony."

"I'm sorry, Nina-sama. Please overlook it."

I jump off the balcony of Nina-san's office located on the third floor.

In exchange, I hear the voice of Nina-san getting angry at lady Karina who has just gotten there. She came in without knocking again huh. What an obstinate person.

◇

Well then, house name huh. The proper one would be Suzuki, and I would also change my name to Ichirou Suzuki. However, that would be the same as declaring myself as a Japanese, and it's probably safer to not do that.

If I'm to take one from my titles, if it's god slayer, then how about [Kamisaki], or [Kanzaki]?

Satou Kanzaki

It's not bad, but it'll be hard to answer Arisa if she asks about the origin of the name.

Then, from dragon slayer, let's try to take [Ryu] word, or Dragon if it's in western style shall we?

Satou Ryu

Satou Ryuzaki

Satou Dragon

Satou Dragonslayer

Satou Slayer

Not quite there.

I've thought of using hero's name from games, but since there are people who would understand where the inspiration comes from, like Arisa or that Saga empire's hero, it's difficult.

How about using holy swords' names?

Satou Excalibur

Satou Caliburn

Satou Durandal

Satou Longinus

Something's not right.

What about the name from Japanese katana.

Satou Kotetsu

Satou Muramasa

Satou Kikuichimonji

They don't sounds right. Or rather it feels like combining modern world with period drama... those are rejected.

Hah, maybe Satou Satou is good enough~

Not good, I've hit the roadblock.

If this continues, I'll come up with a weird name. I'll go and consult this with other people to change the mood.

◇

"Fa-me~?"

"Turtles are delicious nodesu!"

<TLN: House name=kamei, turtles=kame.>

I asked Pochi and Tama since they were the closest from where I was, but they didn't even understand the meaning of [House Name].

The two are sitting beside lady Soruna while eating rice crackers shaped like bones. Recently, beside the time when they're training, they're always getting snacks from either lady Soruna in the baron living room, or the maid-san in the waiting room. You'll get fat you know?

"House name is it? Alright then, it's fine to use Donan name if you marry

Karina."

Lady Soruna said so mischievously. Looks like that name is the one baron-san has used before succeeding Muno name.

Satou Donan.

It's not bad, but if it comes with lady Karina, I'll pass.

If she gets a bit calmer, I feel like she could become a friend, but right now she's an acquaintance at best. Of course, I won't say something impossible like her becoming ladylike.

"I will refrain since that sounds dreadful."

"Oh my, Karina's future is rocky huh."

I get out of the room while the lady is giggling.

◇

"I recommend Nagasaki. It was the name of my previous master."

"How about Kishreshgalza? It is the name of my family, there shouldn't be anyone who call themselves so."

"Bornean."

Those are remarks from Nana, Liza and Mia in turns.

Satou Nagasaki.

Satou Kishreshgalza.

Satou Bornean.

Nope.

Or rather, Liza, and Mia, aren't those your family names?

"What are you guys talking about?"

Lulu who has just come back to the room greets. Her eyes are shining when she hears about the decision of my house name.

"Oh my! House name is it! How about Kubooku?"

I believe Kubooku is the name of Arisa's and Lulu's kingdom.

"As expected, it'll be bad if I use Kubooku. It'll look like I'm picking a fight with the country that has invaded Kubooku."

"Then.... Ah, no, it's nothing."

Lulu who seemed to have thought of something stopped halfway. When I urge her to tell me, the name [Watari] comes out.

"It was the family name of my grandmother. She was from far away country, but the country where I was born forbade anyone besides nobles to have family name, so it wasn't used by anyone."

Satou Watari.

That sounds like Satori.

When I tell Lulu that I'll put it to candidate list, the other three are booing, so I also put the names from the three to the list. Liza wasn't saying any complaint, but I could feel it from her atmosphere.

◇

"How about asking Yuyurina-dono? She should know many kinds extinct house names y'know?"

I asked knight Zotor and retainer Hauto, and although there weren't any good name that came out, I was told about a person that I could rely instead.

I check on the map and head toward where lady Yuyurina is.

She's in the dining room.

"Haus? Hausnemisit?"

"I'm sorry to disturb you during your meal."

"That's right chevalier-sama. In the first place, servant's dining room isn't somewhere you should often step your foot into."

I called out Yuyurina-san who had stuffed her mouth full like a hamster, but I was immediately scolded by the head-maid who was nearby.

Head-maid-san said that if a noble came close to servants' area, they would get nervous and wouldn't be able to get works done. I don't understand nobles. If it's a company, won't the executives use staff canteen?

"I-have-found-you."

Haah, someone's troublesome has come. I've thought that she would come a bit later, but it seems she's taken a shortcut. I had noticed her, but I wasn't able to run away since I was being lectured by head-maid-san.

"Now! Let's have a match like usual desuwa! I'll get a hit on you today!"

Lady Karina takes a stance while declaring so.

She's getting pretty good in this one week. Maybe due to the grappling experience with me, she's acquired [Fighting] skill level 1.

Of course, we haven't ever actually fight during all this time.

"Karina-sama! Please consider the place!"

Head-maid-san thundered off. Lady Karina, you should have been more aware of your surrounding. She's a relative of Toruma (Ossan) in that regard.

In the end, I'm not able to use names from extinct nobles from what I've heard from Yuyurina-san. It looks like I need permission from Crest Parliament on the Royal Capital to use them.

◇

"So, have you decided?"

"I've not found a good one."

"Well, it is something that will follow you for the rest of your life. One can't decide on it so fast huh."

I haven't decided on the house name after the promised three days. There are Yuyurina-san who has come to deliver some documents to Arisa, and somehow, lady Karina in Nina-san's room.

"What~? You're puzzling over house name? Then, I have a good one in mind."

"What kind of name is it?"

"Hmm~ what-should-I-do-I-wonder."

Lady Karina is being pretentious. Annoying.

"Nina-san, I'm sorry, but please wait for some days more."

"It can't be helped huh."

"Then, if you haven't decided after two more days, it's Tachibana, alright."

Arisa, you really want to make my family name Tachibana huh?

"Wait~ please don't ignore me?"

"I'm sorry, I've forgotten."

She's not easily discouraged huh.

"How about Pendragon? It's the name of hero-sama. Orion Pendragon-sama."

"Isn't that a fictional character?"

"That's right. He's the hero from the story I love. It's a heroic story about a hero who goes on a journey riding on a dragon, surpasses seven trials of the gods, and finally beats the demon lord."

The story of king Arthur mixed with Greek myth.

"He's riding a dragon is he."

"Yes, and it's not a Wyvern, but a Welsh dragon."

I think the father of king Arthur is Pendragon. Was he a hero who had slain a dragon?

It may be unexpectedly good. I have Excalibur anyway, I might change name to Arthur, like Arthur Pendragon.

Afterwards, I was really troubled with the house name matter for two days straight.

◇

"Then, let's begin. ■■ Name Order.『Satou Pendragon』."

＞[Name Order Skill Acquired]

I got a new name and name order skill from Yuyurina-san.

After that, I confirm on the Yamato Stone, and a new ID is prepared for me. Unlike the one for commoner, it's a silver plate with the letters engraved. I'm told that I need to have it casted with fixture magic in duke's territory later.

This time, I had changed the value on companion column before I touched Yamato Stone.

I increased my level and skills as to make it looked like I could support from behind, even if a bit unreliably and moved a bit fast. I've consulted Arisa about this on the day before.

"Fufufu, Karina Pendragon doesn't sound so bad."

I've heard dangerous remark, but let's ignore it.

"Arisa Pendragon sounds like Arthur, but the nuance is good."

Arisa is grinning, making her mouth looks like a wave.

"Ehehehe~ it'd be nice if I get to be called Lulu Pendragon someday."

Lulu, even you huh.

Of course, Lulu were only speaking to herself. If I didn't have [Straining Ears] skill I wouldn't hear it.

"Pochi Pendragon nanodesu."

"Tama Pendragon~?"

Pochi and Tama are congratulating while running around me.

"Mwuu, Bornean."

"Master, you're splendid."

"Master. Master Pendragon. Which one should I use to call you?"

Mia doesn't seem like she's given up yet. Beside her, Liza is saying something like a guardian would.

I answer, "Just master is fine.", to Nana's question.

"Then, chevalier Satou Pendragon, please take care of me from now on."

"Yes, viscount Nina Rottol."

Nina-san offers her hand, and we shake hands. This is the first time I know that there's a custom for handshakes in this world.

While gripping my hand, Nina-san gives me further homework.

"Next, you have to decide on your crest before you depart."

It's crest this time huh...

On the following day, I take lessons for socializing with high-class people from the baron and butlers, and heraldry from Yuyurina-san.

It goes without saying that I've gotten [Social] and [Heraldry] skills during those times.

Name: Satou Pendragon

Tribe: Human

Level: 30

Affiliation: Territory of Baron Muno of Shiga Kingdom

Occupation: None

Rank: Chevalier

Title: None

Skill:

[Magic Art]

[Evasion]

[Training]

[Blacksmith]

[Woodcraft]

[Cooking]

[Arithmetic]

[Estimation]

[Social]

[Heraldry]

Reward and Punishment:

[Medal of Sapphire of Baron Muno Territory]

[First Rank of Baron Muno Army]

[Medal of Honor of Muno Citizens]

I've set these parameters on my companion column.

They're abnormally higher than the one on the ID from Seryuu city, but since I have not shown it when I go inside Muno city, it's probably fine.

I make it level 30; being higher than average so I won't be make light of and yet not so high as to be feared.

Since I've been seen doing blacksmithing and woodworking in the wagon, I've added them so it wouldn't look strange.

I've also added cooking since the servants have seen me made various things.

Social and Heraldry are noble-like, so I've added them.

The two medals from baron territory seem to be justified for saving the territory. Seems that either of the medals are only given for someone who has done outstanding things.

The last medal is given to me by the influential people from the city.

Intermission: Lord's Secret

"Baronet Leon Donan, over here."

"Yes."

<TLN: I've mistranslated Donan as Donajun and as a honorary baron, he's called Donan and a baronet, sorry.>

At the center of the chapel near the royal castle that his majesty has lead me to, there's a crystal-like thing with 20 sides shining blue light while floating.

His majesty is waiting in front of that floating crystal.

"Leon, this is a City Core."

--City Core?

I stare at the City Core as if I'm charmed.

"This is the reason that makes a king and governing lords different than other nobles."

"...Reason, is it?"

His majesty solemnly nods at my parroting words of question.

"That's right. The City Core draws abundant magical power from The Source, it's an artifact that exist for the purpose of letting the person who becomes its master to make use of that vast magic power."

As if answering to his majesty's voice, the City Core flashes blue light once.

"Even if it's said that this City Core is an artifact, it's unknown if the core is made by someone somewhere. There was a certain king who once asked the gods, but the answer never came."

"Then, just who is..."

"I don't know. At the very least, the method to create one is already lost at the present time. Once, the Bornean sage, Trazayuya-dono, attempted to recreate one, but he could only make a counterfeit with much lower performance at best."

I wait for his majesty to continue his words.

I wonder what's the real intention of his majesty for showing me this artifact?

"The story has diverted, I'm sorry."

"No, I've heard some really interesting things."

"Although it goes without saying that this talk is a secret to anyone but the one who will succeed royalty's or lords' house. Revealing this to others is useless."

"--I understand."

Unpleasant sweats flow on my back.

Why would his majesty tell me such secret?

Even though I'm a relative of duke Oyugock, I'm not of the main family, and nothing more than a baronet.

Just what is the king--

"Now then, let's get back to the topic. The lord could establish this City Core to people so they could use it and uses ritual magic. Truly various magic; you could create walls that could defend against attack from high-ranking demon, attack magic that reduce armies to ashes, or climate magic that could manipulate weather."

Even manipulating weather!

Handling enormous amount of magic power from The Source, it could even resist high-ranking demon that could equal sub-gods.

"That is like--"

I hesitate to continue the words on the verge of my mouth.

Since the words are like sacrilege against gods.

"Like a living god is it?"

However, his majesty continued to speak those words lightly.

"There is no need to worry. Gods would not needlessly interfere kings or lords. It has been decided with the covenant between the gods and the ancient kings."

The king said so, but there was a large country comparable to the the old empire that got destroyed after angering gods.

Shouldn't we be careful not to let out many sacrilegious words?

Though a coward like me isn't able to remonstrate the king.

"The story keeps wandering off. The lord is special precisely because they could wield the core power to transcend human."

His majesty repeat the story once again as if emphasizing it.

"The rank of the governing lords depend on the scale of The Source they control. Once, a lord raised his rank followed by numerous cities he had."

His majesty stops talking and judge my reaction.

I timidly nods at his majesty to show my understanding.

"And then a king is a person who's followed by his lords. And then, an emperor is a person followed by kings."

The difference between king and emperor is like that... I've thought that it's just a difference in naming.

I express a question that has crossed my mind to his majesty.

"Then, are guards and viceroy lords too?"

"No. They're both representatives that lords have given authority to act on their behalves. They could borrow the power of the City Core, but the master is still the lord."

--I see.

With this I think I understand the reason why rebellion that guards and viceroy have caused in the history is suppressed.

The reason why the rebellion have been able to be quenched isn't written in the history, but after seeing this, I finally can understand.

"Also, as the holder of City Core, you can appoint new nobles in behalf of the king."

So that's the reason why marquis Lloyd isn't able to appoint chevaliers.

I've always thought it's strange that a high-ranking noble couldn't appoint new nobles when earls of neighboring country could, but I understand now.

"[Nobles] are originally what people who control cities are called. The rank of nobles is indication of the level of authority a representative had. The one protecting the city is either baronet or a baron, the city's viceroy must be a viscount at least, those aren't just customs but in accordance to the authority level of the City Core."

I desperately try to understand his majesty talks, but it's too difficult to understand it all at once.

"Oy oy, you should understand this."

Ashamed with myself, I'm going to apologize to his majesty, but when I hear the majesty's next words, I get so dumbfounded, nothing is coming out of my mouth.

"Leon, today I will grant you Muno house name. Go to Muno city, release the cursed and blocked City Core, and become the new lord."

--Muno?

The same territory where nobles who've announced their candidacy to become its governing lords die one by one, becoming the lord of the [Cursed Territory]?

However, this is a royal order. I do not have the right to refuse.

The majesty has talked about the City Core earlier probably because he has maximum faith in me.

Right now, the thing I can do is to solemnly lower my head and answer, [Your will].

◇

"Are you nervous?"

An old lady with miko outfit looks at me worryingly.

"No, head miko-sama. I, I am okay."

"You don't have to force yourself. Even for me who has long life of confronting monsters, standing in front of this door is making me trembling."

She probably said that to reassure me.

Latenion head miko lets out a young smile belying her age.

I take a deep breath, and together with the head miko, go toward the underground sanctuary on the Muno city where the City Core is.

The people who descend the spiral stairs to the underground sanctuary are only the head miko and me.

Originally, this passage is only to be used by the lord, but for the sake of exorcising the curse that the [Undead King] has left, I'm accompanied by the head miko this time.

I feel more sick each time I step down the stair.

It seems that many nobles die the moment they step on this stair.

It's probably safe this time because I'm with a head miko who holds the title [Saintess].

I continue following head miko while feeling nauseous.

In front of the sanctuary, the head miko touch the walls as if falling.

"Leon, looks like it's the limit soon."

"I understand. I'm going to go alone from here..."

I step into the sanctuary while holding my consciousness.

--My vision is shaking.

Bam, I hear the sound of my own body that has collapsed as if it's coming from other's, I look up.

A semi-transparent black shadow is floating in front of my eyes.

『O intruder. I am [Undead King] Zen--Its shadow. O pure person, show me that you deserve to become the lord.』

"Lord is--"

I faint in the middle of my words, and I get rescued by the golems controlled by royal court magicians that his majesty has deployed.

I tried challenging it for three times after this, but it was over right whenever I had just arrived to the sanctuary.

I wasn't able to grasp the City Core, but for my accomplishment of getting to the sanctuary, I was appointed to be the lord of this land.

Since I'm just a temporary lord, I am not able to tap the magic power of The Source to manipulate weather, resulting in famines often happening in the territory, and I'm not able to stop people from leaving this territory.

I was only able to become the true lord after 16 years.

I had to wait until a merchant who had just become an adult uncovered the plot of the demon by himself, and even saved the territory from the swarms of undead monsters.

◇

I want to grant honorary knight to Satou-kun for his achievements, but since I don't have the City Core, I don't have any way to confer peerage to him.

I could ask Nina-dono to write a letter of recommendation for duke Oyugock, but I'd like to reward him with my own hands.

I proceed to the sanctuary where the City Core sleeps after 16 years, and over there I notice that the curse that has always been there is gone.

I don't know if the caster has died, or if the silver masked hero who defeats the demon has dissolved it.

I walk to the front of the City Core, and a voice that's neither man or woman greets me.

『Welcome, qualified person. Do you hope to become the lord of this land?』

This is probably words from the will of the City Core itself.

I answer clearly.

「I do.」

『The registration is complete. I serve lord Leon Muno from now on』

Lights separate from the City Core, one becomes a ring on my finger, the other flies beneath me.

When I concentrate on the ring that I've received, things that could be done with City Core come into my mind. Apparently, the demon wanted to do something by stealing the magic power from The Source. For the time being, I do ritual magic for controlling weather, I should be able to grant him rank too.

"■■■■ Weather Control. Warming."

『Executing Command. The average temperature of the territory will raise by 15°C for the next few days.』

I don't know how much 15°C is, but if I could decrease the freezing cold, the people who die from it would probably decrease too.

Either way, there's not enough magic power for anything more than this.

On the next morning, I do the ritual of conferring peerage using the City Core without any problem.

I go to the balcony in the early morning, and is surprised at the warmth.

Usually, my breath would becomes white. The cold of midwinter has changed into the warmth of autumn in just one night.

I'm trembling under the sunlight warm.

--It's excessively powerful.

The City Core brings power beyond human to a person.

I vow to use this power for the sake of people without drowning on it.

デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲
4
Honobono tokidoki
Serious soshite
Harem
愛七ひろ
Hiro Ainana
Illustration・shri

デスマーチからはじまる
異世界狂想曲
4

7-1. To the Hometown of the Dwarves

Satou's here. When I was on business trip, I sometimes caught sight of people who was transferring for job getting sent off on the platform for the bullet train.

I wonder how does it feel to get sent off like that? I've thought of such thing, but when I actually experience it, it doesn't feel bad at all.

◇

"Are you leaving no matter what?"

Viscount Nina who has come to see us off tries to detain me.

Behind her, more than 20 servants and maids have also come.

The maids aren't wearing the plain uniforms they've worn two weeks ago, but frilly maids clothes that one usually sees in Akihabara. Even though the skirt cover down to the ankle, it's still incomparably cuter than before.

Of course the mastermind is Arisa. Somehow the budget for it hasn't come from the baron but from my pocket instead, but if this is the result then I can consent.

However, even though I've heard that it would be completed in spring, it's done already. It might have touched the heartsrings of the tailor. Cute is justice they say.

By the way, it's early morning right now, the sun has just risen on the horizon.

To be honest, I didn't expect that they would come for the farewell like this.

I could see Pochi and Tama receiving something from lady Soruna at the edge of my view. Looks like the thing that entered their small purses are sweets.

As for the other, the men like the Baron, Hauto, and Zotol have also come.

Lady Karina isn't here.

I've asked the maid who's attending her room not to wake her up. Since she's always attacking me every day during the past two weeks here, I want to avoid troublesome thing when we're departing.

More than that, the maids that have been creeping up on me since awhile ago are scary.

Everyone folds their arms and stare at me with teary eyes.

Er~rr?

No one is going to start a fight right?

"Chevalier-sama, please don't go."

Without hesitation, a slender red-haired maid steps up and shouts while clinging to me.

I'd love a bit more volume, regrettable.

Starting with that girl, the maids begin to cling on me in turns.

Kuh, the maids with loli bodies are too fast, I've lost my chance to get in contact with the maids with superb volumes.

Arisa kicks me from behind while saying, "Stop grinning.", but I ignore her.

"Chevalier-sama, please stay here forever."

"That's right, if chevalier-sama is gone, who would make creepes."

"Rather than creepes, I want karaage again!"

"Leave only Pochi-chan here~."

"What are you saying, Tama-chan is cuter right."

"Better yet, become my husband and make meals for me forever please."

Even though I don't think it's because I'm popular, everyone are aiming for foods, or Pochi's and Tama's cuteness huh.

Oh?

Since I feel familiar sensations on my legs, I drop my line of sight--

It's Pochi and Tama. What are they doing hugging my legs?

The twos look up with sparkling eyes. I wonder if they're thinking some new play like Oshikura Manju?

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oshikura_Manju>

"Everyone! I understand your reluctance, but don't trouble chevalier-sama."

"That's right, we have pound cakes made by chevalier-sama in the dining room. You can eat it after you've done your morning works."

The head maid claps her hands, and the maids step back.

Then after the chef's remark, they fall back as if pulling tides. It's a bit lonely.

"You haven't eaten breakfast right? It can't be compared to chevalier-sama's creation, but please eat this if it's fine with you."

"Thank you very much. I gratefully accept."

I pass the bento I've received from Chef-san to Lulu on the wagon.

"Really, won't you at least leave Arisa-dono here."

"No can do~ I can't live if I'm not beside darling."

Who's darling!

I ignore Arisa's careless remark, and say may farewell to Nina-san and the baron. I've received letters of introduction for nobles on various cities from Nina-san. I've also been asked to deliver several letters for influential nobles from Nina-san.

"I'll come back here after 1-2 years of training in the labyrinth city."

"Yes, we'll be waiting. At that time, we'll get territory rebuilt so we can return the money we've borrowed from you even for a little."

"Yes, I'm expecting it."

"I sincerely ask you to take care of Pochi-kun and Tama-kun."

The baron is giving off atmosphere as if he's sending his daughters for wedding. He's way too entranced by the cuteness of the two.

The debt that Nina-san talks about is 250 gold ingots that I've lent for rebuilding the territory. It's not enough to completely rebuild it with this, but it'd be usable for operating funds. The reason why I use ingots is because it'd look like hidden assets. I made it by crushing large quantity of gold coins. Since they were doubting where it came from, I showed them the magic bag <<Holding Bag>> and explained it. I told Nina-san that I was heading to the labyrinth city for the sake of Liza's and the others' training.

Liza and the others are already riding the horses, so I get in the wagon.

We leave the Muno castle behind while waving back to the people who keep on waving here.

◇

Now then, even though there have been various things happening during this two weeks, the one that's immediately apparent is this wagon.

I was allowed to freely use the workshop left from the marquis era, so I remodeled the wagon as much as I wanted to. I mainly tried to remodel the suspension system by strengthening the shock absorption. Unfortunately, I couldn't make anything fancy for the shock absorption.

The wagon is now pulled by four horses, increased from two before, so

I'm expecting speed increase. Especially since the horses that Mia and Tama have ridden have leveled up are now pulling the wagon, it would be more effective.

For the sake of avoiding thieves, Liza and Nana wear armors and ride the horses. The baron has given a horse for Nana from the same species that Liza is riding, Shuberien. The full plate armors that the two wear are my creations. When I was taking Nana's size, there were some lucky situations that arose, but Mia hindered them all. I think Mia's intuition is too good.

Needless to say, the reason why the ones riding the horses are not Pochi and Tama is because they're too short, they'd look like children from afar, and that'd invite thieves rather than repelling them.

Mia is riding a horse.

The reason is the horse that Mia is riding itself. In truth, it's not a horse, it's a unicorn that has been sold illegally on the black market.

Even in this world, unicorns are being sold for their horns since they're effective medicines for all kind of sickness. I saved this unicorn when it was going to to be sold to people with eccentric taste in food after it got its horn cut.

The business of selling unicorns is forbidden in the entire Shiga kingdom, not just in baron Muno territory.

I wanted to return it to the place where other unicorns were with Mia, but since it didn't have horn, it couldn't get accepted into the herds.

The horn is seen as a recovery item by other races, but for unicorn itself, it's an important organ. Without the horn, an unicorn is not only unable to use its race-specific abilities, but it also loses the way to communicate to its friends. According to the indication from AR, unicorns are not monsters but belong to mythical beasts category.

Even the baron administrative was troubled with it, but since the unicorn got attached to our Mia right from the beginning, Mia began to gradually take care of it. We'll take it to Bornean forest together with Mia, and let it live in peace there.

"Lulu, I'll change your place as the coachman."

"Don't do that, master has become a noble, so when we're at the place where other people could see, master should let the servant to be the coachman."

Since I get scolded by Lulu, I give up on being the coachman and sit beside her. It's cute that she's still holding the rein properly even while scolding me.

"The flirting guy is here huh~"

As if estimating the right time, Arisa snuggles on my waist while protesting in monotone voice. Furthermore, she purposely puts her face between me and Lulu.

"Oh Arisa, burned with jealousy are you."

Lulu pats Arisa's hair while smiling.

There, Pochi and Tama climb on Arisa as if flattening her.

"Ugeh."

"Flirt~?"

"Prohibited nano desu."

The two are probably happy because it's been awhile since it's only us together.

"Prohibited."

Mia who's riding the horse on the side poke my shoulders while sulking a bit, probably because she's lonely.

The wagon gets out of the Muno city and head toward the highway.

We're speeding up from there. Since we've been going slow in the city, now the wagon advances close to three times faster.

The leveled-up horses speeding up the wagon don't bring only good things. The countermeasure I've made for the vibration goes to waste.

"Au, the vibration is harsh."

"Even though it's quite better than before, it's still too harsh I guess? Lulu I'll take your place, so you can sit on the Float Seat with Arisa."

"But."

"You don't have to be reserved, it's alright."

"Yes, I understand."

Float Seat is a chair made with magic circuit that have properties of opposing magnets. On top of having low weight limit, it also needs to be recharged with magic power every 30 minutes, so it couldn't be used on the wagon's body. It still needs some improvements.

If I could downsize it a bit more, I could use it on the coachman's seat.

"Fuh, I'm revived."

"My bottom isn't hurt, but I feel nauseated."

"I'll give you medicine if you feel sick, so say if you are."

"Yes."

In exchange of the two who are sitting on the back seat, Pochi and Tama sit beside me.

"Next to master~?""Nano desu."

Come to think of it, since we were busy with various things when we were in the baron territory, we hadn't been together much beside the time when we were sleeping. I decide to pamper the two until they're satisfied today.

◇

The wagon gets out of the baron territory four days later.

During that time, thieves showed up on the radar, but their scout only loitered around without attacking us even once. So having cavalries outside does help after all.

Our route is not to the capital of Oyugock dukedom, but the slightly off-course self-governing dominion of the dwarves.

The self-governing dominion is inside Oyugock dukedom, about four days away from baron Muno territory.

Of course, our purpose is sightseeing.

It'd wasteful to avoid the live townscape of the dwarves so, might as well.

Incidentally, there's also the matter about the letter that viscount Nina has asked me to deliver.

After advancing through the highway located beside a river with reddish-brown water, we arrive at the hometown of the dwarves.

7-2. At the Hometown of the Dwarves (1)

Satou's here. I remember getting surprised at the fact that even the dwarven women have beard on the first fantasy novel I've read.

I'm not also sure about the loli dwarves from the recent days, but it'd be troubling if I have to choose between them and bearded dwarven women.

◇

Dwarves are typically said to live in caves, but from the information I've collected with All Map Exploration, about half of them live normally in the fortress. The other halves are exactly like that typical impression, they're living on the caves next to the city.

This self-governing dominion of the dwarves isn't that wide. It's a valley of around 20 kilometers wide in radius. Inside the dominion, there's a city called Bollhart, and two villages. The city has population of 30 thousands people, there are 20 thousands dwarves with the levels averaging at 5-6, four thousands ratmen, two thousands rabbitmen, two thousands humans, one thousands weaselmen, and the other 1000 are other demi-humans. There is no elf. I wonder if they're in bad term?

There are a lot weaselman and human merchants from what I see on their occupations and skills.

There are about 10 people who are higher than level 40 among the dwarves. The highest leveled one is a dwarf called Dohar. If I'm not mistaken, he's the dwarf that makes Toruma (Ossan)'s dagger. His level is 51. As expected of dwarves. There are a lot of veterans.

There is no demon, transported or reincarnated person. Looks like it would be peaceful this time.

There are fields around the city, but the ones who're plowing them are not dwarves, but ratmen, rabbitmen, and other various beastmen. Seems they're not exactly slaves.

We're joining the queue to enter Bollhart city at the front of the gate.

I stop the wagon at the end of the queue and wait for our turn.

"I think we're the 20th in line? There are quite a lot huh."

"That's right."

Arisa climbs up my body and look over the queue.

Someone is pulling my sleeves, when I look to the side, Pochi, Tama, and even Mia are waiting for their turns. Since my clothes would get wrinkled if they climb it, I put them on my shoulders. Since Mia is the only one who wears skirt, I don't put her on my shoulder, but instead, I hold her waist and raise her up.

"I'm against discrimination."

"This is not discrimination, but distinction. If you're wearing pants instead, I'd put you on my shoulder."

"Mwuu."

Among the carriages that are waiting for their turn, about half of them are ridden by human.

"Pochi, Tama, keep your attention for any thieves on the back."

"A~ye."

"Roger nano desu."

Liza who had just come back from scouting the gate gave direction to Pochi and Tama.

"Master, weaselmen seem to be going in and out of this city. Please be careful since they're shrewd fellows."

"Yes, I understand. Thank you Liza."

If I remember correctly, weasel men tribe is the one who have destroyed Liza's village.

"Onii-san, won't ye buy potatoes? It's delicious see?"

A weasel woman is trying to sell potatoes with awkward words. Seems it's one copper coin each. Three times the market price. I wonder why am I hearing her like she has fake Chinese accent.

"Onii-san, this yakitori is more delicious than potatoes from that potato girl. I've put a lot of Bollhart salt see? They're three copper coins apiece."

"Mister, meat is better, the taste of the grilled mother frog from the mine basement will surely satisfy you."

Are those mother frogs alright to eat?

It smells nice, but we've just eaten so I turn down their offers. Pochi and Tama look a bit disappointed, but eating too much is bad for your health.

The ones who come to sell things to us that are waiting for our turns aren't only the weaselmen, but also ratmen, rabbitmen and children, however, I only look at the market price of those without buying them.

Mia who has bought something from the front comes back. She's eating something.

"Satou."

Mia presents the yellow stalk thing she's eating in front of my mouth, so I eat it.

Sweet.

It tastes like flower's nectar rather than sugar. It reminds me of the time when I suck up nectars on the roadside flowers during my childhood. Nostalgic.

"Aah!"

"Just now, it's an indirect kiss right?! then, next, is me."

Reproaching voices pour down from Arisa behind, and Lulu on the side.

Indirect kiss, we're not middle schoolers. No wait, Lulu is around that age huh.

Arisa extends her hand while coming here, but before she could, Mia nabs the stalk back. She quickly puts it in her mouth and shows V-sign toward here.

Since Arisa is making a noise, "Mukkii" behind, I want you to stop with the provocation. Look, even Lulu's eyes become teary.

Right at that time, a weasel person selling sweet stalks comes, so I buy it for everyone.

Somehow everyone made me hold the stalks in my mouth in turns, but I think I'd lose if I mind it.

◇

In the end, we're finally able to get inside after 10 minutes.

We get preferential treatment from dwarven soldiers who come to check on Liza's magnificent armor.

It looks like nobles get prioritized. Even though I'm just of the lowest ranking honorary noble, it still applies. When we're getting inside, I'm the only one who need to show my ID, while my companions don't. They only trivially look in the wagon, and don't investigate or ask for the tax for entering the city.

Is it a special privilege?

But then, like this, some unscrupulous nobles would be able to smuggle things.

The first time I see dwarves, they're as small, wide and stout as I've imagined. They're about 130cm high. The dwarven women are like dwarven men without beard version. Since they're not like the legal loli that often appear in recent games, I'm relieved. No more little girls.

◇

"Nice to meet you, Chevalier Pendragon. I've certainly received the letter from viscount Rottol. Is that courageous woman in good health?"

"Yes, she's taking the command energetically. You could call me Satou if it's fine with you."

I'm having a chat with Driar-shi, the mayor, after I deliver him the letter from Nina-san.

Liza and the others are relaxing in another room, but Arisa is here somehow. That Arisa is talking very formally, far from how she usually is, with Driar-shi.

"Driar-sama, as is written in the letter, we'd like permission for sending exchange students here."

Hoo, Arisa. This is the first time I've heard about that though? Arisa who has noticed my glance look at me with a face that's as if saying, "I didn't tell it?". I'll poke her forehead later.

"Fumu, I was taken care by viscount Rottol when I was studying on the royal capital. I can accept if it's just a few exchange students."

Driar-shi answered while opening the letter. The lord of this self-governing dominion isn't this person, but his father, Dohar-san, is it alright to agree without his consent?

"It's alright, my father has entrusted me with the city unless it's a serious matter."

It seems to be alright. Good.

However, I think that the territory's technology is an important enough matter, or maybe they're taking stance of "If you can steal our technology, do it"?

"According to the letter, Satou-dono is doing blacksmithing, would you like to see our workshop if that interest you?"

"By all mean!"

Ooh, what a windfall.

Nina-san has done a good job.

◇

"This is the greatest blast furnace in this city."

It's a 20 meters high building.

There's also a window to put fuel coal below the furnace, half-naked dwarves and beastmen are throwing coals to it while getting themselves blacked. I could only see white smoke from the outside, I wonder how are they dealing with the dirty smoke? Well, there must be some sort of absurdity (fantasy) going on there.

"This is a wonderful facility."

My words are not flattery. The facility's scale isn't inferior compared to the ironworks I've seen in the previous world.

The people here are me, Driar-shi, and a dwarven woman who looks like a secretary. She's Jojori-san, Driar-shi's daughter. Arisa and the others have gone to the city after receiving letter for Nina-san. They're looking for a merchant who's going to Muno-city to deliver the letter.

We're observing from a place that looks like VIP seat, slightly away from the furnace. It's quite hot here, but it seems that it's still better than the place with insulation magic applied. It's hotter if we go outside.

According to Driar-shi's explanation, about 30% of the iron ingot used in Shiga kingdom are made here.

Next, we visit converter and pressure facilities successively. In the pressure facility, people who look like magicians are putting magic power into magic tool like thing in rotation. Everyone have dark circles under their eyes, looks like it's quite a hard labor. Originally, seems that there are more people here, but they've been dispatched on another level for different matter, so now they're in shortage. Well, Um. Do your best. I cheer on the floundering magicians inside my heart.

There are no heavy machineries, but in exchange, about 3 meter tall people from the tribe called Little Giant are carrying ores, finished iron plates and steel materials around.

I wonder if the facilities for Mithril are secrets, they're not showing me it. It looks like it's in the underground caves.

I guess I'll ask about it.

"Are facilities related to Mithril located in the underground?"

"Y, you know your stuff. Did you hear it from viscount Rottol?"

"No, I've heard from a merchant acquaintance that the Mitrhil products from this town are wonderful."

"Is that so, I'd really love to show you there, but we need permission from my father if we want to visit the underground facilities."

Driar-shi folds his short arms while frowning. Seemingly unable to see Driar-shi's grimacing, Jojori-san gives a suggestion.

"Father, if that's the case, shouldn't you try to ask grandfather. Even if it's grandfather, he wouldn't tell a person he's just met to suddenly forge a sword."

Jojori-san, that's a flag I think.

7-3. At the Hometown of the Dwarves (2)

Satou's here. Ironworks often come up in drama or theatrical play, but isn't it not the case with light novel?

Even though the leading role usually does a lot of blacksmith-related things, it's strange.

◇

"Then let me see you forge a sword. We'll talk after that."

Jojori-san?

I look to her, but she averts her eyes.

We've come to elder Dohar's workplace after passing through less-than-one-and-a-half meter high tunnel. There are also numerous high leveled dwarves forging swords inside the room.

They're all good. Every sword's offense, sharpness, endurance and other parameters are 50% higher than the ones available in the city.

The word earlier was addressed to me after I introduced myself to him.

"Father, Satou-dono is an acquaintance of viscount Rottol, and--"

"Umu, I'm indebted to Nina, but this and that are different story. I can understand people's nature from how they forge swords. Zajir, heat up a mithril ingot."

"Uss, Shishou."

Driar interceded, but elder Dohar quickly proceeded with the trial.

The dwarf with gray beard, Zajir, offers me the seat before the prepared ingot and tools.

Well, since I've tried blacksmithing once in Muno city, I mostly understand the procedures, I'll try this once again. The skill is MAX anyway, I should be able to do it somehow.

I let the ingot to become red hot, and put it on the anvil. I gently strike it with the smith hammer.

Clink.

Huh? Something doesn't feel right?

Elder Dohar seems to have sensed my hesitation, he takes the hammer and similarly strikes the ingot. After hitting it once, he calls Zajir-san and punches Zajir on the head with his fist.

"Idiot, how many decades have you dealt with mithril. Haven't I told you to always be at the workshop when you're melting the ingot!"

"Uss, Shishou."

I don't really understand, but it seems that there's a problem with the ingot Zajir-san has prepared.

The slight sense of incongruity was because of that huh.

"Arright, let's go to the mithril furnace. Follow me, young 'un."

"Yes."

Looks like elder Dohar is going to guide me directly. I haven't forged a sword, but I've probably passed the test. Driar-san and Jojori-san are also following from behind. Zajir-san has gone earlier, I wonder if there's some kind of preparation.

I don't know what kind of furnace it'd be, but I'm going to enjoy it.

◇

The blast furnace for mithril is made from a metal that's strong against heat, Hihiirokane--something with Japanese-style name after a long while.

Zajir-san and other blacksmiths are making noise there, but everyone is lying down on the floor.

Apparently, this furnace is not fueled with coal, but with magic power in order to make it works.

Looks like the blacksmiths have ran out of magic power, and they're currently resting. Everyone here is a veteran with level higher than 30. Everyone has blacksmith and some kind of magic skills. The situation might be the same as the blast furnace above, with fewer people available than usual.

Apparently, they're waiting for their magic power to recover in two hours.

Elder Dohar's wrinkle become deeper and he's shouting, but there's nothing they can do without magic power. I wonder if he has also reached that conclusion, his argument turns here.

"Young 'un, since you're carrying short stick, are you a spell-user? If you're confident with your magic power, then put it into that furnace."

"Wait, father, don't make our guest act like your disciples."

"There's no problem if it's just magic power."

Driar objects, but I also want to look at the working furnace fast, so I gladly comply.

I put in my magic power.

I guess 200-300 MP should be enough?

It gets sucked rapidly. There's no response.

10.

20.

There's no lamp or some kind indication for when if it's enough, I guess I'll put the amount at the level where the surrounding aren't going to be surprised.

100.

200.

300.

Oh, the fallen people's faces slightly change. I should stop here huh. 300 MP should be normal for a magician with slightly higher level than 30.

Still, seeing this reaction, wouldn't this able to accept 1000MP?

While acting like I'm wiping sweats that don't actually come out, I stop the infusion of magic power.

"Fuh, this furnace is amazing. Looks like it can still accept more."

"Umu."

Elder Dohar nods, and the surrounding people begin to move, the mithril refinery starts.

Jojori-san presents me sunglasses-like thing.

"Since it would hurt your eyes, please take this. Please don't stare at the fire even after you put it on."

I accept it while saying my thanks. It's pitch dark after I put it on. I could only faintly see the mithril furnace. As I stare harder.

>[Night Vision Skill Acquired]

I get the skill after all this time. After I activate it, I become able to see like normal even though I'm wearing sunglasses.

"I'm igniting it! Everyone, make sure to put yer' shade tools."

Uwah, this is dangerous. At this rate, there's no point in wearing the sunglasses.

I immediately close my eyes, but I'm late for an instant. White afterimage burned into my eyes.

>[Light Radiation Adjustment Skill Acquired]

Am I a robot! I activate it while cursing. I'd have liked this skill before it happens.

I open my eyes while feeling the self-recovery skill restoring my retina.

The temperature rises while the vermilion band around the furnace is mysteriously moving. Can you understand if I say that I'm seeing the inside of the furnace like with CT-scan? The AR indicates that the temperature reaches 3000 degree. The temperature of the ironworks that I've seen earlier is 1600 degree. Looks like mithril is substantially more resistant to heat.

<TLN: The author doesn't state which standard he's using for temperature but it's most likely Celsius.>

"Umu, it's a nice vermilion."

I don't really understand, but elder Dohar seems to be satisfied while looking at the light leaking from the furnace.

Seems that the furnace could refine 100 kilograms of ingot in one go.

When the heat cools down, beautiful silver ingots with slight green tinge are completed.

Since this has taken quite a bit of time, Driar-shi has gone back to the city leaving Jojori-san here.

Elder Dohar sees the completed ingot, but then he suddenly raises his arm, and strike it with a small hammer, confirming the sound. He chooses several ingots that Zajir then carries.

"Young 'un, come here. I'll have you strike with phase hammer."

"Shishou, it's impossible for a human kid to use phase hammer."

"Noisy, don't butt-in my decision."

I wonder what's the original meaning of phase hammer that elder Dohar is saying.

"Young 'un, don't think you can sleep 'til morning. Jojori, meat, there's that smoked basilisk meat right. Bring it whole here. Let's fill our stomaches first."

Is Basilisk edible. Or rather, it's no good to not eat something that's been presented huh~

I ask Jojori-san who's going to go back to fetch food to bring message to Arisa and the others and arrange for their meal. Though, since they're going to stay in the guest mansion of the mayor, there's probably no problem.

◇

It's exactly a lump of iron--

<TLN: Berserk reference.>

Putting aside the joke, the great hammer that Zajir-san bring is an unrefined lump of metal. Looks like it's an alloy made from iron and mithril.

What the heck is this? It's being lifted lightly, but isn't this at least one ton heavy?

"What's wrong young 'un. If it's just that much, dwarves could lift it on one hand. Put out your spirit!"

Dwarves are amazing. This, with one hand huh.

Zajir-san actually lifts it on one hand. He's trying to appeal to Jojori-san, but she thoroughly ignores him. Needless to say, Dohar-san put his fist on Zajir-san who falls then.

It's not like I can't lift the great hammer, but since my body is light, it's hard to get the balance right. My balance shakes off several times as I'm learning. When I think about it, I might have not struggled if I just activate Transport skill.

While I'm learning to swing the great hammer, elder Dohar is checking the inside of the a jar that his disciples have brought.

"This is a bit weak. Bring out a stronger one."

"Shisou, we only have that for now."

"Then, have Ganza compound it."

"Ganza is having a meeting with the Gnomes, so he won't be back until tomorrow."

Elder Dohar looks like he's going to explode. It seems the blacksmiths use some kind of medicines. If I know the recipe I could compound it instead, but it's probably not something that could be taught to outsider.

"Jojori, anyone's fine, bring me an alchemist who could compound."

So sketchy.

If anyone's fine, then I'll step up.

"Dohar-sama, if anyone's fine, then shall I compound it?"

"Hn? You've done alchemy too huh. Yosh, then I'll leave it to you."

A prompt decision. Starting with Zajir-san, the disciples are becoming upset.

It seems they're not people who could say something directly face-to-face.

The recipe is hidden in an unexpected way. Instead of tablewares with the scales of the ingredients on the shelf, pots with raw material are lined up in accordance with the compounding order. Lastly, I have to finish it by putting it on the magic bestowing stand, but since the compounding is one of a kind, the setting is fixed.

I don't know the content of the jar, but thanks to [Analysis], [Appraisal] skills, and AR indicators, I've mastered the way to make [Secret Medicine of the Dwarves].

Elder Dohar checks on the medicine I've made, and then nods seriously.

"Good work. Let's boot Ganza out and have you replace him."

I'm not hearing elder Dohar's joke.

I follow elder Dohar to a different blacksmithing room than the first one. There's a small furnace made from hihiirokane inside. This one is for melting ingot, unlike the one for refining earlier. The anvil is also made from iron and mithril alloy. I wonder what's the liquid used for cooling called [Dwarf Water].

Zajir-san answers normally when I ask him. It's a 3:1 mixture of oil and spirit. I refrain myself from retorting, like 'it's more like [Dwarf Oil] rather than [Dwarf Water]', since the mood has become a bit tense.

"The preparation is complete."

"Yosh, let's do it."

Looks like it's quite an honor to help elder Dohar's phase hammer strike, the gazes from the surrounding disciples are painful.

If you have any complaint, I'd like you to tell it to elder Dohar.

I ignore the jealousy from the neighbors and concentrate here. I'll enjoy this rare chance of doing blacksmith together with a famous swordsmith.

7-4. At the Hometown of the Dwarves (3)

Satou's here. The sake is only after you've turned 20! It was the favorite phrase of my father when my middle school self accompanied him drinking after dinner. That phrase might have been unexpectedly important.

◇

The next morning, the sword is completed.

I've struck enough to see it on my dream.

The dwarf's secret medicine was used when the mithril was being heated up in the furnace. Since one of the ingredient is magic core powder, it might be for dwarf-style magic weapon. Looks like the system is different than magic weapon made with magic liquid.

"We finished without changing shift huh. If you're want to seriously train, come here anytime. Someone like you will surpass me immediately."

Bang, elder Dohar slams my back.

Guho. It's about as painful as Wagahai-kun's tail attack. If you don't mind the one on the receiving one, they could die you know?

"You're quite good for a human!"

"Agreed, aren't you actually a beardless dwarf?"

"I didn't think that anyone other than Dohar-shi could swing that great hammer until morning existed."

"You're very welcome anytime here."

Uun, I've just swung the great hammer until morning as instructed by elder Dohar, but it seems I've been approved by the dwarf blacksmiths. I'm happy and all, but the beardless thing is none of their business. It should grow in 5-6 years. ...Probably.

Elder Dohar has gone somewhere while carrying the completed sword, and the other dwarves go to get breakfast.

I wake up Jojori-san who's sleeping on the corner of the room and am also going to get breakfast together with her.

◇

After the breakfast, I was called to a hall near the basement. It seems that this place blows through two layers, it's four meter high until the ceiling.

"Try swinging it."

I receive the presented sword. Apparently, elder Dohar has added ornaments that also acts as an anti-slip on the sword.

The type of the completed sword is of double-edged bastard sword. It's only about 70-80% as heavy as swords made from iron. When I pick it on my hand, it feels a bit light. I think if sword is too light, it wouldn't be as powerful though...

When I take a stance, it feels firmer than the sword I've made before. I wonder if the balance is good?

I could swing better with this.

I swing it lightly.

It feels nice.

I try to swing faster this time.

I could feel air resistance if it's a cheap sword, but, I don't feel one with this sword, just like with holy swords. Yup, it's a nice sword.

"Now, put in your magic power and try it."

Elder Dohar who has been watching me swinging sword gives me an additional order.

Since Magic Edge is quite a rare skill, I guess it's fine to just put magic power normally?

I put about 10 MP.

Ooh, it accepts magic power easily just like Liza's spear. As expected of a sword created by the dwarf master craftsman. It might also because of the ability of mithril.

Ripple-like green patterns appears on the surface of the sword. Seems that it's a characteristic of weapons made from mithril. When I put more magic power, it begins to leak out red light like Liza's magic spear.

It'd be bad if it break if I put too much magic power, so I stop at 50 MP.

Mysteriously, the sword gets heavier as it accepts magic power. At the first 10 MP, I've thought that it's just my imagination, but now it's obviously heavier. We haven't drawn magic circuit during the sword's creation, I wonder if this is a characteristic of mithril?

I've had doubt whether the great hammer could be smaller if it's made from mithril instead, but later I'm told that the magic power from mithril-made hammer could adversely affect the mithril of the weapon that's currently being made.

"Umu, you have good skill. Let's have a bout for a bit."

Elder Dohar says so while taking a battle-axe and readies himself. My crisis perception kicks in as soon as I see the battle-axe.

No wait, that's a cursed weapon right? I could see a nasty red aura on it you know?

>[Ghost Vision Skill Acquired]

Uwah, don't need it. I don't want to learn it at all now.

Although I've seen real undead several times already, putting aside monsters, please spare me the evil spirit kind.

Horror is a no no.

In the end, I'm made to exchange blows with elder Dohar until he's satisfied while my thought is in another place like that.

Still, Dwarves are tough indeed. After pulling an all-nighter doing blacksmith, he's fighting for half an hour on top of it. Moreover, even though elder Dohar shouldn't have eaten breakfast yet, he's still energetic.

Even though I'm devoting myself to avoid his attacks as much as possible, he succeeds in seeing through it and grazes me several times. Even though I'm faster than him, I'm gradually running out of place to run to, just like a chess game, it's a curious experience. As expected of a veteran of many battles. Having a lot of real combat experience is amazing after all.

◇

Dohar-san hands his battle-axe to his disciple, Zajir-san, and walks toward me. He's not running out of breath even after moving that much, as expected.

"Show me the sword."

I give the sword to Dohar-san, and then after checking the blade for any chips, he swings it to confirm something.

"Nice arm. There's no chips, and the sword isn't distorted too."

Is he praising himself? I've thought that, but it seems that he's praising my sword skill instead.

I've tried to move as much as not to have my high skill level known, but he might've seen through it.

"You must've been training on sword since you're small. I don't intend to pry, but you don't look your age. One couldn't be that skillful before having at least 10 to 20 years of experience."

My age certainly doesn't match my appearance.

After elder Dohar stares at the sword he holds with both hands in silence, he begins to chant as if determined in something.

"Umu, ■■ Name Order.『Fairy Sword Trazayuya』."

That was dangerous, I almost let it slipped on my face. Poker Face is a really useful skill.

Is it fine to give that boorish straight sword, a name like 'fairy sword'? Mithril is also called fairy silver, so maybe he takes it from there.

"Is Dohar-sama familiar with Trazayuya-shi?"

"Umu, yer' know it too huh. It's an old story, but I've served the Sage-sama for a long time. This is the best sword I've made in my life, I've named it after the late Sage-sama just now."

It's not like he's shedding tears, but elder Dohar closes his eyes and falls silent.

After opening his eyes, he sticks out the sword to me in silence, and having taken by the momentum, I receive it.

"It's a sword formed by yer' cooperation. With your skill, that sword would probably consent too. Use it well."

Wait a minute, the market price shows [--]. The stronger magic swords also have [--] market price, so this one is about equal huh. This should be worth several hundreds gold coins, or maybe even more than a thousand.... As expected of the work of the master among dwarves.

After I receive it, Dohar-san lets out an awfully good smile and shouts.

"Today is a good day! We're drinking it off! Bring out all the barrels!"

◇

And then, the drinking banquet happen just like that.

The place remains as the one where I've had a bout with elder Dohar for half an hour.

There, the dwarven women are bringing large quantities of grilled slices of meat, dried nuts and fruits, and fish variants that are good to have with liquor.

Not losing to them, the dwarven men are bringing out large amount of liquor barrels. Half of it are ales, and the other half are distilled liquor it seems.

Jojori-san pours me drink while I'm sitting beside elder Dohar. The strong drink poured into the silver cup is a transparent liquor with faint reddish tinge, and seems to be quite strong when I tasted it on the edge of my mouth. In turn, it tastes quite nice, so it's easy to drink. It tastes like the Awamori that I've drunk in Okinawa long ago.

"Guhahahaha, you sure can drink."

"Drinking it raw straight even though you're young, this guy has a promising future."

"The human that look like master swordsman from before magnificently choked on it."

The dwarves from the blacksmith room earlier are gathered around elder Dohar. Unlike when they're blacksmithing, everyone is a good-natured person.

Unfortunately, I don't know if it's because of my status or level, I can't get drunk. After I drink, I feel like getting drunk for a bit, but then I sober up very quickly. It's hard to become so even after I discard the effect from poison resistance.

>[Alcohol Resistance Skill Acquired]

I don't want to activate this skill.

Liza and the others are invited to the banquet too.

Since it's been a day, at first I want to spoil Pochi and Tama, but it's only until we get to the table on the corner of the room filled with smoked and grilled meat from unusual monsters.

Nana and Mia are drinking fruit water on my sides. Mia is biting variety of nuts while leaning on me. She looks cute like a small animal. Lulu is unusually eating meat around lead by Arisa.

The dwarven craftsmen's conversation begin to liven up. Although, since the topics are about blacksmith or mines, I mainly take the listener's role. It seems that they employ gnome magicians to deal with cave-in or gases, but when they're not accompanied by one, they use scrolls. It's expensive, but it's nothing compared to their lives they say.

That kind of scrolls aren't sold on the magic shop above the ground, but on the magic shop at the entrance to the dwarf mine district. I'm taught the place to buy earth and wind magic. If they're selling it, I will definitely buy it.

◇

I had considered not to let Liza and the others drink, but since the dwarven old men insisted on letting them drank since it looked fun, I couldn't stop it.

"Ehehehe~ Satou. Fufuh~n Sa-Tou. Ahaha~, Satou♪"

Lulu is fully acting like a spoiled child, probably because she's taken off her sober face.

She looks like a merry drinker. When I take the cup from Lulu, she hugs me and begins to cuddle.

"Sniff, a person like me, it's alright to protect the membrane forever. I'll end alone in this world too."

Arisa is a downer, or rather, a maudlin drinker. I keep in mind as to not let Arisa drinks liquor.

『Kusukusu, it's fun, this is fun. Now Satou, go drink more. Ufufu, there are three of you, it's wonderful.』

Who the heck are you.

The always taciturn Mia talks furiously in elf language. It's a bit surprising.

It's fine that she's spinning around while looking so happy, but her skirt is going loose so I should stop her soon.

"Nihehe~ mas tar sa ara roresu."

"Nyuru~n."

Pochi's tongue isn't functioning well.

Tama curls up on my lap as if slipping and starts sleeping. When Pochi looks at it, she also gets on it.

Ah, she's already sleeping.

"Master, the condition of my logic circuit is unusual. This water has poison possibly, possibly, possibly?"

Dang, even Nana drank huh. She has become able to eat a bit of food since a week ago. I make Nana who's become like a broken record to drink a magic potion effective for hangover and put her to sleep.

Liza who has been drinking quietly beside me sleeps in sitting position.

I won't let these girls drink next time.

While I'm having such determination, the drinking festival continues late into the night.

>Title [Blacksmith of the Fairy Sword] Acquired.

>Title [Hard Drinker] Acquired

>Title [Heavy Drinker] Acquired

>Title [Heavyweight Drinker] Acquired

>Title [Friends of Dwarves] Acquired

7-5. At the Hometown of the Dwarves (4)

Satou's here. Turmerics are amazing. When I had to drink and got hangover after getting dragged to corporate parties, I always drank it.

◇

On the next morning, three little girls and one girl are suffering from hangovers.

"Kuah, my head hurts. Uuh, it's blurry."

"Nyuu~."

"Ouch......Nodesu."

"Satou, medicine."

Of course, Nana who has drunk medicine yesterday is fine, but even Liza and Lulu are alright too.

Lulu is handing water for everyone. When my eyes meet with Lulu, she turns red and looks down. I am not so uncouth as to quip shameful sight of a drunken person, but since it's cute, I'll leave her like that.

I make everyone drinks the same potion that Nana has drunk.

The effect of the potion is splendid, everyone who has been groaning since a while ago quickly gets back to their usual self and begins saying that they're hungry. I better not ask if they remember about yesterday. Particularly Arisa and Mia.

Since Jojori-san has come for us, we're going to the dining room. Come to think of it, even though elder Dohar and Jojori-san are the ruling family of this town, they're eating in the same room as the craftsmen and the blacksmiths. I wonder if dwarves see themselves as family?

Elder Dohar in the dinning room has already decided to have a drink in the morning. The meat in front of him is the same one we've eaten yesterday, the basilisk meat. It does taste good, but the smell is too strong and I can't exactly say that I like the flavor. I prefer something a bit more plain.

He's only noticed that Mia who has taken off her hood for the meal is an elf. It seems that I'm narrow minded with my worry, dwarves and elves don't have bad relationship.

"Hoo, the girl of Bornean forest eh. I've heard that you're missing, but you're actually eloping with a human huh?"

"Nn. Mutual love."

Don't say that scandalous thing. It's unfounded.

"I've saved her from a bad magician, and she's going to tag along until the forest."

"Mwuu."

It seems she's dissatisfied with the mutual love declaration being torn off.

"Since we've got request to search her from Bornean Forest's Senate, do you mind if we send them letter to report this?"

"Yes, I'm sorry troubling you."

Driar-shi, the mayor, arranges the letter instead of elder Dohar.

The worker's guild manager in Seryuu city should have sent a letter, but since, there's no guarantee that the letter will arrive, unlike the post office's registered mail, there's probably no problem even if there are many of them.

◇

I'm bringing everyone to go on a sightseeing tour of Bollhart city today, since yesterday I've left them unattended. They've already replenished the consumables yesterday. As expected.

Looks like Jojori-san has deliberately volunteered to guide the sightseeing. It feels like we're VIPs.

First, we're going to the magic shop I'm taught yesterday.

"I'm sorry Satou-sama. I can't take people who don't have permissions from grandfather to the magic shop before the mine. There's no problem with Satou-sama, but I have to ask the other honored guests to wait here."

We're going on a tour together! Or so I've thought but it's already running aground.

Things won't change even if I trouble Jojori-san, so I decide to ask everyone to wait here and finish my business quickly.

The magic shop, Don-Haan, is beyond the passage after the open-space above the furnace for mithril-making yesterday. I see, I can understand why it needs elder Dohar's permission if it's here.

Per Jojori-san's request, I put the fairy sword we've made yesterday on my waist. I've made the sword belt myself from when I'm making something for Nana back then. The sheath has been made in hurry, literally before the breakfast today. It's a plain simple sheath with wood as the base. I'm thinking of making more proper sheath some other day.

"Yo, Jojori, have you fallen for a human? Zajir will cry y'know."

"Oi, Jojori, what are you doing bringing a human here. Oya-san will knock you out y'know?"

Twin small old men greet us inside the magic shop. They're gnomes, not dwarves.

"Hello, old man Don, and old man Haan. I've gotten permission from grandfather."

Jojori-san says so while pointing to the pommel of my fairy sword. Since the gnomes ask to look at it better, I take it off the sword belt and put it on easy-to-see place.

"This is, I'm surprised. If this isn't True Mark of Oya-san."

"Dang surprising. Did Oya-san make this as a joke after drinking too much?"

It seems that True Mark is like the signature of Dohar-san, and he doesn't usually put it on commonly made things. If I show this True Mark to the dwarves and gnomes of this self-governing dominion, I'd be treated like an old friend. Elder Dohar... you're too nice to a youngster you've just meet yesterday.

For the time being, since I could buy anything in the shop thanks to the True Mark, I decide to see magic books and scrolls in this shop.

This is also an alchemy shop, but they're only selling finished products, and there's no compounding tools or materials for sale.

"Right eh, we have lower grade magic books for water, wind, ice and fire magic, while the intermediate grade magic books are for earth and fire. There are also unusual stuffs like blacksmith magic and mountain magic."

Don-san is piling up magic books.

This is the first time I've heard blacksmith magic, but it's just magic arranged for blacksmithing purpose, it looks like it's usable with fire magic skill. It's the same with mountain magic, it's just arrangement of magic for searching and digging out minerals in the mine, it seems to be usable with earth magic skill. I'm also advised that magic from other elements are necessary too, although there are only few.

I've bought the lower grade magic books from human towns, but since I see some unfamiliar spells in them, I buy them all. Since we can't carry it, it's decided to get it delivered along with their stock delivery.

"Hoo? Scrolls eh? We do have scrolls, but they're only expensive things for people who could use magic themselves, the effects are very light y'know?"

Haan-san takes the scrolls from the shelves here even while warning me like that. It seems that there are only six kinds of scrolls here.

"They're insurances for miner who's going solo to the mine. To crush rock so that it becomes sands, [Rock Smasher], for when water comes up [Freeze Water], and [Hard Clay], also, for reinforcing brittle bedrocks [Mud Wall (Wall)]. There are also [Air Cleaner], and [Air Curtain], for breaking through place with strange gas."

Of course, I tell him that I'll buy it all, but Don-san halts me.

"I'm sorry lad. I insist that you hold back on [Air Cleaner]. There's only one of that left. I want to keep it in stock until we restock next month."

"If it's like that, I'm fine with the other five."

It's regrettable, but it's not something I want at the expense of the dwarves. Moreover, it looks like the scrolls here are bought from the Toruma (Ossan)'s household, so I'll probably get it anyway when I get to the dukedom's capital.

The scrolls I've gotten are as follow.

>Scroll, Earth Magic: Rock Smasher

>Scroll, Earth Magic: Mud Wall (Wall)

>Scroll, Earth Magic: Hard Clay

>Scroll, Wind Magic: Air Curtain

>Scroll, Ice Magic: Freeze Water

◇

After finishing the purchase in the magic shop Don-Haan, I sally forth to the city with everyone.

At first, Pochi and Tama are dangling on both of my hands, but Mia and Arisa begin to complain. In the end, they've calmed down after they're alternating holding my hands in turns for each street, the turns are decided with rock-paper-scissor.

Oh? Once we begin to walk, I notice that there are people following us.

They're dwarves when I check on the map, or rather, they're people from Bollhart public order bureau. According to Jojori-san, they're bodyguards that Driar-shi has prepared. It's not 'feel like', but we 'are' treated as VIPs.

At the center of the square with water fountain, there are swordsman who's sword dancing, grinder shop, and people selling weapons openly.

The commodities are put on the sheet on the ground, unlike with stands like in Seryuu city. Although it's not like the displayed items are bad, they're also not especially good so I'm not interested.

There's a weaselman street vendor who's opening a play with target on the square. It seems that you have to hit a target 3 meter way with darts that look like shuriken. A session is one copper coin, and you'd get three pennies for each one of the five shurikens hit. It's the customers' victory if they hit twice right, isn't that easy?

"How 'bout it bro. Would ye like to play?"

Since Pochi and Tama seem like they want to, I give him one copper coin.

"I'll hit with them all nodesu."

Pochi's first throw missed. It looks like the dart's balance is bad. No, seems that it's deliberately made to be unbalanced. Yet, she still hits twice, she does have throwing skill.

"I've hit twice nodesu!"

"Aiyaa, jou-chan is great really. I'd have to survive with rice if this keeps up."

I pat Pochi who looks pleased after she receives one copper coin and one penny. Her tail looks like it'd get torn off.

"Revenge for Pochi~?"

Everytime Tama throws the dart, the surrounding people cheer. She has hit it three times in a row.

"Oh, that little girl is besting the record."

"I'm betting for four hits."

"I'll bet that third will be the last."

They've begun betting, but Tama throws the fourth and fifth darts without minding the atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the fifth one misses, but she's amazing enough for hitting fours with darts made to miss.

"One missed."

"It's quite amazing already Tama."

She's wanted to hit with all the darts to the point that she forgets to ask for the prize. But, it seems that she pulls herself after I praise her. While she's rubbing her head on my hand after I've finished patting her, she triumphantly shows the copper coins she's gotten on her hand to Pochi.

Since Tama shows her two copper coins and two pennies, Pochi's rivalry is burning and she's going to challenge the play again, but the weasel man doesn't accept re-challenge from people who have hit the target for twice or more.

Everyone else have also challenged it, but beside Mia who hit once, no one hit even once. Even though Liza occasionally does spear-throwing practice, she's missed it all. Jojori-san encourages me to to try it, but I refrain.

◇

There aren't only weapons, armors, and other savage things that are on display on this square, various handiworks made from gems or precious metal are also lined up. Although they look finer than the ones in Seryuu city, I feel like they look a bit rougher than the one I usually see on the TV's CM.

Since we're already here, I suggest on buying one silver worth of handiworks for everyone, but--

"The things that master makes are better anyway. Please put plenty of your love in it."

"Meat~?"

"That's right nano desu, I want grilled meat nodesu."

"Steak is nice, but I think that roasted meat on net is better."

"Crêpes."

Arisa is asking for accessory, but starting from Tama, Pochi, then Liza, and even Mia are making noises for food.

Nana and Lulu who are looking at the accessories agree with Arisa and tell me that my self-made accessories are better. I could do it easily due to production skills anyway, I'll make some matching earrings or bracelets I guess?

Maybe they're hungry because they're talking about food, I decide to have meal on the restaurant that faces the square. Since I've been in the basement for a long time, I secure the seat on the open terrace in front of the restaurant. When we're ordering the meal, Pochi says a very curious thing, "I wish to quickly go on a journey and eat master's meat nodesu." Somehow everyone sympathizes with Pochi's remark and nods, Jojori-san is showing a confused face as the only one who doesn't understand the situation.

The meal is black bread with cheese and sausage garnishes, and it's normal for the dwarves to pour these with ale. The sausage is minced, so I put mustard on it. It's mustard after a long time, and when I check on Lulu, it seems that she's bought various type of sausages and mustard. GJ.

◇

"Why aren't you selling mithril sword even though here is dwarves' hometown!"

When we're drinking ginger tea after the meal, I could hear such yelling. When I glance there, a man who's wearing noble-like clothes is complaining to a dwarf who's selling weapons on the street stall.

It looks like the peace is ending and the disturbance at the dwarves' hometown seems to begin.

7-6. At the Hometown of the Dwarves (5)

Satou's here. There are a lot of clearance goods that appear during deflation, but even in parallel world, those goods also exist.

◇

"You've heard what I said from awhile ago right mister? Even among dwarf blacksmiths, the only ones who could work on first class stuff like mithril are the personal pupils of the old master. An ordinary working-class dwarf like me only makes sword from normal iron at best. I don't do mithril."

The dwarf man who has been pressed for an answer declares so while shrugging his shoulder as if spitting it out.

"That can't be.... Then where should I buy it. I've especially come here from Gururian city."

"I dunno such thing even if you ask me."

It seems that even the dwarves don't know how to deal with the man who's lamenting exaggeratedly.

"There's a lot of people like that during this season. With the month changing in 8 days, the once-in-three-years martial tournament will open in the capital, so people are coming here looking for mithril weapons."

After explaining it, Jojori-san says, "I'll go for a bit", and goes to quell the dispute. There are a lot of hidden bodyguards, so she should be alright.

If the tournament is next week then I don't think that he'd make it in time, but since the preliminary is held in every city of the dukedom, it looks like it'll be alright. Unfortunately, the preliminary isn't happening in Bollhart city.

The guy is the fourth son of the viscount, level 6, has sword skill. I don't think that he could do well in the tournament even if he has mithril sword.

"Gobler-san, what seems to be the problem?"

"Ah, Jojori sis. These people insist on buying mithril swords."

"What's this? Are you selling it?"

"I'm very sorry, but mithril weapons are made by reservations. Moreover, it requires letter of introductions from duke-sama and viceroy-sama."

"What... you say, the I won't be able to get mithril sword..."

The noble man mutters and collapses onto the ground--he's fainted.

Judging from the states of his clothes and mantle, he's probably been through a long journey.

Jojori-san comes back while shouldering the man. As expected of a dwarf to easily carry a big grown man.

The cafeteria's caretaker comes out, and the man is laid on the bench at the corner of the cafeteria. She sure is kind, it'd be fine to leave him on the shade of the tree over there.

"Looks like he's overworked. Among second son of nobles and below and fallen nobles, there are a lot of case where they collapse after arriving here in strict schedule."

It has become a tradition huh?

However, even if he use a mithril sword, I think it'd still be hard though?

The one who answers that doubt isn't Jojori-san, but a woman dressed in armor who seems to be the attendant of the noble man earlier. She's a 16 years old blond woman with childish face. Her eyebrows are big. I don't know her proportion due to the armor, but it looks relatively good. Her level is 7, she has one-handed sword and shield skills. It looks like she serves the viscount house.

"I'm sorry for the trouble young master has caused. We'd like to get mithril swords no matter what, isn't there any way?"

"Even if you say that. If you bring the raw material, the mithril ingot, yourself, then there would be several people who could help, but since they're reserved for the duke and the viceroys beside that, it's impossible."

The woman warrior is more constructive than the noble man from earlier, but Jojori-san's answer isn't favorable. By the way, the viceroys seem to be nobles who are governing cities beside the dukedom capital. It looks like the office's term ends in five years and the seat will be changed to a different person.

Still, if the system is so tied with reservations, I wonder if it's alright for me to receive such an excellent sword?

As the two's conversation is of no concern to me, I wipe Pochi's mouth which has gotten dirty from the meat soup, but the argument turns toward here.

"The personage there. I assume that your sword is made from mithril. It's an impudent wish, but would you be willing to hand it over?"

"I refuse."

She could know even without appraisal skill huh.

I've declined in a flash, but the woman warrior press on without giving up. But, even if I'm selling it, I don't think that they could pay the compensation.

"You won't sell it no matter what?"

"In the first place, you wouldn't able to pay it anyway you know?"

"We'll pay no matter how much, if we can't, I'll give you anything you want."

Everyone glances at my face with that words from woman warrior. No, I'm not thinking something perverted you know.

"Even if you say no matter how much, a dagger sized mithril cost 40 gold coins you know? For a straight sword of this size, it'd be at least 120 gold coins."

"Wha, even though an iron sword only costs one gold coins, one hund, 120 you say?!"

I think that iron sword is more expensive though, but when I check on the woman's sword, just as I thought, it's of poor quality. Still, it's bad for her to try to buy something if she doesn't even understand market price.

I'll give her a warning once again to make her give up.

"Even if you get yourself a mithril sword, you won't suddenly get stronger you know. Rather than coming here to buy one, you should use that time and labor to hunt monsters instead."

"It is not so. For the sake of entering the imperial guard of the dukedom, the young master needs either a mithril sword or a magic sword."

I ask for the detail since I don't quite understand the relation. According to her story, it seems that the people who possess mithril swords or magic swords are able to pass the first preliminary round. And then, there's a story circulating among the young nobles that if you clear the "People who participate on the second preliminary round" condition, you'd get accepted into the dukedom's imperial guards.

It seems that entering into the imperial guards is the most popular course to be successful in life beside being the first child, so the noble man earlier has participated in the martial tournament since he's 15 but he's never passed over the first preliminary round. It'd be the third time he's entering this year.

To be frank, I don't really care since it's a stranger's problem.

Since Liza's spear is wrapped in cloth, it's fine, but it'd be troublesome if she notices that it's a magic spear.

Yet, Arisa who has just finished her meal repulses the woman who's persisting.

"You're being rude to our master even though he's being humble you know? This person is a respected noble with peerage, Chevalier Pendragon-sama."

After hearing that, the woman says, "I earnestly apologize for my rudeness.", and lowers her head while turning pale. What's this, I should have show her my peerage from the start. As expected of Arisa.

"Please be careful as there are a lot of frauds who are selling weapons made from monsters as though they're magic weapons recently."

Jojori-san advises the woman warrior.

I don't have obligation to keep them company forever so when Liza and the others have finished their meal, I give them sign to leave.

After we leave, some weasel men that looks like merchants approach the woman, but I decide to not care about it. It's her own responsibility if she gets scammed after ignoring Jojori-san's advice.

◇

The magic shop above the ground is managed by Jojori-san's childhood friend. The product line-up seem to be inferior compared to the underground shop, but since it's in the middle of the way to the waterwheel tourist attraction, I decide to visit it.

"Hey Jojori. That's unusual for you to come to this shop! Are you finally fed up with that muscle-brain idiot Zajir? That's good! That's really good."

"Hello Galhar. Please don't say such thing about Zajir-san."

Galhar-shi speaks like a machine-gun when he sees Jojori-san. Jojori-san lightly reproves that. Even though he's a dwarf, he's not exposing his stomach, and his beard is carefully set and waxed. Is he perhaps, a dwarf hunk?

Introduced by Jojori-san, I ask the magic shop to show me their magic books and scrolls, and although the magic books are mostly the same as the ones from underground magic shop, there are two books with different authors, so I buy them. The scrolls line-up is different, the ones here are suited for nobles and merchants.

"What do you think, I've deliberately stocked them from Daregan city. Aren't they unusual?"

He takes out some life magic scrolls.

They're insect repellent, anti-itch or deodorant, *etc*. Things that the wealthy would buy. There's even scroll for clean drinking unboiled water. Those scrolls are quite interesting, but I think the costs don't balance out.

Sure enough, when Jojori-san sees the line-up, her face becomes clouded.

"Hey, Galhar. How much are these scroll each?"

"Fufuhn, normally it would be 1 gold coin for one, but for you, I'm fine with giving it for 3 silver coins."

"These scrolls, perhaps they're not selling even one?"

Galhar-shi is boasting until his nose expands, but when he hears Jojori-san's words, his face freezes. Furthermore, Arisa delivers the decisive blow.

"That's right isn't it, rather than carrying around such expensive scrolls, it'd be more convenient to just hire an attendant who can use life magic instead, it's more effective financially too."

So it seems they're bad stocks that aren't selling at all ever since they're stocked half a year ago. With the support from the girls, I buy them cheaper than their stocking prices. Coupled with three other well-selling scrolls, the total becomes three gold coins.

The scrolls that I've obtained are as follow.

>Scroll, Life Magic: Bug Wiper

>Scroll, Life Magic: Anti-Itch

>Scroll, Life Magic: Deodorant

>Scroll, Life Magic: Pure Water

>Scroll, Nature Magic: Short Stun

>Scroll, Nature Magic: Sonar

>Scroll, Nature Magic: Fence

Beside Short Stun, they're all questionable magic, but I've bought them all since my collector's soul grows excited.

Galhar-shi brings more bad stocks from the back since he seems to have judged that I'd buy them. Looks like he's bought them from a weasel merchant at the neighboring city called Daregan.

"How about it? They're quite rare y'know."

They're certainly rare, maybe.

The first is [Nature Magic: Signal] which Nana also has, but it's useless since there's no one who could receive it. It's probably usable as beacon.

The second is [Nature Magic: Cube]. This is like a magic in between [Shield], and [Floating Board], the practitioner could create cubes of arbitrary size that float in the air.

It's mainly used to keep off rushing enemies, but it could also be used like a chair. On top of having short effective time, it would also disappear when it's separated away from the practitioner. It's not like it's completely still in the air as it'd move when it's overloaded. Looks like I could use it to create invisible stairs in the air.

I wonder if it's an unexpectedly usable magic?

"The lowest level cube is about this much see?"

Arisa creates a floating cube of about 10 centimeters wide in the air. Moreover, it seems that it could only hold 500 grams of weight. In case of scroll, since it could only invokes magic of the lowest magic, I understand why it becomes a bad stock.

The third is [Fire Magic: Furnace Flame]. It seems to be a magic for melting ores into ingots. It's actually a very dwarf-like scroll, but it couldn't even be used for melting iron core if there are less than 10 scrolls, it also needs strong vessel to use, and the melted iron will flow to the ground, so it's difficult.

Furthermore, the activation range is short, so the practitioner would get burnt, it's a defective product.

In short, it's better to just use normal furnace. Since there's no meaning for its own blacksmithing purpose, there's no demand for it at all. He's only noticed it after he's bought it.

"How did you end up with all these weird scrolls..."

Arisa and Mia looks amazed. Pochi and Tama are sleeping beside Liza's feet. They're tired after all huh.

"Y, you can use it as attack magic."

"If you attack with this, you'd only hurt yourself. Something like fire bullet is more efficient."

So it seems.

The last one is [Light Magic: Condense]. Galhar-shi desperately tries to sell it by saying things like you could use it for drying laundry during cloudy days, or you could use it to read in dim room. I'm told that he's mistaken it for [Luminescence(light)].

He seems to have thought that I would not buy it since it's been thoroughly disapproved by Arisa and the others, so he looks really dumbfounded when I begin negotiating.

Certainly, normally one would think that they're nothing but trashes, but as for me, I think that they look more attractive than the scrolls from the underground shop. With the help from Arisa and Jojori-san, I buy them all for dirt cheap one silver coin, far from even half the prices.

It was a good shopping.

I'm keeping in mind to sell him scrolls for cheap when I've become able to create scrolls my own someday.

◇

The great waterwheel that Jojori-san has lead us to is smaller than I've thought, but I'm glad that it looks like a tourist attraction.

Even though we've just eaten so much just now, everyone heads to the sweets stalls instead of the waterwheel. The stalls are selling famous specialty pastry around here in style of prawn chips. It seems that they're in promotion.

"Master, aan nano desu."

I get one baked sweet that Pochi is presenting to me. Arisa and the others who are queuing in front of the stalls are clamoring, but I taste the sweet without minding it. The taste and smell are like prawn chips.

While tasting that nostalgic flavor, we go around visiting blacksmiths from various tribes, starting from the dwarves, on the craftsman district, and then we go back to the guest mansion.

Evening of that day, losing to the pleading gazes of Pochi and Tama, I decide to stand in the kitchen. The dining room aunty who gives me permission turns out to be the wife elder Dohar. I've brought 20 type of meat from the wagon as ingredients, but it's not enough at all in the end. I've prepared many large plates, but after the dwarven blacksmiths are coming after getting enticed by the smell, the dining room becomes battlefield. The line of sights from Pochi, Tama and the dwarves who are seriously competing for the meat that look at me when I'm refilling the platters are scary.

Jojori-san is unable to remain indifferent to this, so she divides the children from the adults, but since the dwarf children have also come for the meat, the contest hasn't ended. Since friendships seem to be budding from the meat contest, I let it slide.

It wasn't until late in the night that Lulu, Nana, and me who have been refilling the meal were able to have meal ourselves.

7-7. Scrolls and Cheat

Satou's here. I'm reminded of Icarus when we're talking about flying human, but flying in the air has been everybody's dream since the olden days. In this world, people aren't flying with wax wings, but with magic.

◇

I'm told that the granddaughter of elder Dohar will be my wife if I stay, so I promise Zajir-san who glares at me when he hears that to part away, thus we leave Bollhart city behind.

The nearest city is four days away.

Since the path there is a mountain trail, it'll probably be five days.

There are several carriages going to the same direction as us, but since our speeds are different, we're not moving in caravan. It seems that normally, even if the moving speeds are different, many carriages join together to evade thieves, monsters and beasts.

Since we wouldn't be able to craft, experiment and do training if we're together with other merchants, I try not to intrude each other's turf as much as possible.

Even so, there are times when we meet them during the break, so I've put dummy barrels, boxes and various luggage around.

Currently, the coachman is Lulu. Arisa has installed a cushion on the driver's seat during our stay in the Bollhart city, so it looks comfortable now. It seems that the inside of the cushion seat contains coiled springs that she's asked the blacksmiths to make.

◇

Two days after we've left Bollhart city, the caravan of merchants aren't near our camping ground at last, so I decide to use the many scrolls that I've bought.

Before I use the scrolls, I finally activate the five kind of magic skills; Earth, Fire, Wind, Ice, and Light.

First I make a wall made from mud with [Mud Wall (Wall)]. It's a one meter tall, one meter wide, and five centimeters thick [Wall]. It looks like it'll collapse if it's just touched lightly.

Lulu and the others who are watching give an applause. Tama wants to climb it, but I warn her that it's fragile so she shouldn't.

Next, I harden the mud wall with [Hard Clay]. It's not glossy like a porcelain, but it's strengthened enough.

It seems that both the mud wall and the hardened wall would not return back to their original forms even with passing time. If I have a potter's wheel, I would be able to make pot for medicines. Come to think of it, I don't have Ceramic making skill yet, let's try it next time.

When I use [Rock Smasher] on the mud wall and hardened mud wall, both of them breaks and becomes sand.

When I use [Freeze Water] on the water in the bucket, it freezes for three centimeters from the surface. Since it's winter now, it doesn't seem like it'd melt even if it's left alone. If I use it on a pond if we find one, we would be able to play on a skating ring made from it. I'll make skate boots while we're moving.

The [Air Curtain] could be used to make windbreak, but the effect disappear in about three minutes.

Since all the life magic I've tried have subtle effects, I'm omitting it. [Deodorant] seems to be usable for when I've moved my body like after training.

It's quite unpopular when I use it later. I've already expected the kind of Arisa's reaction, "Boy's sweats are proof of youth you know, and you're erasing that! erasing that!", but even Lulu looks really disappointed. When we're sleeping, even Pochi and Tama say, "There's no master's scent nodesu.", they rub their noses while putting on strange faces, so I decide not to use it except when I'm really stinky of sweats.

Next I try using [Condense]. It condenses the moonlight and it does get a bit brighter, but that's it. The magic tool Light Drop that hasn't had role recently is much brighter. No wonder it becomes a bad stock.

I use the other bad stock [Furnace Flame (Forge)] from a place away from everyone. I ask Mia to standby with a long stick for if the fire spread. I change into cheap shirt and trousers since I don't want my clothes get burned. Arisa is saying some stupid things from behind, "Shirt is way better than robe isn't it. That slender body line is irresistible."

I put a copper dagger I've got from the thieves back then on a rock and use the magic. The MP consumption is slightly bigger, maybe because this spell belong to intermediate class. Since the flame appears only one meter away from the scroll, I move it to the dagger's place in a hurry. Even though the copper dagger should have been more soluble than iron, it only gets hot and isn't melting. Since the nearby weeds are burning, I ask Mia to put down the fire.

I'll try the remaining nature magic. I use [Signal] to send Morse codes to Nana. I ask Nana to activate [Signal] too so that she can receives it.

"It's ton ton ton, tsu, tsu, tsu, ton ton ton."

"Then, try to send the same thing back."

"Yes, master."

A signal sound from one scene of the movie I've seen a long time ago is playing back in my head.

Arisa who's seemingly bored begins to sing [SOS] song while doing strange choreography. I wonder if that's from olden idol? Since the song is upbeat, Pochi and Tama have also begun to dance together. Even Mia is accompanying the music with reed flute.

No well, you girls, you don't have to force yourself to watch, if you're tired it's fine to do as you like you know?

I pull myself together and use [Sonar]. It's searching for enemies in 20 meters wide range. It seems that it doesn't detect small animals, and only targets dangerous ones like poisonous snakes and stray dogs. The effect only last for five minutes. I know now just how irregular the radar is.

I try the remaining ones in turns. [Fence] creates transparent horse-rail-like fences that's one meter tall and one meter wide. However, it's quite fragile, it partially breaks from [Short Stun], and completely breaks when Liza lightly kicks it.

It might be usable if the opponent is just some low level thieves, but if it's a knight-class, then it would get broken without any resistance.

The last one I use is [Cube], and it's just like how Arisa has demonstrated, the activated cube is not more than 10 centimeters in size.

◇

It's the real thing now.

So that Liza and the others don't get hurt, I move two mountains away from them. Unlike from before I announce that I'm high leveled where they'd get worried if I go alone in uninhabited place, they don't object at all now. However, when we're in place with people, there's always someone beside me at midnight, perhaps they're thinking that I'd go to have some night time. Good grief, it's no good. I've felt that my sexual desire has decreased sharply after I arrive at this world, but I'm still a healthy man. I'd like to have a nightlife once in a while.

My destination is a place with five monsters called Soldier Beetles.

They're drone beetle-like monsters with the size of light cars, their level are lower 20s.

When I'm two kilometers away from it, I activate [Sonar] and go closer. It seems that the range of enemy search is around one kilometer. I think it's because the skill level is 10, it's quite different from the initial one. However, since I have radar already, it's regretful to think that I'd never use this magic. The effective time has been quite extended too.

Above all, judging from the name, it'd be bad if an enemy with good sense notice me when I'm searching using this. In truth I could sense radar-like wave of magic from [Sonar] when I'm using [Signal] magic. On the contrary, I think it could be usable for fake warning.

Since I've got to the place 500 meters away from the monsters, I shoot [Short Stun] to check its effective range. Just like Magic Arrow, the possible shot amount has increased. The amount is the same as magic arrow it seems. I shoot one to one of the beetle. The remaining 120 go towards the other three. I divide it to 20, 40, and 64.

As the result, the beetle shot with one is fainted with dented shell, but the one shot with 20 gets its shell crushed and is half-dead. The beetles shot with 40 and more have been completely smashed.

It's disqualified as a magic for making thing faints.

It'd be fine if the opponent are knights or heavy infantries, but if it's civilians, they'd surely die. I'll analyze this spell, and I'll make one that won't increase in strength with skill level and status. The time limit is until I get to Toruma (Ossan)'s household to make scrolls. It's been awhile since I've got a work with delivery date, it's tensing me up.

Strangely, the only safe monster is coming toward here. Is it not running because its intelligence is low, or is it trying to revenge its friends.

Since it's vigorously flying here, I try to use [Mud Wall (Wall)]

I use it at maximum power, and a gigantic wall of 300 meters wide, 20 meters high, and 5 meters thick wall appears.

Since I create it just before the beetle, it hits the wall splendidly. I've thought that it would pierce through the wall, but seems that the wall is surprisingly hard, and the monster is stuck on the other side of the wall.

--Looks like I could build a castle overnight.

Since it'd only obstruct me if I leave it alone, I destroy it with [Rock Smasher]. The mud wall becomes fine sands and collapses. Since it looks like I'd get swallowed in it, I quickly jump onto a nearby tree and get out of the trouble.

Once again, I make [Mud Wall], and cancel it, it returns to the similar state as the original. As expected, the destroyed woods and undergrowth aren't restored.

The fainted monster finally recovers after 30 minutes, and it's going here. Since it's firing fire bullet even though it's just an insect, I take it with [Air Curtain]. Even though it's taking the fire bullet directly, the fire bullet is not piercing through and gets scattered away in front of the wind wall. It seems to be usable as defense if the opponents are just small fries.

The insect seems to have given up on fire bullet and begins to ram here, I'll put up [Cube] to stop it. Looks like I could create 300 meters cube at most, but the limitation is that I can't create one if there's something inside it. I make a cube of about 10 meters big in front of the beetle. The beetle can't break through the cube, just like with the mud wall. It loses its momentum and stops after pushing the cube for about 20 meters. The beetle stalls and begins falling, but by flapping its wings, it lands near me and runs on the ground attacking me.

Just as expected.

I make [Fence] in front of the beetle that's attacking on the ground. It looks like I could create multiple ones with this too, but since I could only create five spatially, I create five of it.

The fence seems to be fixed on the ground, and it won't move as long as it's not destroyed. The beetle which is moving at 30-40 Km/H is skewered by one of the fence and dies, but there's no trace of the fence moving. Since the fences could be canceled individually, I remove the unused ones and leave one alone. I leave it to confirm the effective time.

I put one complete corpse of the beetle into the Storage, and only collect the shells and the cores of the rest.

The dying one becomes a sacrifice for [Condense]. It seems that the focus power is increased with skill level, the condensed moonlight becomes laser-like. Unfortunately since the original light for the amplified one is weak, the power isn't that strong. It's about as powerful as one Remote Arrow. Furthermore, the effect only materialize after five minutes, so I think it's only usable during daytime as point attack. If it collects sunlight, the power will surely increase. Since it somehow feels cruel to keep doing this, I end it with Remote Arrow.

Continuing on, it's time to experiment with [Furnace Flame (Forge)].

I've thought of making furnace with [Mud Wall] reinforced with [Hard Clay], but I decide to use [Cube] instead.

I create transparent furnace by using several [Cubes]. It looks like the cube is reinforced if they're connected. Even though I could erase [Cube] blocks that has been connected whole, I could not separate them once connected so I have to be careful.

And then I put copper and iron daggers inside the transparent furnace made from Cubes, and activate [Furnace Flame (Forge)]. Three minutes after activation, the copper dagger melts, and in five minutes, the iron dagger also becomes liquid. It seems that [Cube] is about as durable as [Shield], it could withstand [Furnace Flame (Forge)] for 30 minutes before breaking. I found out that I could extend the endurance time to 50 minutes by creating two Cubes layered.

I open the menu and narrow the search on the map. I search for places where there are metal veins on the mountain nearby. There are veins for metal called [Iron Stone] and [Uutz Steel] it seems. I mark them, including the copper vein.

The former is approximately 30 meters away from the ground surface, so I expose it by skillfully using [Mud Wall (Wall)]. The rest of the work is done by adjusting the power of [Rock Smasher] to cut the ores. I've thought of using the sharper holy sword for an moment, but I decide to use [Rock Smasher] as a training for using magic.

Then I put the iron ore inside the transparent cube-made furnace, activate [Furnace Flame (Forge)], and begin the refining process. At first, I fail at the adjustment and the finished product is unusable, but by the third time, I'm able to refine normally. The light is dazzling, but thanks to Light Adjustment skill, it doesn't become a problem. Even while being discouraged by the small quantity of ingots refined from large quantity of ores, I continue the work.

Since Uutz Steel would darken and become brittle if I go too far, I have a hard time in adjusting the heat level for refining. I might've not been able to refine it if I don't know the accurate temperature from AR.

Thanks to the complex refinery from before, the copper one is easy.

I've thought that my magic power would be exhausted halfway, but maybe thanks to the quick MP recovery rate, it isn't even depleted by half. I've made 100KG iron ingots, 20KG Uutz steel ingots, and 70KG copper ingots before the sky turns white. The copper ingots alone worths 200 gold coins huh. Magic is tremendous after all.

I take out an anvil from the Storage, and try to create an iron sword using the same process of creating the fairy sword, but I'm only able to make a brittle sword. It's not like it could not receive magic power, but it's cracked even before I put 10 points on it. So the process is for mithril after all.

Let's try to look for mithril veins when we're moving.

>Title [Magic Blacksmith] is Acquired

◇

I'm going back by strolling on the sky by using Cubes as footholds. I've changed into Silver Mask since I don't know if anyone's watching.

At first I make cubes in the shape of stairs to play around with, but since it's fun to walk on the air, I try to see how far I can go up while shouting, "I can fly". I'm unusually in high tension if I do say so myself.

I keep making footholds as I jump from them, and I'm become able to see the morning sun on the horizon. I could see a white line leading up to the sky at the southeast direction, I wonder what's that? Judging from the map, it's on the direction of Bornean forest. Well, I will probably know about it in time.

Since it's become hard to breath, I try to see below, and my back grows cold.

Huh? Did I get too carried away?

According to the AR, the altitude is about 4 kilometers. Even I would probably die if I fall from this height. I must be careful not to run out of magic power.

Even though I'm at this altitude, I unexpectedly don't feel fear, since the stratosphere should be about 10 kilometers high, there's no worry of jumping out to the space yet.

For approximately 10 minutes, I practice fighting in the sky. 3D Maneuver, and Space Grasp are doing nice jobs. I've become able to understand the minimum [Cube] size needed too.

I feel like I could fight dragons or demons in the air if it's like this.

There's a hawk with five meter wing-span near the mountain, so I try practicing air battle with it during my way back. If I have wings to glide through air, there would be more usable tactics.

>[Sky Drive Skill Acquired]

Sky Drive is a skill with similar effect as using [Cube] as footholds to fly in the air, it uses less magic power. I would be able to have midnight stroll easier with this. Since the only one who could endure the wind pressure and decompression is me, it's too bad that I can't invite Arisa and the others to have some air night strolls. I think there's a wind magic called [Windbreak (Canopy)], I'll request it from Ossan's household when I'm getting scrolls from them.

>Title [One who Flies without Wings] Acquired

7-8. Wolves and Stalker Reserves

Satou's here. Isn't it unexpectedly recently that the word 'stalker' become popular? It'd have been fine if the earnest person isn't troubling other people...

◇

"Master, it seems that the road is split at the foot of the mountain ahead. Which way should we go?"

Having been called by Lulu from the coachman's seat, I stop the experiment.

"Nice, Lulu! Now now, you must go quickly!"
"Flirting, end."

Arisa pushes my back to hurry me go the coachman's seat. I leave Tama who's sleeping on my lap to Mia. Pochi is sleeping on Nana's lap. Very enviable, I wonder if she'd let me take her place if I give her meat during meal.

I thought Mia's line was a false accusation, Nana and me were only facing each other for experiment, we were not flirting.

I was only trying to check the limit of [Signal] magic; whether we could receive signal from [Signal] magic if there was no receiver, so Nana and me were sitting face-to-face with each other.

In addition, since I wasn't allowed to stare at Nana's breasts, I looked at her face, but they were still saying bad things.

"Really, on top of gazing each other, you two were even locking hands, really!"

"Guilty."

My [Magic Perception] skill immediately kicked in, but Nana couldn't receive the signal, so I was to tap Nana's palm with my finger whenever I was sending a signal.

It's purely an experiment.

There's nothing shameful--I've thought of the little perk, but it's a secret.

To change the subject, I go to the coachman's seat and give instruction to Lulu.

From the mountain trail we are on now, I could see the road extending at the direction of the forest. The road that extends beyond the forest leads to Daregan city. I could even faintly see something that looks like the outer wall beyond the forest from here.

"Turn left there, don't go straight."

"Yes, I understand."

"Huh? Haven't I said that Daregan city is straight ahead? I've already told you to board on a ship there to get straight to the dukedom's capital."

That was plan, but it'd be bad if we went to the city ahead.

"We're going to encounter the stalker reserves if we keep going."

"Geh, don't tell me, it's Oppai-san?"

"W, wait Arisa. For the time being, she's the daughter of master's master, call her Karina-sama properly."

Lulu gives a warning, but since Lulu herself has added, "For the time being", I understand Lulu's assessment about her.

Karina-sama and three bodyguards-like maids who are traveling together with her are in the Daregan city ahead. Looks like it's impossible for knight Zotor or junior knight Hauto to go with her after all. Even lady Karina should have had many jobs like suppressing thieves in her own territory. She's a pain in the ass.

"Karina~?"

"Now, it's time to have a match nano desu!"

Pochi and Tama are gleefully jumping out to the coachman's seat. That reminds me, these two love to have a match with lady Karina.

At first they were waging war with lady Karina to protect me since she looked like she was bullying me, but the three were somehow in the same wavelength and had good matches. It seemed that Lady Karina were reluctance in hitting the two, so it became a defensive match. One out of two matches, the two ran out of their stamina and lady Karina won. If it was not that then both sides ran out of stamina and it became a draw.

The two are looking around restlessly while saying, "Karina, not here~?", "Not here nodesu."

While we're having such idle talk, Liza who has gone ahead to scout the junction comes back. There is no thieves in our course today, so only Liza is riding a horse.

"Master, there's a group of human on the fork ahead, Since I could hear sounds of weapon clashing, they might be thieves."

"Thieves extermination~?"

"I'll do my best nodesu!"

Looks like lady Karina has disappeared from Pochi's and Tama's heads after they hear about the thieves.

We can't see them from here, but the people that Liza's found aren't thieves according to the map. There are several martial artists, and the rest are farmers, probably from the neighborhood.

◇

There's an open space on the crossroad. Two martial artist are exchanging sword blows on the center of the open space. Around 20 farmers are watching that battle from a distance.

It appears that it's a betting game, the farmers are having heated discussion in excitement.

There are several carts parked on the open space. Since they're empty, the people here are probably going back after delivering goods to Daregan city.

Pochi and Tama want to participate, but since the martial artists here are only level 4-7, they're too weak for them, so I forbid it.

Pochi and Tama are demanding persistently on my sides, but they'd only bully the weak here if I give in here, so I endure it. The two don't seem to be giving up, but Liza who gets down from the horse lifts them up in both hands.

Pochi who rarely sulks is posing like a corpse listlessly while being carried by Liza. It's been awhile since I've seen the Dara~n pose. Tama who's still resisting Liza looks as if remembering something after she sees Pochi, and takes the same pose.

Now then, the opponents for Pochi and the others aren't them.

There are three people heading here from the forest chased by wolf packs reflected on the radar. Things would become quite horrible if those wolf packs rush to where the farmer crowd is. I could exterminate them with Remote Arrow, but I'll have them become sacrifices for Pochi's and the others' fighting spirit.

I park the wagon on one corner of the open space, and bring only the three beastkin girls near the place the wolves will come out.

Pochi's ears are twitching. Apparently she has detected the wolves' presences.

"Master, wolves nano desu!"

"Nyu~? there is?"

It seems Tama and Liza still haven't heard them. Liza is glancing here, so I nod.

"Bro, some strong looking guards you have there. Would you like to compete? You'll only get some injuries even if you lose, but you'll get one big copper coin if you win. It's not a bad deal right?"

"No, this girl is saying that there's something strange in the woods."

"That so?"

A man who looks to be the gambling manager greets me, but I only answer him vainly. They're already under 200 meters away.

The manager seems to have heard the wolves sound too, he gives sign to the farmers to move away. The manager is talking about something to five people who seem to be martial artist.

Let's settle it before they join.

I chant dummy spell to activate [Fence], and put five transparent fences in places.

So that the mercenaries don't plunge to the fences, I stop them when they come out of the woods and roll them behind the fences.

"Run away! Wolf packs are coming."

"We will try to buy some time. So, quickly."

Two of the three thrown ones warn us, but it's unnecessary. I assure the three.

"It's alright. We'll quickly take care of it, so rest behind the fences."

Wolves that are chasing the mercenaries are coming out of the woods when I'm talking, but they get skewered by the fences one by one. With their daggers, Pochi and Tama easily deal with wolves that are somehow able to avoid it.

The wolves group that tries to circumvent the fences get pierced by Liza's spear. I could hear the mercenaries murmur, "Amazing", "Strong", but I ignore them.

I kick the jaw of the unfortunate wolf that have jumped over the fence while heading here. It bounces on the fence and flies to before Tama.

"Dangerous~?"

"Aah, sorry."

Tama quickly finish the wolves even while complaining. The three have defeated about 20 wolves in the blink of an eye. There are still three wolves in the woods, but since they escape to the depth, I don't chase them.

"Yer' amazing, pipsqueak!"

"The wolves were like puppies!"

At first the farmers are frightened by the wolves voices, but they've soon watched the battle it seems. Several of them are raising voices of praises.

"I'm not pipsqueak nodesu! Pochi nano desu!"

"Tama~ na no."

Liza is indifferently dismantling the wolves, but Pochi and Tama are taking victory poses while lifting the wolf with one hand together triumphantly. They immediately get scolded by Liza and go back to the dismantling.

The gambling manager and the five martial artists are escaping toward Daregan city. In a way, their actions are justified. Or rather, half of the farmers who haven't escaped are the weird ones.

◇

I leave the dismantling process to Liza and the others, and go to where the mercenaries are behind the transparent fences. All three of them are women. One of them is level 5 with dagger skill, but the rests are level 3 with no skills. Only one of the level 3 has serious injury.

"Are you alright?"

"Yes, thank you for your help."

"I'm sorry. We didn't think that there would be people here."

Certainly, if this is a game, i's like Train, or rather an MPK. Let's have them reflecting on it. I give them my honest opinion while giving emergency treatment to the girl with serious injury who doesn't have energy to talk with me.

"It would have become a catastrophe if these girls weren't here. I suggest to hunt in moderation."

"It's my fault. Since it was our first dispatch, we chase far into the forest and got counterattacked..."

A female mercenary who looks to be the leader makes an excuse. She's 18 as the oldest of the group, the other two are 15-16 years old. I'd like you to learn to act carefully before you lose your life.

I've mostly completed the emergency treatment, but her stamina still keeps decreasing. I lift the girl and see her back, there are three claw marks. Like this, scars will remain. Even though her appearance is like a 10 years old, it's probably still harsh for a woman.

I've had no intention of using potion here, but it can't be helped. Even though the girl is losing consciousness because of the injury, I pour the potion on her mouth. Since I can feel criticizing gaze from behind, I restrain myself from doing mouth-to-mouth.

As the result of saving these girls at this time, I've given clues to troublesome people. I regretted that I didn't ask them to not speak about it, but I didn't regret saving them since forsaking them would leave bad taste on my conscience.

I decide to depart while leaving the girls who are surprised with the effect of the potion. We distribute half of the entrails from the dismantled wolves to the watching farmers and the mercenaries women. As expected, I can't exactly ignore the eyes full of expectation coupled with drools.

7-9. Karina and the Maid Squad

God is mean.

Even though the unpleasant male soldiers have disappeared, and it'd finally be comfortable, I have to accompany the young lady on a journey...

I dream of wearing that cute maid uniform again, but I endure it for now.

"Pina-san, Pina-san, Karina-sama has gone off, is it alright not to stop her?"

The subordinates are calling me who's deep in thought. As it turns out, the other maids who accompany the young lady with me are the problem children, Taruna and Erina, god is really mean.

I put off the grieving for later, and see at the direction Erina's finger points to, my face turns pale.

The young lady has been peeking on the cliff below since awhile ago, but then she jumps down it without hesitation.

"Y, young lady."

I rush up to the edge of the cliff in hurry, but it's probably too late now. Ah, how incompetent of me to not even able to stop the young lady's suicide. I'll be fired from my precious workplace too. I might be downgraded to be a slave. Considering the pampering baron-sama, he might even sentence me to decapitation out of grief. Ah, such misfortune.

"Pina-san, rather than indulging in your misfortune, you should look at that instead you know?"

Contrasting her calm outward appearance, the brash Taruna points on the foot of the cliff. Did the young lady perhaps only suffer from bone fracture and fall somewhere?

I brace myself and see under the cliff, the young lady is lively exterminating the thieves.

My neck is safe somehow.

◇

"Young lady, please don't do such thoughtless action--"

"My, I'm protecting populace from thieves, it's our duty desuwa."

As if covering over my scolding, the young lady pushes her ideal. This person really doesn't listen to other people. In the first place, this is the dukedom, the young lady doesn't have to act for the populace here, but she's said that it's trivial even when I point it out.

"I'm sorry Pina-dono. I had thought of stopping her, but several lives were depending on us. I'd like you to overlook this."

Voices of a gentleman talks for the young lady, it's the very mysterious talking magic tool, Raka-dono.

Although, I think the restraint for the young lady's recklessness is gone ever since she's got hold of this magic tool.

The ones she's saved are merchants party who are going to the Daregan city. Their guards have been killed by the thieves, but they themselves are only suffering from minor injuries. Since there are no one who's dying, let's let them tend to their own injuries.

Taruna and Erina are stripping equipments from the half-killed unconscious thieves. It's annoying, but I'll help them. The smells from leather armors make me want to pinch my nose, but since they can be sold for some money, we're taking them before dealing with the thieves. Unfortunately, their swords and spears that seem to be made of bronze have been destroyed. The young lady used her superhuman strength to destroy them, it'd had been more profitable if she cut their throats instead.

After I've finished stripping off their equipments, I dispose the thieves one by one. The thieves have lost their way, they're probably prepared to lose their life like this. I stab their hearts in one go to at least not make them suffer.

Taruna and Erina have finished dealing with theirs too.

We go back toward the merchant who is troubled with the young lady's talk about hero's tale. The ignorant young lady refuses the merchant-dono when he's going to give her rewards, "Such things like rewards aren't necessary desuwa", she says. Since I can't ask for rewards now, I have the merchant-dono to buy the equipments we've got from the thieves. He buys it at higher prices than the market's. It probably includes the reward.

Due to the merchant-dono's earnest request, we're going to escort them to Daregan city. It's a secret from the young lady, but I think escort's job is attractive. With this, we don't have to do things like renting barn for everyone but the young lady when we're staying at the inn in Daregan city.

The traveling expense from Nina-sama is barely enough for a round trip to Daregan city. Considering the poor financial situation of the baron's territory, she could not give us more than this. If the head-maid hasn't given us one silver coin in secret, we might have had to hunt along the way.

Evening of that day, we're treated to the meal made by the merchant-dono's slave, but it's only cereals porridges. Moreover, 30% of it consist of brans. He doesn't seem to be a wealthy merchant. The young lady gives an impression, "What strange textures.", but I think it's a strong point of her that she would eat up food even if it's bad. She's been raised to be poor--er, economical since she's child in the honorable house.

I want to quickly arrive at Daregan city, and eat the popular fish dishes with relish.

◇

"Now then, young lady, is it alright for us to not greet the viceroy?"

"It's fine, I don't have dress for the greeting anyway. It's not good to go meet them looking like this right? Or, are we going to tailor a dress?"

The young lady's words are reasonable.

Even though the clothes that the young lady wears is nicely tailored, it's a soldier-like clothes, not something that a lady would wear.

We're barely able to pay hotel fees, there's no way we have money to make dress.

"Pina-san, we've already got an inn, so let's quickly eat some fish~."

The suggestion is so, the gluttonous, Erina-like. However, first we have to straighten the clothes of the young lady. Since she hasn't been able to bathe until here, I'll dust her off.

"Taruna, go ask the inn's caretaker to bring hot water. Erina, go to the port and ask if anyone's seen someone that resembles chevalier-sama. Taruna should also go get informations from the market after you've done arranging the hot water."

I give the reluctant two works. Since there's still some time until evening, I'll make them work until then.

I receive the hot water from the inn's caretaker, and wake up the young lady who's begun to doze off on the bed. I take off the young lady's remaining clothes and wipe her body with a clean cloth that's been soaked in the hot water. They are violently-sized breasts no matter how many time I see it. As I'm perfectly flat, I occasionally feel hateful on it.

"Okay, I feel refreshed now."

The young lady falls on the bed while muttering satisfyingly. She's probably tired from her first long journey. She's sleeping just like that, while not wearing even a piece of string.

I put her underwear and night-wear while being careful not to wake her up. I wash dirty laundry until the two come back.

◇

Even though I feel sorry to say that it's as expected, the two aren't able to get any clue about chevalier-sama.

If we still can't find any clue after searching for the whole day tomorrow, it'd probably be better to rely on Toruma-sama and head to the viscount Shiimen house in the dukedom's capital.

"Yay, fish~♪"

"It's not something you can often eat in Muno city."

The dining room at the first floor of the inn is quite lively. Since our purses have got a bit swollen from the rewards as escort, we order famous set of fish meal. The two are innocently frolic, but as for me who isn't good with fish bones, I'm not that excited. It's finally here. I move the cut white meat to a different plate, and present it before the young lady. It should have been the work of the two, but if I leave it to the rash Erina and the thoughtless Taruna, the young lady will choke on fish bones.

"My, the salt works well, it's delicious desuwa. This rice? This strange texture matches well with the fish."

I'm glad that it suits the young lady's taste.

This town has a staple food, a cereal called rice. Not unlike baking bread, it seems that it's difficult to make, but it's more filling than bread.

That reminds me, it feels similar to the snack called rice porridge that chevalier-sama's made during my night watch shift. That rice porridge should had been made only with rice, water and salt, but the deep taste really didn't make you think it was. I want to eat it once again.

Erina pulls my sleeves when I'm lost in thought.

"Pina-san, postpone your fun delusion for a bit, and listen carefully to the conversation of the female mercenaries behind."

Erina whispers rude things to me. Some punishments are necessary later.

It seems she's talking about a group of three girls. The clothes of one of them is quite worn. There are patches on the shoulder and the back, I wonder what kind of thing she's fought to get those rips? Or rather, it's good that she lives after going through situation that rip her clothes like that. Just at that time, a different female veteran mercenary who seems to be their acquaintance comes beside them.

"Hey, isn't it quite rare for you girls to eat in this kind of restaurant?"

"Nee-san, I'm sorry for not contacting you for so long. We've got a bit of money from wolves extermination, so I've thought of eating something nice once in a while."

"That so, since the wolves packs are getting larger recently, don't chase them too deep into the forest okay?"

What does Erina want me to hear?

It seems that the veteran's hit a sore spot, the three girls fall silent from her words.

"Ah, Nee-san, I'd have liked that advice a bit earlier."

"What's this, did you guys run into a large pack of wolves?"

"That's right. We were chased hard by 30 wolves in the forest, I thought we were going to die."

"How did you get out of that without even an injury?"

"Ah, you don't believe me huh."

"I was so greatly injured that my clothes becomes tattered."

Those rips are from wolves are they.

"Oy oy, there's limit to bluffing too you know? If you get injuries from that kind of rips, you'd have been dead now right?"

"Hehee, magic medicine! I've been given magic medicine. He must have fallen for me, no doubt about it! He looks good too, I wonder if I should aim for marriage~?"

"Magic medicine you say. How many gold coins do you think a magic medicine that could heal even the scar worth. If you're a peerless beauty then I understand, but there's no way there's such a good natured person willing to save a plain young girl like you."

I see, I have such a good natured man in mind.

I look at Erina who's also listening, and we nod our heads. It's most likely chevalier-sama. He has also generously given an expensive magic medicine to a girl who's been ran over by carriage in Muno city, it's quite enough as circumstantial evidence.

"Well, even if I give in to the story of the magic medicine, how are you girls able to escape the wolves?"

"That, the three demi-human girls that had tagged along with the person who gave that medicine defeated the wolves in a flash."

"They were great. Even though the dogkin and the catkin were children, they killed the wolf in one stab."

"However, the scalekin person was extraordinary. She defeats so many wolves with one thrust of the black spear with red glows."

It's decided.

There's no scalekin who wields a magic spear beside Liza-dono."

"Red spear? Isn't that a magic spear?"

From the veteran's words, the atmosphere of the dining room changes.

""""Magic spear you say!""""

The people who look like traveling nobles that have been eating fish set meals since awhile ago stand up all at once.

The nobles and their servants who have changed their facial expressions press on the young female mercenaries to inquire about it, but the veteran manages the situation, and charges for the information.

Three set of master and servants who have gained the information leave the dining room after finishing their meal in hurry.

I wonder what's going on? Magic tools are rare indeed, but I don't think it's rare enough to be chased that desperately. I think they should have dozens of gold coins if they're nobles, I wonder if they have some kind of reason for needing magic spear? I want to catch up with chevalier-sama before he's involved with troublesome things.

"Then, I wonder if the onee-sans that have been listening since awhile ago want to buy informations too?"

Looks like we've been found out.

"The ones you're talking about since before are acquaintances of me. The user of that magic spear is called Liza right?"

"Yes, she's said she is."

"What were the names of the little beastkins?"

"Wasn't it Pochi and Tama? At least remember the name of your saviors."

"But, we don't know the master's name right. I forgot to ask his name."

Normally, someone would have ulterior motive for saving people, it's really like chevalier-sama.

"I will teach you! He's a vassal of my father, chevalier Satou Pendragon desuwa! He's a master of both sword and magic!"

Ah, Karina-sama.

If you're boasting with such sparkly eyes...

"Hee, he's the young lady's favorite huh?"

"That's nice~ Chevalier-sama, that means he's a knight-sama?"

"Uwah~ I have to give up marrying into the rich huh, what a waste~"

Karina-sama says with red-face, "N, No. I don't have such relationship with that person." She's really unfamiliar with love stuff despite her age.

Erina and Taruna are also watching the young lady with warm gazes.

From the information we got from the girls, chevalier-sama was a stone throw away from Daregan city yesterday, and instead of entering the city, he had gone to the highway headed to the neighboring city, Gugurian.

I think his instinct is too sharp, it seems that the road of Karina-sama's love is going to be thorny. Bud might unexpectedly sprout on Erina instead.

Tomorrow, we're going on the boat to get ahead of him. If we don't catch up to him soon, the day where we have to stay in the barn might not be far.

I think it's alright for me to have a delusion of getting the home-made cooking of chevalier-sama.

Karaage, Tempura, Ebifurai, ah, there are too many. Crepes is nice too. However, I want to eat the rice porridge with just the two of us together once again after all.

7-10. At the Canal's Bank.

Satou's here. There's this famous scene of huge ships joining together while advancing through the river from a movie about the romance of three kingdoms. It's not something that would happen in real life, but I'd like to see it at least once.

◇

A large river is flowing 100 meters away from the highway our wagon is running on. It can't be seen now since there's a hill obstructing it, but it'll be visible in about 10 minutes. A large ship is currently going to the same direction, we might be able to see it.

There's a 800 kilometers long great river in this territory. From the Daregan city that we've ignored yesterday, the river connects to four cities starting from the capital.

If the traveler's journal is to be believed, the canal is made by a large empire that precedes Shiga kingdom. It was made with magic right? I think the figures of giants and golems doing public construction works are great.

Calculating for a bit, if they use soil magic like I've used the other day, they could make 2-3 kilometers long canal in a day, so the whole canal would probably be completed if they work hard for a year. As expected of fantasy. A large construction works sounds quite easy.

I understand that the Oyugock dukedom is vast after seeing such great large river. Isn't it enough to house 10 small countries I wonder?

The oval-shaped Muno territory is about as wide as Hokkaido, and although the dukedom is only about half as wide, the total surface area seems to be about as vast as Japan's mainland. Just like with the baron's territory, most of it consists of undeveloped mountains and forests. Why aren't they developing it I wonder?

Even though the territory is this wide, there are only seven cities. Beside the capital with its 21.000 people, there is also a large city which houses 13.000 people at the mouth of the great river facing the sea. There are 10 villages with various population number near it, ranging from less than 1000 to about 5000 people. The total population is around 720.000 people. 80% of it are human, while the remaining 20% are demi-human. The majority of the demi-human are the ratmen as slaves.

The traveler's journal states that the territory doesn't have demi-human, what does this mean I wonder. Come to think of it, baron Muno told me that he also rarely see beastkin when he was staying in the dukedom.

Since the traveler journal that I always refer writes the baron Muno territory as marquis Muno territory, it might be informations from more than 20 years ago. I'd like a newer book if possible.

As for other things of note, there are about 10 special enclaves that are like the self-governing dominion of the dwarves in the dukedom. Every one of them is about as wide as the dwarves' or wider. There are a lot more small enclaves of only around several kilometers wide, but since I can't be bothered to count all of them, I only mark the ones that are on our course.

According to the traveler's journal, there are sanctuaries for featherkin, and beasthead people in the territory. There should be another one, but it's not listed. Since we would not visit it during our journey, let's leave it alone. It's fine to visit it after we run out of place for sightseeing.

Finally, I narrow down the search for reincarnated or transported person. I'm relieved that there's none of them in this territory.

◇

Today, I drive the wagon after a long absence. Pochi and Tama on my sides are blowing something that seem to be reed flutes as hard as they could, like 'pipupipu'. They've taken Mia's lecture this morning, but it seems they can't do it properly.

Liza with her horse is coming closer. It seems she's found something.

"Master, please look over there. There is something on the other side of the forest."

I look at where Liza is pointing, but I don't see anything beside the ship's sail beyond the forest. No wait, that sail is probably the thing that Liza is talking about. Since the trees are growing on the lower terrain, the sail could be seen on the gaps between them. Unfortunately, we can't see the river yet.

"That's a ship's sail. There's a great river beyond the forest, it's probably sailing there."

"Pipo~?" "Pupuru."

Tama and Pochi who still have reed flutes on their mouth produce strange signals. Since I could predict the two's actions after that, I quickly restrain them. I tightly caught Pochi on my arm, but Tama smoothly slipped away.

"Ship~?"

Tama readily throws away the reed leaf, climbs my body, and look toward the forest. My clothes is stretched. I'd like you to stop gripping my hair since it's softly painful.

However, before I could warn Tama, Liza draws near with her horse and scoops Tama, then she puts Tama on the neck of her horse.

"Ship, I want to see nodesu."

Pochi who seems to have realized that I won't let her go no matter how much she wriggles looks up to me intensely and starts asking.

"You would see it in few minutes if you just sit tight."

She's persuaded and sit on one of my lap. After that, Pochi is acting docile, but then Mia climbs on my shoulder by using the coachman's seat as scaffold.

"Mia, it's forbidden to ride on my shoulder with skirt."

"Nn."

Mia points at the trousers she's wearing. I can't see her face, but I can imagine it looking proud.

Arisa who gets on the coachman's seat's back while supporting her body with the wagon's canopy looks at Mia and says, "Fearful girl", but I ignore it.

The river comes into view before long.

A considerably large sail ship is advancing to the same direction as us. Since it's traveling downstream, it's faster than us.

Tama who's riding on Liza's horse is waving greatly at the ship. Since we still haven't come that close to the river, I don't think anyone over there could see it.

"O~y"

"Over there is returning the greeting nodesu."

Pochi says so and waves her hands at the ship too.

"They can see eh. I wonder if the one over there is a beastkin too."

"Bird~?"

"Bird-head-san nodesu."

Arisa is right on the money. The other party is probably a birdman.

Pochi and Tama are waving their hands until the ship disappears behind the forest.

◇

Our camping location tonight is at a tributary flowing from the large river. There are camping grounds on both sides of the tributary, but we've crossed the bridge to the other side. Normally, there would be a fishing village or the likes in this kind place, but there's only an abandoned village with no one inside.

Confirming the map, I could imagine the cause of the abandonment.

It's probably because of the flock of monster located near the basin on the upstream 15 kilometers away from this tributary. Their levels are on the upper 20s, they're level 26-29 monsters called Hard Newts, they seem to have special attack using acid breath. There are nine of them.

It seems that they're preying on level 10 insect monsters that live in the cave of the basin.

Since I want to harvest the crystals and the stalactites in the cave, I'll go see it tomorrow morning or tonight.

I give Pochi and Tama harpoons and soft baskets that could be attached on their waists, they're going to catch small fish and shellfish on the river.

I go to the abandoned village to check just in case. There's already nothing left inside the houses, but there are traces of paddy fields on the cultivated land. They have plenty of water here, so they might have planted paddies. I try looking for wild growing paddies, but there's nothing after all.

"Big catch~?" "Nano desu!"

When I get back from checking the village, Pochi and Tama have also got back early. It seem that they're putting the spoils since they've had big catch.

There are large quantity shellfish that looks like clams inside the bucket that Pochi is happily showing me. A lot of palm-sized crabs and shrimps in the bucket filled with water that Tama shows me.

I'm drooling at the thought of roasted shellfish on a wire mesh dribbled with soy sauce. Seasoning it with salt and sake sounds nice too, but I'm avoiding everyone getting drunk of the smell situation.

It might be nice to divide the crab and make soup out of the half. The shrimps are to be fried. It's hard to throw away the idea of making tempura out of it.

◇

Now then, I leave the meal's preparation to Lulu, and I make a certain thing on the bank that face river.

It can't be helped that it's hard for me to talk about it, I make a 2.5 meter long bathtub with Mud Wall and harden it with Hard Clay. Furthermore, I collect pebbles on the edge of the river and put it in the bottom of the bathtub.

Everyone can get in if it's this wide.

Just so you know, by everyone I mean the women camp. I've made a bath for one person size in a separate place. It's not like I feel particularly embarrassed and I'm fine even if we get in together, but since I think that Lulu, who's in the height of puberty, would not be able to calm down, I divide the sections for man and woman.

Next I take a large barrel and use it to carry water from the river, repeating it for several trips. It's a hard job, but by making use of my high stats and Sky Drive skill, I've got it done in a blink of an eye. Of course I've already made sure that there's no one who witness it.

Continue on, I warm the water with Furnace Flame (Forge). I stop at 45 degree. Since I always use Furnace Flame every night lately, I've mastered the regulation of temperature.

Finally, I use Pure Water to erase the slight impurity.

In addition, I leave a barrel with fresh water for temperature control and a bucket; it's complete. I also make the washing space with Hard Clay. I put a drainboard below for when we're washing our body and it's complete.

Since there's only Sauna in Muno castle, it's a bath after a long time. Let's enjoy it relaxedly.

Various reactions appears when I tell everyone that the bath is complete. I explain it in simple term since no one beside Arisa knows bath.

"Kuh, mixed bath with a boy! Ah, so this is the rewards for all the hardships until now!"

"The baths are different for man and woman you know."

"W, what did you say----! This is why, herbivores! This should have been the time for love flirt hot spring!"

I've already expected Arisa who's in high tension toward strange direction. It's not a hot spring in the first place.

"Master, I'm applying for the duty of washing your back."

"No."

"Yes, that's a no."

I've also already expected Mia and Lulu's refusal to Nana's words, but Lulu's next words are unexpected. Moreover, they know about such custom like washing back huh.

"Master's back, I, I'll do it."

"Since master is refined, he might be embarrassed in showing his back to the woman of the same tribe. While it's presumptuous of me, I will wash it."

"Tama will do it~!"

"Pochi will wash nodesu."

Even Liza wants to participate. My back would turn red if so many wash it. I've already made tool for washing the back so there's no problem.

Somehow they look disappointed when I tell them so. Liza and Lulu urge me to take the bath first, but when I tell them that there's a different bath for me, they obediently go to the bathtub. As expected, Arisa says that she will follow me to the men's bathtub, but Lulu drags her away.

I enter the men's bath and look up to the sky. I begin to feel good when I see the stars. It's too bad that the stars aren't reflected on the water surface, but the reflection of the moonlight is quite beautiful. I've not been in an open nature bath since the college time where I go around visiting unexplored hot springs.

The men's bathtub is small compared to women's, it's about the size of a common household's bathtub. The size is only enough for the short me to stretch my legs.

When I relax while leaving my back on the bathtub's wall, I hear splash sound and my body feels heavier. I know that someone is coming with Space Grasp skill, but I don't know who since I've turned off the radar. I look up, it's Mia.

"Mia, this is the men's bath you know."

"Nn."

I gently reprove her, but she doesn't seem to care about it, sits before me and leans her back to me. I'd greatly welcome it if her outward appearance is like Nana, but since Mia doesn't even look like her secondary sex characteristic has begun, it feels like taking a bath together with a kid relative.

I'll let her do as she please since the retrieval squad seems to be heading here.

"Is there a bath in the elf village?"

"A joint one."

It's a public bath I guess?

When Mia leans her small head to my chest while I'm looking at the stars, the retrieval squad, or rather, the second raid squad arrives.

"Together~?" "Entering nodesu."

Pochi and Tama enter from both sides. You girls, no matter how small you are, the bathtub is over capacity. This is more like little girls bath rather than water bath. No, what am I saying. Since Pochi and Tama are taking the same postures as Mia, I support their backs with my hand so they don't sink.

"Wait, you three! Stealing the march is forbidden!"

Arisa is taking a daunting pose with a towel, or rather, a thin piece of cloth wrapped on her body. The cloth that sticks to her body is see-through, but I don't care. More importantly, my line of sight goes toward the senior group that has arrived behind Arisa. Nana is too brutal, no comment there, but I feel that Lulu's proportion has become better since I've met her.

In the end, I am to enter the women's bath per Arisa's suggestion. Of course, I check Lulu's and Nana's wills too, but they easily agreed unexpectedly.

Wide bath is nice after all.

There's a reckless violet-san under the water since awhile go. I can guess what she's up to, but since I've worn brand new trunks, she shouldn't be able to see what she wants. It's boorish, but since this is an emergency, I want you to overlook this.

<TLN: He's talking about wearing trunks in a bath.>

Lulu is submerging until her shoulders nearby, but I feel slightly uncomfortable with her gaze locking on me.

I lean my back on the tub's wall and resume the earlier pose. The steam isn't really doing its work, so the view before me is difficult.

I feel a bit hot, so I take out my arms off the water, and they've become pillows. My right arm is for Pochi and Tama, the left is for Mia. Lulu is waiting for her turn somehow.

"Master, I've discovered a serious matter! I request confirmation."

Nana is calling from behind Lulu. When I see there, defenseless--

"Breasts float in water! Furthermore they're tender, and somehow cute."

There's a figure of beautiful woman who has taken off the cloth which has shrouded her a while ago and floats her breast on the hot water happily. Nana, GJ. This is the scene where I have nosebleed if this is a manga.

"Nana-san, no!"

"Ecchi."

Lulu stands before Nana and block my view. It's fine that she turns her back on me, but her cute butt is completely exposed.

The slightly late Mia stands before me and spreads her limbs. Of course she's not wearing anything, so I could see various places that shouldn't be seen. I'd probably be so glad I'd cry if I'm a lolicon.

The bath time passes with such noise.

Liza seems to like the bath, and enters for the longest time. The next morning, since she looks really sad when she sees the bath that has become cold, I warm it and then she takes a morning bath. I should make a folding bathtub I guess?

After that day, Nana begins to study water magic from Mia.

Since she's awfully happy with floating breasts, I wonder if she would make a water dress?

7-11. At the Canal's Bank (2)

Satou's here. We've always used seasoning casually, but aren't there only a few people who know what they're made of? Mayonnaise, Worcestershire sauce, dressing. You only understand the merit after it has disappeared, or so they say.

◇

"N, no, you can't, master."

Lulu looks at me with anxious face.

"It's alright. Now, relax yourself."

"Y, yes."

I put my hands on the waist of Lulu who's frightened while inching back, leaning her body on me.

"Let's go, Lulu."

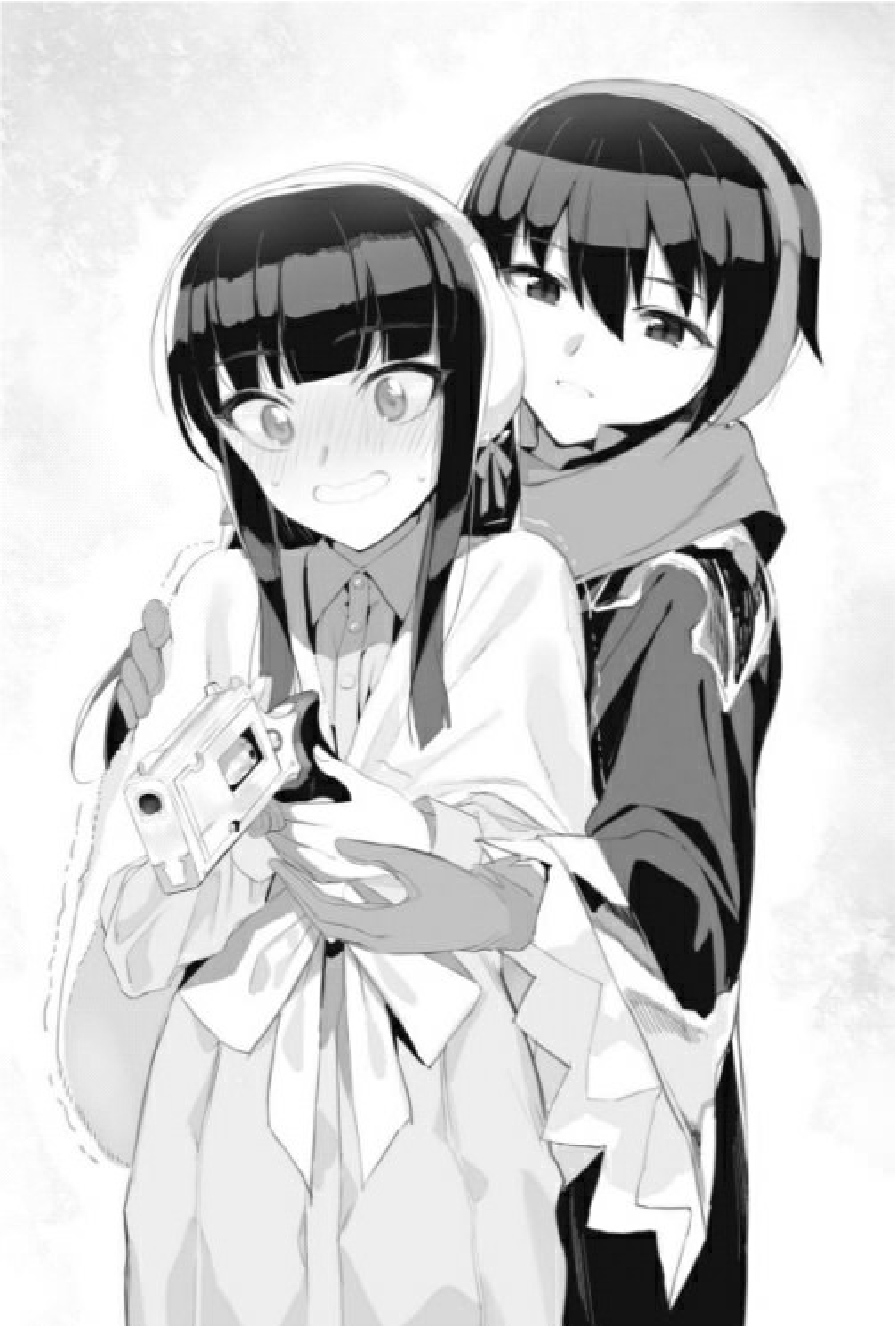
"I, I can't. It's too big."

"You don't need to worry. Believe what I say."

While calming Lulu who's still anxious, I put my hands on top of Lulu's delicate hands.

And--

Lulu's finger pulls the magic gun.



◇

At the waterfall basin that spreads before our eyes below, there are six giant monsters resembling newts that exceed 10 meters acting as they please. The monster's name is Hard Newt, and their special ability is acid breath it seems.

Every one of them are on upper level 20s, they're relatively strong.

There's a reason why I take Lulu along for monsters hunting despite frightening her.

During Muno incident, Pochi's level had become lower than the others, so I took her on a monster hunting date when there were monsters on the highway near our camping ground. Arisa and Mia found out about it and protested that it was too unfair, so since it can't be helped, I promised to take them on monster hunting dates whenever there were strong monsters on the highway near our camping grounds.

And then, they did rock-paper-scissor to decide their turns, but not only Arisa and Mia, Nana and Lulu also participated in it; eventually the order for the hunting date was Mia=>Lulu=>Nana=>Arisa. Doing it one-by-one is inefficient, but apparently, "Just the two of us together.", seems to be important.

About three days ago, I found reasonably strong monsters, so I took Mia along, but even though we had defeated seven level 15 caterpillar monsters, her level wasn't raised. Apparently, it's hard for elves to level up.

◇

"M, master one of them is coming here. W, what should we do."

Lulu desperately clings to my chest. Desperate Lulu is cute too.

I invoke Remote Arrow outside of her vision, and after a shot from the magic gun hits the monster, I destroy the hard newt monster easily with the arrow. It seems that the remaining five monsters have recognized us as enemies. Since the newts are climbing the cliff, I shoot them with Remote Stun to knock them down the cliff.

"Lulu, drink this, and shoot the second shot afterward."

I make Lulu drinks magic recovery potion, and let her charge the magic gun. I had thought that she could supply 30 shots since she was level 3, but her magic power was halved with just one charge. It seems that the charge efficiency is greatly different for each person.

Maybe her level has leveled up after defeating one monster, this time one charge only consumes 20% of her magic power. We aim together like before and shoot.

I destroy the monster with remote arrow after the magic gun hit it, after doing this work routine for three minutes, the extermination of six monsters is complete.

I leave Lulu who's completely exhausted after her first combat on the cliff, and go down to collect the monsters' remains. Looks like there are three monsters higher leveled than the ones earlier on the other side of the waterfall, but Lulu's level should have been raised to 7-10 after defeating this many. Let's leave the rest for the hunting with Nana.

I carry Lulu who's not feeling well on my arms, and run on the water surface of the great river along the highway leading to the tributary, back to where everyone is. Sky Drive skill is way too convenient.

◇

"Ara? Lulu what's wrong? Are you tired from your first battle?"

"A, Arisa. I, I'm fine."

Arisa runs anxiously when we get back to the camp. Lulu has firmly asserted that she's okay, but she looks pale.

Her body seems to be surprised with the radical level up, just like Liza and the others have been in the labyrinth. If we take that time into consideration, she should recover if she sleeps for 3-4 hours. If it's painful, I'll give her an anti-fever potion to drink.

"W, wait, just what kind of things were you guys fighting?"

"Six newts on the tributary ahead."

Arisa who has confirmed Lulu's level presses on me. Lulu's level has gone up radically from 3 to 13 from just fighting six monsters. Her level rises considerably higher than my expectation. There might be First Attack bonus or something like in games.

Lulu has gained new skills, the [Cooking] skill that Lulu has longed for appears. Furthermore, she's also got [Shooting], and [Sniping], probably due to monster hunting, and there's also [Compounding] skill, maybe because she's helped me compounding before, and lastly, she somehow gets [Chanting] skill too. Lulu has never participated chanting training even once before, so I wonder why she's learned it? I'm envious.

Arisa knows the answer to that.

"Eh? Chanting? Ah~ I might know. Lulu has always practiced chanting together with me since we're small. She didn't learn the skill until now probably because her skill point wasn't enough maybe?"

"Then, wouldn't she learn Mind magic?"

"Somehow Lulu isn't able to think of anything related to science. She was just bad at magic theory no matter what, and dropped out halfway."

Drop out....

"Isn't fine if she just memorize it?"

"That's a wrong way of thinking! You have to understand the chant's meaning if you want to use magic!"

Looks like Arisa is quite peculiar with the aesthetic.

I'll teach Lulu some chants in secret next time. She might learn magic skill on the next level up after all. Or rather, I'd like her to teach me the chanting skill instead.

Arisa puts Lulu on top of a cushion, and cools her with a wet towel. I take out a painkiller and an anti-fever potion and hand them to Arisa.

"Thank you. However, you shouldn't ease the pain from level up growth with medicine. I haven't tried it myself, but it seems that the stat increase would be bad."

Hoo, is that so. I've almost made her drink it.

I leave Lulu's care to Arisa, and ask Liza to make an easy to digest food for one person. Pochi and Tama have gone to the great river to catch fish. Since we've had tempura yesterday, I guess I'll make fried white meat tonight.

While thinking such thing I lead Nana for sortie.

Hunting with Nana is easy since she could use Magic Arrow.

Instead, the soft feeling during the traveling to the hunting ground, and the clinging body with wet clothes when we're in the waterfall caves is so sexy, it's dangerous. I'd like to praise my reasoning mind.

The hunt ends with nothing noteworthy happening, and I collect crystals, jades and a bit of the stalactites inside the cave. If Nana didn't stop to admire the limestone cave for 30 minutes, it would had been over faster.

I wonder if the newts here are special and gives a lot of exp, Nana has also leveled up from 5 to 12. She has learned new [One-handed Sword], [Shield], [Parry], and [Horseback] skills. It seems her Nature Magic skill has leveled up too and she could use new magic, [Shelter], and [Sharp Edge] now.

◇

"In just half an hour, Lulu had surpassed my level, and in another hour Nana had equaled me. I think this is quite serious."

"Agreed."

"We want strong enemies too!"

"To the prey!"

Arisa and Mia who are in seiza with their hands on their laps are having a meeting.

What kind of farce is that?

"Prey~?"

"Meat, better than fish nano desu!"

Huh? Pochi and Tama have come back before I know it. Their buckets are full with caught fish. Looks like they have also properly catch shellfish, shrimps and the likes. I feel like eating Paella when I see the shellfish. Sadly I can't make it since I don't know the recipe.

Pochi seems to be dissatisfied with having fish every day. Maybe I should make some steak from the wolf meats.

Lulu seems to have woken up, but she still looks unwell. I decide to cancel our departure today and let Lulu and Nana rest.

When I tell Arisa and Mia about the insect monsters in the cave, I end up sortieing for the third time while carrying the two on both of my sides. The two hate to have their level behind more than being alone together.

"Uha! R, running on water like this. A water strider!"

"Float walk?"

I've already told about this to Arisa and the others, but they seem to have thought that it's not a skill that could be used for prolonged time.

Mia is probably talking about Float Walk, an intermediate level water magic.

I'll surprise them by flying in the sky next time.

"No wonder Lulu's and Nana's hunts were fast."

"Convenient right?"

"Nn."

The insect hunts in the cave is done by repeatedly having Arisa and Mia attack first with their magic and for me to destroy the monster. Since the two's magic power run out in the middle of the hunt, the pattern changes into me attacking first with Remote Stun, then the two attack with short spear and dagger to give damage, and I finish off with the fairy sword.

An insect monster gives less exp than 10% of the exp gain from the newt monster earlier. From Arisa's observation of the exp during the hunt, it seems that she would level up once after 40-50 monsters.

I can't check my own exp since the counter has stopped with number 9s lined up. Judging from the digits, there's no mistake that it's more than ten millions. There's a gauge that indicate the percentage to the next level, I only know that there are still 80% left until then. I don't want to think the concrete points.

The high-pace efficiency-maniac-like hunt ends after defeating more than a hundred small monsters for two hours, and the result is that both Arisa and Mia level up by 2. In spite of the fact that Arisa's level remain higher (than Mia's), she would level up again after a bit more. The required exp for elves to level up might be around twice of human.

Nevertheless, I wonder what do these many monsters eat to multiply so much?

Mia answers that question.

"Spirits."

We can't see it, but it seems that there's a place underground lake with transparent water inside the cave where spirits gush out, the monsters are predating them. Correctly speaking, it's not predation, but absorption it seems, however since Mia doesn't know the detail, I'll ask the adults in Bornean forest about it.

I try to stare hard at the underground lake, but unfortunately I can't see the spirits.

◇

I'm practicing the fairy sword to master it after the meal to help digest the food.

I raise the sword overhead, stop, put magic into it and swing downward. And then when the sword is down I suck up the magic power from it, and quickly raise the sword that has become lighter.

I'm getting used with the weight-changing characteristic of fairy sword and the swing speed increases little-by-little. In 30 minutes, I've grasped the movement I want after repeating without stopping, I end the practice.

I've got applauses for some reason. Everyone has surrounded, watching me before I know it.

"Real~ly, cheat huh. Do you know what you've been doing?"

"It's just a form practice though?"

Like reaching the second self-taught form or something?

Arisa lays her hand on my nape, draws her face close and whispers.

"You don't seem to understand huh. Normally, one can't pour magic power into a sword that fast. Incidentally, you've even dispersed magic power from the sword, I'll say this again, something like absorption is impossible."

Is that so?

Since it's possible with Liza's magic spear, I've thought that it's obvious though?

"Isn't it because they think they can't that they end up not able to do it?"

"There's no way it's like that right? If people could so easily do it, something like magic potion isn't needed then. When you need to consume MP for magic, you could do something like absorbing magic power from a loaded magic tool, it could become the only battery."

Arisa releases her hands from my nape and takes up a giving-up pose.

I see, it's a good story.

I thank you Arisa. Since it's poor if it's just words, I hug her. Since Arisa is a mysterious creature who's fine with attacking but gets embarrassed when she's attacked by the proactive opponent, it's fun to occasionally do surprise attack.

For the time being, I should check the efficiency by pouring and absorbing magic power on the sword, putting it inside the storage for one night and the absorb the magic power from it; I decide to check how is the decay.

According to my expectation, it should be able to hold the same amount of magic power as I usually put it into.

7-12. Gururian City Disturbance

Satou's here. When I became a working adult, I ate a lot of convenient store's sweets for the sugar supply of my head. When I was a college student, I felt like I only ate Japanese confectioneries due to the influence of the lab senior.

◇

"When you get to Gururian city, don't miss out on eating the round red bean paste! Though since it's one big copper coin for one, it's not easy to have one. For a merchant like Onii-san, you'd get laughed by your business partners if you've never eaten one."

"What kind of sweets is it?"

"Umm~ you make this white lump and put the sweet black lump as the main part around it."

The sisters who are with us at the campground before Gururian city are talking about the established sweet in the city. It's somehow an imaginable, yet misleading explanation.

"You've never eaten one either have you. This girl becomes interested in the sweet after a merchant boasts about it in the village."

"Fuhn. When I get my wages at the apprenticeship, then. I'll eat it first and foremost~."

"Wages you say, it'll be years before that."

As I understand, these sisters come from a village nearby to be apprentices in a merchant store at Gururian city. They're guaranteed of necessities like food and shelter, but in exchange they won't get wages until they become full-fledged. This is like Edo era.

Such employment method might be unexpectedly cheaper than buying slaves for labor.

"Master, the merchants seem to be departing."

"Then, we should go too."

Liza comes to call the dawdling me.

Looks like the merchants who are with us at the camping ground are departing. There are three group of merchants. I heard a lot of stories from them when I offered them ales and fish last night.

The most troubling story is, "In a remote place deep in the mountain, red light could be seen, and sounds of hammer hitting something resounded all through the night.", such ghost story. It really feels like something I've done myself.

Thanks to my night work that's become a ghost story, I've successfully refined and casted a lot of tin and zinc. I made mud walls to prevent the noise from leaking out, but it didn't seem to be enough.

Since we could arrive at Gururian city before noon with the wagon, I invite the sisters to go there together.

"Yay!"

"Thank you very much. Is it alright?"

"I don't mind, we have the same destination anyway."

These sisters are doing reckless thing of walking to Gururian city on foot. It seems the distance between the sisters' village to the Gururian city is two days away by foot, good thing that they don't get attacked by beasts. Last night, they slept with us in our tent, but their chastities could've been in danger if we weren't there.

Our wagon joins with the other merchants' carriages while advancing.

There are a group of suspicious young nobles gathering on the open space before Gururian city, so I decide not to go first and blend with the other merchants instead.

◇

"Merchants who are visiting Gururian city! We desire magic swords. We promise to the people who give us magic swords that we will give them favor as purveyors in the future!"

An man past his 20s wearing knight-like clothes is appealing to the merchants who are lining up to enter the city. Naturally, no one answers it. There's a similar noble at the dwarf village, he's probably the same kind of him.

I've stored Liza's magic spear inside the Holding Bag since it looks like it'd get entangled. It became a problem when we were entering Muno city back then, I had put it away before this. Right now Liza is hanging a normal sword on her waist.

"Hey hey, that noble-sama said that he'd make you a purvoyer if you gave him a magic sword!　It's amazing right, Onee-chan."

"It sure is. However, such expensive things like magic swords have nothing to do with us."

"You girls, you'd get deceived in the city like that you know?"

Arisa worryingly butts in the carefree talk of the sisters.

"That one is, you know, 『We do not have money. However we want magic swords. Give it to us for free. As the compensation, we'll give you favor if we succeed in the future. Don't complain even if we don't succeed.』, convenient for them alone, such nonsense isn't it?"

"Uwah, so it's like that. I didn't know."

"Arisa-chan, you're smart even though you're small."

The sisters get down the wagon with Nana's help. They line up on people's queue since the queues for carriage and people are different.

"Satou-san, thank you~."

"Thank you very much. On top of letting us slept together, you even gave us meal all day."

"Don't worry about it."

"That won't do, we'll be working in a utensil store called Midoriya, so if you need something there do pay us a visit, I can't give you discount, but I'll prepare the best goods for you."

I think employees would only be given chores, but I accept the girls good wills and thank them.

The nobles and their servants from earlier seem to be negotiating with the merchants who are queuing one by one. I'll enter the city before they get here.

We go toward the gate without lining up. Nana and Liza have confirmed with the gatekeeper that nobles could be prioritized to enter first. Even though it's not like no-check admission in the self-governing dominion of the dwarves, they only check us formally.

I could hear, "Eh", and "So he's a noble-sama." from behind. Come to think of it, I've not told them my house name.

◇

During the past several days, I've made swords for Pochi and Tama--ones that would equal Liza's magic spear--but I've not been able to produce satisfactory ones.

I could give them the magic swords from the storage, but they're too big for anyone beside Nana, so I try to make ones myself.

There are five types of magic swords.

The first is the type that incorporates the magic circuit from Trazayuya's holy sword research. There are many good magic swords of this type. That being the case, the degree of difficulty is abnormally high.

The gold and silver wooden magic swords are of this type.

The second is the magic sword like the one elder Dohar has made. It's a type that could accept magic power without special magic circuit as it's a characteristic of magic metal like mithril or adamantite. It's hard to acquired the material, but their stabilities are their strong points.

The third is weapons made from monster's parts, just like Liza's magic spear. The performance is similar to the second type, but the individual difference is too great, weapons made from the same monster's parts could have great difference, there are a lot of poor ones.

The fourth is cursed weapons. Even though it has permanent magic grant, it basically gives harm to the user, so people who use this type are few. At present, I've never actually seen anyone who does beside elder Dohar.

The fifth is a type where the blade part and the magic circuit are made separately, and then attached to become a magic sword. I noticed this when I dissembled a magic sword from the storage. The blade part is ordinary, but the grip part has magic circuit imprinted. When you put in magic power, it gives [Strengthen] and [Dexterity] effects. It even quickens the sword's drawing speed.

You can separately makes magic circuit on the blade and the grip, this is easier than engraving magic circuit on the blade part.

The ones I've produced in the experiments are the first and the third type.

For the method from Trazayuya's document, I tried to create the circuit during the casting process of the sword, but since the circuit liquid was weak to heat, it dissolved halfway through. The sword can roughly accept magic power, but the circulated magic power is distorted, there's no practical use for it.

Next, I made blades by shaving shell from beetle monster and hard newt's bones, and permeated circuit liquid on the gap to improve the magic conduction. For once, real-like magic swords are finished, but the aspects such as strengths are inferior compared to Liza's magic spear so I put it on reserve.

I got [Bone Crafting] when I was shaving bones, although it seemed to be of little use.

◇

Sweet smells is drifting the moment we enter the city. It smells like a Japanese sweets, or rather, red bean pastes.

"Kuu, what a nice smell!"

"Is it Japanese sweets."

Arisa's and my tensions are rising while the others see us curiously.

"Young gentleman over there, how about some excellent round red bean paste?"

A girl of around a high schooler's age is selling while carrying a food tray on her neck. It's like a style of the boxed lunch seller from Showa era. Unfortunately her clothes is a normal plain village girl-like, not Japanese clothes. She's wearing a short apron on her waist.

I buy several round red bean pastes and distribute it to everyone. Mia looks a bit unwilling, but when I tell her, "It's a sweet snack made from grains and beans.", she timidly puts it on her mouth.

"I think it needs a bit more sugar."

Arisa makes a slight request, but everyone has already finished eating.

"Fuh, this is, that right."

"Umu, that huh."

Yes, it's an [Ohagi]. The inside of the dumpling is not sticky rice but granulated glutinous rice. The red bean paste is coarse too, it feels like [Ohagi] from long ago.

"So it's really true, this city's name is."

"I wonder if it's a bad pun."

People would not know that it's a bad pun if they don't know Japanese language so I won't tell this to anyone, but this [Gururian]. The one who's named this city is definitely a Japanese who likes bad pun.

<TLN: Gururi:Round, An:Red bean paste. Yep.>

◇

We've wasted some time from buying the sweets. First of all, I have to go to the lord's place and hand Nina-san's letter.

Lady Karina and the maid squad are inside the ship that's currently entering the port, but they most likely will remain on the ship until it reach the capital. Since Raka should not be able to detect us here, there's probably no need to worry.

It seems that The First preliminary fights to enter the qualification are happening on the public parks here and there in this city now. The name [The First] is making me cry.

It looks like you need to pay three copper coins on the agency at the town hall to get the participation proof, and when there are 10 people who have gathered, the first preliminary round could begin.

A match happens every time two people gather, and after gathering 32 people who have win a match, the preliminary match is over, and the second match begin it seems. People who have won four first preliminary matches could participate on the second preliminary round. I see, I guess each city has to have best four. It has been a week since it begins, and there are already 20 people who have passed the first round.

There's a preliminary match taking place on the park near the main road, I stop the wagon and watch it. Since Pochi and Tama are restless whenever cheers are raised on the public park, I decide to watch it for a bit.

A sharp sighted weaselkin girl tried to sell me wager checks but I refused. When I ask Pochi why she is sniffing violently, it seems that she's smelled yakitori scent. I ask Nana to buy it. There doesn't seem to be any idiot that tries to pick-up Nana who's wearing a full body armor from head to toe.

I distribute the yakitori and minced fish meat on sticks that Nana's bought to everyone. Even Mia has bought fruit water unnoticed.

The people who participate in the preliminary fight are mixed goods of mostly level 3-7, but some who exceed level 10 rarely mixed in too. The ones who are fighting now are both on the upper level 10s.

They both wear leather armors, one-handed swords and shields, they are long-time mercenaries. Their levels aren't different with Liza and the others, but they're slow, and there are too many useless movements during the swords' blows exchanges. I'd say that the beastkin girls wouldn't lose against either of them, This is not favoritism.

Apparently, the winner of this match would be eligible to participate in the first preliminary round, so the cheering is quite frantic. However, to watch a game during weekdays like this, I wonder if this gallery is fine with their works?

It's probably not because of that needless worry, but a tumult can be heard from the public park nearby.

"It's terrible! Monsters have appeared inside the city!"

That is terrible.

I confirm the map, but there are surprisingly a lot of monsters in the whole city. Looks like they are cavalry monsters called running dragons. It seems that most of them are assigned as the private soldiers of the viceroy.

There is no monster at the direction where the voice from before comes.

The one there is a demon--

Moreover, there's a troublesome person nearby.

7-13. Gururian City Disturbance (2)

Satou's here. I had often went to a cat cafe, but after I became a working adult, the chance to visit zoo or aquarium remarkably decreased. Even though they're safe places for having a date.

◇

The demon that has appeared in Gugurian city is of the same grade as the one from Muno city. The species is of the same Short Horn demon too, level 30, and it also has the same skills, [Strength], [Hard Body], [Transformation], [Flame Palm]; it has no magic skills. It's a demon totally suited to become a vanguard.

Nevertheless, I was certain that there was no demon before we entered this city. Or rather, I could affirm that there's no demon in the whole dukedom. It doesn't seem like the demon can teleport, so it's probably sent or summoned by someone.

I leave the horses and the wagon to Lulu and Nana, and we go to the street against the escaping crowds. When we're moving, I tell everyone that the one ahead is not a monster but a demon, its level, skills, and things to be careful during the fight.

Occasionally, there are people jumping on the air as if playing trampoline from the direction of the crowds. Even though the demon can't use magic, it doesn't seem to be weak. When the escaping people become scarce, the demon's figure can be seen.

The demon looks different than the one from Muno city, having bigger build, and six arms, it looks like a gorilla. The only common point between them is the red short horns, like their species' name implies.

Warriors who are fighting the demon are surrounding it. Several destroyed carriages from the battles are scattered around along with corpses among the heaps. It looks like there are survivors inside the carriage. Many holes are opened on the buildings that face the street. Near the demon, there's a soldier with heavy equipment and blue shell shield doing well against it with his shield. His level is 29, equaling the demon. I guess there's no need for back up with this?

And then as if betraying that thought, the demon swings its strong arms and blow some people to the air. Those people come flying here.

I quickly dash and catch one of them.

I release Cubes for the remaining two to cut their momentum. With this, at least they won't die. Endure it if you're a man.

I talk to the person I've caught.

Yes, the reason why we take action so conspicuously is because there's this girl near the demon.

"Please don't be so rash, Karina-sama."

"Eh, eh, Sa... no, Sir Pendragon."

Despite being confused when she knows that I'm the one who's received her, lady Karina calls my name. I know that she's faltering, but what kind of ritual she's doing by joining and separating her hands with stretched fingers in front of her breasts. Is she perhaps embarrassed?

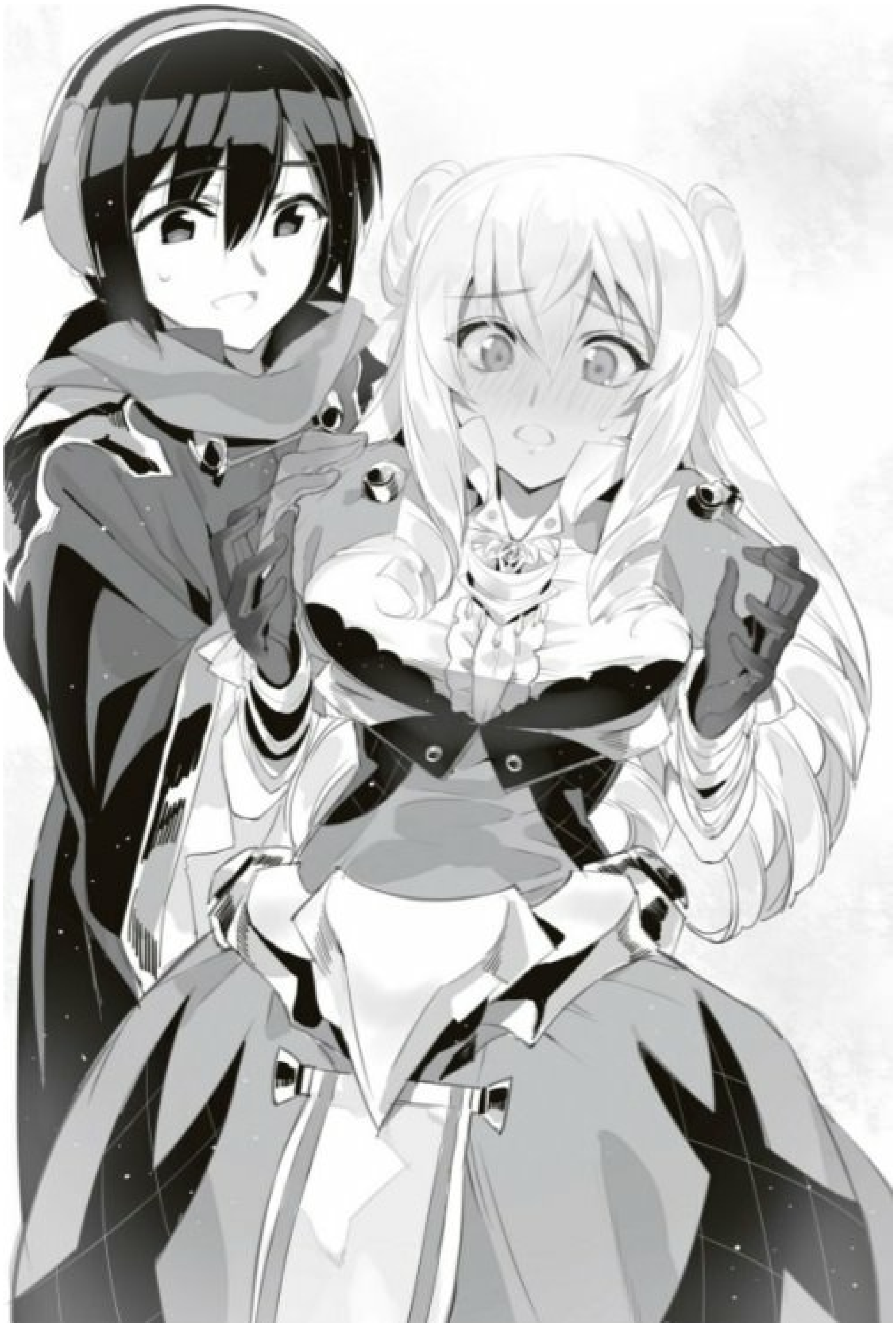
Furthermore, while in my arms, she's muttering "To be hugged by someone other than father.", "He's unexpectedly strong.", or "The honeymoon is in the royal capital I wonder.", her monologue is running wild toward cryptic direction. It looks like she's not accustomed with physical contacts from the opposite sex.

"Princess carry is forbidden!"

"Nn, forbidden."

Arisa who's caught up kicks me from behind. I wonder if my butt have footprints imprinted?

Even though lady Karina has Raka's protection, she still has lost around 20% of her health, so I ask Arisa and Mia for the healing. And then, when I put lady Karina down, for some reason she holds my sleeves, and it seems the person herself doesn't understand why.



"Master, the front line has collapsed. I will assist them."

Liza declares so and heads to the battlefield. Pochi and Tama also charge toward Liza's direction after greeting Karina's breasts from both sides. What was that, I'm envious.

Since the demon is going to counter Liza's attack with triple punches, I intercept it by shooting Short Stun on every fists.

Liza's magic spear pierce the defenseless body of the demon that has lost its balance. She's activated magic edge of course. The attack only decreases 5% of the demon's health, but I think it's amazing when you compare it with the accumulated damage the demon has incurred.

Pochi and Tama who are late attack the bottom of the demon's knee simultaneously. The damage isn't even 1% of its health, but it seems to be painful since the demon raises a short scream and retaliates using its tail toward Pochi and Tama.

I throw someone's helmet that has fallen near my foot toward the demon's abdomen. It's so troublesome that I have to chant whenever I use magic since the peanut gallery is watching.

Since the helmet breaks the demon's posture, the tail attack loses its strength and Pochi and Tama become able to receive it by crossing their dagger, changing its course to the sky. The two make us of that vector well and take some distances away from the demon.

That reminds me, the heavy soldier from before is gone.

When I look below, the soldier has fallen near the demon's feet. The metal armor below his arms is greatly dented, blood is spewing out of his mouth.

"Pochi, Tama, take the heavy soldier to the safe zone when you have the chance!"

"Ay~""Roger!"

I throw Remote Stun on the Short Horn demon. During that gap, Pochi and Tama swiftly close-in and drag the heavy soldier to the peanut gallery.

"Before it was the intermediate class Great Hammer randomly shot, and just now it was advanced class Divine Hammer. He must be the [Black Gale]-dono who has his name comes out on the first preliminary round."

"No, [Black Gale] should have been a middle-aged man, he must the magic warrior, [Red Fighting Demon]."

The peanut gallery are making some irresponsible commentary. Who the heck are those people with Chuuni-like names. The peanut gallery are hiding in the building not too far away. I wouldn't have heard it if I didn't have the straining ear skill.

Since the defensive position has exited the scene, I guess I should substitute for it.

"■▼■▲ ▲■▲■ ▲▲Shield."

The materialized magic shield stops the blow from the fist of the demon that has got up and came to attack. It's an unexpectedly prolonged punch. That's not a metaphor, the punch really elongates for five meters, so I have to pay attention.

If it's stretching again next time, I'll tie it up like in manga.

"Over here you gorilla!"

Using provocation skill, I rob the demon's attention to me. With this, it shouldn't change its aim even if Liza and the others attack to some extent.

"I will assist you! Sir Pendragon!"

Lady Karina is calling my name in loud voice as if she's advertising to the public. Please stop it.

She's sending glances at me frequently as if expecting me to call her name back, but I ignore it. She must not be spoiled.

Before she arrives at the demon, Arisa's and Mia's magic hit it first. Arisa's magic, Flash, burns the demon's eyes, Mia's attack, Mustard Mist, roasts the demon's lungs.

Mia, you'd roast my lungs too you know? I look at Mia with critical eyes, but she turns her head away.

"It's prohibited to look away in a battlefield desuwa."

Karina who's expressly came before me intercepts the demon's attack, and got blown away. Raka was shining before the attack hit her, and multiple small shield of lights was stacked defending her, that was probably why the damage was practically none.

I wonder if you could distill this automatic defense from Raka and mass produce it? I want to have everyone equipped with it by all mean.

Accompanied by dummy chanting, I invoke five Remote Arrows and launch them.

The demon's health is reduced by 30% in one go. That is from the attack of Remote Arrow from a distance. Since the demon is the type that specialize in physical attack and defense, its magic defense is probably weak.

"Arisa, please cover me with attack magic. Mia, please attack with water ball or water polo."

"Okkey."

"Nn."

Arisa makes Light Dagger flies toward the demon, but it gets destroyed with just a swing from the demon's arm. The water ball that comes a bit late only makes the demon wets.

Oh? Isn't it weak to magic?

"Well now, junior class magic like Light Dagger won't be effective against a demon."

"But, the magic arrows just now worked right."

"That was either intermediate class Javelin or advanced class Multiple Javelin."

"No, it must not have been Multiple Javelin indeed, is it~?"

The peanut gallery are noisy since awhile ago. Ten men and women with matching uniforms have come into my view. I wonder if they're magician's apprentices?

As they've hoped, I chant dummy intermediate class ice magic spell and shoot [Freeze Water] to the demon. The aim is the places that's got wet from Mia's attack.

Liza attacks with her spear at that place in no time at all, and the demon's arm is successfully broken.

Pochi, Tama, and the revived lady Karina throw small barrel filled water, and with the fairy sword, I cut the small barrels that have come near the demon making it wet to the skin.

I could end this by slashing the demon with the fairy sword, but it would be too conspicuous with all these peanut gallery.

Alright, now I just have to freeze the demon, and have Liza knock it down to end this.

◇

I wonder if the temperature drops too low for the frozen demon, the section that's received Liza's spear attack crumbles and scatters away. The fragments that have become small disappear with black smokes. Wagahai-kun left a corpse, but lower grade demon would disappear huh? The splitter also became black dust back then.

The lower part of its body remain as it is, but a magic core that shines dull light peeks through the remaining upper part. Liza casually collects it. I look at the place where my crisis perception is reacting, a small red horn has fallen on the ground.

I appraise that, it's an item called [Short Horn]. The explanation part is written in demon language. I could roughly read it after I raise the skill level to 5. Unlike with the humans' magic tools, the explanation is simple.

"Transform a creature with intelligence on-site into a demon." is written there. The reason why a demon had abruptly appeared inside the city was because of this item.

I check if there is any other [Short Horn] in this city just in case, but there's none.

I try to search for it in the entire territory, but it only returns freeze-like sound, so I search in turn while limiting the range. Since I can't search the inside the Item Box and Holding Bag (of other people), this is only for peace of mind, but it's better than not doing it.

I put the Short Horn into my storage, and begin the work of helping the injured people.

◇

First, to the luxurious carriage. There are four survivors inside this carriage. There's a torn-off cart on top of the overturned carriage.

Since it'd be too conspicuous if I lift it, I blow the cart away with Short Stun. I secretly hold the carriage's body so that it doesn't shake.

I get on the carriage's top and look inside. It seems that they're all unconscious. There are a boy and a girl with black hairs of around 10 years old, a smart-looking woman past her twenties wearing civil official clothes. And a 15 years old pink haired girl wearing a dress. Arisa's hair is also like that, but pink... is this a manga!

Even though the dress girl probably doesn't hear the retort inside my mind, she's waking up.

She seems to be still feeling hazy.

"Black hair? He, ro, sama?"

The girl only murmured so and fainted again.

This is my first encounter with the princess of the small Rumooku kingdom, Menea.

7-14. Gururian City Disturbance (3)

Satou's here. There are people who say that the history of mankind is a history of war. I remember feeling that it's real when I watch a video showing world map and pie chart of outbreak of wars around the world.

Even in the parallel world, humankind's acts don't change.

◇

"In praise of defeating the demon who had attacked the city. The viceroy of Gururian city awards you this medal."

The bald civil official who's standing next to the young viceroy reads the award aloud. This is the audience room inside Gururian city castle. It's only about a quarter as wide as the one in Muno city, but there are twenty heavy soldiers equipped with halberds lined up on both sides.

At this time, I had a carefree impression, "It's nice when it really feels like a castle~", but in truth, later Arisa told me that the viceroy guards were reinforced as a precaution against me.

The only one inside the audience room is me. The other members are waiting in another room. I'm unarmed since I've given the fairy sword and the short cane to Arisa.

And then, the meeting with the viceroy ends without any problem and I withdraw.

In the end, the viceroy only said, "It was arduous."

◇

After leaving the audience room, I'm guided by a maid to a different room than the one Arisa and the others are.

There's the bald civil official from earlier inside. He's the consul of Gururian city.

"Sir Pendragon, I can't thank you enough for your assistance on the occasion. Your help is admirable."

"Even though I'm of the lowest ranked noble, I'm still one of Shiga kingdom's nobility. I was just fulfilling my duty."

We get down to the business after the regular greetings.

I talk about the state of the demon that has attacked Muno city, and the scales of its army. Even though they've known the detail from the duke, it's better to check on the fact. Continuing on, we're comparing it with the demon that has attacked Gururian city.

"I do not understand. I cannot read the demon's intention."

"That's right is it, it's a different story if it has thoroughly prepared armies to attack like in Muno city, but there's no meaning in just rampaging around in the city."

Since there's that item, it might have only been a diversion for the rampage. I don't report the thing about the magic tool [Short Horn]. Since I don't know the character and ability of the viceroy, I won't report an item this dangerous. If the information about it carelessly spread, it'd be scary if witch hunts happened. Arisa also opposed in reporting it.

"Sir Pendragon, won't you tell me your opinion?"

"It might be a diversion, or possibly a way for implanting fears in the people."

The consul has probably expected my answer. He's nodding solemnly.

Actually, when I was searching during the wait for the audience earlier, short horn demons had appeared in other cities. I haven't confirmed if they've been exterminated, but there should be people who can defeat them in this season of martial arts tournament.

Afterwards, we finished our talk after exchanging some opinions.

The viceroy's butler hands me an invitation for banquet before I head back. Even though I've intended to take Pochi and the others along to go on Gugurian city trying food around, keeping the nobles company is troublesome.

◇

When I get back to the waiting room, the people who greet me are not only Arisa and the others. I've expected lady Karina and her maids, but there are also some unknown women. They're probably not servants of the viceroy since they're wearing poor clothes. When I check on their stats, they're slaves with [No Master] displayed.

"Chevalier Pendragon-sama, I'm sorry for my impoliteness the other day. I thank you for saving me during the demon's attack."

I wonder who? I don't remember helping her though?

"There was a cart carriage for slaves that fell down on the site earlier right, she was on it she said."

I see. But impoliteness--that's right, isn't she the part of the group who asked me to hand over mithril sword in Bollhart city.

However, why is she a slave? When I ask her, she replies in vexation.

"Actually, we were deceived by the weaselkins that day."

Her words aren't to the point, but, "We followed the weaselkins when they said that they had magic swords.", "They asked 30 gold coins for the magic sword.", "Since we only had five gold coins, we agreed to have a loan contract for the sword until the tournament was over.", that seems to be the case, I wonder where is the deceiving part?

"The scam was after that. We went straight to the Daregan city, but we were attacked by tigerkins and lionkins thieves and got the magic sword stolen."

"Were they real thieves?"

"If they were real, then my master and me would have already been killed. When we returned to Bollhart city, we met the weaselkin that had loaned us the magic sword. He saw through the fact that the magic sword was stolen. When I think about it again, he obviously knew that we didn't have the magic sword."

Isn't it paranoia?

The weaselkin would know that they were attacked by the thieves if they see their tattered clothes, and there might be those kind of chivalrous thieves who didn't kill their victims.

"That, you see."

Arisa adds the fact that the women who are on the same carriage are telling similar stories. As for the young nobles, they seem to have been sold to a mine city on the nearby small kingdom.

The women were taken here by lady Karina who appealed directly to the viceroy, or rather the consul. 'They've become slaves and don't know if their masters taken to the mine city have died, don't you feel sorry for them,' she said.

"If this story is true, this won't end in just the weaselkins getting caught, but a war against the weaselkins kingdom won't it?"

No wait, the weaselkins might be instigating someone to go to war against them instead. There seem to be war factions among the weaselkins. According to the story from the drinking bout with the merchants last night, it had been 15 years since the weaselkin merchants entered the dukedom.

Around 18 years ago, there were 7-9 kingdoms on the border of the dukedom, and there were principalities of lizardkin and tigerkin beyond those kingdoms. The weaselkins has swallowed those demi-humans kingdoms and became big, and they're still growing their empire even now.

It seems that they've never meddled with human countries, but last year, they've utterly annihilated one of the small countries and touched the border of the dukedom.

Well, let's hope that even if war happens, it won't spread to Muno territory. There's no soldiers to dispatch, Nina-san should be able to judge well.

I'll leave the problem to the concerned person. I ring the bell that's on the table to call the maid who's standing by outside the room, and pass her a letter for the consul. It's hard to orally convey the content of the letter. It's up to the consul if the girl can be meet.

◇

"Nevertheless, this sure is a world with many troubles."

"Fantasy world is like this you know."

Right now, I'm with Arisa on a jewelry shop near the viceroy castle. Of course it's for the banquet tonight. Arisa said, "Your clothes is already quite noble-like, but there aren't enough decorations.", so we went to buy some accessories. I only had wristwatch in the original world since I liked it simple; I didn't know what to choose, so I brought Arisa along.

The ones who will attend the banquet tonight are lady Karina and me. I can't bring slaves or demi-humans, so there's only Nana among my companions that I could take along, but since the viceroy's wife has Status Check skill, I ask lady Karina instead. The wife is only level 4, so the

Status Check skill level is low and can only know name, but there's no need to take the risk. I have to learn the nature magic [Fake Patch] quickly.

I check on the accessories that Arisa and the shopkeepers have recommended, but there's nothing that fancy me. The accessories in this world are fundamentally rough. Most of the goods are all about seeing the limit on how many jewels or gold can be put on it.

If the banquet isn't tonight, I'd make one myself.

I check on the market price while ignoring Arisa's and the shopkeeper's conversation. Processed goods are more expensive after all. I've saved a lot of raws of amber, corundum, and zircon when I discover the veins by chance. I also have other ores like jade and crystal, I want to make magic tools for polishing or learn the mountain magic, [Polish].

In the end, I picked "Something that won't embarrass me even if I meet the viceroy." The 30 gold coins spent are truly wasteful.

◇

When I'm going to the room that the viceroy has prepared, a maid of this mansion is waiting for me, and says that there's a visitor for me.

The other party is the pink-haired princess and her companions. I've originally intended to meet her, so this is convenient. I tell the maid that I consent, and go meet them together with Arisa. I've already told all the informations about the princess and her companions to Arisa beforehand.

"Sir Pendragon, I want to thank you for saving me from the dangerous situation in this occasion."

Menea Rumooku is a princess of one of the small kingdom bordering the dukedom. She's 16 years old. Level 9, she has summoning magic skill. It's quite rare. Her waist-long loosely-waved pink hair, and emerald colored pupils are followed with chiseled face that's not too deep. Her height is only around 150cm, but her waist is thin, and her breasts are big. They're C-cup on the brink of D-cup. If our standings aren't different, I'd have wanted to court this beautiful girl in 2-3 years.

It was originally planned that she, as the third princess, was to marry the prince of a small kingdom, but the kingdom of her partner was destroyed by the weaselkins and the prince had died. Therefore, for the sake of meeting her next marriage partner, she's going to study in the the place where there are a lot of Shiga kingdom nobles, Kayou Royal Academy. Of course the academy is located in the royal capital.

From the knights and subordinates that have accompanied her until here, half have died from the demon attack, and the remaining three are being healed of their serious injuries in Tenion temple.

The wise-looking woman past 20 years old wearing civil official-like clothes who's standing behind the princess seems to be her attendant, she's called Poni-san. Her level is 7, her skills are [Negotiation], [Spy], and [Etiquette]. The spy skill is too suspicious.

So far so good, the problem is her black-haired attendants.

First, the boy gives his name. He has longish hair even though he's a boy, with biggish black eyes, he's 10 years old. His level is 1. His skill is only [Arithmetic]. His height is 132 cm. It's slightly lower than the average. He's the so-called [Girly boy], you can only see a girl when you look at his face. He's wearing girl clothes too.

Arisa can't leave it alone, so he must be a true boy. In fact, she's muttering, "Not bad, it'd be nice if the hair is shorter", beside me.

"I'm Aoi Haruka. Thank you for the help."

I wonder if it's Aoi Ryo or Haruka?

"I'm Yui Akasaki. I work as an idol. Onii-san, do you recognize my face?"

Akasaki Yui? She has shoulder-length black hair, and black pupils, she's 13 years old. Her level is 2. Her skill is only [Acting]. There are no Singing and Dancing (skills)? Her height is 149 cm. Her breasts are about B-cup. It's probably quite big for her age. However, even though she says that she's an idol, I've never seen her. I peep at Arisa, it looks like she doesn't know either.

"Yui, you're being rude to chevalier-sama. Speak the words properly."

Poni-san rebukes Yui's language, but it seems she doesn't look like she's going to change it.

With lip reading skill, I see that she's been speaking in Japanese all this time, but what I've heard is in Shiga kingdom language. Poni-san tells me later that with the translation ring the girl is wearing, her words are translated to Shiga kingdom.

It can be understand from the two's name that they're Japanese--they should be transported people, but they don't even have the [Self-Status] skill that any reincarnated or transported person should have according to Arisa, let alone unique skills. There's a possibility that they could hide it like me, but they might be the never-before-seen fourth type.

"So, which Japan are you coming from? Is it like this child's Great Rich Japan Empire? Or like my Southern Japan Federation? You can't be from the Northern Japan Republic right?"

I see, so it's come to this.

Poker Face skill is doing a good job today too.

7-15. Various Japanese People

Satou's here. I'm lumping the Japanese people together, but from color of udon to dialect, there are various differences in the east, west, south and north of Japan. I wonder if it's because of the information-oriented society, those special characteristics have been fading away in recent years, it's quite sad.

◇

The princess' entourages, Yui and Aoi pondered if me, who's called Satou, and has black hair and black eyes, is a Japanese. It doesn't seem that they're aware of Arisa's name.

The girl before me, Yui, is summoned from Southern Japan Federation in a country separated to north and south. The kind of country's setting that's often found in fictitious military stories. It seems to be a real country from what she's said, I guess I shouldn't say 'setting' out loud.

However, I've thought that I could easily go home if I just go to Saga empire, but if there are parallel worlds, I have to rethink my plan. Although from the start, I don't intend to go back until after the livelihood of Arisa, Liza and the others are guaranteed here, so it's fine.

"By Japan, do you mean the illustrious country referred by hero-sama?"

"Satou-san isn't from one?"

"My house has always given the name of the eldest son, Satou, for generations long. It's said that our ancestor is a Saga empire hero, but there's no hero called Satou if we trace back the generations of Saga empire's hero, so it's probably a fake story."

This setting is finally used. I thought that I wouldn't have the chance to use it even though I had prepared it. Supported with deception skill, it seems that Yui believes me.

Arisa speaks to Yui from my side.

"Hey, what kind of country is Southern Japan Federation?"

"Hm? It's an amazing country you know, there are mass of irons flying in the air, a lot of them fly until the heaven, it's bright even during the night."

"Hee, are there a lot of delicious food?"

"Fufuhn~, right eh, there are a lot of things that you've never eaten before, like--"

Apparently, it seems to be a different Japan than Arisa's own. When they bring up the subject to the Aoi boy, he's also started talking about

various matters.

While listening to the three's conversation, I talk to princess Menea.

They wouldn't have come here just to make sure if I'm another Japanese.

"Your highness, I've thought that only Saga empire can summon heroes, are these girls taking refuge from the empire?"

"No, it's different. These girls were summoned by our kingdom."

"P, princess. E,err, chevalier-sama, please keep the talk just now a secret, please."

I didn't think that she would answer frankly.

Still, it's not good to disclose such information to nobles from other kingdom right. Miss Poni hurriedly stopped the princess, but the essential point had been said.

Of course, I don't intend to tell this to anyone, but I'll bully them a little and get more informations.

"I really want to keep this a secret, but since this is concerning the matter of national defense, I have no choice but to tell this to my master and the royalties."

Poni-san who thinks that my statements is really reasonable, moans with, "au au", and cannot find any points to oppose it. It looks like she's not an excellent politician like Arisa and Nina-san. If it's those two, they would immediately try to bargain until I could be kept silent.

"Ufufu, Satou-sama, please don't bully us too much, you will keep it a secret."

The princess declared so confidently.

I wonder what's her basis?

◇

"Satou-sama is a retainer of the neighboring baron Muno territory's lord aren't you."

"Even though I'm a retainer (of a baron), I'm of the lowest ranked honorary Chevalier."

Right now, I'm alone with the princess at a garden's arbor. The place can be seen from the room we've just been earlier. Thickets are hiding the place we're sitting, so people can't see us.

When she invited me to a walk, I thought that she was going to talk something that Yui and Aoi shouldn't hear, but I was surprised that she even left Poni-san in the room.

When we arrived at the arbor, I took a seat in front of her, but she deliberately went to sit beside me.

We're not talking about the summoning, but only about me. It looks like she's heard a lot of rumor about me when she was visiting her knights, so she becomes interested in me.

It can't be that she's seducing me?

--Not. I cut off the momentary convenient imagination of mine. Even though it's a small kingdom, there's no reason why the kingdom's princess would fall for me.

Let's return back the topic to about summoning.

"It seems that her highness believes that I would keep it a secret, why is that?"

"Even if I come from a small kingdom, I'm still a princess. I can discern people who's trying to gain favors."

Hoo? That is amazing.

"I don't feel that Satou-sama is going to make use of those girls and me. The reason why you bullied us was because you were trying to get information from me right?"

Yes, that's exactly right.

Then, let's frankly ask her.

"Your highness."

"Menea."

Taking my momentum, the princess overlaps her word with mine. Your face is close princess.

"Please call me Menea. Satou-sama."

"I understand, Menea-sama."

She seems satisfied with me calling her name, and shortly goes back to sit. She doesn't seem to care that I use 'sama'.

"Is Rumooku kingdom able to summon Japanese people since olden days?"

"No, the one who summoned them was my aunt, the king's litle sister, her highness Yuriko."

She casually used 'was' huh. Additionally, "Yuriko", means that she was a reincarnated person huh?

"It's just as you've guessed. Her highness Yuriko was a reincarnated Japanese person. She said that she was murdered by a thug when she was an elementary schooler in her previous life. She declared to the people that she met the god when she was reincarnating; she should have been revered as a saintess, but due to her ominous colored hair and pupils, no one believed her words."

Ominous color huh, it must be violet like Arisa.

"In our country, the direct line of the royal family who had pink hair like me was regarded the most, so her situation was difficult."

This is something that I hear later, but the reason why pink hair is regarded the most is because when her ancestor meets the ancestor king Yamato, the ancestor king declares, "Pink hair is the treasure of the world. Hereafter, Shiga kingdom will enter eternal non-aggression treaty with this country." Isn't Yamato-san a person of the olden days? I somehow imagine the person to be like someone from Akihabara....

"Her highness Yuriko asked for three wishes, [Power to Connect Worlds], [Eternal Youth], and [Beauty], to the god. However, I don't know if she's angered the god, Beauty is the only thing she doesn't get."

It's like Lulu's case I guess. She couldn't have imagined that the world had different standard of looks.

However, I feel like the other two skills are too different from [Power to Connect Worlds]. Did she intend to go back and forth between the previous world and here?

"When she used her [Power to Connect Worlds] for the first time, she summoned a monster that massacred nearby maids."

Afterwards, to see if it could be used for military purpose, she used [Power to Connect Worlds] after preparing the knights to stand by, but nothing came out beside one rabbit.

"Just as that happened, weaselkin magicians visited the castle while carrying a certain item."

Weasels again huh. They're active behind the scene like the demons.

"They knew about her highness [Power to Connect Worlds] from somewhere. They tried to sell the king the magic tool they had brought along, saying that it could be used with her highness' power to summon heroes."

At first the king showed his disapproval, but he got persuaded by the skillful talks of the weaselkins. It was also immediately after the annihilation of the neighboring small kingdom by the weaselkins, so he couldn't exactly refuse them.

And then, Japanese people began to get summoned, but--

"Among all the Japanese people who had been summoned, no one was as strong or had unique skills like the hero."

There's also possibility of them hiding their ability, but the princess denies while saying that it's absolutely impossible since there's a curse that won't let them disobey the summoner. Unlike the king's little sister, no one met the god. It's the same pattern as me.

"By no one, that means there aren't just the two girls?"

"Yes, there are total eight people who had been summoned."

The first and the second summoned ones began to scream eccentrically immediately after they had been summoned and tried to get close to the royalties, so they were executed by the guard knights. They might had just tried to understand their situation while speaking in Japanese language, pitiable.

The third one is a man in his late teens, he slipped out of the castle the day he was given the translation ring and seemed to have died in the forest, eaten by monsters. When the soldiers had caught up to him, the monsters were devouring him, and only his hand with the translation ring on the finger was left.

The fourth one is a man in his 30s. He attacked a noble who was on an inspection during his battle training, and got executed. After living peacefully in Japan, he had to undergone military training every day to the point of vomiting blood, he went mad.

When I overlap his situation with mine, a chill run downs my spine. If I were to be left alone in a wasteland without unique skills, I would probably end up similar to him.

The fifth one is a woman on the later half of her twenties, after she was given translation ring and explained of her situation, she committed suicide on the evening of that day.

"Why did she kill herself?"

"We honestly told her that there was no way to return her home."

"Is there none? Couldn't she just use that [Power to Connect Worlds] again?"

"The magic tool Motara from the weaselkins did help connect to [Parallel World Japan], but the connected world was always different every time. They didn't know why it could not connect to the same world."

The princess is talking detachedly, but when she's talking about the weaselkins, her words get a bit harsh.

"And then, the sixth was Aoi, and the seventh was Yui."

She cuts her words there.

"When the last, eighth person was summoned, a senior demon attacked the castle that day, her highness Yuriko and the people involved with the summoning were all killed. The eighth summoned person was abducted by the demon, and half of my country was burned in half jest by the demon."

It seems Oyugock dukedom provided funds to help rebuild the kingdom. It was the duke who want Yui and Aoi to go with her to study together at Oritsu academy.

And then, it seems that the upper nobles of Rumooku and Shiga kingdom have known about this.

I finally understand the reason why she could declare "I will keep it a secret" now. There's no meaning anyway if the people I would report already know. There's a high possibility that baron Muno doesn't know about this, but as a lord he is, he's a legitimate senior noble.

I'm bothered with the whereabout of that eighth person, but I wonder why she's talking about it like this?

"Reason is it? There was an oracle. It was prophesied that I would meet my destined person in this kingdom. And I think that you are my destined person."

Umm, I don't understand what you mean, you know?

Are you sharing your secret to your destined person or something?

She drew her body closer to me while spinning her words together with entranced sigh. Her hands which she's put on my upper arm are trembling.

The stare from her passionate blue eyes draw men in. She's a bit young, but I'm charmed by her alluring gaze and small gestures. Above all, the abundant swelling that are being pressed on my upper arm are nice. It might be fine to get swept away by the atmosphere like this, and when I think about it a bit, she's attractive.

However, I wonder why. Reasons returns to her eyes even though they have been so passionate.

As if being lured by that, my interest also rapidly declines.

These following three messages are displayed a lot in queue of my log.

>Mind Magic: Resisted Calm Field
>Mind Magic: Resisted <<Impossible Cage>>
>Mind Magic: Resisted Frank Principle (Flat Rule)

It was Arisa huh.

It seems that she's used her unique skill that's finally available again, Never Give Up.

The evidence is the, [Mind Magic: Failed in Resisting Frank Principle (Flat Rule)], that are in the log.

I'll tell her GJ this time. Since I was overwhelmed by the atmosphere. I really do have to play around to vent out once in a while after all.

7-16. Gururian City Night

Satou's here. During the time of bubble economy long ago, it seemed that it was normal to treat your lover with full course meal in every memorial day. I don't think that I'm lucky to grow up during the recession, but it looks like people who've been in the good times have their own shares of problem too.

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"Well then, everyone, please enjoy the specialties of Gugurian."

The viceroy says so signaling the start of the banquet.

The people in this dining room are the viceroy, his wife and his retainers, gentlemen and ladies--who are of course nobles with peerages. The guests are princess Menea, and Poni-san who acts as her escort,

and also lady Karina and me. The influential people in the city are only invited when it's a buffet party.

By the way, only adults are allowed to participate in the banquet and party, their children aren't.

The dining table is decorated with flowers, and two maids accompany each guest. The tablewares are silver knives, spoons and forks. Beside the knife that looks like an extremely common dagger, the spoon and the fork are like the ones used in the previous world. There is only one set of the tablewares for each plate, but it gets exchanged with new ones when you've finished your meal it seems.

The room is lit with magic light. It's not with magic tools, but a magician is putting out light balls. That should be the case considering magic balls are occasionally added from the corner the room.

Wine-like liquor is poured into the glasses. This is the first time I've ever seen glasses as containers since I come here. It seems to be famous products of the dukedom called Oak Glass. According to lady Karina's story, there's a life-sized glass mirror in the women waiting room.

Lady Karina's clothes looks so gorgeous, you wouldn't think that they're made in hurry. I'm the one who pay for it, but it's scary to look at the bill. The clothes have spaciously shown neckline, and the demonic--I mean, emphasized breasts, it's also not only decorated with silver and golden threads, but even gems are mounted in every important places. It's probably not preferable for the invitee to wear clothes that are too gaudy, but since the viceroy's wife is wearing even gaudier dresses, so it should be alright. Since the topic about sense of beauty could be controversial, I don't really want to talk about it, but it's also 'Peacock' in this world too huh, I'll leave it at that.

The first plate that I've assumed to be cold from the beginning is light green soup. It's delicious even though it's cold, potatoes soup-like.

Starting from that, various plates with dishes like meat pudding, boiled trout, pilaf-like dish, baked pheasant, and fillet meat steak are presented out in turns. Aren't there too many main plates?

Regardless of the main course, side dishes like vegetables, and entremet are put on different plates. Breads are also served in a basket, this is the first time I've seen ones that aren't black breads. They're not puffing hot, but it's been a long time since I've eaten white breads.

I want to use chopsticks when I'm eating the trout, but the nobles nearby seem to have got used to it, they break the trout and eat it without problem.

However, half of them who aren't able to do it well are assisted by the maids behind by leaving only the white meat for the nobles. Diligent maids are too wonderful.

Of course, I ask for help too.

Apparently she's an inexperienced maid, I could hear, "Ah", and, "B, bone-san, please don't bring it here.", such slightly fun screams from behind. Since she said it in low voice, guests who don't have attentive ears skill probably can't hear it. I did not think that I would be this glad for getting attentive ears skill.

I'd like to have Liza eat the pheasant dish. Let's buy it in the market, and make the same dish. I have to thank the chefs for the good food in the kitchen, and get them to teach me delicious recipes later!

The overall volume of food is too much, though it's not like I can't eat them all, but since it seems to be normal to leave leftovers, I'm relieved. Even in glutinous Japan, I don't think I've ever left this much. The gormandizer lady Karina eat them all up.

During the banquet, people around me are having conversations while eating slowly, and it's unexpectedly difficult for people who can't eat slowly.

Moreover, lady Karina is too engrossed in eating she tends to forget about the conversation, and has a hard time to follow it. Since she's unfamiliar with this position, it can't be helped. If I haven't followed

Arisa's recommendation and got taught of etiquette by well-informed maid-san beforehand, I might show some shameful behaviors too.

Arisa and the others are on eating tour around Gururian city as scheduled. I'm expecting their result enthusiastically since they would absolutely find shops with delicious cooked rice.

The last dessert isn't gururian (ohagi), but sweetened chestnut. It's called gold sugar, and seems to be promoted at Gururian confectionery. It's really very tasty.

After the dinner, we move to a different room to have pleasant chats. Men and women are in separate rooms. The talks are frank since there are only same sex.

Since a gentleman at the prime of his life who claims to be baron Muno's childhood friend is talking, I don't get left behind alone. The baron is like that since long ago after all.

I got uncomfortable when the topic changes to silver masked hero who has appeared in Seryuu city and Muno city, but the impressions are generally favorable. 'Maybe his true nature is someone who has served the previous Saga empire's hero', such theory is prominent. If he's the predecessor hero's friend, shouldn't he be around 70-90 years old then? I want to retort with that, but I restrain myself.

Since I want to change the topic, I try to talk about the story of the young nobles at the dwarves' hometown.

The atmosphere gets a bit heavy since it's not really a good topic to talk about, but I get some informations. There are hundreds of noble houses in the dukedom alone, and more than 100 young nobles don't succeed their houses and become commoners each year. There is no strict rule that mandates nobles to fall and become commoners, but if one of their sibling inherit the house then they have to leave. If they're minors then they'd be still under care of their parents and remain in the house for the time being.

The magic swords search seem to be vain struggles of the young nobles who don't want to become commoners, even if each of their houses issues prohibition for it, there are always someone who breaks it.

It seems that entering into the duke's imperial guard is quite an honor, and during the service, they'd be treated as temporary nobles and the fall into commoners is postponed. The person with talent could be conferred with medal and become a honorary knight.

◇

When we get back to the banquet, lady Karina and me are invited to a tea break together by the viceroy's son. He's not actually the viceroy's legitimate son, so there's no problem even if I refuse him. However, there's something that interest me so I decide to accept the invitation.

Lady Karina is also going to accompany me. I wonder why? She's being meek and quiet today unlike her usual behavior. The thing that's different from the usual her is that she's not wearing Raka now huh? If she was always like this, I wouldn't have avoided her.

"Nice to meet you, sir Pendragon. Thank you very much for accepting my sudden invitation."

"Thank you for the invitation. The daughter of the viceroy is famous for her wide knowledge. I'd like to meet her once at least."

With my reply, the girl and the boys that follow her harden. She's wearing boys clothes after all, and the clothes matches her well, so she really looks like a feminine boy.

"H, how did you know?"

"I understand from the frame. There are various differences between men and women. The way to distinct it is a secret of my house, so it breaks my heart that I have to tell you I cannot show it."

I think casual talk matches her better, although I don't think that's how she naturally is. The bluff about frames is something I know from the net.

They are the same girl and boys with matching uniforms who have been watching the fight back in the noon. The other boys are children of the viceroy's retainers. Looks like they're children of the nobles from the banquet earlier.

I've accepted the invitation not because they're powerful nobles. It's because they're students of young division of Oritsu royal academy. Princess Menea that I've met yesterday seem to be studying in the advanced division of Oritsu royal academy.

I probably would visit Oritsu academy to gather information someday, so I'll try to have connections even a bit here.

"Satou-sama is amazing even though you're so young. How are you able to be that skillful in swordplay and magic?"

The daughter of the viceroy introduces herself as Ririna, she's fervently speaking about how amazing my fight with the demon is. At first she calls me, "Chevalier Pendragon", or, "Sir Pendragon", but somehow it's changed to "Chevalier Satou", and then, "Satou-sama".

When her way of calling changed, the line of sights of lady Karina and the boys that follow Ririna became dangerous. Leaving aside lady Karina, it's not my plan to be hated by the followers, so I take care as to keep my distance from lady Ririna.

Their attitudes quickly changes when I verbally promise to teach them the basic of magic someday. I don't know when is that someday, so I write it in the memo so that I won't forget it.

The viceroy's office term is only for five years, but since her father is a capable person, it has been decided that he would move to Kwoka city afterward.

◇

"Satou-sama, you've promised to teach me about magic! Please wake up."

The figure of us sleeping together in a bed spreads in front of lady Ririna who has come into the room without knocking. Moreover, everyone is wearing pajama that Arisa has made for seven people, it seems to look like underwear from the eyes of the people here.

"Satou-sama, a, au, d, dirty desu!!"

It seems to be too stimulating for the 13 years old her.

And then a lady maid who serves her comes to apologize for the impoliteness, and closes the door.

"What was that?"

"The viceroy's daughter, lady Ririna, 13 years old. She's a talented girl who's attending the young division of Oritsu royal academy."

Arisa's voice is flat. Mia who usually sleeps in also looks at me harshly while looking sleepy. Liza turns around and goes back to sleep again indifferently. Pochi and Tama are tossing around on the bed. Defeated by their cuteness, I pat their stomaches while lying. The two are letting out comfortable sounds from their throats.

"You there, stop flirting."

"Nn, seiza."

Arisa and Mia also take seiza postures and look straight to my face.

I wonder what is this? This 'husband who has been blamed for cheating'-like composition?

"I haven't done anything shameful you know? I got to know her when she invited me together with lady Karina to a tea break. I promised to teach her about magic someday, didn't she just want to do it immediately?"

"Gununununu."

"Mwu."

Lulu is also looking here with teary eyes, but it seems she's been persuaded somehow.

After breakfast, the mood became strange since lady Ririna and princess Menea had come intruding, but I got pass through it somehow.

I prioritize in teaching magic for lady Ririna and her followers, and the princess amiably concedes. Arisa said, "There's no fool who would make enemies of influential nobles of a large country." Looks like viceroys are amazing.

Even though I said 'teaching magic', I just asked each of them to perform magic, sensed it with magic perception, and pointed out their weakness and strength with the knowledge from the magic theory books. They thank me greatly somehow, but I think anyone would be able to do this much. They're probably happy because it's the words from [A magician who's defeated a demon].

◇

Since princess Menea was absent when I came to meet her after the teaching, I went to the town with Arisa and the others. I wasn't able to resist the appeal of cooked white rice and grilled fish.

"Fufuhn, the way to cook white rice has been properly mastered! By Lulu!"

It seems she was taught by the chef from the restaurant they visited yesterday.

"They willingly teach you huh."

"It's give and take! I traded it with tempura recipe!"

I see, after a while, we could eat tempura in this city when we visit it again huh. GJ Arisa.

I make promise with Lulu to have her teach me how to cook white rice later. Of course, I intend for Lulu to make it first. It's so that Lulu's effort doesn't get to waste, but anyone would yearn for freshly cooked rice from a beautiful girl right.

I bought [Float] scroll from the magic shop. I did not bought the other scrolls since I had them already.

When we get back to the viceroy mansion, maid-san tells us that they've booked us seats for the ship that will depart to the dukedom capital tomorrow. A carriage that carries five sacks of rice and one sack of glutinous rice ordered by Arisa has arrived. There's one sack of adzuki beans too. You've bought too much Arisa.

When we are preparing for the departure, princess Menea comes over.

I've thought that she's going to continue the talk about heroes from yesterday, but she's just confirming my contact address. I tell her that we're in the middle of a journey to the labyrinth city, and I promise her that I will send a letter to Oritsu royal academy addressed for princess Menea after we have decided the place to stay there.

This is the first time I'm going to exchange letter with a beautiful girl-- No wait, I've already promised once with Zena-san. I should send a letter to Zena-san.

Lastly, I check on one thing I've forgotten to ask the princess yesterday.

When was the eighth person kidnapped?

"More than one month ago. Do you remember the day when many meteors fall from the sky? It was the day before that."

That kidnapped eighth person wasn't me right? Right?

7-17. Ship Travel

Satou's here. I imagined that Europe have prejudice against octopus which they call devil fish, but I was surprised when I heard that it was eaten normally in Italy and Spain. Akashiyaki is delicious, but I prefer normal takoyaki.

◇

I'm waving my hands on top of the departing ship. It's not only princess Menea and her escorts that have come to see us off, but even the viceroy couple and miss Ririna.

There were imprudent young nobles and hooligans that they had hired aiming for Liza's spear waiting in the harbor, but the viceroy soldiers skilfully arrested them before they could cause harm to us. It seemed miss Karina's maids had notified the viceroy beforehand after they heard about some disturbing rumors.

The nobles had probably seen Liza's spear during the fight with the demon yesterday, but they were really confident if they thought they could go against her even after seeing that fight.

I want to leave miss Karina too if possible, but my reputation would become bad if I do leave my employer's daughter, so I give up.

"Fufufuhn, you've raised and collected flags of the new character huh! She should just disappear after this."

New character.... Please don't liken a person with characters. Today's

Arisa is a bit dark. Is she still minding about the things at the arbor yesterday?

Last night, before we slept, Arisa and I exchanged informations about our Japans, and about 70% of it matched. I had thought that she liked minor animes, but in Arisa's Japan, they were super popular works that even non-Otaku knew.

"Are you still thinking about the eighth person?"

Arisa who seems to be worried about me that has lost in thought calls out.

Yesterday, I was a bit upset, but even if I'm the eighth, there was no particular merit or demerit, so I decided not to mind about it. Since the reincarnated person who could do summoning has died, a situation where more Japanese people overflows here is unlikely anyway.

For the time being, I've told the princess that the summoned hero of Saga empire could be sent back to his original world. I'll pray for the possibility of Yui and Aoi going back to their worlds would increase even for a bit.

Arisa pokes-pokes my head lightly, and we go together to Pochi and the others who are clamoring on the bow while looking at the water surface.

◇

"I've cleared another thing that I've always wanted to do in the previous life~"

Arisa spreads her arms on the bow while I'm supporting her waist. It looks like a scene from a famous western movie. I knew the title since it was a masterpiece, but unfortunately I had never watched it.

"Umm, chevalier-sama, it's dangerous so, could you...."

The area of the bow we are in is actually off-limit, but I unreasonably ask to enter it.

Since the lone tour guide who's taking care of us is looking troubled, I take Arisa who seems satisfied back to the general deck.

This ship's deck is wide enough to hold four carriages. Although since there are other things like the masts, it can only hold two in actual. There's only our wagon right now. This ship consists of three layers, the top one has the captain's cabin and our guest rooms. Miss Karina and her maids are in different room of course. The other two layers are for domestic animals like the horses, cargo room, and the sailors' rooms.

I was worried that everyone would get seasick for their first ship voyage, but beside miss Karina's maids who are downed, all other members are fine. Everyone is saying that it's far better than the vibration on the wagon. Let's give some motion-sickness medicines to the maid-san later.

It's 300 kilometers away until the capital, but since we're using a ship chartered from the viceroy this time, we would reach it in just two days. It would take 3-4 days if it was a general ship, since they'd need to make stops at the cities along the way.

"It's boring desuwa."

"Karina-sama, how about exploring the ship's interior together with Pochi and the others?"

Karina-sama barged in when I was relaxing on the sofa that the tour guide had prepared on the deck.

There are only Liza and me here. The other members have gone exploring. I didn't think that even Lulu would also go, but since it was the first time she had boarded such large ship, it couldn't be helped. I'm the only one who's sitting on the sofa. Since there were three seats, I encouraged Liza to also sit, but she stood obstinately like a sentry and wouldn't sit.

I don't think that even miss Karina would try to pick a fight in this kind of place, but since I'm absorbed in map searching, I drive her away.

"My, even though such beautiful girl is visiting you, you immediately send her away?"

"I have no such intention, would you like to take a seat?"

I'm saying thing that I don't mean to.

I get irritated at miss Karina, but I don't show it on my face.

"So, would you not sign the letter from consul Nina?"

"I thought I had given the letter of refusal on the other day?"

Nina-san's letter was a request for me to become [Special Liaison Officer] from baron Muno territory. In short, I have to coax influential nobles in the dukedom to invest in baron Muno territory. As the compensation it was written that the honorary part of my peerage would be taken out, but since it was not worth it, I declined. If I carelessly accept it, I'm afraid that I'd get led around until I'm made to marry miss Karina.

"Why is it? If you become a chevalier, your children could inherit the peerage you know?"

"Even the honorary knight that I have now is too excessive for me. I don't think of anything beyond that."

Miss Karina looks dissatisfied with me who's not getting into it. Please stop inflating your cheeks like a child. The maid--err~ was it Pina-san?--is warning her as it's unbecoming of a lady.

Right at then, Pochi and Tama who have finished their exploring dive in.

"I'm home~.""Nano desu!"

"Yes, welcome home."

I gently catch the two and make them sit on the seats at both of my sides. Since they look thirsty, I advise them to drink the fruit water on the side table. Arisa comes back slightly late.

Mia who has realized that my sides are already occupied clings from behind the sofa. Please stop rustling my hair.

"You're all getting clingy during the noon!"

Miss Karina accused so.

How rude! We're just a bit intimate.

Miss Karina is stamping the ground with her feet, but it seems she's discrete enough as not to utter, "Let's fight desuwa."

◇

"Look look! It's mermaid, mermaid!"

Why did you say it twice.

I look at where Arisa is pointing, they're certainly mermaids. The AR indicates that they're finmen tribe (Mermaid). It looks like they're aquatic demi-humans. There are also other tribe like fishmen or gillmen.

It seems the mermaids are gathering shellfish and prawn, and carry it to small boats with humans on it. It's completely different, but they remind me of ama-san divers doing cormorant fishing.

I look at the people on the small boat, the tour guide who has noticed it calls the small boats here.

Since the story advances into buying of aquatic products, I go with Lulu to the ship's side.

The line-ups are shellfish that are as big as a tray, lobster-sized shrimps, and octopus with two meter long tentacles. There shouldn't be octopus in fresh water, but I guess I shouldn't bring real world common knowledge to a parallel world.

I buy shrimps for everyone's shares, several shellfish, and three octopus. It seems octopus are rarely eaten by people, the tour guide looks awfully surprised. It's delicious you know?

"Octopus~?"

"This guy, nano desu."

Pochi and Tama catch the octopus that has ran away from the bucket, but they're having a hard time with the tentacles coiling around them.

It seems Pochi is irritated with the tentacles that just won't come off, she begins biting on it.

It might be delicious, but please stop biting it raw.

Tama has escaped somehow, and pricks the octopus that coils around Pochi with her claws. Stop enjoying it and help Pochi. Well, since her

harassed behavior looks cute, I do understand. However, I should help her soon.

"Satou."

Mia is calling me with pitiful voice from behind, when I turn around, she's also become a victim of the octopus. Leaving aside Pochi, Mia who gets entangled by the octopus' tentacles feels immoral-like, no good. Arisa also says, "Erofu is here." while helping her.

Lulu also helps, and the tentacles on Mia are torn off. Nana and Liza are helping Pochi.

"Sticky."

Mia tells her displeasure while looking really pitiful.

I ask the tour guide to draw water.

I hear Pochi screams, "Please help nano desu" behind. When I look behind, there are Pochi and Nana who have become black from the octopus' ink. Liza and Tama seemed to have avoided it.

I put up a partitioning screen, and the three octopus' victims are taking baths behind it. I put Air Curtain outside the screen so that it won't get stripped off. Rather than being troubled from them being seen, it's more so that they don't catch cold.

Mia and Pochi are going out of the screen to dry their bodies, but since there are other people's eyes, I tell them to wipe it with their own clothes and push them inside the screen. That's why it's inevitable I see naked body of Nana at that time. I have absolutely nothing to feel guilty about.

"Your lips, they're grinning."

"How rude."

I unintentionally put my hand on my lip from Arisa's words.

I've seen good things today, I decide to cook the octopus dish.

I ask the tour guide to borrow the kitchen. It's only inside the ship, and it's small. It might be better to cook it on the ship's deck with magic tools.

I had made Heat Plate, referencing from Light Heat Plate, but since the only one who could regulate the temperature was me, it rarely got used during the camping.

Unfortunately, the only octopus dish that I could think of is boiled octopus sashimi that would fit in a bar, or vinegared one. I've thought of making takoyaki, but since I don't know how to make stock soup for the dough, I give up. Let's research it next time.

Since I feel that the rice that Lulu is cooking would slightly fail, I put up ingredients for making octopus pilaf. I soothe Lulu who's depressed, I don't expect her to make splendid cooked rice on her first try.

I ask Liza's and Nana's help to bring it to the deck, and we're having lunch under the blue sky. It's generally popular, but Pochi looks a bit disappointed, probably because it's not meat. I'd like you to endure since they'd be suspicious of the origin if we have grilled meat on the ship.

Since there's going to be a town near the place where we're anchoring this evening, maybe I should go shopping with a small boat there.

Tama and Liza are wildly eating the grilled shrimps without peeling it.

Maybe because it looks really delicious, Miss Karina begins to mimic them, but Pina-san the maid scolds her. The other two maids are engrossed with the meal, they don't even act as miss Karina caretakers. I wonder if the medicine is effective, miss Erina the maid who has been looking like she'd die this morning is stuffing her mouth full with the octopus pilaf.

It was worthwhile in making so much food since there are many gluttons here.

When I'm searching for [Short Horn] at the capital during the meal, I find more than 20 of it. I pray that the capital doesn't get destroyed until the ship arrives.

I wish that Hayuna, her child and the workshop of the viscount Shimen are safe.

7-18. Ship Travel (2)

Satou's here. I imagine gorgeous passenger ship when I hear 'Ship travel', but I've only ever ride a nighttime ferry. Since I mostly slept, I could only remember some random theme song that remained in my ears.

◇

"Bird~?"

"Bird-san nano desu!"

A birdman who's flying near the water surface as if gliding passes over the ship.

Pochi and Tama are waving their hands to the point as if it'd get torn off. It seems the birdman is also giving a service, he makes several turns and do a full revolution before flying away.

I'm afraid that the two will fall since they lean forward too much while waving their hands, but since Liza seizes the girdle, it's probably alright.

Even if they fall, there's [Float] that I've learned recently so it's fine, but there's no need for them to fall in the first place.

It's basically a leisure on the ship.

Yesterday, the ship was attacked by two aquatic monsters, but before we could go out, the gillmen soldiers who were escorting the ship cleaned it up. There was also a pirate group, river version, that was going to attack on the river branch, but I attacked them with Short Stun from afar, and their boat got capsized, the end.

Since it's generally peaceful like that, I continue practicing signal magic with Nana like before.

Mia and Arisa look dissatisfied, though they're not being hindrances because I persuade them that having someone that can receive the signal anytime is important. This person is being a nuisance instead.

"You're all clingy again this early in the day!"

"Karina-dono, I've thought that it's normal for married humans couple to get clingy? Besides, the two seem to be doing training for receiving signal magic. In my humble opinion, you should not disturb them."

Raka remonstrated Karina who was picking a quarrel. As expected of magic creature. It understands that we're doing signal magic.

"I want to do training too!"

"Since Karina-sama has Raka-dono, there is no need for training. I'll contact Raka-dono if anything happen."

Good grief, if lady Karina is going to be my practice partner, my line of sight would be at her breasts no doubt. Arisa and Mia would say [Seiza] again.

"Right, right, it's unnecessary for young lady Karina who has the convenient magic tool. Now then, it's Arisa-chan's turn."

Arisa declares so while breathing heavily. What's this, card game!

When lady Karina was intruding, that Arisa took my short cane and did something on the deck's corner, it seems she was using [Signal] magic. The reason why she was breathing heavily was probably because used [Signal] even though she didn't have nature magic skill. She's a rash girl like always.

Mia claps her hands when she sees Arisa, takes a short cane from my bag, chant nature magic spell, and casts [Signal]. Mia is following Arisa huh.

It seems that Mia has successfully casted the magic, but far from breathing heavily, she falls from anemia. I was going to put her on the cabin to sleep, but she insisted to be here and slept on my lap.

Lulu who's beside the tea set looks at Mia enviously. I don't think it's something that warrant such envy. I feel that lady Karina's expression looks like Lulu, but I ignore it.

"Hey, I've struggled to be able to be the receiver, so start the training~."

"Okay, first, let's see the receiver's state using [Signal]. Give me your hands."

"Uy~."

Come to think of it, it's been awhile since I join hand with Arisa. They're small. I'm squishing it. When I'm playing with the small hands that have nothing to do with the training, Arisa is letting out strange voices like, "Au", or "Iyahn". She seems to be shy, like always, I don't understand the point that would make Arisa shy.

Since Mia scratches my knee while irritated, I stop playing around and go back to the training.

"First, it's a brief signal. Then, next is long signal."

"Okay, I know, I know."

"I know."

Oh, Mia is also participating huh. Please don't overdo it if your anemia is painful.

"Then, from now on is the real thing. Activating [Signal]."

"Hoi."

"Nn."

I've tried it for many times, but they can't receive it as well as Nana after all.

At that time, Pochi and Tama who have been looking at the birdman on the ship's broadside come back.

"Pizza~?" "Lap pillow nano desu~."

It seems Tama and the others are still affected by Arisa who eats 10 pizzas when I make mock pizza the other day. Looks like it's still stuck on Tama, she still says pizza while pointing at my lap.

Maybe they want to mimic Mia who's sleeping on my lap, they gather both hands on the opposite knee and lie on it face down. No. That's not how you do sleeping on the laps.

Since the two who look at me poking Arisa's and Mia's hands say that they want to do it too, I make them spread their hands in line and poke it too.

I try to send various signals' interval and strength.

Ton, ton.

Piku, piku.

Oh?

This time, I try to send the signals without poking their hands with my finger.

Piko, piko.

Pochi's and Tama's ears are twitching matching the signal, they lean their heads while looking puzzled.

"Pochi, raise your hand if you receive my signal."

"Roger nano desu."

Ton, swoosh.

Silent. ...Ton, swoosh.

This is a bit interesting. However, it seems that she could only grasp short wave signal.

"Next, Tama okay."

"I'll manage somehow sir~"

That's wrong.

She got the vocabularies that Arisa had taught her mixed. She must have wanted to say, "Aye aye sir.".

Ton, swish.

Ton, swiswish.

You don't have to take strange poses when you get it.

Looks like Tama can receive both types of signals, but strangely her sensitivity is weaker than Pochi's, the range of signal strength that she could receive is narrow. That reminds me, Tama did find magic traps in the labyrinth eh.

I don't know if it's due to her race characteristic or her individual ability, but she's quite reliable.

With this, I could communicate with them even if we're separated. At the very least, the signal could be received from end to end of the ship, I'll check on the range when we get down from the ship.

I decide on several urgent patterns at once. I'm worried Pochi and Tama wouldn't be able to remember signal that's too complex, but Arisa proposes to make Tama talks the signal out loud to Arisa, and so I agree with it. Afterward, Arisa would decipher the Morse signal.

I've thought that it's quiet, but it looks like Karina has shut her room and sleep while sulking. The maids seem to be free too, they're dozing off.

Ah, it's peaceful.

◇

"Now then, honored guests. Please close your eyes and wait. Please do not open it until I give you the signal."

The tour guide is making a speech to us who are sitting on the seats that have been prepared on the deck. The ship is going to enter a 3 kilometers-long cave soon. There's a legend that says this cave is penetrated by the ancient empire's magician who've made the canal using magic.

The reason why we're asked to sit and close our eyes is to make our eyes get accustomed to darkness to see the tourist attraction in the cave ahead.

"From now on, Meeru the batkin will steer the ship replacing the captain."

That was the man who was patrolling during the night yesterday. I've thought that he's an escort soldier, but he would steer the ship huh. They're probably using demi-human who could use echolocation to steer through the terrain in the unlit cave.

A small boat that comes out of the harbor in front of the cave is guiding our ship entering the cave. A person is using light signal to tell the people on the other side of the cave.

I see, since it could only hold one ship, they're regulating the traffic.

The sails on the ship are folded when it approaches the cave.

Warm wind is blowing from the frontward. If this is a fairy tale, it'd feel like entering cave straight into the stomach of a giant monster.

Of course, such thing doesn't happen and we uneventfully enter the cave. Soon after we enter the cave, the light dims. Of course, I'm the only one who open my eyes and observe various things. Everyone is obediently closing their eyes following the tour guide's instruction.

Since I have light intensity adjustment skill, I immediately get accustomed with dark places. It's truly convenient.

Ooh!

Even though the tour guide probably doesn't know the astonishment in my mind, he gives the signal.

"Now, everyone, please open your eyes slowly! This is the famous Phantom Firefly Cavern of Oak!"

I've seen it one step ahead, but it's quite a spectacle. Mosses on both sides to the ceiling of the cavern are casting faint lights in various colors, drawing mysterious gradation. It's like a nature's painting. Moreover, there are crystals located here and there reflecting the light, making it never dull. It's already quite beautiful with those alone, but there are even a lot of lights that look looks like fireflies flickering and dancing around.

What happen if emotional girls and little girls see such thing, it goes without saying.

"Glittering~? Flickering~?"

"Amazing nodesu! Master! Amaaziing nodesu!"

Pochi and Tama who are sitting beside me are getting too excited, they grab my shoulders and begin shaking it. My eyes is spinning.

"Beautiful."

"Amazing."

Arisa and Lulu are watching this magical scene as if their souls are stolen. The two get off the sofa and sit beside my feet. Of course they're not sitting directly on the deck's floor, but on soft feather cushions that the tour guide has prepared.

I think they're unaware that they've grasped my feet near them. It's a bit painful.

"It's beautiful, yes, truly beautiful."

Mia is muttering feverishly while watching the fireflies dancing wildly. She occasionally becomes talkative huh.

Thud, with such sound, Liza's spear fell on the sofa nearby. Liza who comes to her sense from that sound picks up the spear. Everyone's line of sight gathered for an instant but it scatters away again. Liza apologizes for her impoliteness and returns to standing by posture, but she looks obviously embarrassed It's rare to see embarrassed Liza. It might be the first time even.

"Master, my vocabularies are insufficient. I request installation of the second language set."

What the heck is the second language set.

"You don't need to mind about vocabulary. It's enough with the word, beautiful."

"Yes, master. It's beautiful."

Nana leaks out a sigh of wonder and hugs my head from behind while watching the boisterous dance of the light. I'll say the important thing once again. Nana is hugging my head from behind with her breasts. Of course, she's not doing such boorish thing like wearing armor since we're on the ship. In other words, it's direct.

What a happy day.

I'd like for time to stop while it's like this.

7-19. A Night No One Knows

Satou's here. As I lived in Japan where the limit for religions was lax, country that went to war for difference in religious views was strange to me. I wonder if there's also religious war even in a parallel world?

◇

The ship carrying us is anchored at a place where the capital's night view can be seen. The port is crowded due to the tournament season, so we're waiting our turn. It seems the duke has issued order to prioritize ships that are carrying supplies, there are a lot of other anchored ships.

Since the captain has gotten the right to enter the port first thing in the morning tomorrow, it looks like we could enter the port without waiting tomorrow.

Everyone was watching the night view until just now, but since the youth trope began to doze off, I made them turn back to the room.

I hear light footsteps, I look back, and there's Arisa.

"You're going after all?"

"Ah."

I answer briefly to Arisa who's giving off strange atmosphere.

"I can't imagine you'd fall off against opponents at the level of short horn, but absolutely don't let your guard down, okay?"

"Ah, I know. Or rather, I'm going for it before the short horn demons could appear."

We wouldn't be able to tour the capital relaxedly if there are people who are like terrorists with bombs around. Moreover, I've been looking forward to the scroll workshop, like I would let them get in the way.

Furthermore, the identities of the people who are holding the short horns are suspicious. Majority of them are younger people of the nobles who are members of a secret society called [Wings of Liberty]. There doesn't seem to be anyone who has peerage, but there's even a direct descendant of the duke among them. I feel like the weaselkins are involved with them in the background, but the members are all humans.

"Alright now, you have to absolutely come back unharmed okay? You're not a hero, so don't be reckless! If you come back with even a scratch, I will never let you go alone again!"

"I know, I won't overdo it. If some strange powerful enemies comes out, I'll proceed with [Protect life]."

Since Arisa still tends to be overprotective, I put her at ease by citing play tactics from a famous game that's common in both our worlds. Arisa finally nods her head while saying, "Really, that's fine then.", so I decide to depart.

<TLN: Dragon Quest reference, haven't played one in ages so I don't know the official English localization for the reference.>

"Arisa, the likes of river pirates might attack tonight, so have someone among our companions to do night watch, it's also fine to call lady Karina and her maids to our room. If she comes, Raka would be with her."

I shouldn't say that Arisa is overprotective. I'm one as well.

◇

Now then, there was a little something that I didn't tell Arisa.

First, there are about 300 Wings of Liberty's members who aren't holding the short horns. There isn't anyone past level 30. I feel that they should have been exposed with Yamato stone, but since every member has not-less-than two affiliations, the other affiliation is probably prioritized.

Their stronghold seems to be a mysterious area several hundreds meter below the capital's ground. I knew this after someone who I had marked before appeared out of map's range, when I checked, it was treated as different area. I wonder if it's a geofront or a labyrinth?

Of course, there are also buildings that look like their offices on various places above the ground.

Furthermore, there are three people with, [Abnormal Status: Demonic Possession]. Among the two executive members, one of them is a clergyman of Tenion temple. Putting aside the former, I wonder why is the latter possessed? Since the three of them are in the underground, I'll do something about them after collecting the short horns.

I wonder if it's because of Spy skill, I've successfully sneaked into the capital without being found out by the patrolling batkin.

Of course I didn't enter via the front gate, I leaped over the outer wall with sky drive skill.

Since it's a sneaking mission at night now, I'm wearing a jet black mask instead of the silver mask. I'm also not wearing robe, but the knight clothes with the ornaments taken out. I've thought that it's better to not wear something conspicuous since my purpose isn't demon subjugation, but thievery.

Now then, even though the night is long, they're gathering in the underground, so I should quickly raid the short horn holders above the ground.

First of all is from a fortuneteller in the back alley. I enter the store without knocking. It took some time with the lock, but I entered without problem. I was somehow able to do it with treasure chest unlock skill.

"Who? The shop is closed for today."

A sexy blond haired older woman tells so as if spitting out, but I make her faint without minding it. I've confirmed that there's no one beside her here, so I collect the short horn from the safe and leave. Just to be sure, I lock the door.

And then, I was able to collect until the fourth person without problem, but the fifth one is bad. Of all things, he's the third son of the duke. I am able to infiltrate the castle somehow, but there are a lot of guards with see-through, surveillance, and enemy search skills scattered around. Even now, I'm hiding from the sentries who are patrolling the area.

There's no beastkin sentries, but I use [Deodorant] magic to erase my smell just in case.

I want to believe in Spy skill level 10, but the density of the sentries is too high, I can't feel relieved. I wonder if I could get invisibility-related skills if I erase my presence like when I get enemy search skill back then?

The fortunate things? There is no shortage of [enemies] who are trying to find me, so it should fulfill the conditions.

Back then I was searching for foreign body in the nature, but it's the opposite now. I relax, and imagine myself melting with the surrounding in mind and body.

Unexpectedly, maybe because I've had similar experience before, I obtain the skills easier that I've thought.

>[Hiding Skill Acquired]

>[Invisibility Skill Acquired]

>[Stealth Steps Skill Acquired]

I activate those skills, and I become able to pass the corridor while concealing my footsteps. There's no doubt that it's also thanks to the soft leather shoes I'm using.

Thanks to combination of the four skills and magic, the infiltration mission is successful, and I've arrived at the living room of the duke's third son. When I peep inside, there's an over thirty years old obese man muttering in low voice while facing a hand mirror. I've thought that he's talking to himself at first, but since the hand mirror is emitting magic power, it's probably a communication-type magic tool. When I listen closely--

"Then, kidnap--no, invite Sera from Teenion temple."

Disturbing words came out. If I'm not mistaken, one of the person with [Abnormal Status: Demonic Possession] is called Sera.

"Umu, I want to go there too, but I'm busy with government affair, so it's extremely unlikely that I could participate in the ritual. No, I am not making light of the society. I understand, I will be there before the ritual begin. Keep the person who can operate the gate waiting."

After he's finished with the hand mirror, he goes before the bookshelves while carrying it. After he operates something, the bookshelves slides out and a hidden room appears. Why do the residents of this fantasy world really like this kind of gimmick I wonder?

Since he's begun changing to the society's attire inside the hidden room, I quickly stun him and collect the short horn. There are passwords list and some kind of plan inside the treasure chest with the society's attire, so I collect them.

The duke's third son is fainted while wearing the society's attire, I decide to leave him as he is. Theoretically, I'd want to take his attire and wear it for the infiltration, but I don't want to wear that clothes.

There's a hidden passage along the drainage that continues to the castle's basement so I make use of it.

It smells of mold.

The rats are darting about since awhile ago. I would be caught if they were familiars, but since the radar and my crisis perception weren't kicking in, they were probably just normal rats.

There were several alarm devices that looked like spider webs along the way, but they were no obstacles before the trap discovery and crisis perception. Rather, the foul smelling drainage beside the passage I'm advancing in is more painful. Since I'd leave traces behind if I use [Deodorant] magic too much, I have to endure this.

In the middle of the drainage passage, I seized the society attires and changed to it. Typical of a secret society, the attire hides the figure and the face. Since the one who I seize this clothes from is a woman, I hesitate to leave her alone on her underwear, but I put clothes and a mantle that I've taken from the thieves back then on her and tie her up. I'll release her when I return.

◇

"Toward the blue sky."

"The wind of liberty blows."

I replied with the code to a woman who was confirming the password.

There are also other people from the society gathered here. There is no one who has short horn among these people here.

There are people wearing different clothes than ordinary members' that seem to be the higher-ups, they seem to be disputing about something since awhile ago.

"What should we do, Mitsuo-dono still hasn't come yet."

"That fool must be resting somewhere. There's no time until the ritual start, let's go ahead."

Apparently, they're waiting for the duke's third son that I've stunned earlier, but it seems to be near the time for the ritual. I've been scanning the document that I've snatched from the third son since awhile ago, but I'm doubting if the content is serious. They're offering sacrifices with the ritual to summon holy relic--based on the context, the short horn from hell.

Today's sacrifice is probably lady Sera that the third son's talked about before. Since she's been possessed by the demon, she might have been sacrificed already.

I go to the gate device that would transport us to the underground area with the other members. I've imagined that it'll be like the torii/shrine archway that I've seen before, but it looks more like the Stonehenge instead.

The device is activated, and we move to the underground area. It's a type without time lapse huh.

I activate [All Map Exploration] in secret, and check on the underground area's composition. It's the [Pig King Labyrinth: Ruin] here. It doesn't seem to be an active labyrinth. It's probably the same kind as the [Withered Labyrinth] in Arisa's country. There should be some monsters left even if it's withered, but there is none at all here. There are only common insects and small animals.

The society's people seem to be gathered beyond this corridor. Since my main objectives, the short horn holders and the three demonic possession people are there, it looks like I could settle it at once.

7-20. A Night No One Knows (2)

Satou's here. There were a lot of light novel and games that had had religious groups as the villains during the end of the twentieth century, but it felt like I didn't see it much recently.

◇

"Oi, you're late, the ritual has already begun. I'll open the door, so take your positions quietly."

A person who looks to be a leader-type is scolding us with rough voice in front of the door that leads to the ritual room. The scolding is over quickly, I slip in with the society members to go into the door.

I've thought of this since I mix in awhile ago, but they're full of leaks.

They don't look like a group that would do such outrageous thing as summoning items from hell. There's something mismatched about this. I wonder if there's someone who's pulling the string from behind?

Well, whatever.

There are probably only a few places where they can hold the ritual, so if I destroy this place, people who are thinking of doing misconducts will lay low.

The ritual room is wide. The width is 200 meters, the height is 20 meters, the depth is nearly 1 kilometer long. Of course there are a lot of standing pillars, but they sure are strong for supporting such enormous weight. Is it due to [Fixture Magic]?

My thought had wandered off for a bit.

The nearly 200 men and women inside the room are reciting poetry-like words repeatedly. It doesn't seem to be a spell chant.

There are three beds of stones lined up on the altar, and three girls are sleeping there. Magic circle-like drawings are painted on the girls' bare skins. They don't seem to be dressed.

"Summon the holy relics as compensations for these unsullied girls!"

"""Summon!"""

It seems I've come slightly late. Following the most self-important looking man's shout and the replies, three executive members beside the girls raise ceremonial daggers overhead, and swing it downward toward the girls' hearts.

Maybe it's not like the usual me.

The moment I see the executive members raise the daggers, I rush out instantly.

I feel the members behind me are blown to the wall. Looks like they've been exposed to the reaction from my sudden acceleration.

I run at the speed of an arrow, but I won't make it like this.

Remote Stun would be excellent for a case like this, but Sky Drive is faster. The magic gun's range is 200 meters. It's still far.

"M-A-K-E-I-T!"

I try to convince myself by yelling.

The moment during the executives' dagger swinging downward is only for an instant, in reality it can even be called [Now], but this isn't futile it seems.

At the next moment, I feel like strangely running in water, and when I come to, I've kicked the daggers from the executives' hands.

＞[Ground Shrink Skill Acquired]

◇

"Who are you!"

The man who said that must be the society's head, no doubt.

But I make everyone faints before they can say anything. Since I make use of the ground shrink skill that I've just acquired, I must be looking like split bodies from their point of views.

Thanks to that, I don't need much time to make the nearly 200 members powerless.

I'd like to collect the short horns, but I guess I'll do something about the demonic possession people first.

"Disturbing the ritual like this, what a boorish comrade, deojaru."

"Yes, yes, truly like the inferior beings humans are, nari."

Two demons appears by breaking out of the bodies of two members that have fallen on the ground as if taking off clothes.

They're not short horns.

They're the same upper-ranked demon like Wagahai-kun.

The 'ojaru' one has red body with deer-like horns, it doesn't have wings. The 'nari' one has bronze body with water buffalo-like horns, it has two pairs of wings. They're both level 63.

"Good grief, he's foolish beyond help for disturbing our resurrection ritual, nanoda."

There's a figure of a girl sitting on the stone bed. The girl--no, the one possessing the girl doesn't show its true body.

Leaving aside the life of the members, I want to save the sacrifice girls.

I use ground shrink skill, and carry the two girls to the exit.

"I won't let you go, deojaru."

As if space is breaking in front of my eyes, the red-body demon teleports in.

Since both of my hands are occupied, I restraint it with [Remote Arrow] and [Short Stun], shooting with maximum power.

"I'll return it, deojaru."

The magic that I've shot toward the demon return to me in entirety.

Space magic huh!

The Remote Arrows change their course back to the demon, but the Short Stuns are going to directly hit me. I put up Shield at once to stop it. The shield breaks in an instant, but I've successfully arrived at the door.

I leave the girls on the other side of the door, and close it.

The red-body demon behind me is fed up with the Remote Arrows that are coiling around it.

"Irritating, deojaru."

The red-body demon roars, making cracks run on the space and destroys the Remote Arrows. Thanks to magic perception, I could see stream of magic that worked like early warning before the cracks ran on the space.

I turn ON the silver mask set and hero title before it's too late.

My equipped sword is Durandal, not Excalibur, it's not because I'm unwilling. I've stored dangerous amount of magic power inside Excalibur when I experiment with storing magic power, so I'm afraid that I would collapse the capital if I'm careless with it.

Durandal's performance is worse than Excalibur, but it's exceptionally strong compared to Gjallarhorn, so there's probably no problem.

"Houhou? I've thought it's a rat, turn out you're a hero, nari."

The bronze demon is approaching while munching on something. The altar's side has become a blood bath.

They themselves become the demon's sacrifices this time huh.

Right now, it's not the time to sympathize with them.

I put off dealing with the red-body for later, and going to get rid of the bronze demon first.

I move like teleporting with Ground Shrink, and slip below the bronze demon's chest, cutting--

Tremendous pressure overwhelms me.

>[Gravity Magic Skill: Demon Acquired]

>[Gravity Resistance Skill Acquired]

Still, I endure the high gravity forcibly, and swing the sword, but just before the holy sword touch the demon, I stop it, and back step away while opening the distance.

"The current hero is weak, instead his intuition is sharp, nari."

"If he cut just as he was, the hero's body would had been split in two, almost, deojaru."

It seems they've set some kind of trap-like magic.

If the crisis perception didn't ring me a warning, it would have been dangerous.

I make the Remote Arrows to fly around randomly, and hit the bronze demon with Short Stun, it seems that the trap magic breaks it huh.

I feel my body is being pulled slightly by the red-body demon. When I look at the log, it seems that it's using magic called [Drawing(Evil Snap)].

>[Space Magic Skill: Demon Acquired]

>[Space Resistance Skill Acquired]

I activate the resistance skill.

"The magic isn't too effective even though his level is low, deojaru."

"Ushashashasha, senility excuse nari huh?"

Their attentions turn toward each others, now.

Making full use of Ground Shrink and Sky Drive, I rain down Short Stuns in 16 three-dimensional directions.

As expected, the Short Stuns begin to change their course, turning back. There's the bronze demon among one of the course.

When it hit the bronze demon, the short stun is forwarded to the red demon like the trap magic. It's different than the plan, but the result is alright.

Of course, they've only received small damages.

However, that's fine.

That instant chance I've got is quite enough.

When the blue glow from Durandal have melted in the darkness, the red-body demon becomes pieces of meat and falls to the ground.

I sprinkle it with dragon scales that I've taken out of the storage, incinerating it so it can't revive.

[Flash Slash Skill Acquired]

◇

"This is strange, nari."

Taking the moment when the bronze demon is stunned, I take out the Holy Bolt set loaded with magic power from the storage, and shoot it.

The bronze demon tries to repel it with its hand that has jet black spiral appeared on it.

"Avoid it, noda!"

<TLN: Not the demon's name.>

With the possessed girl's words, the bronze demon inclines his body to avoid the bolt in a hurry, but it couldn't avoid the arrow, and its upper body is ripped into many pieces. Annihilated.

I've originally expected the bolt to be a mere diversion, but it's unexpectedly effective.

I cut the bronze demon while also using it to test Flash Slash skill.

"This is, splendid nanoda. I have to apologize for thinking you're a small fry hero, nanoda. No, I ought to thank you for destroying my courtiers, nanoda."

The girl who's sitting with one knee drawn up on the edge of the stone bed murmurs so as if asking questions.

When the girl stands up, she begins to spin words in a clear voice as if she's a stage actress.

"The time of my revival has come. O humanity fear it! Today, at this time, the world will begin its walk into ruins noda!"

This should be the scene where I should shudder, but maybe thanks to the strange word she's adding at the end of her sentence, it feels like a comedy show instead.

Now then, looks like round two begins.

7-21. A Night No One Knows (3)

Satou's here. Ever since I come to this world, I get unnaturally high chances of meeting beautiful women, but it's not limited to only beautiful women.

◇

"What's wrong, are you so scared you can't talk, noda?"

However, I can only hear the scream of a chuunibyou patient from the girl who's declaring with daunting pose.

Moreover, she's swinging her arms matching her speaking rhythm, so her exposed breasts are shaking and swaying. I can't help but become interested in it since awhile ago. Yup, they're big relative to her age.

"O black-haired hero. I do not care why you're hiding your appearance, but can you entertain me like Yamato? I won't forgive if you bore me, noda."

I wonder if she has see-through skill, the girl's eyes are shining red.

I'm sorry for the possessing demon who's trying to set up the mood, but at this time, I'm not thinking, "How do I defeat the enemy", but, "How do I get this fellow out of the girl's body", instead.

I wonder if I could do something with Saint title and magic healing somehow?

It might be good to learn ways to exorcise demons. It'd be terrible if someone I know got possessed.

Let's use persuasion skill here--I've also thought of such thing. Before I could open my mouth, the girl's time is up.

"Thanks for making my courtiers become sacrifices, the power has been filled, noda."

Something is making cracking sounds.

The girl's back is splitting.

A wild boar-head comes out of it.

Right when the hairless wild boar demon starts to make its appearance, the girl's health becomes zero in an instant.

This isn't the time to be dumbfounded. Take action rather than regretting.

I rain down Short Stuns on the wild boar-head to restraint it, and strike it with palm technique combined with ground shrink while pulling the girl's body away.

I put the girl's body that has just died into the Storage. Of course in one set with the flowed blood. I cannot do it, but a priest or a miko might be able to revive a body that has just died. It should be that flexible in a fantasy.

I make Sera folder in the Storage as to keep it from mixing with other things.

"Fumu? What exactly you intend to do nanoda? Rather than worrying about collecting corpses, you should begin pursuing me instead nanoda."

I pay no attention to the incomprehensible critique.

Well, thanks to the useless talk, my magic power has recovered, so let's consider it as a good thing.

"Since I've just been resurrected, I am weaker than during my heyday, noda. This is your once in a lifetime chance to win nanodazo? Now, come at me with all your power, noda."

Violet light that looks like ripple creeps on the wild boar-head, and its body shines golden. Looks like they're support magic like what Wagahai-kun did. According to AR reading, they're [Physical Damage 99% Cut], and [Magic Damage 90% Cut].

If this is the demon's weakened form, just how strong it has been, let's quickly settle this.

I press the demon with the same combo I've used to beat the bronze demon. Restrain it with magic, and finish with the holy bolt.

However, the two attacks were prevented without effort.

Short Stun and Remote Arrow are repelled just before it touch the golden wild boar-head's skin and disappear. Even though they've worked earlier, it seems that the golden skin has prevented it from working.

Next, the golden wild boar-head spit out something from its mouth, and that invisible something destroys the holy bolt, leaving only blue afterglow.

"This is, I can't make light of."

The golden wild boar-head murmurs in low voice, and lets out second support magic chant roar. Did it make some kind of chant from its mouth somewhere?

Oops, this isn't the time to flinch and think about it.

I went with the closing in and attack physically tactic.

One meter before my holy sword touch the golden wild boar-head, multiple small shields magic like the one Raka's used unfolds, and they're crushed by the holy sword.

They're just small shields that are easily broken, but--

Little by little.

Yes, it seems to be reducing the holy sword's power by just a little.

After breaking nearly 100 small shields, the holy sword stops after advancing for about 50 centimeters. I'd really like to learn this magic.

"Fumu, it has more attack power than Claiomh Solais that Yamato uses huh. It should have been able to quickly kill my retainers."

I'm still trying to push through it even now, but the golden wild boar-head demon takes out two liuyedao from its mouth, and attacks from both sides using the two sabers.

I stop one side with a holy shield, and the other with the holy sword. I'm pushed by tremendous power. Since the normal stone pavements are gouged out after I get pushed for several meters, I use sky drive as my foothold and hold out with all my might. It consumes magic power, but it can't be helped in this situation.

Even if I attack, it's always prevented by the multiple small shields. I have to do something about it or else my attack won't ever reach.

I could destroy the demon's weapons the moment our weapons touch, but conversely, the jet black mist-like feelers coming out of the liuyedao are also trying to break my sword, so I can't let my guard down.

◇

I haven't got damage, but it's the same for the opponent too. We can't hit each other, and only time passes.

"I will be more serious, noda."

The golden wild boar-head demon cover its whole body with violet light once again.

It's probably the unique skill of this guy.

The demon doesn't hide its unique skill at all. There are three which are [Ikkitousen], [Phantasmagoric], [Banpufutou]. Looking at the first case, it's probably fine to think that all three have been used.

<TLN: Ikkitousen and Banpufutou have similar meaning, that is "being a match for thousands".>

The two liuyedao are also wrapped in golden lights. It seems that the attack powers have been upped. Their powers were originally close to the holy sword, but now they're definitely stronger than Durandal.

I ward off the powered-up liuyedao with the holy shield. Seeing that my crisis perception is at work, the holy shield might be destroyed if I stop it carelessly.

The holy sword attack is once again prevented by the multiple small shields.

Wait.

Prevented by the multiple small shields?

In other words, even for the demon with 99% physical damage cut, holy swords are dangerous existences huh.

And I also remember another more important thing.

The holy bolt wasn't prevented by the multiple small shields, but intercepted by destruction magic.

In other words--.

So it's like that huh.

I'm setting up strategy while avoiding the demon's attacks.

I'll break through the multiple small shields, give damage to the demon, and drive in the holy bolt when it's at the state where it could not intercept with destruction magic.

◇

First, in order to break the multiple small shields, I have to increase my moves.

I put the holy shield back into the Storage, and pull out the magic sword Balmung on one hand. It's not a holy sword, but its attack power doesn't fall behind Durandal. It doesn't really matter, but both have matching golden grips.

However, it seems the opponent is also exploring the breakthrough solution.

Many jet-black rings arise near the golden wild boar-head demon.

They rush on me as if they're independent creatures. I try to counter them with Short Stun and Remote Arrow, but either magic disappear as soon as it comes in contact with them.

Anti magic-attack huh?

I take out a suitable stone out of the Storage and hurl it. The ring disappears while sounding like water droplet dropped on a heated frying pan.

Looks like physical attack works just fine.

I coat the holy sword with magic edge and intercept the jet-black rings that are assaulting.

>[Holy Edge Skill Acquired]

I don't know the difference with magic edge, but since the name indicates that the skill would work well against demons, I allocate it maximum point and activate it.

I absorb magic power from the holy sword, and coat it with holy edge, but they look completely identical. The magic usage is the same too, I wonder what differ.

"O defective hero, what are you nanoda? Even though you can only use beginner level magic, your avoiding capability is top-tier, your swordsmanship is superb yet you only have one straight technique. It does not look like you're holding back. You're like an artificially created cultivation, nanoda."

The analysis is too accurate, my ears hurt.

"I've been trying to turn you into stone with magic eye since awhile ago, but it's not working at all, noda."

In the log, starting with petrification, a lot of special attacks like paralyze, and curse are displayed in array, but everything has been resisted.

Right at that time, the golden wild boar-head demon roars--magic huh.

I put up Shield as a countermeasure, but it's destroyed by the invisible bullet the golden wild-boar demon shoots. It's impossible for beginner magic after all huh.

When the shield is getting destroyed by the bullet, I frantically avoid the liuyedao's stabs. Even though the bullets are invisible, I can understand the techniques' trajectories due to Space Grasp and Magic Perception combined, so it's easier than the liuyedao. Since my clothes evaporates when it's near the bullets' orbit, it has become meaningless. My skin feels a bit itchy.

>[Destruction Magic: Demon Skill Acquired]

>[Destruction Resistance Skill Acquired]

I promptly activate the resistance skill. Seeing how close this fight is, I'd welcome it even if it only helps a bit.

I invoke holy edge on the holy sword, and prevent the invisible bullets, but since I'm also defending against the liuyedao, it's really busy.

I get closer and try to kick the demon, but it's prevented by multiple small shields just like with the holy sword. Since my shoes have been evaporated too, my toes hurt.

I have nothing to lose anyway, so I invoke Furnace Flame (Forge). It should be usable as a distraction at least. I'm using it while thinking lightly, but the multiple small shields are burned like scrap of papers.

"Inferno huh! That's your trump card is it."

The golden wild boar-head demon roars once again, but I can hear its speech overlapping it.

ROAR.

In an instant, thunderous roars are echoing to the point that I can't hear anything.

Looks like I've been directly hit by the demon's magic attack that has vast range. The magic sword Balmung on my right hand is leaking out red light, but since it's blinking as if breaking, I put it back into the Storage. I take out magic sword Nothung in its place.

＞[Explosion Magic: Demon Skill Acquired]

＞[Explosion Resistance Skill Acquired]

I'm bothered with the difference between destruction and explosion, but I want the resistance for now. Honestly, it's too painful. Pain resistance, please work harder. It's like this even though my HP hasn't decreased much, I'm afraid if I get hit directly by the liuyedao.

My injuries are healed in a blink of an eye with self-healing, but my clothes has vanished.

Since I don't enjoy being in the nude, I wear the black mask equipment with quickdress. It can't be helped if this is called transformation having such speed.

"Fumu, looks like the counterbalancing is over, nanoda."

Counterbalancing?

The demon's figure doesn't look like it at all. Burned by the Furnace Flame (Forge), half of its body has inflamed.

Is it weak to fire. Or maybe, it's because Furnace Flame(Forge) is an intermediate level magic.

I generate holy edge on both swords on my hands and cut with them.

I invoke Furnace Flame(Forge) to burn down the small shields.

Although, it looks like the opponent has expected it too. It's invoking the explosion magic like just now, jet-black rings, and invisible bullets at the same time. Using three different magic at the same time huh, tremendous.

I shoot Short Stun on the ground while matching the explosion magic obstructing the view, using that gap, I use Sky Drive and Ground Shrink like somersaulting, and teleport behind the demon high in the sky.

While invoking Furnace Flame (Forge), I cut both the demon's arms with the holy and magic swords.

The swords reach before the shields are all burned down, but maybe because the number is low, it reach the demon's body. However, ripples spread out on the golden body, and the attacks are prevented.

When it's prevented, it feels like some kind of protection membrane has been broken. Typically in a game, it's like magic that could prevent attacks once. Since it shouldn't be able to prevent attacks indefinitely, I guess I'll rush it multiple times.

The demon swings the liuyedao without looking back, I stop it with both swords.

It was the demon's trap. At the same time my crisis perception kicks in, 8 rib bones break out of the demon's back and try to skewer me like living things.

I took evasive action at once, but they accelerated at the speed more tremendous than I had predicted.

Guh, I couldn't avoid it, and the rib spears pierced through my body.

It hurts, it hurts, it hurts.

I endure the burning-like pain, and break the stuck rib spears with my knee. Fortunately, the pain is only for an instant, it quickly disappears like pulling tides. It's aching, but I bear it.

The treatment is after this.

The demon is fixing its posture, but I won't let it. I drive the Furnace Flame to the wild boar-head with all my power. I can see the magic it's going to invoke, so I stab it with holy sword, destroying the magic.

When the demon is being burned by the Furnace Flame (Forge), it throws away the liuyedao, catches me with both its hands, and presses me hard. Such stupid strength. P, painful.

I fire an additional Furnace Flame (Forge) with all my might.

The invoked crimson flame roasts the demon's body. Of course, the one who fires it, me, am also not safe from it. The black costume becomes ash.

Maybe thanks to fire resistance, my body only becomes red, but I don't have any burn.

No, it is crazy hot here you know?

It seems I'm the winner of this patience contest.

The power on the demon's arms are loosened.

This momentary chance is enough, I enlarge the gap by force and slip away.

I store away the magic sword, and exchange it for magic power-loaded holy bolt, and immediately shoot it.

The holy bolt is sucked into the demon's abdomen--

The demon's abdomen along with its defense are destroyed.

Not yet.

The demon's health hasn't become zero.

I pour my remaining magic power into the holy sword Durandal in one go, and activate holy edge skill.

I split the demon's body into two, and even while spouting flames and smokes from its body, the golden wild boar-head demon raises its fist on the air, and swing its last blow.

The blue track of the flash slash sucks the demon's heart, blue light that gushes out of its body blow its upper body out.

While back-stepping away to open some distances, I take out a health and a magic recovery potions from the storage and gulp the two bottle down.

Yes, it's still too early to be relieved. If it dies with just this much, it couldn't be called a Demon Lord.

Yes, the demon's name is [Golden Wild Boar King], a level 120 Demon Lord.

Good grief, there are too many obstacles in my pleasant sightseeing tour.

Now then, shall we begin the third round next.

7-22. A Night No One Knows (4)

Satou's here. I wonder since when is the trend of boss characters transform for so many times when you're defeating them? It's generally troublesome when it's in a game, but when it's in real life....

◇

It's probably the effect of the demon's unique skill. The demon has revived as an undead. The demon's upper body that should have been lost has also regenerated in the blink of an eye. There's no worth in defeating this guy.

The two liuyedao have been lost somewhere when I destroy the upper body earlier, thankfully.

I do have several trump cards, but since I don't know how many times the demon can revive, I won't recklessly use them. It's painful that one MP recovery potion only recovers 20% of my MP with one bottle.

From now on, I'll charge magic swords and the holy swords whenever I'm free.

"It has been since Yamato that I have to resort using Banpufutou's effect. O Nanashi, perchance you can beat me? Yamato took the heavenly dragons lot along to attack my castle. You alone intend to be the equivalent of a hero and heavenly dragons nanoda huh."

Fumu, since my name is blank, it's [Nanashi] huh. I guess I'll call myself Nanashi from now on.

<TLN: Na nashi=nameless.>

Thanks to HP potion and self-healing skill, my wounds have disappeared. It still hurts, but not to the degree that makes me unable to fight. Looks like it's bad for the opponent to let me heal more than this.

"The heavenly dragons are taking rests."

While holding three MP recovery potions on my mouth, I operate the storage with thought.

Since the demon launches destruction magic towards me, I slap the magic with my palm and change its course. The demon is muttering, "Ridiculous", but I ignore it. My palm is stinging. I don't want to touch that magic too much.

"Besides, the professional hero is currently taking a vacation with beautiful big-breasted women in the imperial capital."

I'd hit him if he really was on a vacation.

I exchanged Durandal for [Trump Card #1, Holy Spear Longinus] from the storage, and pour it in with magic power that I've just recovered. I feel dizzy from using too much magic power, but I endure it.

"Professional hero? Then what are you, nanoda?"

"I'm a part-timer. My main job is a tourist."

Tourist is not a job. I know.

Using vague words to distract the demon is just fine. The demon uses destruction magic, but the aim is loose. Use ranged magic if you want to hit me.

I shouldn't think unnecessary things.

The demon really launches ranged magic. I kick up the stone pavement below my feet, standing it up and make it into a shield. Unfortunately, I don't get tatami flip skill.

The demon's magic destroys the stone pavement and rushes to me.

I've put up Shield to buy some time, but it's meaningless. The shield also breaks in an instant. I twist my body and protect the important places.

Ouch.

As expected of the demon lord's attack. It's wholesomely painful. Even though the pain quickly goes away, painful thing is painful.

Looking at the health gauge that's only reduced for a bit, the demon is probably the type that's weak with magic.

This time a breath attack is coming, so I use Ground Shrink to evade it. Of course, before it.

While closing in like teleporting, I launch a technique.

Three-stranded spiral spear attack.

I invoke Furnace Flame (Forge) at the same time to burn down the multiple small shields.

The first and second spiral attacks pierce both shoulders of the golden wild boar demon lord's, the third spiral attack pierces the heart. While like that, the holy light sucks the demon's body--

Half of the demon's body has been blasted.

However, the demon cut half of its body with both of its edge-like claws before the spiral spear attack effect reach it. A new body grows out of the remaining half. Are you a planarian.

This demon is much more immortal than Zen.

This time translucent tentacles-like things come out of the demon's hand and attack. What a diverse guy.

Since it's destroyed with just one stab of Longinus, I don't know what kind of attack it is, but it's probably dangerous to recklessly take it.

The demon's eyes are glittering, but since I don't know what kind of attack is it, I look at the log and a chill runs down my spine. They're instant death attack, followed by attack with instant death effect.

>[Instant Death Resistance Skill Acquired]

I stop my assault, and activate the skill on the spot. Next time, if I see the demon doing the same motion, I should take out a mirror.

◇

Since then, my attacks have hit it for many times, but the demon gets revived each time due to its unique skill's effect. It has been revived for seven times already, I want it to end.

The demon seems to think that magic and special attacks are not working against me, this time it changes to attacking physically.

The most annoying one is when I'm attacking it in close range.

While yelling with spirit, I stab at the demon's heart with Longinus, at that time, its hands stretch out toward me. I judge that I could avoid the stretched arms attack with a paper-thin difference, but--

The arm bone breaks through the hand and flies out like a crossbow's bolt.

Its attacks have become increasingly absurd.

While being slightly surprised, I acrobatically avoid the bone arrow.

Short Stun is already unable to even act as a feint, so I don't use it.

Making use of the air as a foothold with Sky Drive, I stab with the holy spear while being upside-down.

It's no good even though the heart is pierced after all huh.

When it comes to this, I have no choice but to cut up the body to pieces and then, evaporate or burn it down.

I exchange Longinus with Durandal.

There's only little magic power left in it, so the blue light that comes out of Durandal is faint.

"What's wrong hero. You can't manage to defeat this immortal body, nodana?"

The demon takes out two rib bones from the sides under its arm, holds it, and lets out a short roar that makes the rib bones get covered in black flames. Flame magic swords huh?

"I'll let you taste my black flame bone swords, noda. Come, dance the dance of death."

The demon lord comes attacking with two swords style, but leaving aside its appearance, the black flame bone swords are more fragile than the liuyedao. When our swords clash, I just get slightly burned from the black flame.

"What the hell are you, nanoda? Basking in the black flame, bringer of ruin that burns down heavenly dragons, why are you unhurt?!"

I guess it's because my level is high? No, it might be because my destruction resistance skill is at MAX.

Moreover, I do get hurt. It's just that my recovery speed is fast. MP is used for recovery, so I should take care as not to get hurt as much as possible. It hurts after all.

"If you're unhurt, then I'll just keep attacking until you do, noda!"

Please stop doing endless repetitive moves.

The demon endlessly takes out another black flame bone swords whenever I destroy it, and right when I get bored with it, I've finally recovered enough magic power.

As I energetically destroy the black flame bone swords, I cut the demon's body into pieces. When it starts reviving, I invoke Furnace Flame (Forge) during the regeneration's time of half of an eye's blink, incinerating it.

And yet, the demon still regenerates without losing to the fire.

As expected of a demon lord.

Oops, this isn't the time to admire it.

While maintaining Furnace Flame (Forge), I charge holy bolts that I've taken from the Storage, set up crossbow sets, and shoot it. I shoot the remaining 10 sets during the short time.

At last the pieces of meat that are regenerating stop wriggling.

I have to perform the last rite now.

I take out a new thing from the storage, [Trump Card #2, Holy Sword Galatine], and slash with it, evaporating the demon.

I've not thought that I'd end up taking out the secret, Galatine. Galatine is a sibling sword of Excalibur, I've filled with reasonable amount of magic power. If it's still not good with this one, I'd have to use Excalibur even though it's dangerous.

In preparation for the second revival, I gulp down potions. I drink too much, feel sick.

◇

Apparently, it won't revive again. The evidence is the appearance of these guys.

"Kusukusu, it lost huh."

"It lost, lost to Yamato."

"It lost to the new hero too."

Three small violet lights rise up, just like the time with Zen.

No, their colors are a bit black. Jet black lights are also mixed in occasionally. The impression I sense from them are the same, but are they different things?

"It's an Orc after all."

"What should we use this time?"

"Weasel seems smart."

Thinking that I would not harm them, they let their guard down, I cut the black violet lights.

I slash the jet black lights three times, and the three after-lights disappear. I take off [God Slayer] from my title, and put the divine sword into the Storage. It feels like the divine sword has absorbed the slashed lights, but since the divine sword's status hasn't changed, it's probably just my imagination.

After crushing the black violet lights, the log flows in great speed indicating loots acquisitions, but I scroll back on it and will check the loot for later. The log properly shows [Fragments of God have been defeated!], so I've probably beaten them.

When I carefully think about it, the deeds make it as if I'm picking a fight with the god, but it's a done deal so there's no use in thinking about it. Though, I feel that an existence that lends its power to the demon lord would be hostile even if I don't do anything anyway. Even if I've antagonized the god, I hope that it's the kind of god with 100 years later scale.

>Title [Demon Lord Slayer]

>Title [Demon Lord Slayer『Golden Wild Boar King』] Acquired

>Title [True Hero] Acquired

>Title [Unsung Hero] Acquired.

7-23. A Night No One Knows (5)

Satou's here. It seems that the generation that has been around during the dawn of home consoles makes a list of hiragana for Spell of Restoration. I laughed thinking that it was a joke when I heard it, but it's the truth. Humans could unexpectedly work hard if it's for the sake of entertainment.

<TLN: http://dragonquest.wikia.com/wiki/Spell_of_Restoration.>

◇

Fuh, that was tiring.

Both of the masks have been broken, so I put on a white mask that Arisa's made for cosplay at her request. I feel like I know where the inspiration for it comes form, but it seems like it'd fall off easily, scary. I put on cheap clothes and a mantle, and head toward the hall's exit.

The hall looks disastrous to the point that I admire it for not collapsing.

The floors are turned upside down, several pillars are destroyed, many places have become craters. Some of the craters have glasses formed from Furnace Flame (Forge). There isn't any trace of the altar.

I should say as expected of a demon lord. I've just barely won even though my level is three times as high and fully loaded with items.

It's unfortunate that I won't get a rematch--I don't have even the slightest bit of such thought.

Fortunately, the opponent was a type weak with magic, but if it was strong in both points, I might have lost.

I'll go watch the tournament at the capital and study sword techniques and battle forms.

And also, I'd better resume spell chanting practice.

If an opponent of demon lord class begins with space magic, I don't think I could win. Among the scrolls that I would get from viscount Shimen (Toruma's parent house), magic destruct and magic cancel are indispensable. And also, intermediate level or higher attack magic. I might have got checkmated if I didn't have Furnace Flame (Forge). If I find a nice liquor during the journey, I will be sure to present it to the one who has sold me that scroll, Galhar-shi.

While thinking those thing, I open the heavy door and get out of the hall. I immediately understand why the door has been slightly opened.

There should have been a member here. I search in the Storage. There's an item called [Petrified Member]. Come to think of it, the demon lord was attacking with petrification magic eyes right. He saw that huh, curiosity killed the cat indeed.

I put long shirts on the two sacrifice girls. The two have proportions that don't look like their 14 years old ages, so I can have some peaces of mind with this.

The girls seem to be Garleon and Parion temples' miko. They're both level 30, quite wonderful.

I carry them both on my shoulders to the teleportation room, but I don't know how to operate it. The operation manual is among the loot I've got, but honestly, I'm too tired, I can't bring myself doing all these.

I scrape off the ceiling with a magic spear, and expose the soil.

Next, I use Mud Wall to create a narrow passage. Magic is really convenient.

I run up the impromptu passage--or rather, hole, with Sky Drive. There are three members in the initial teleportation room, but since it's troublesome, I hit them with Short Stun. They should not be dead.

Since the road I use to come here leads to the duke's third son's room, I pick the course that goes to the temple via the map and advance toward there from the underground. I see a white crocodile and a mysterious creature-like person wearing a rag along the way, but I ignore them all. It might be good to come play here while bringing presents when I've become better.

I'm going to Tenion temple, the place where the dead girl comes from. It's not because the girl belongs there, but because only Tenion temple has a head miko of old age with level higher than 50. Moreover, she has the [Saintess] title.

While mechanically advancing through the course that I've picked earlier, I operate on the girl's corpse in the storage. I try to drag and drop the blood that has flowed out of the girl and stack them. Rather than stack, it seems the blood has been absorbed by the corpse, they can't be separated it seems.

I drag a potion with the same idea, but it's no good.

The title [Saintess] that the Tenion head-miko has comes to my mind. Maybe it also has some kind of special effects like the hero title?

I have nothing to lose, so I put on [Saint] title, and drag the potion, it works.

Although it's not like she's been revived. The item's name has changed from [Sera's Corpse: Degree of Damage, Maximum] to [Sera's Corpse: Degree of Damage, Great]. I drag several potions until the item name changes into, [Sera's Corpse], so I don't think this is a waste.

Afterwards, it all depends if there's resurrection magic or not.

◇

"Ara, the assassin tonight is quite excellent. This is the first time I don't notice one until he's this close."

I've sneaked into the Tenion head miko's room, but I immediately get mistaken for an assassin.

"Ara, you're an assassin and also a kidnapper?"

The head miko-san who has noticed the girls on my shoulders asks as if baffled.

Beside holy magic, this old woman also has character appraisal and crisis perception skills. That's why I've made my level to be 70, like the Saga hero is, beforehand, so she would believe the story later. I've left my displayed skills to be of recovery-related ones.

Anyway, let's correct the misunderstanding for now.

"Nice to meet you, Yu Tenion Head Miko-dono. I am Nanashi. I have no intention of harming you. These two girls are Parion and Garleon miko that I've rescued from a cult group called『Wings of Liberty』."

"My. I certainly remember them. Hey, Nanashi-san. Won't you show your face. It's hard to talk with that mask."

"I'm very sorry, head miko-dono. It is my principle to hide good deeds. Please pardon me."

"Is that so, you're such a shy saint-sama."

Her voice is young. Her moonlit face doesn't look like a 80 years old at all. I would believe it if I'm told she's 17.

"Hey, Nanashi-san. Don't you know the whereabout of our kidnapped miko, Sera."

"I knew."

It's not reflected on her expression, but her tone of voice becomes deeper.

She seems to have guessed everything from my words, her face is stiff.

"That child has died huh."

I nod on her words.

"Nanashi-san, could you honestly tell me one thing?"

"If I could answer it."

She asks in slightly trembling voice.

"Was the one who deprived Sera's life the humans of『Wings of Liberty』? or--"

After hesitating for a bit, she continues her words.

"Demon lord. That's right is it, Sera has been sacrificed for the demon lord."

"That's right."

A trickle of tears streams down the head miko's noble face.

"Is that so, that child wasn't able to go against her fate."

The head miko-san talks with sobbing mixed in.

It looks like there's an oracle that says the demon lord will appear in not so distant day. However, the place are different in each of oracles that the seven miko has received, therefore, everyone believes that their own gods has brought oracle for themselves each.

According to head miko-san, the fate of the girl (Sera) was to become a sacrifice for demon lord's resurrection in this city. Even though Tenion temple had put utmost efforts in protecting her, she suddenly disappeared in her own room the evening today.

And, it seems that the oracle of Tenion temple tells that the demon lord would be resurrected in this Oyugock city.

When I ask in detail just in case, the name of labyrinth city, Selbira, and the kingdom that has occupied Arisa's kingdom, Yowok kingdom have also appeared. The remaining four are land of gods Parion, the principalities of the ratkin and weaselkin, and the last one is a country that exists on the other continent.

To hit on the 1/7 probability, both me and this city were unlucky.

◇

Let's get back to the main topic.

"Yu Tenion head miko-dono, are you able to use resurrection magic?"

"Yes, I'm able to."

Oh, so it exist, resurrection magic!

As if pouring water on my excitement, the head miko continues with gloomy voice.

"However, there are several conditions for it. First, the subject has to have been baptized by Tenion temple. Second, it must be within 30 minutes after the death. Third, this resurrection artifact has to have stored enough magic power. Since it has been used to resurrect the legitimate child of the duke 20 years ago, it cannot be used for several years more."

What, that sort of things huh.

I pick up the artifact hanging on her neck and put magic power into it. I proceed steadily. It hasn't been filled even after putting in 2000 MP.

It can't be helped, I take out Excalibur from the Storage, and make it into a magic power source. The head miko is surprised when she sees the holy sword, but she puts on appearance by smiling like a Japanese.

The artifact is filled after around 20.000 points in. The capacity of this holy sword is extraordinary after all. I should had used it as magic power tank rather than a weapon when I was fighting the demon lord.

I hear this afterward, but it seems that the only one who could put magic power into the artifact is people who have [Saint] or [Saintess] title.

"I will summon miss Sera's corpse here. It's only been several seconds after her death, so there should be enough time."

"That can't be, time magic should have been a magic that only appears in fairy tales, not the reality...."

There's no time magic huh. I've wanted to go back in time and meet Yamato.

I put back my astray thought.

I take out Sera's corpse from the Storage. Since she's naked, I put a towel on her. Someone is astonished when I take the corpse out of the storage, but I decide not to mind it.

The head miko is chanting a long spell.

Holy magic is usually long, but this time it's especially long.

The chanting is complete, I make sure that Sera has turned from item back to person, and leave the place afer that.

I've forgotten to report about the demon lord thing, but they have the convenient oracle, and it'd be uncool if I go back just to report it, so I leave it. I'm really tired today.

At any rate, it was a long night.

I'd like to be healed at the night place, but for the sake of relieving Arisa and the others who are waiting anxiously, I decide to go back.

Intermission: The Melancholy of Zajir

"You idiot! Put yer' back into it if you want to use the phase hammer!"

The master's fists roar again today.

I've been under master's care for 30 years now, but I still can't use the phase hammer to his satisfaction. Even among master's personal pupils, the only two who could wield the great hammer are only me and Garir. After that, I just have to become able to swing it properly. I'll show that I'd be able to do it in 10, no 5 years. And then, someday I'll build a family (shotai) with Jojori.

"Zajir-san, what's wrong with true character (shoutai)?"

"Jojori huh, nothing, just something trivial."

"Is that so? We have a guest for grandfather, is he in the hall?"

"Yeah, he's in a bad mood, so take care."

"I understand, thank you."

She's lovely today too.

She answers properly even though I act brusque. Truly a nice woman.

◇

The guest that Jojori mentions is a humankin Kozou (youngster). I don't really know humankin age, but he's probably just at coming of age.

However, master tells the youngster to try and make a sword. Moreover, not with iron but mithril? What a waste.

There's a failed mithril from that idiot Rodar's failure earlier, I guess I'll bring that. An amateur probably won't know the difference anyway.

"Use this."

"Yes, thank you very much. This is the first time I'm blacksmithing with a mithril, I feel nervous."

It looks like he has experience of making an iron sword, he's probably not a total amateur, but the ones here are all tempered warriors, even the lowest seat, Rodar, has been making sword for 50 years. It'll be pitiful to compare him with them. Master is cruel for letting this.

The motion of Kozou who smoothly put fire in the furnace slightly catches my attention when I see it. Is this guy really an amateur?

That small doubt becomes conviction when I see Kozou holds the mallet.

That unwavering stance.

He looks like master.

That impression isn't wrong.

Kozou looks puzzled as soon as he strikes with he mallet. Did he notice that slight difference? He could discern failed mithril even though it's the first time he hit one.

The master's fist drops on me for the mithril thing, but such thing doesn't matter. If I give this guy the best mithril, what kind of sword will he make? It's been awhile since my heart boils.

I run to the mithril refinement furnace before master and the others.

I've entrusted it to Rodar. This time, I'll prepare the best mithril myself.

"Yer' bastards! Get fired up!"

I motivate them with rough words but the refinement furnace's guys keep lying on the floor.

"Zajir-san, today, the gnomes aren't here. Because of that there's not enough magic power."

"Spirit! If you just put your spirit, anything can be done."

"Please don't say unresonable things. Then, Zajir-san, please pour your magic power. With spirit!"

That Ganza has also gone to the meeting with the gnomes huh. That's why the mithril today come out bad huh. It's not because of Rodar being careless in his supervision. I'll treat him to a liquor next time.

I try to pour my magic power, but it's not something that an inexperienced person can do. I can only pour around 0.5%. Seems that I'm bad with putting magic power into magic tools.

"It's fine to put magic power into this right."

Looks like Kozou is filling magic power as ordered by master. Judging from the short cane on his waist, he probably can use magic, but the furnace is an equipment that's normally filled by 10 gnomes magic power. It's not something that one person can somehow do, I've experienced it myself just now.

And yet, that guy has accomplished it alone.

The head of the refinement group is surprised to the point that his jaw looks as if dislocated, but I can't say that I don't understand his feeling.

Master is checking the finished mithril with examination apparatus. I know by just seeing it. That's a first-class one. In addition, extremely so. This is the first time I see master especially uses examination apparatus.

◇

Ordered by master, I bring out a great hammer made of mithril alloy from the warehouse. It's far heavier than the usual phase hammer. Unbelievably, master tells Kozou to swing this great hammer.

Telling non-dwarves to swing the great hammer?

Garir and me express our opinions to master, but we only gets dropped fists. I can't go against master's decision.

Kozou who has been asked to swing the great hammer by master also becomes dumbfounded when he's in front of the great hammer.

No wonder. It's not something that a thin humankin kid can lift. When I show him how I hold it with one arm, he's greatly surprised. Kozou admiring me makes me ticklish. We're in front of Jojori. Say more.

"Oops-a-daisy. It's really heavy after all. I can't stabilize my shaking body."

When I look back, Kozou is lifting and practice-swinging the great hammer.

Idiotic. The weight is not something a humankin can stand--that's what should have been....

He's staggering, but he's certainly lifted it. Garir and me can lift it since we have herculean strength skill, but even for the dwarves in this room, only half of them can do it. Who the heck is he really.

"Zajir, go call Ganza."

Master shouts while holding the secret medicine pot on one hand. When I tell master that Ganza is visiting his home and not here, master shouts in angry voice enough to fill the whole room while boiling in anger.

I'm almost given an errand to go to the gnome's hometown, but I get out of the hardship since Kozou can do compounding. What a versatile guy.

Later, Ganza asks me the name of the one who's done the compounding, but since I always call him Kozou, I tell Ganza, "Don't know", and he gets really depressed. He must be dissatisfied for having the compounding equipments used by other people. He shuts up when I says to go tell master if he has complaints.

◇

I burn into my eyes the figures of master and Kozou forging the sword. They could be called twin existences, they match their breaths perfectly. Unbelievably, Kozou swings that great hammer for all night long without uttering even a whine. I can't let a humankin even touches the great hammer, but I allow it if it's this guy. My colleagues have the same opinion too.

Fairy sword.

The sword that Kozou swings is beautiful.

I will forge a sword exceeding that one someday. It's unreachable for the me now, but I'll show that I will surely reach it after several dozens of years.

Absolutely.

◇

Later, liquor from Kozou for master has arrived.

He's sent it with the barrels altogether, he sure knows dwarves. He's a heavy drinker that beat master and me in drinking bout back then after all. I'd like to drink together again someday.

"Yo, Zajir. Is Dohar-shi around?"

I hear voice of a delicate man with an attitude. It's the eccentric Galhar who's opened a magic shop in the city above ground.

"Fun, there's no reason for you to not use honorifics for me. Call me Zajir-sama."

"Now now, Zajir-san. Don't talk like that to a childhood friend even as a joke."

The lovely Jojori shows her face behind Galhar. Childhood friend is a story of 30 years ago. It's a thing from several dozens years ago.

"Jojori, it's just like a child wanting to be glorified."

"Alright, I accept that challenge!"

I roll up my sleeves and am going to hit Galhar, but Jojori stop it with her body. Why, are you an ally of Galhar. She calls Galhar without honorific even though she uses "san" with me.

"Galhar, you too stop talking with biting words. Please get along."

"I know, Jojori."

Even though I get scolded by Jojori, when I see Galhar who's red like an octopus, I become wanting to hit him once.

"Wait Zajir-san, please don't use violence."

Dang, I unintentionally hit him.

My quarrel with Galhar continues until master comes back from a meal.

"What's this commotion. Do it outside if you want to make noise."

"Ara, grandfather."

"F, forgivme, master."

Fufun, he's been hit too many, he can't talk well. Serves you right.

"Wer' just playing arnd."

I just have a slight difficulty of talking today. It might even rain later.

◇

Thanks to Jojori-san who calls Don Haan siblings to cure us, both of us can talk now.

Galhar who rarely comes to the underground has come to invite us-which surprisingly include me too--to drink the liquor together-. He should have said so from the beginning. People who brings liquor with him is never bad people.

"This light green liquor is delicious."

"This crimson liquor is also sweetly easy to drink."

We can't have a banquet with just the shares that Galhar brings, so we take out the liquor barrels that Kozou has given to master.

As I'm told, it seems that the liquor Galhar brings is also from Kozou.

Why?

"Several barrels of liquor came together with a letter of gratitude. In the letter, along with gratitudes, he says that he's escaped death thanks to the goods that he's bought from me. I've opened the magic shop for 20 years, but this is the first time I've been thanked to this degree."

I heard that Galhar was forced to buy trash-like things when he went to the humankin city, but it seems he's doing a good work.

"Galhar, don't forget the feeling now. If you do that, you'll become the best dwarf magic merchant."

"That's right, Galhar. The best of gnome are Han and me though."

"That is so, Galhar. Aim to become the best among the dwarves. You'll always be second in this city though."

Even though master specially gives a good word to Galhar, the Don Haan siblings mix in.

It seems master has approved him, but I won't hand Jojori over. While battling for Jojori's line of sight from across, we gulp down the liquor cups at the same time.

A good liquor with a nice woman, and a nice rival (friend), is good.

Next time, I want to have a banquet together with Kozou.

Intermission: Zena's Squad Disaster

<TLN: The chapter is told in two alternating timelines, ◇ symbol signifies timeline change.>

"Zena, the monsters flocks are coming. There are 50-60 flying type ones. As for the ones coming on the ground, there are 3 big ones, 10 medium-sized ones, and a lot of smaller ones--around 400. Most of them are insect types."

Rio comes back from scouting bringing quite hopeless numbers. Furthermore, those are just small portions of the enemies.

We, the 24 people from Seryuu city labyrinth selected corps, are the core of the left wing unit that is made in hurry and comprises of 300 people consisting of civilians, farmers, and serfs. They're similarly frightened. It's natural to be so, they're forced to fight monsters that they usually never even see while not even having decent equipments.

"Hear me, everyone must survive! Don't think only on defeating the enemy and becoming a hero! You lot's lucks are good, we have elites that have survived fight with an upper demon and real dragons, not wyverns. There is no need to worry for things like small fry monsters or mid demons."

The Vice-Captain, sir Rilo encourages the ally. He's slightly overbearing, but it seems the grim faces are decreasing from the people. That's good.

I never imagined that we would get involved in this fight when we departed from Seryuu city.

◇

"We're doing well huh~, Zena-chi."

"That's right, Lilio."

"Lilio-san, nevermind when you're in private, but call her squad leader Zena during the march."

"Ho~i, Iona sure is stiff."

Iona-san scolds Lilio.

But, it's embarrassing to be formally called squad leader Zena.

It's been half a month since we get chosen into the selected labyrinth corps--abbreviation of labyrinth city Selbira training selected corps--after much hardships.

We should have departed on the beginning of spring, but due to the will of Earl-sama, it's been accelerated and the corps has departed. The captain and vice-captain might have decided to sortie when they hear that the season for departing has changed since the snow falls late this year.

The selected labyrinth corps consists of two knights squad with four knights and junior knights each, three magic squads with one magic soldier, two guards, one scout each, and then, one engineer squads. Beside those, there are two civil officials, and four servants.

There are 30 members in total, eight horse riders, and five carriages, maybe thanks to that sometimes thieves that can be seen on valleys or medium sized monsters attack, but they're no match against us who have been tempered in the Seryuu city underground labyrinth.

"By the way, Zena-chi."

"Yes?"

I answer cautiously. Whenever Lilio asks like this, it's always nothing good.

I receive the provision that Iona passes. They're black bread that's roasted to be hard as stone, and bean soup. Putting aside the taste, I'm happy with the warm soup. The magician, Rodril, who's been used as a substitute of firewoods is dissatisfied, but at a time like this, I'm jealous of people who can use fire magic.

"With how well we're going, shouldn't we catch up to him soon?"

I tried to keep my mind in peace, but I couldn't stop my twitching reaction.

What should I do? She would poke more if I answered with, "Catches up with whom?". I somehow don't want to answer with, "We're still far away."

"Catches up with whom."

When I was troubled with the reply, Ruu asked. Even though Iona-san was silent, mou, Ruu.

Look, Lilio is holding her laughter while having a really bad smile on her face.

"The boy of course."

Lilio calls Satou-san with boy. He certainly seems to be younger than us from his looks, but I think Lilio who has baby face herself shouldn't call him boy. It somehow sounds like a special nickname, I feel unpleasant to it. Is this jealousy?

"Boy?"

"It's about Zena-san's lover."

Iona answers Ruu's question.

It's not, he's not my lover yet.

Love story is a favorite of Iona-san, so it seems she can't endure it.

However, please stop talking with me as the joke material. It's painful, heartrending, and makes me feels uncertain.

The journey continues in this peaceful atmosphere for awhile, but it abruptly ends.

◇

"We're going to use traps for the ground enemies, and fight the airborne ones. We're not going to use bows for this. Zena, and Norina, drop them to the ground with wind magic, then the knight squads overrun them at once. I leave the others to vice-captain Rilo. Kill even one of them with all your power.

Zena, and Norina, after you use magic, immediately recover your magic power on the spot. Two squads concentrate on protecting them. Don't be lured and break out even by mistake."

Captain Derio tells everyone the strategy again.

It seems that the main vanguard unit of the monsters is going to clash with baron-sama unit. We can see the cloud of dust between the bushes and trees from here.

"Start the chants."

Vice-captain Rilo orders so since captain Derio's knight squad is departing. The voice is powerful, typical of a man.

Norina and I start the magic chantings. I chant [Fallen Hammer], and Norina chants [Turbulance]. Turbulance knocks down flying monsters to the ground, it's a tactic for certain victory against a wyvern.

The problem is there are too many enemies. Unlike Turbulance, Fallen Hammer's area of effect is narrow. It can only knocks down 10 monsters at most. I adjust my cane's angle in order to have the spell casted in the center of the flock.

"....■ Turbulance"

"....■■■ ■■■ Fallen Hammer"

I invoke the magic, slightly late from Norina. Alright, it's according to the aim.

We successfully swats down around 40 Tusk Horseflies to the ground. Right after, the captain and his squad overrun the tusk dragonflies from the flanks using wedge-shaped formations. Leaving aside when the tusk dragonflies are flying, they're slow on the ground, they become victims to the spears and hoofs.

"Whole unit, charge!"

By the order of vice-captain Rilo, all units beside Norina's and mine charge. In order to recover our magic power, we begin meditating on the spot. With the special breathing technique taught in the army, magic power recovers faster than usual. On the other hand, we're completely defenseless when we're meditating, so guards are necessary.

Lilio's crossbow, and Iona's greatsword intercept several tusk dragonflies and glutton dragonflies that are late. Since I'm fully absorbed in recovering behind Ruu's great shield, I don't see their activities.

It seems that we're the only one who fight relatively smoothly. At first, the right wing collapses, and as if trailing it, the center begins to collapse as well.

During this time, we're already fully occupied with repulsing the enemies before us, so we can't grasp the situation of our ally. Due to that, when the ally begins to retreat, we fall behind. Gradually, we get stuck with guarding the rear.

I unconsciously put my hand on the chest section of my leather armor.

A folded stole is there. My important amulet.

◇

"Is there something?"

There should be still some time until the break, but the carriages have stopped. Lilio who has immediately gone to the front carriage to check comes back, we listen to the situation.

"We've met with the army of earl Lesseu."

"Since we're on earl Lesseu's territory, it's not strange to meet his army right?"

"The problem is, the one who call himself the earl is a boy."

"Isn't the earl supposed to be a man at his prime?"

"To make matter worse, they look like remnants of defeated army."

When we're chatting idly, the captain calls us.

The captain tells us that Lesseu city has been destroyed. It was an attack by a demon that had brought monsters along.

"Looks like the demon is level 40, an intermediate one. They say that there are 200 flying monsters, and 1200 ground monsters the demon brings."

"How strong are they?"

"The monsters are mostly a bit stronger than average soldiers, but there are some strong ones mixed in. The detail about the demon is unclear, but it seems it's a horse-headed demon strong at fire magic. It seems that the permanent army of Lesseu city has been annihilated from a surprise attack by the demon alone."

I'm confident that we can fight a lower demon even though we won't be able to win, but if it's an intermediate one, I don't think we have any chance of victory with the current force. Excluding captain Derio and the vice-captain who are at level 20s, everyone else is at level 10s. There is no magician that specialize in bombardment magic like in Seryuu city here. There are only three magic soldiers, including me, here. Our magic power capacities are low, so we can't do anything showy.

"The new earl Lesseu wants us to participate with the demon subjugation under the pretext of the [Blue Covenant]. We cannot turn this into scrap paper. The non-combatant should take refuge with the carriages in the nearby villages. It's probably safer than in the city."

The [Blue Covenant] that the captain talks about is the oldest covenant that has been passed over among the nobles since the founding of Shiga kingdom. The covenant is mainly about how the military has to cooperate together in case of demon attack. It's rarely put into work, if I'm not mistaken, the last time that happens is at marquis Muno's territory 20 years ago, before I'm born.

Just like this, we get included into the impromptu army at the second city of earl Lesseu's territory. The whole force consist of 800 regular soldiers, and 2000 militia. Even though it's twice the monster's number, the militia are just padded forces, it's certain that this will be a hard fight.

It'll be over if the demon attacks directly, but if we use the city's wall to make it into a siege war, then there's still a chance to win. Fortunately, there's an emergency communication magic tool in this city, so the information should have arrived at the neighboring cities.

We just have to wait for reinforcements now.

Everyone has thought so.

The next day, the young earl Lesseu has decided to fight the monsters on the field. The captains have tried to make him change his mind, but it's no good.

Satou-san. I might not be able to keep our promise of sending letters.

◇

"Zena-chi, are you alive?"

"Yes, Ruu has protected me."

"Hey, Lilio. Are you only worried about Zena."

"Ruu is the most heavily armed one right. Moreover, it's impossible for Iona to die."

My memory isn't clear. We should have been dealing with monsters on the rear.

"I'm glad that you trust me. The flash earlier must have been an advanced level tactical magic fired by the demon. We would have joined the deceased if there was no Zena-chi's defensive magic."

Everyone is pitch black covered with dust.

We've narrowly escaped deaths somehow, but the footsteps of the monsters are approaching. If we start moving, the demon in the sky would probably snipe with magic without mercy.

At that time.

The sky is divided, and that appears.

A ripple that looks like when a fish turn up on water surface floats and then, it appears in the sky. A beautiful silver ship. It's a ship right?

"The great me has arrived!"

A swordsman wearing blue armor shouts while standing on the tip of the ship without any support. Even the talkative Lilio can't follow this development, she's unable close her opened mouth.

That was the encounter with the Saga empire hero, sir Hayato.

That man holds overwhelming power that annihilates the intermediate demon with one swing of his holy sword, Arondight. Even the many monsters were destroyed by his ship--Dimensional Traveler Jules Verne--burned by the ship's beam.

We're saved.

If this miracle didn't happen, we would die in battlefield like the others.

I want to become stronger.

At least, in equal footing with the demon. For the shares of our fallen comrades too, we will become stronger.

Next time, we will stand beside the one who creates the miracle!

Intermission: Pochi's Secret

Pochi will not forget.

That day, the day I'm given name.

◇

"Princess, we have come to escort you back."

Two dogkin men who wear silver clothes are standing while being bathed in moonlight. The kind-looking long-haired man talked to me.

"I do not have any intention to leave this planet."

"However, princess!"

"Please wait, Dober. First, let's hear the princess."

"However, Shiva!"

The long-haired man stopped the red-haired man who was pressing on me.

"Please tell us your reason. Is this savage planet more important than your home planet?"

"I have important companions here. And also, for the sake of the child in my stomach, I cannot leave this planet."

She pats the stomach that looks inconspicuous while she's sitting on the chair.

"That can't be, the miko of the great Ra Anubis to do something like having a child with the savage creature!"

"I, is that true princess?"

I nod at the two who are panicking.

◇

Pochi will not forget.

The taste of the first dried meat I eat. The happiness of grilled meat festival together with everyone.

Absolutely never forget.

◇

"Are you going no matter what?"

"Yes, I'm not the miko of Ra Anubis but Pochi Pendragon nano desu."

Yes, this place is important, along with that person.

As long as there are these two holy magic swords that he has forged, I can't let something like demon lord to keep doing as it pleases.

"We're also going together okay?"

"One for all~?"

Karina and Tama stand in my way when I'm about to depart.

We exchange high fives just like we've done in the battlefield a long time ago.

Now, let's board the world tree ship that Mia has prepared and embark toward hell!

Liza, please watch over us from beyond the star. We will surely take on your opponent.

◇

"Hou? I have died in it huh?"

"Au, don't look nodesu. Prohibited nano desu."

Liza saw the written story that I wrote together with Arisa nodesu.

"Even Pochi didn't want to have you died nodesu. But, but, Arisa is."

"Is that so, Pochi is laying the blame on Arisa huh."

"Au, au, I'm not nodesu, I'm not nodesu~"

When we were debating who was going to die, we did it inadvertently nodesu. I'm reflecting on it, so please forgive me nodesu.

I've prepared myself for the meat to disappear at the dinner tonight, but Liza properly puts it like usual nodesu.

Liza is gentle after all nodesu.

When the next story needs a killing, I'll have Arisa as the victim nodesu. Arisa will surely forgive me while laughing nodesu. She will right desu?

Intermission: Pochi and Picture Book

My favorite things are master and meat nano desu.

"Ara? Pochi hates me huh."

I'm not nodesu. I like Arisa too nano desu.

"Pochi hates Tama~?"

"Is that so, I am below meat huh."

Tama and Liza too, please wait nodesu.

"I see~ Pochi-chan likes meat more than everyone huh. It's unfortunate~ even though I've grilled a delicious steak."

"I express regret."

"Heartless."

Au, Lulu too, it's not like that nodesu. Nana and Mia too, please wait nodesu.

But, meat is delicious nodesu. So delicious it makes me happy nano desu.

"Then, Pochi doesn't need us right. Good bye Pochi."

It's not like that nodesu. Wait nano desu.

◇

"Please don't go~, nano desu!"

"Uwah, I'm surprised. What's wrong Pochi. Did you see a strange dream?"

When I look around restlessly, Tama is sleeping on top of master's lap.

Is this the camping ground?

I went to sleep when I was on night guard duty nodesu.

"Everyone was bullying me nodesu."

"That was just a dream. Everybody loves Pochi, so it's alright okay."

Master gently hugs Pochi and pats my head and back. It feels good nodesu. I almost sleep in because it feels too good nodesu.

Swoosh! I take a pose to get me spirited and wake me up nodesu. I'm a disgrace of a slave if I leave the night watch duty to master alone nodesu. I can see that Tama is sleeping on master's lap, but Tama is surely only pretending to be asleep nodesu. She surely is, nano desu.

"I won't feel sleepy with this nodesu."

"It's fine to sleep if you're sleepy you know?"

"I'm alright nano desu."

However, the [Aspalegus Meat Roll] that we've eaten just now is too delicious, it's no good nodesu. Happiness with full stomach--

Ha!? Critically dangerous nodesu. I almost dozed off involuntarily nodesu.

Arisa has said this, full stomach is the strongest enemy of drowsiness, she says.

It's reading time for a time like this nano desu.

"Master, I'd like you to read the picture book please nodesu."

"Nn? The picture book that Arisa's bought from the secondhand store huh? Hasn't Pochi become able to read now?"

This and that are different matters nodesu. It's essential for master to read it for me nano desu.

"Then, let's read it together."

"Yes, nano desu!"

■――――――――――

A loo~ng, long time ago.

The seven gods came here together with the world trees from the world of gods.

The gods planted the world trees on the earth, and taught everyone knowledges and words.

And then, everyone lived together in happiness, happily ever after.

————■

"Not that nodesu, the story is not like that nodesu."

Master is not serious nano desu. I should protest firmly here nano desu.

Even though Pochi is hitting master softly, master only laughs without complaining that it hurts nodesu.

The master today is mean nano desu.

"I give, I give~ I'm going to read it properly, so forgive me."

"Being mean is no good nano desu. The next one is the last chance nano desu."

"Understood. I'll read it properly alright."

■————

The people lived peacefully and prospered greatly at the feet of the eight world trees.

However, since when was it. There are nine gods in the world.

The eighth god is the god of dragon.

The god of dragon had been in the world before the seven gods came together with the world trees.

The god of dragon was a sleepyhead, it was sleeping even until the world had completely changed.

The god of dragon was very surprised when it finally woke up, but since it was a foolish god who didn't fuss over small things, it approved the agreeable seven gods and got along with them.

However, the ninth god was different.

————————■

"Master, why does it use [Hashira] instead of [Hito] nano desu?"

<TLN: This is impossible to translate in English, Japanese uses counter words to count objects. In this case the book use [Hashira] to count gods, and [Hito] to count people. Satou-sensei will explain next.>

"I wonder? We learn to do it like that. Birds use [Hane], rats use [Hiki] right? Different counters are used for different objects."

As expected of master nano desu. I don't really understand, but I feel like I've understood nodesu.

"Thank you nano desu. Please read the continuation nodesu."

When I push the picture book to master, he says [Ow, ow] and laughs. When I see master's smile, I feel happy nodesu.

■——————————

The ninth god was a demon god that had traveled from another world.

The demon god was really spoiled, it couldn't stand not being the best, and always tried to pick a fight with the other gods.

It couldn't be helped that the demon god became envious when it saw the other gods were surrounded by various people and mythical beasts.

The demon god created demons to have them revere itself. The demons and their creator, the demon god, bullied the other races around.

The troubled gods protested to the demons and demon god to not act violently, but they were completely ignored.

Too bad so sad, and then, the world was destroyed.

——————————■

"Mou, master is a bully nodesu. Not reading the picture book properly, bad, nano desu."

Even though I'm scolding master, he's giggling.

Is he really repenting desu?

"I am repenting, I'll read it properly this time."

"You have to absolutely nano desu. Let's do pinky promise nodesu."

We link our little finger and make a pinky promise nodesu.

Master's finger is slender and beautiful nodesu.

I'll boast it to Arisa later nodesu.

■――――――――

One day, a tragedy occured.

The demons that had gone wild laid their hands on the dragons and the dragon god who were sleeping. The dragons who got their pleasant sleeps disturbed violently raged, every demon were burned by the breath of the dragons.

And unfortunately, at the same time, the other races were also burned together.

The demon god was also chased by the dragon god, but the demon god who was quick at running away continued to elude the dragon god for 100 years, and finally, the dragon god got tired and went back to the dragon valley.

The gods said to the dragon god that it was too excessive, but the dragon god who was half-asleep swung its tail once and blew away the gods to beyond the mountains.

Ever since that time, the demons never approach the dragons, and bully the weaker ones stealthily.

The weakest and most bullied one, the human race, asked the young goddess for the power to fight against the demon.

The young goddess was very troubled.

That is because the young goddess didn't have power to fight. The troubled young goddess consulted with the other gods, but every one of them only nods their heads while uh-huh-ing without trying to do anything.

The young goddess went to consult the strongest one, the dragon god. Of course, she couldn't borrow the power of the dragons. If she did that, the damage would be greater than letting the demons going wild.

At first the dragon god was unwilling to help, but since it liked the human toys and liquor that the young goddess had brought, the dragon god taught her one magic.

That was the magic to summon a hero.

It was the magic of hope.

"Pochi also wants to be summoned nodesu! And then I'll become a hero nodesu!"

"That's right, if it's Pochi, she will become a hero someday."

Muu, master answered vainly nodesu.

Pochi knows nodesu.

Not good desu. Truly not good nodesu.

Master has closed the pattern and the picture book nodesu.

No nano desu!

After this, it'll be the part about the hero's heroic tales nano desu.

I protest by clinging on master's neck, and look up at master's face, but master isn't looking here nodesu. Master? Pochi is over here nano desu.

"Good morning, master."

"Good morning, Lulu. Liza and Nana are tired from the special training yesterday, so let them keep sleeping, I'll help with the breakfast today. Pochi, do you have any request?"

Meal from master!

That is the essential wonder nano desu.

I don't have to think for the request nodesu.

"Meat!"

When I declare so vigorously, master laughs nodesu.

Today is also a really good day nano desu!

Intermission: The Agony of a Transported Person

I thought I could do anything alone.

Who made me the meal, who gave me games and phones, I didn't appreciate those kind of things, thinking that they were givens.

I wonder, was that why?

I was different than the classmates around me. I had come to think so without any ground.

Of course, I felt that exerting effort was uncool, so I did nothing but raising my gaming skill. Flaming on bulletin boards behind anonymity was also my specialty.

Maybe because no one wanted to associate with such a person, far from friends, my own families were even distancing themselves from me. Mysteriously, I didn't get bullied.

For those reasons, I started playing wish-fulfillments galge, and got into things where the protagonists were unparalleled or reincarnated.

Particularly the reincarnation plot, I collected various knowledges from the net to prepare for when I got summoned someday. After copying the collected informations, I wrote it down on a notebook. Since electricity might not exist on the world where I'd get transported. I filled the notebook with a lot of those knowledge in messy writings.

Come now, princess of a different world. I'm okay with getting summoned anytime!

Mouth is the origin of misfortune. These words come home to me these days.

◇

It suddenly becomes dark, and I'm inside a room made from bricks.

Oy, oy, where the heck is this?

Not. Of course I know. Obviously.

The room is dim, and the lights from candles are flickering. They're not light from magic.

Oops, I shouldn't forget about my favorite reincarnation works. First, I have to observe [People]. I frantically keep my eyes on the faces of the people here. Who are my allies, who are in agreement with the summoning, and against it. Observing them. Right now, that's the only thing I can do. That's why I'm observing.

There are three women who wear miko-like clothes, and six men who looks like soldiers. The other people are two civil officials-like old men, and a sly glasses-wearing good-looking guy, he's an enemy. It's decided.

Ack, a weasel is standing upright and talking about something. Beastman should just have different ears and tail. I'm okay with paws too.

My people observation is forced to stop.

"●●●●、●●●. ●●●●●●●●●"

When that person is talking, my cool style instantly evaporates.

Oh, geezuz!

My head becomes blank, I can't think of anything. I can only stare at that woman wholeheartedly. It might be some kind of magic attack or mind attack.

But, whatever.

Right now, staring at her is justice.

A maid-looking woman is giving me something.

You, outta the way. Get away. Look, you're hiding her hair. She pushes me something on my hand, but as long as she's not obstructing the view, that's fine.

"Do you understand what I'm saying?"

I do, but so what?

Is there any meaning to that for enjoying her beauty.

"What should we do your highness. The translation ring might be malfunctioning."

"My, that's troubling. What should we do?"

The beauty's troubled face also looks beautiful.

I want to see more expressions on her face.

"Your highness, the result from the Yamato stone that he's touched earlier has come out."

"And it is?"

"He's like the two before. He has an unusual 『Burying』 skill, but there's no unique skill."

"Does it match the kingdom's interest?"

"Unfortunately...."

"Is that so."

I heard something bad. What the heck is "The two before". Am I the third one? I shouldn't say, "It's because I'm probably the third" right? Furthermore, what is kingdom's interest? What's with that remark when you've gone and kidnapped people without permission.

Just like how a young man usually react, I'm also boiling in anger for a moment.

However, that was poured with cold water due to the existence of the guarding soldiers. The swords on their waist and the spears look real.

If I'm to attack, now is not the time.

This is a composed investigation. It's not because I'm scared of the soldiers' swords at all. It's also not because the glances from the soldiers are saying as if they'll kill me if I move. It's the result of a cool investigation through and through. I'm going coolly. Coolly.

I keep staring at the violet-haired woman. She's too beautiful it's hard to live. I wonder how old is she? She looks like a high schooler, but she's probably older right? I want to tell her that her twintail will look good tied with thin ribbons, but the soldiers' glances are scary. It feels like they'd slay me for rudeness without warning.

◇

In the end, the kidnapper lots treat me as if I'm air the whole time, and a maid escorted by two soldiers guides me to a three tatami-wide small room. The room is only lit by one candle on a candlestick.

"The person in charge of training you will come tomorrow morning, wait here. I'll bring you something to eat later, so be quiet okay?"

A maid of around 20 years old talks to me condescendingly and leaves.

It's probably going to be black bread and lightly salted soup right?
I want to see her bringing imperial court cooking.

When I see the dish that the maid's brought, I regret the curse that I've said in mind earlier.

Don't make fun of me fantasy.

What the heck is dinner with one potato! Moreover it's raw! You're killing my stomach!

Since I can still feel that there are guards outside the room, I swallow my complaints. The maid seems to misunderstand it.

"Ara? Are you really that hungry? I'll prepare another one for the breakfast tomorrow, so you can eat that whole. You don't need to hold back."

The girl said so without sarcasm, put a water jug on the side table and left. Oy, oy, there's no cup here.

I'm not hungry enough to eat a raw potato, so I drink the water directly from the jug to quench my throat.

My mouth longs for something, so I throw a candy that I've always readied in my pocket inside it. Other things that I've brought are a swiss army knife, the three candies that are the most important, and a notebook written with cheat about administration.

After getting some sugar supplies, I'm able to think this a bit more carefully.

First, let's check if cheats dwell in my body.

By simply doing push-up. I'm downed before the tenth just like usual. I don't have a body reinforcement cheat.

I take out the swiss army knife, imagine a virtual goblin and swing the knife. I feel empty in the middle of doing it, I don't have a swordsmanship or martial arts cheat either.

There should be magic at least, since I was summoned after all. My last hope, I try magic cheat. Imagine it. I imagine flame and put my hands toward the desk.

It's cold. My heart is cold.

This is a world without magic huh. I've decided so.

That means, I stay like what I've always been. Summoning magic, do your work.

Fuhn, there is no apology from the god, and I begin to vaguely notice. Reality is different than delusion. I am allowed to despair for a bit right? I'm already tired. I'm sleepy.

◇

When I notice a certain thing, I immediately stand up.

That's right, this is a hard mode world. It might be a cripplingly very hard world even. It's still too early to rest.

I investigate the informations that I've got in hands.

I got summoned. The summoner is probably that girl.

They call the violet twintail beauty your highness, she's probably a royalty.

Who were the "Two before" that the sly-glasses mentioned. Were they summoned people like me?

I recall the look on the soldiers' eyes. Those guys were obviously wary of me. That means, the previously mentioned two summoned people have done something bad. They couldn't have hugged that beauty right.

No, the thing they were wary about was not that kind of thing.

That's right, it's [Skill]. Those guys unmistakably said that. They said that I have skill. It was [Burying] wasn't it? It's really like me, sweats will come out of my eyes.

How do I use it?

I recite Burying inside my heart. I somehow feel like my presence becomes thinner. Wait, isn't it just like always.

While becoming slightly sad, I get out of the room.

I've thought that there's a sentry, but there's no one outside the room.

If I didn't think like a child and went to explore the castle here, my future might have been slightly different.

However, there is no IF in reality. You can only choose once.

And then I've heard it.

I have heard it.

The two summoned people before me were deemed to be unsuitable for heroes and executed. The maids and soldiers talk about it without having any sense of guilt.

That's bullshit!

After you've abducted them like that. If they're unnecessary, send them back to their world.

◇

Unable to go back to my room, I wander around the castle and meet a girl.

I try to block her mouth in a hurry, but get pinned down by her self-defense-like moves instead.

She's strong, belying her delicate look. Why did I use polite speech.

<TLN: The first line is said in keigo/polite speech.>

"Keep quiet. The soldiers will come if you're noisy. You're the person from the different world that Yuriko-sama has summoned today right?"

The girl is called Menea, a princess of this kingdom. I'm told that Yuriko is the violet-haired twintail beauty, her aunt. Eternally 17 years old huh. I understand.

In exchange for some informations, I got informations out of her.

I shouldn't have heard it. There is no method to return to my original world. Are they calling and leaving huhh.

When we talk about the fate of the two summoned people before me, she becomes upset. It seems that she spent some times with the two on the city outside the castle.

I desperately try to get her sympathy, and ask about the ways to get out of the castle. It has been since the examination for high school that I try so hard like this.

I got fruits and jeweled ring for trading with money from her. Since she doesn't seem like she's directly involved with the kidnapping, I want to repay the favor, so I give her two pages of the administrative cheat from the notebook. I've memorized the content of those pages. Don't belittle a student with free time.

◇

I light the torch that I've got from Menea with a lighter.

Even though I've been suspected of smoking by the teacher, and questioned by patrolling police and other doubts because of this, I keep carrying it.

I'll use [Burying] until I arrive at the town at night.

Fufufu, I'll register at the adventure guild in the town, and seize my success story from there on. Different world dream, come on.

I don't hear the sounds of insects.

I know.

This is not an easy mode world. It's a crazy hard real different world. Of course, there are monsters too.

However, seriously spare me from getting attacked by a praying mantis the size of a human being.

I desperately run away, but I've not thought that running on the mountain at night would be this hard. I couldn't even run away for several meters and got caught. My left arm is bitten off in one gulp. It's hot rather than painful. I wonder if my adrenaline is pumped in tons, I don't feel much pain.

Ah, game over huh.

Even if I want to counter attack, I've dropped my torch somewhere.

The monster deliciously eats the left arm that's been torn off me. Even though I want to run, the monster pins down its leg on top of my stomach, so I can't move.

Ah, I'm bleeding too much.

My consciousness becomes hazy.

I hear a clamor in the end. I don't understand what they're saying. Oh right, I've put the translation ring on the finger of my left hand.

The last thing that I see is a dark brown skin with long ears.

It's here, a dark elf in flesh.

I've thought that my life is a kusoge, but I see something good in the end.

I wanted to TUEE with a dark elf serving me.

<TLN: TUEE is a slang for, err, basically OP? kusoge=trash game.>

I will become black knight the next time I'm reborn....

5
Honobono tokidoki Serious soshite Harem
デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲
愛七ひろ
Hiro Ainana
Illustration・shri

8-1. At the Capital of the Duchy

Satou's here. Japanese people are world-famous for being impatient, but people of a parallel world aren't all easygoing either.

◇

"A peanut is flying nodesu!"

"Monster~?"

Pochi and Tama who have come from the ship's deck pull both of my sleeves and take me along to the deck.

There's a floating airship when I look at the place where the two are pointing. I've already checked it on the map, but it's quite impressive when you actually see the real thing. It's a 300 meters long peanut-shaped rigid airship. It's unknown whether it floats using gas like helium or magic tools.

I can guess the airship's route from the map, it probably has arrived here from the royal capital this morning.

"That's an airship."

"Ayership?"

"Ships that fly in the sky."

"Amazing nodesu! I want to ride in it nodesu!"

Yup, me too.

If you think about it, the ship is probably for military affairs, so it's doubtful whether we can ride in it or not.

"Uwah. Truly a fantasy. I'm burning up~."

"I wonder how is it floating?"

Arisa and Liza have also come. This is the first time Arisa sees it huh. I wonder if she hasn't ridden in the exclusive airship of the hero?

"Master, I wish for that."

"Ufufu, the shape is quite cute isn't it."

Nana is gesturing like she's trying to reach and grasp the airship with her hands. Lulu says 'cute', is that cute? I don't really understand, maybe because our senses are different.

"Arisa can just make a cushion with that shape later right? On top of being cute, it'll also be soft."

Nana plops her hands once, and goes to pester Arisa. She hugs Arisa from behind, and speaks intensely about how cute the airship is. Arisa will probably yield before long. Since Nana absolutely won't give up when she's like that.

"Master, I've inquired Shelna-dono, and it seems that demi-humans aren't welcomed in the inner part of the big wall. I think it's better for Pochi, Tama, and Mia to put on overcoats before we enter the port."

"Right, I'll tell them after their euphoria from the airship have receded."

Shelna-dono that Liza's mentioned is the tour guide. Her main occupation is one of the civil official of the viceory of Gururian city--earl Walgock. I thought that she was the viceroy's watchdog when I discovered it from AR, but it seemed she just missed the time when was working as a tour guide for earning her school expense since she was young, so she replaced the tour guide.

At the duchy capital, we get to stay in the mansion of earl Walgock, thanks to the goodwill of the viceroy. I'm fine with staying at a normal inn, but since the martial tournament is open, there aren't probably many decent places left, so I decide to receive the favor.

The ship that we're boarding heads toward the port of the duchy capital. It's not the port on the downtown, but the one built inside the capital great wall for nobles' and purveyors' use.

By great wall I'm naturally talking about Oyugock city outer wall. It seems that the population has increased too much, and so, in order to settle down the people in the suburbs, they've created a three meters tall wall called new wall outside. The new wall is unlike an actual great wall as it cannot protect against monsters' attacks, so the area inside the great wall becomes inhabited only by nobles, the wealthy and technicians, while people like workers, demi-humans, and the poor are living outside of it.

◇

After we have disembarked, we are being guided by Shelna-san toward the mansion of earl Walgock.

Thanks to the pass from the viceroy, we aren't checked during the inspection for entering the city. However, I feel like there are too few guards at that time. When I check on the map, it looks like the guards are running around inside city.

The cause is probably the corpses of the members, and specific things that show their positions that I've left inside the castle covered with sheets after defeating the demon lord last night. Since I left them with the [Wings of Liberty] clothings and their plan of resurrecting the demon lord, the soldiers are probably cleaning up the aftermath. Work hard.

I could arrest the remaining members and hand them over to the authority, but since it's troublesome, I leave them alone. The woman that has got her attire taken by me seems to have been rescued by her friends, and she's now among the gathering in the mansion of a noble called earl Bobi. It'd be bothersome if they cause disturbances so I mark it.

The mansion of earl Walgock is in an area that is wide even among the noble area inside the great wall.

After I have finished greeting the previous earl Walgock together with Shelna-san, the two of us go to the duke's castle with the carriage that she's taken out from the mansion. Shelna-san is quite an energetic person.

I myself am fine since my stamina is overflowing, but Mia and Arisa don't have much stamina, so I tell them to be at leisure in the mansion today. They won't be able to meet the duke even if we go together anyway, so there's no particular problem. Lady Karina has invited Pochi and Tama for training on the courtyard. She's probably quite frustrated since she couldn't move her body too much at the ship. Liza and the maids are accompanying them, so they probably won't cause an uproar.

The duke's castle is as vast as baron Muno's, but there are wide differences in the splendors and the number of present people.

Over the castle walls inside, there are four 4 meter tall iron golems stationed around the castle gate. Looks like the castle walls are connected with various anti-aircraft towers. I wasn't able to confirm what kind of artilleries are put in it. I'll ask them to let me see it later.

The wagon stops at the courtyard after crossing the inner wall earlier. It's walking from here. Guided by the maid, we're advancing through a corridor made with abundant of marbles. Carpets are spread below, and we come across decorations like artworks that are on the wall and flowers on regular interval. I don't understand the quality of the pictures, but they're good calming paintings.

Someone is waving hands inside a painting hanging on the wall along the way on the corridor.

As expected of fantasy. It's really like a magic item.

The little girl drawn on the painting is waving her hands. She looks delighted when I wave back. It's quite interactive. I'm expecting that there would be people moving inside other paintings, but unfortunately, they're all just normal paintings.

"Is there anything wrong Chevalier-sama?"

"No, it's nothing. As expected of duke-sama's castle. There's a fun magic item."

"That's right, I was also surprised when I came here for the first time."

No wonder. Anyone would be surprised if they saw someone moving inside a painting.

◇

We're led to a room and get to meet the consul aide.

"Well then, this is the letter from baron Muno. And then, this is the letter from baron Muno's consul, viscount Rottol, for the consul-sama here."

I hand over two sets of letters. The letters from Nina-san are in the forms of three scrolls and one bundle of documents.

The consul aide receives that respectfully, and then someone who looks like the assistant put it on the rack. Shelna-san also has a letter from the viceroy to pass here, but she gives the bag that she's brought here to the assistant-san. I heard later that it was packed with reports from each departments.

A maid enters after getting permission by knocking the door and whispers something to the consul aide.

"Sir Pendragon, your excellency, the duke seems to want to meet you. Is it fine for you to go for a bit?"

Oh?

The plan today is to only pass over the letters, and the meeting will be for several days later I'm told.

Since this means that I won't have to trouble myself coming here twice, I gladly accept it. I don't have the right to refuse in the first place anyway, the invitation is probably just a formality from the opposite.

I've thought that we'd be guided to the audience room, but we pass over it and proceed to what seems to be the private room of the duke.

The room earlier is gorgeous, but this one is two grades higher. The chair that I'm offered to sit isn't too hard or too soft, it's a superb fit. I've wanted this kind of chair in my workplace. There is a water tank on one side of the room, and tropical fish-like fish are swimming inside. Their shapes looks like guppy, but they're dimly shining light green light from the inside of their semi-transparent bodies.

There are four statues of nude women on the corners of the room, they're all Living Statues. There's a passage that leads to several soldiers that are standing by in a waiting room, although it's been skillfully concealed. There are three magic soldiers on the roof standing by. There doesn't seem to be any movable gimmick, so they probably would break through the roof if there was an emergency.

They've put some considerations for making sure that normal people won't be able to sense the existences of those guards. They don't seem to have any intention of needlessly intimidating guests.

The room maid announces that the duke is coming here from the next room, so I stand up to receive him.

The one who comes into the room is an old man with good physique and with entire body hair in white. His hair is plentiful, but his beard is even more so. He looks like a good-natured man, but the glints on his eyes are too powerful. As the proof, Shelna-san who's together with me has completely stiffened. The one who comes after the duke is probably the consul. He has blond hair with gray ones mixed and slender build. He looks like an able man with thin eyes.

"Fumu, so you're the rumored hero-dono who saw through the demon's trick, and protected baron Muno territory from monsters led by the demon huh. You're young."

After we give our each other names, the consul speaks first. Young? Oh right, my appearance is that of a 15 years old. Mirrors are rare so I've forgotten.

"On top of that, it seems that you've exterminated the demon that has appeared in our territory's Gururian city. Allow me to thank you."

When it's spoken like that, it's as if I'm the perpetrator who has instigated the demons in order to be promoted.

"It is surely because of the people who have fought earlier, and the beast people subordinates of mine. I cannot win against the demon if it's just me alone."

"Modesty is unnecessary. A letter of recommendation for you to participate in the second qualifier has arrived from earl Walgock."

Viceroy-san, I'd have liked if you inform me first when you were sending a letter of recommendation.

I gently decline it of course since I don't have any intention of participating.

"Is that so, that's too bad. So, I've summoned you here to tell you something about baron Muno."

I wonder what?　Don't tell me that the demons are attacking the territory again.

"Your excellency, he would misunderstand if you said it like that."

"Really? It's a good story. It's been decided that baron Muno will be raised to Earldom during the kingdom's spring meeting. There is no custom of a noble getting raised two ranks so there was some disputes, but he has piled up quite enough achievements."

He's originally been decided to be raised in rank, but since there's enough achievement just right, it's been hastened. The territory won't be particularly expanded, but the advantage is that the territory won't be made light by the neighboring territories.

"You don't seem to have much desire in getting success in life."

"Desire to successful in life is it?　I think the current honorary knight is already quite excessive for me."

Apparently, there's a talk for me to become a honorary baron in addition with baron Muno's. Lords are allowed to assign honorary knight and knight peerage, but it seems that honorary baron and above are the king's privilege. Honestly, I'm not interested in raising the rank or something, so I safely pass on it.

From this on, replacing the duke, the consul comes ahead to talk about the real issue.

"I don't think that you, Sir, knows, but every towns have been attacked by a lower demon like the one that has attacked Gururian city."

I do know, but normally one wouldn't, so I put on a slightly surprised face.

"Only Gururian and Standel cities have escaped with little damage. The other cities have suffered damage that will take several years to recover. We cannot confirm if the upper demon like the one that's attacked Seryuu city last month appears, but mid demons have appeared in other Earls' territories."

If an upper demon attacks, a city would surely vanish, but if it's just a lower demon, then people who are capable of defeating it should exist. The damages may have been done before the capable person comes huh. I could sort of understand why the viceroy was awfully kind.

The demons' damages have increased in various places, so they want to gather people who can defeat demons it seems. I think there are some problems in soliciting other lord's retainers, but since the duke's influences are too far apart, it seems that it's possible for me to be transferred. I don't have that in mind, so I decline in a way that won't create hard feelings.

They want to hear my wish for the rewards of saving Gururian city, so I ask permissions to buy attack-related scrolls, and magic tools, and they agree to it easily. When I talk about it to Arisa later, she says that maybe they want to avoid expenses from the available cash since they need it for restorations of various places. I see.

While I'm at it, under the pretext of 'for the sake of Muno city from now on', I got permit to go on inspections of all kinds of workshops. I very much look forward to have a field trip on workshops like the Oak glass workshop.

<TLN: 'Oak' can also be read 'Orc'.>

◇

"Haah, that was tense."

"You're right."

"How can you say that. Wasn't chevalier-sama looking very normal in front of duke-sama?"

That's thanks to Poker Face. In truth, even though I remember the second half of the conversation, it didn't feel real to me.

When we've come to the courtyard to get on the wagon, I notice that there's something strange.

Everyone is looking at the sky.

"Chevalier-sama, please have a look at that."

I look at where Shelna-san points. I use my hand as a shade since it's in front of the light. I have no need of shading since I have the light intensity adjustment skill, but my hand has moved out of habit.

Putting aside such trivial things, that descends from the sky.

8-2. Visitor from the Sky

Satou's here. Impossible setting like woman warriors wearing bikini armors exist in video games, but as expected, there is no warrior who wears bikini armor in the parallel world.

◇

The visitor that falls from the sky breaks its speed just before it hits the ground.

"Thank you for welcoming me!"

The girl takes off her helmet, and her silver hair appears as if flowing. When she get off the golem that's modeled after a pegasus, the heels on her metal armor lets out clear sounds. It doesn't seem to be an armor made from normal iron.

"Princess!"

"Ringrande-sama!"

The people on the courtyard call her "Ringrande".

The girl who comes down from the sky by riding a pegasus is Ringrande Oyugock. A follower of Hayato Masaki, the hero. Her level is 55. Judging from her skills composition, she's more like a magic warrior than a magician.

She's 22 years old, her eyes are somewhat tsurime, and with the thin eyebrows, she's an intense beauty.

<TLN: google tsurime, it's kinda hard to describe but quite obvious when you see images of it.>

Her armor is unlike the unrefined lump of metal that soldiers are wearing, it's shaped with womanly lines. If her armor curves aren't exaggerated, then she's about E cup. I'll remake Nana's armor with lady Ringrande's armor as a reference.

I don't know why a grandchild of one of the leading figures of Shiga kingdom has become a follower of Saga empire's hero, but judging from the reactions of the people on this square, she seems to be very popular.

"She's quite popular eh."

"Are chevalier-sama not familiar with her?"

Shelna-san clutches her fists in front of her chest, and I listen to her curiously.

I nod to her who seems to be setting up the mood, and learn various things about lady Ringrande.

Lady Ringrande is the granddaughter of the duke, the fourth daughter of the next duke, and her mother is the daughter of Shiga kingdom's king who has been married into his subject. The kind of lineage that'd ensure her to inherit the peerage.

She had been overflowing with talent since she was 10 years old, and skipped grades to study at the royal Oritsu academy. She's a talented girl who has obtained the bachelor's degree in two years, and mastered wind and fire magic until the advanced levels. She's still in the academy even after she obtained her degree, and for three years until she's 15, she continued polishing her magic in the labyrinth city while also continuing her research. She's a genius magician who has revived the explosion, and the destruction magic that had been considered to be lost. Additionally, it seems she has been given honorary baronet peerage for all those achievements.

Looks like she's also learned swordsmanship in the labyrinth city, but Shelna-san doesn't seem to know it well.

When she's 18 years old, such woman ran away to serve the hero of Saga empire which caused quite a bit of uproars. Since I don't have any interest in that matter, I just response agreeably to Shelna-san without really hearing it.

It seems that it's been two years since she last comes home.

◇

Since Shelna-san looks like she wants to join the people who surrounds lady Ringrande, I give her permission. Looks like she's been ordered by the viceroy to attend us during our stay after she's given the report to the duke, but since we've already finished the task that has to be completed as early as possible, it's fine for her to have some time off. Just be prepared for the tour around various workshops from tomorrow on.

I ask the footman who's standing by on the entrance to call the carriage that I've ridden.

It's troublesome to ask people's help every time I need to do something. Since it's NG for me to do it myself, Nina-san has told me to get accustomed to it even though it's troublesome.

I have the carriage go to the area where magic shops and bookstores are gathered. There are magic shops in the downtown, but for now I head toward the one close to the castle.

When I notice the people inside, I've thought of going to the magic shops in the downtown instead, but since it'd be too suspicious, I give up.

"Oh, if it isn't Satou-dono."

"Hmm, are you Toruma's acquaintance?"

"Umu, I've told you before right? To the whole 10.000-strong monsters army that attacked Muno city, he's--"

The people inside the magic shop are a man who looks to be the shop manager, and Toruma ossan. The shop manager is a man so muscular you wouldn't think he's a magic shop manager. His stern face looks like he's suited to carry a pickaxe or a great sword on his shoulder.

The shop manager is joyfully listening to the exaggerated story of Toruma while grinning. He probably regards it as Toruma's usual boasting. It doesn't seem like he takes it seriously.

"My name is Kikinu. It sounds strange since I'm born in a small country to the east, but don't mind it. If it's hard for you to pronounce it, you can call me, Kinniku, Oyaji, or Shop manager any one you want."

"Pleasure to meet you. My name is Satou."

<TLN:Kinniku=muscle, oyaji=old man, boss, or father depending on the

context.>

Toruma who's being treated like an air says "Chi chi chi" while swaying his finger. What, I can't help but wanting to smack him.

"You have to properly give your house name okay?"

I didn't tell him my house name since I wanted us to talk without reservation, but he's a KY guy like always.

<TLN: KY=Kuuki Yomenai, can't read the atmosphere/mood.>

"Excuse me. I'm Satou Pendragon."

"Hou? I can see that you like heroes tales."

"His master is baron Muno, also known as associate baron Donan back then."

"That's, a misfortune huh."

To be so widely known, just how much you like heroes, baron Muno.

"No, ultimately, the one who've chosen it is myself."

"Well, only people who share the same interest will understand it, so it's probably alright."

I see, shop manager Kikinu is the same kind of person as baron Muno huh.

I chat adequately to liven things up, and ask about the line up of the magic books and the scrolls.

A lot of things are the same as the ones from Gugurian city magic shop, but as expected of the magic shop in a metropolis, it's quite complete.

"This book is nice."

"That so? It's a book that only sells one copy in several years, but it's good that you like it. It's an indispensable dictionary for magic tools appraiser, but since the only ones who'd buy it are people who have appraisal skill, it's become fertilizer for the bookshelf."

I can read the magic items inside my storage with this.

There are magic books for magic that Shelna-san has mentioned earlier, explosion and destruction magic. Due to their contents, the magic books are something that can only be sold to people authorized by the military, but thanks to the permit I've got from the duke, I can buy it without problem.

There are also various books with titles that fascinate me like, "Magic Tools and Carved Seal Magic", "30 Magic Circuit Standards for Magic Tools", "In-Depth Learning from the Basic for Cane and Catalyst", "Gems and Magic Cores", so I buy them all.

"Young master, how about this book?"

Shop manager Kikinu presents, "Rotation and Roman", "The Meeting of Rotation and Round Trip Movement", "New Magic Born from Rotation", books that excessively push rotation topics. Since the author is the same one who has created the magic spinning disk I've bougt back then, I decide to buy them. The shop manager Kikinu's face which somehow looks amazed catches my eyes. Did he think that I wouldn't buy them?

That can't be, he's the one who recommends it himself.

I've also bought many other books, but there's nothing that talks about making scrolls.

On the other hand, there are plentiful of scrolls.

It seems that Toruma is here to sell the scrolls door-to-door since it's difficult for him to stay in his parent's house.

"You don't have to buy them here, you can buy them from our workshop right?"

"Oy, oy, Toruma. Don't take away my customer."

"I'd like to get extraordinarily unusual scrolls from Toruma-san's parent house, so this is fine."

Rather than unusual scrolls, I intend to custom order peculiar magic for the scrolls that can't be bought, so I'll buy the ones that can be bought from stores beforehand.

Generally, here, the scrolls that can be normally traded are similar with the ones sold in other cities, but I get to buy various battle-related scrolls for military use. They seem to be mostly used as substitutes for when there are shortage of magicians, and insurances that magicians carry around with elements they can't use.

There's also the magic that the fire magician viscount-san has used in the Seryuu city labyrinth back then, Fire Storm. If I have this intermediate magic, I wonder if it'd be easier to fight against a demon lord?

Elementary level magic scrolls are cheap, but intermediate level scrolls are worth several pieces of gold coin, so even if people carry it around for insurance, won't they feel reluctant to use it? I'm thinking that low level people might be able to use it for power leveling, but since it can't be invoked if their magic power aren't enough, it's probably impossible.

"Are you going to carry the goods yourself? If you tell me your lodging location, I could deliver it to you in the evening y'know?"

"Then, please deliver them to earl Walgock's mansion."

"Oh? I've thought that you'll stay in my parent house, but you're acquainted with earl Walgock huh?"

"Yes, there were a bit of things."

I leave the delivery to manager Kikinu. Looks like I can pay at that time. It's a pain to carry around gold coins in large quantities, so payment bill probably becomes the standard.

◇

Afterward, guided by Toruma, I go around many magic shops and bookstores.

I looked tepidly at Toruma who said such line like, "This city is like my backyard.", but it was the truth without exaggeration. We're going around the city through strange alleys, or garden yard inside other people's houses. Rather than back streets, they seem to be courses that a brat would prefer. I've returned the carriage that I've ridden, so we ride the cab carriage when it's far.

In the secondhand bookstore at the downtown, Toruma skillfully persuades the obstinate-looking old man shopkeeper to make him takes out the treasured book. He's good for this kind of negotiation. It seems he's been doing this many times before when he's buying erotic books long ago. Really like Toruma ossan.

Of course the book that has come out is not an erotic book. It's a magic book of space magic. Although it only lists the chants until intermediate level, and things like explanation of the effects, or description of the theory are completely absent. I buy it while convincing myself that it'd be just like disassembling binary codes.

The used scrolls for maniacs have already been sold, so I buy several scrolls with magic that aren't listed in the spell books. I have to compile the spell books later.

◇

"Ara, what a lovely boy."

"Right, if he has more muscle, he'd feel even better to touch right?"

Why is this happening.

"Ara, no way. Try to touch him, his muscles are like steel."

"You're right, even his abs is ripped."

I mildly avoid the hands that are groping my body.

"Ara, meany."

"You're quite strong ne."

"Oy, oy, don't only service Satou-dono, please care for me too."

"Ara, no way. Toruma-san is jealous."

I felt bad if I leave Toruma just like that after he had thoroughly guided me, so I thought of treating him to a meal at least, but he somehow guided me to this establishment.

An okama bar is completely unexpected.

"I mean, Hayuna would get angry if I go to an establishment with women."

So he said.

If Shelna-san who was worried didn't come to pick me, I might be there until morning.

Everyone's glances are painful when I've returned, so I decide to go shopping with everyone tomorrow. Since Oyugock city is relatively warm, it might be a good idea to buy clothes for spring.

8-3. Downtown Disturbance

Satou's here. The only field trip I had ever done in Japan was to a beer factory where I could try some freshly made samples. I wonder why was the beer I drank in that factory so delicious.

◇

Here, here, the little girl inside the painting is beckoning.

As if led by that gesture, my hand approaches.

The painting where she is in has a lone door drawn on a field, it's a mysterious oil painting. The girl opens that door and enters, then she beckons from beyond that door.

I stretch my hand toward the frame of that painting--

◇

"Morning~?""Nano desu!"

Something made a little impact on my stomach along with cheerful voices.

When I slightly open my eyes, there are Pochi and Tama who have dived beside my stomach. The impact on my stomach seem to be from their arms that have ridden on it.

What a strange dream.

Last night, since I've got myself a book that can help decipher the explanation on magic tools, I've sorted the magic tools until dawn, I wonder that's the reason I see that dream?

"Good Morning."

I greet the two and pat their heads while messing with it a bit. Maybe it's a bit too rough, the two hold my palms with both their hands and feet, and escape. I pretend to feel painful since they're play-biting.

"Mwuu."

Mia who's lying down rustles my head. Does she want to be cared, or is this a revenge for waking her up, it's a vague line.

Even though we're this noisy, Arisa is still sleeping beside me with anguished face. I wonder what kind of dream she's having.

Nana has come to tell us that the breakfast is ready, I wake Arisa up and go toward the dining room. It seems she's still sleepy, Arisa acts spoiled and says, "Carry me", so I take her on my shoulder to the dining room. Since Pochi and Tama are looking so enviously, I decide to carry the two on my shoulders after this.

◇

"Chevalier-sama, about the schedules for visiting the workshops--"

Yesterday, on the way to the duke's castle, I hear from Shelna-san that visiting workshops aren't something that can be done immediately, I have to make prior appointments beforehand. Therefore, Shelna-san has got the reservations for us.

Excluding the visit to the scroll workshop of viscount Shimen, Toruma's parent house, that'll be in 10 days, we can visit other workshops in 2-5 days time. The visit to the scroll workshop is so late because we have to wait for viscount Shimen to return from the royal capital first.

"Well then, is it alright for Chevalier-sama and Karina-sama to attend the dinner tonight?"

"Of course, it's alright desuwa."

Lady Karina answered Shelna-san's question faster than me.

The dinner she's talking about is about the invitation from the previous earl Walgock couple. Moreover, I've also been invited to a party organized by the duke three days later. I feel like some kind of disturbances will happen, am I just being paranoid I wonder?

I'm fine with Nana as my partner for the dinner, but since she's less accustomed on the etiquette than lady Karina--there are also some pushes from lady Karina's maids--it's become lady Karina instead. I'm more comfortable with taking Lulu, but since Lulu doesn't look like she has resistance for those kind of things, I abandon the thought.

"Are you really not going to participate in the martial art tournament? If a noble appear in the second qualifier of the tournament, his social status will get considerably high..."

"I have no such intention."

"I understand. The arena for the tournament is in the town, and we've reserved a private room for noble visitor that Chevalier-sama can use anytime during the second qualifier. However, unfortunately, we aren't able to secure the private room for the main match, so we've reserved the seats in the shared room for nobles."

It seems it's fine to be be noisy in the private room, but it's NG to have the slaves and demi-humans make noise in the shared room. It'd be impossible for Pochi and Tama to not make noise when they see the tournament, so I'll go watch the main match alone in secret. Looks like the second qualifier will be held in five days.

◇

By borrowing two four-seater carriages, I go to the downtown together with everyone. Of course, I leave lady Karina behind.

We get off in the parking lot before the great wall, and walk from there.

"So many."

"That's right, due to the opening of the big tournament, this has become the melting pot of races."

"Melting pot~?"

"Is it delicious?"

"Ufufu, Pochi-chan is a glutton-san."

There are also a lot of people in the main street of the noble district, but it's jam packed in the downtown. There's a strange heat like you normally see in the Southeast Asia marketplace. Seemingly stirred by that, everyone is in high spirit more than usual.

First, let's buy thin clothes in the second-hand clothes store. Everyone beside Lulu and me is wearing an overcoat, it looks to be hot just seeing them. Liza reaches for a full metal armor. I tell her that lighter equipment is better, but since she insists, "It's the full dress of a guard", so I buy it as it is.

"Nice smell nano desu."

"Mumumu, this is! It's the smell of burnt soy sauce. This is, squid teriyaki, private Pochi, private Tama. Let's secure the urgent suspects at once~."

"Secure~."

"Aye, nano desu."

It does smell nice. Arisa leads Tama and Pochi running to the stall. Mia is tempted to run with the three, but she probably wouldn't be able to eat it. Liza and Lulu follow the children behind them while walking.

"Master, it's a state of emergency."

Nana murmurs so while taking my arm and leads me to the different direction than everyone's. I tell Lulu who has noticed us, "I'll come back soon". I have the map so I could join them back immediately.

There are ratmen children at the place where Nana pressingly pulls me. No wait, it seems to be different, their skins are glossy and their necks inverts when they're walking. According to the AR indication, they're Sea Lion kin.

"I cannot calculate the movement of that young organism. Even though it's not efficient, I cannot take my eyes off them."

It seems Nana has wanted to see these children. Certainly, one could say that their way of walking is cute. After she's admired them for some time, I'll take her back to everyone. My arm is happy, but it'll be bad if we leave everyone too long and make them worry.

The moment of happiness suddenly ends.

◇

The instant Nana sees a big tigerkin man kicks the sea lionkin child, her atmosphere changed. Nana releases my arm, and jumps over the crowd of people and cut between the children and the big man.

It seems she's used body strengthening nature magic, but her activation time has become quite a bit faster. Wonder if it's because of her training with Liza and the others every day.

"What? A human huh? Get away woman."

"I refuse. I inform that excessive violence against young organism is dangerous, and is prohibited."

The big tigerkin man flaunts his arm--

"You bastard, when did you appear?"

I catch and stop his arm before he could swing it.

The big man scowls with sharp glint on his eyes at me who's caught his arm from behind.

From what I saw, the sea lionkin child who didn't see where he was going hit the big tigerkin man, and the cause of this quarrel was because the man's trousers got stained.

Although, the man's trousers are already dirty enough you can't even tell if it has been stained further.

"You must not use violence."

"Is that so."

The big man kicks me while answering. I jump to avoid it and land before the man. Of course, I'm still holding his arm.

Making use of abduction skill, I pin the big man down.

Right at that time, someone's great sword is swinging toward me.

"Master, it's a reinforcement."

Due to space grasp and crisis perception skills, I've noticed it even if I don't hear Nana's warning, so I ward off the great sword with the fairy sword on my waist while still pining the big man down.

"Hou? You've eluded the sword of this great me while pining Geri huh."

A pure white tigerkin man appears from the darkness of the alley. However, swinging sword in the downtown like this, he's not sane huh. I've done it myself, but this is an act of self-defense, so please overlook it.

The spectators around us are clamoring. It seems this guy is a participant of the second qualifier.

"You'd be wasting your turn in the second qualifier if you cause bloodshed in the town you know?"

"Fuhn, you're showing composure after receiving surprise attack in the downtown. You're also a participant of the second qualifier huh. Come to the final, we'll settle it there."

I feel like it'd be complicated if I answer, "I'm not" here. I'll reply it vaguely to lead him.

"I'm looking forward to it. Please do your best to win through it."

"Fuhn, your show is only for now."

I release the man that I've pinned down and step back once. I want them to leave while they're still misunderstanding. I don't want to attract more attention in this kind of place.

I show my composure while the white man takes the big man until they're gone.

The spectators seem to be dissatisfied for the non-fight, but I don't care.

"Master, master! The young organism is vomiting out fluid from his mouth. I appeal for the emergency treatment."

Since Nana appeals monotonously behind, I take out a magic potion from my pocket and make the sea lionkin child drinks it. He seems to have recovered immediately, I'm relieved. Shouts of joy break out from the spectators somehow.

The sea lionkin is really popular huh. Nana must be attracted.

That popular person keeps licking the bottle even after it's been emptied. It's probably because I've put sweet flavor in the magic potion.

Nana holds the sea lion children up on her hands.

"Master, requesting to make these children become ours."

"No."

"Master, please reconsider."

"Rejected."

It's unusual for Nana to get depressed, but I can't compromise here.

When the sounds of some kind of bell is resounding, the children becomes flustered on Nana's arms, I instruct Nana to release them. She hesitates for a bit, but then she resigns herself and release them.

Somehow the children are going toward where Arisa and the others are, so we follow them along. It is not because Nana is leading me by hands, not at all. I'd like us to link arms if possible, but since Arisa and Mia would protest if they see it, it's fine like this.

There's an unexpected person at the destination of the children.

8-4. Downtown Disturbance (2)

Satou's here. Siblings that don't look alike exist anywhere, but even if they're raised in the same environment, the differences are there ever since they're born. The little sister who wants to surpass her big sister, and the big sister who wants to protect her little sister, those feeling may be the impetus to help them grow.

◇

There's a square just ahead where the sea lionkin children are going, it seems volunteers are distributing food there.

That's good and all, but.

"Line up properly nodesu! Cutting the line is bad, nodesu."

"Line up~ You ignorant people~."

"H, hey Tama-chan!"

For some reason, the figures of Pochi and the others as the volunteers who distribute the food are there.

"The last in line is here! Line up in three lines while carrying your own wooden bowl."

"You there, I'll put you to the end of the line if you're quarreling."

Looks like Arisa and Liza are in charge of the queues.

The sea lionkin children are lining up in accordance to Arisa's guidance.

Nana is going to line up behind them, but I stop her.

"Ara, master, what was Nana's errand?"

"We helped those children from a tigerkin man."

"Fuh~n, I thought that you two were shacking up somewhere."

If we were really shacking up, Mia would find me anywhere I am. Mia's ability to find me can be called at superpower level, although she won't tell me how.

"What about you girls, how did you end up helping the queue?"

"It's just like master's. Some ruffians who didn't act their ages were cutting the line and making some fuss, so Pochi warned them, and then Liza suppressed the three ruffians who were in frenzy."

I see. I can somehow picture the scene in my head.

"That's fine, but then why is Lulu helping serving the food?"

"An old woman tried to stop the ruffians before Pochi, but she got injured by them."

The injury was immediately healed by Mia's and Arisa's magic, but she went home since she was shocked from the violence. Because of that, their hands were short, and so Lulu volunteered to help.

"It feels bad to stop halfway, so we will help for another hour, it's fine right?"

"Of course."

Mingling with the local people is also one of the true charm of sightseeing.

I guess I'll go help too with the cooking. I was going to bring Nana along, but since she was going crazy with the sea lionkin children, I left her.

"Lulu, is there anything I can help?"

"Ah, master! Sera-sama, this is my master, Satou Pendragon-sama."

Yes, the one there is the demon lord sacrifice, the miko from Tenion temple, Sera. However, to go on a volunteer work after she's just been abducted by a suspicious organization like this, is there no one who's worried about her?

No, there are some duke's people among the crowds slightly away from here. She's a lure to fish out『Wings of Liberty』huh.

Putting that aside, my eyes are happy when she's standing next to Lulu. They totally look like some idol unit.

"Nice to meet you, Chevalier Pendragon-sama. I am a miko of Tenion temple, Sera--."

It seems she's progressing well after the revival.

She reflexively greets when Lulu introduces me to her, but she's tilting her head for some reason.

"Um, we've met somewhere haven't we? I'm sorry, but my memory is a bit vague..."

Don't tell me, she has some memory left from when she's possessed by the demon lord. It sound like a pick-up line if you just look at the words. I stop being self-conscious, and go on to deceive her.

"No, this is the first time we've met. Sera-sama."

"Is it so I wonder..."

Looking puzzled is fine and all, but why is she staring at me. When I look at this person, it somehow reminds me of princess Menea. Their proportion and face are different, yet why.

"Sera-sama, the people are tired of waiting for the food."

"Ara, I mustn't."

It's bad to keep the people waiting, so I urge Sera to go back to work distributing the food.

The content of the pot for the food is soup of water plant that looks like seaweeds, and with small dumplings put inside. From what I see, there aren't enough people who make the dumplings.

"I'll help."

"No, it's alright. I can't let noble-sama dirties his hand."

I offered help to one of the aunty who's cooking, but she refused while being sorry. Using polite speech in strain, what a strange person. Lulu, who's serving the ration, boasts, "Master is good at cooking." to Sera besides her. Do beautiful girls naturally attract each other?

"Aunty, how about some help?"

"Right, it'd be bad if someone got stomachache for eating half-cooked dumplings."

I quickly greet the people who are cooking, and participate in the cooking.

"Young master, please use this."

A person who looks like a young wife lends me an apron while saying that my clothes mustn't get dirty. I replace her since her work of making *surimi* seems to be the hardest. Mia who's blowing reed flute while looking bored since awhile ago has stood beside me before I know it, she's staring at my hands working. A nearby aunty who's making dumplings calls out.

"You're pretty good despite being a noble. If you don't succeed your house, how about working in our shop? I'll let my daughter becomes your bride."

One of the aunty praises my skill.

I wonder why do these aunties are offering marriage meeting (omiai) to me.

"No."

""N, no don't." Master is "Eh?""

Mia, and Lulu reacted to the word [Bride] and spoke in denial, but for some reason, even Sera synchronized with Lulu. Lulu isn't the only one who's surprised, even the person herself is. She looks cute with her hands on her mouth while looking surprised, but since the glances from the people who are waiting are scary, I urge her to go back to work.

It can't possibly be love-at-first-sight, so there might be some fragments remaining from when I saved her from the demon lord even if she can't precisely recall it.

Still, even though Sera and Lulu are too young to become the objects of romantic interest, they're feast to my eyes. I want you two to form a unit in five years.

◇

The food distribution is over without any big disturbance.

Just that, there was a person who accused that the dumplings had been exchanged with high-class ones halfway through, but he immediately shriveled after Liza glared at him. We were working right in front of them, so they should have known. It was troubling.

"Hey, it's fine that you're helping, but please hold back."

Arisa scolds me in low voice.

Ridiculous, I only made the *surimi* by grinding, to even need to hold back....

Even if I disable skill that I've become familiar with, the effect won't significantly differ. For skills like alchemy and compounding that I am really familiar with after countless repetitions, it is possible for me to deliberately make inferior goods, and I can probably do it too with cooking. However, I somehow don't like doing something like making it bad on purpose.

From the chatting with the aunties when we're cooking, they seem to be the housewives from around here and the cleaning ladies of the temple. It seems that the five temples in the downtown are distributing food in turns. The distribution is in every other day, there's not enough fund to do it everyday. The current fund comes from donation from sympathizers in the town, and the temples themselves.

There's a Tenion temple with the head-miko at the noble district, but there's also another temple on the downtown. Or rather, it's just a stone throw away from this square.

The clean-up ends briefly, and then, I help carry the equipments back to the temple together with Pochi and the others.

"Clean-up~""Nano desu."

Pochi and Tama are holding a long table overhead together to carry them, they look cute. Of course, Arisa leads them. She's waving a twig that she's picked up from somewhere while leading the way.

"I'm sorry, you even help with the clean-up."

"It's nothing great, so don't mind about it."

Sera is just talking normally, so why do you kick my butt, Mia.

Lulu carry the pots normally after washing it.

Hmm?

It looks like several people of 『Wings of Liberty』 are coming here while riding horses. They're still a bit far, so we probably would arrive at the temple first.

Pochi and the others carry the desk, the materials and tools to the temple's kitchen. Sera and me are the only two who enter the temple main gate empty-handed. Nana is seeing a hallucination of her carrying two sea lionkin children. Perhaps, she's tired.

"Sera!"

"Ne, nee-san?!"

The one waiting for Sera in the temple is the girl who falls from the sky, the granddaughter of duke Oyugock who's also one of the member of the hero's party, lady Ringrande.

Nevertheless, big sister she said?

Since Sera only has [Miko of Tenion Temple] as her title, I haven't thought that she's a blood relative of duke Oyugock. Their conversations, "Are you healthy?", "You've become big.", sound like normal siblings'. They don't really look alike for siblings, but it's good as long as they get along well.

Now then, I'll interrupt their conversation when the time is right for greeting and leaving. If this girl is here, she could mow down something like『Wings of Liberty』with one hand.

However, before I can even talk, the argument has steered toward me.

"You, which house are you from? This girl hates that kind of thing, she's got out of the house and entered the temple you know? Do you think you woo Sera yourself without relying on your house name?"

What's this. For some reason, she's hastily lumping me with a noble who tries to woo Sera. For now, I understand that lady Ringrande loves her little sister and is a cheap person who likes to jump to conclusion.

"N,No it's not like that. Rin nee-san, this person is--."

Sera who follows up by being too upset makes the misunderstanding becomes deeper. Putting aside the big sister, Sera's age is outside the scope of my romantic interest. Even when she's become one, it's highly probable that she won't associate with me, but either way, that has nothing to do with this.

Arisa and the others who have finished tidying up come to pick me up, so I say my farewell to Sera. Before we got out of the temple, a sexy priestess asked for some donations for the sake of the distribution of the food, so I donated several gold coins.

When we get out of the temple, I magnificently ignore the scene where some several nobles-like ruffians riding horses get arrested. Sera is quite an excellent lure.

Various things happened, like lady Karina who had taken her maids along intruded on us when we were looking for spring-related things, or that there weren't any restaurants that sold meat during lunch so Pochi and Liza were down-hearted, but it was generally peaceful shoppings. It was a hard work to make Nana let go of the sea lionkin children when we were leaving the downtown. I asked Arisa to make her the stuffed toy.

During the dinner tonight, lady Karina has caused misunderstanding that I'm her fiancee, so I go through the trouble of dispelling the misunderstanding while keeping lady Karina's face. The previous earl Walgock couple have invited several noble couples from their circle.

I'm looking forward to the workshops visits tomorrow.

8-5. Workshops and Museum Visits

Satou's here. If you're expecting too much on something, the feeling of being betrayed is really great when the real thing doesn't live up to the expectation. I've experienced it with the movie that's made the entire America cry, even if the world changes, let-down is still around after all.

◇

"Blowpipe~?"

"It's swelling nodesu."

Pochi and Tama are flailing around and point at the workers of the workshop while being carried under Liza's arm.

Pochi and Tama are pointing at the blowpipes that the workshop's workers are using to make glass bowls. There are spell-users who use cooling magic in the passage used for the tour so it doesn't feel hot here, but the workers' face are full of sweats.

When Nana sees the swelling of the glass bowls, she looks unsteady like she's being lured from the tour passage, so Lulu and I catch her hands from both sides to stop her.

"Master, I propose the need to do a detailed observation."

"We're observing from here okay."

"Nana-san, you're going to hinder the workers-san. Please endure it."

In contrast with Nana who's overly interested, Arisa yawns uninterestingly.

Well, I can understand. When I heard about Oak glass workshop, I was expecting some kind of fantasy workshop, but it turns out to be a very normal workshop.

"If you're interested in it, how about experiencing making one yourself when the tour is over?"

"Yes, if it's alright with you, please."

The one guiding the tour is a depressed-looking old man, this person is the workshop head. He's a bizarrely thin man on the later half of his 50s with receded hair.

Next, we're guided to a place where the raw materials for the glasses are being produced. All the workers are wearing cloths that cover their mouths and noses. It's probably measures against dusts.

"This is where we crush stones, granites and quartzites, that will become glasses. You can change them into glasses by mixing this blue powder you get by crushing this oak stones and then heat them."

Oak stone?

Can it be, a fantasy material?

"These stones are mined from a mine on the side of the northern grapeyard mountain, and the powder from the stones will create bubbles if you put it into water. These bubbles are--"

I understand what it is from the workshop head's story, it seems to be a carbonic acid, or rather a natural soda. I've forgotten the name, but there are ores like that in the previous world. I personally am happy that I get to learn various knowledges, but I wonder if other nobles who visits here wouldn't get annoyed from that kind of technical explanation?

The last room in the tour course is the main event.

"This is the sheet glass magic tool used for producing glass in this workshop."

I'm told that this magic tool seems to be a legacy from Oak empire that precedes Shiga kingdom.

"It looks like a press machine huh."

I also understand what Arisa's said. Red hot glasses are poured on top of a pedestal with 1 meter wide, and 2 meters long, then something that looks like a presser comes down from the top, creating a sheet glass.

I remember seeing a video that shows glasses are poured on top of melted metals to make one before, but I can probably use magic as substitute for the membrane to make the sheet glass.

If I use Cubes, it might be unexpectedly trivial to do it.

Furthermore, we're showed the process to make mirrors from the sheet glass. It seems they use silver nitrate. The completed mirror looks close to the mirror that people use in the previous world. I have some silver nitrates since they're raw materials for alchemy, so I probably can make some mirrors if I have oak stones.

"There are two Pochi~?"

"There's Tama over there nodesu!"

Pochi and Tama on Liza's arms are surprised at the mirror while they point at it. They usually use one, but it's a bronze mirror after all. I've thought those things, but it seems that the points of their surprises are a bit different.

"It's like Soruna's compact mirror nodesu."

"It's big~"

I see, they've seen one from the eldest daughter at Muno castle, Soruna-san. It seems they're simply surprised since their whole bodies are reflected.

Not only Arisa and Mia, even Nana and Liza are looking at the mirror while posing. I should buy one on the way back.

However, only Lulu turns down her face from the mirror. This is unfortunate.

I wonder if there's a way to make Lulu stop hating her own appearance. I'll consult Arisa next time.

They're charging fee for experiencing the glass making process using the blowing instruments, so I pay. We're given one blow pipe as a commemoration. I get [Glasswork] skill when I blow the pipe once, and although I don't know when I'm ever going to use it, I activate it like usual.

When we're going home, I ask the price of a full-length mirror, but I'll have to wait for two years since the reservation is completely full. The glasses seem to be popular for the senior nobles of the royal capital and the duke capital to put it for the windows, their production cannot catch up with the demands.

◇

Continuing after the Oak glass workshop visit, we tour soy sauce, miso, and brewery workshops in rounds.

Apparently, everyone is tired, so I postpone the scheduled visits to the barrier support workshop and silk factory for tomorrow, I ask Shelna-san to take care of the adjustment.

By the way, today's lunch is meat pickled with soup, roasted. A bit burnt, but it's quite delicious. According to Arisa, there's similar cuisine in her previous world, although I don't know one in mine.

"What should we do in the afternoon? How about watching the martial art tournament qualifier?"

"Will master participate too nodesu?"

"I won't."

Pochi and Tama react to Arisa's words, but I immediately deny.

"I think master could become the champion, are you really not going to participate?"

"Peerless hence wonderful~?"

<TLN: Muteki ni suteki~?>

"Nn, champion."

Pochi looks downhearted since I immediately deny, but I think watching the game is more fun than participating in it. More than anything, the demerit for being the champion looks to be greater than the merit.

"Master, there are a museum and an opera house nearby, how about going there?"

"Right, let's go to the museum then."

Lulu talks about a different topic right there, so I get on it. I confirm on the map that there's a museum close by.

There's an elf from the same village as Mia in the opera house, but when I ask Mia about it, she doesn't know the name. It's probably an elf who has got out of the forest before Mia's born.

◇

The visitors of the museum are mainly women who look to be well-off and their servants.

"Yamato~?""Oh, nano desu."

"Fuh~n, it seems they're holding exhibition of the ancestor king Yamato."

"Looks like it's quite crowded there."

"Nn."

The museum is constructed with three connected main halls. Among them, the biggest hall is holding an [Ancestor King Yamato Exhibition] for a limited time.

The order of things are set, so we'll go according to those orders.

First, it's an area for stuffings and skeletal structures.

The ambiance is fundamentally the same as the one in Japan, but there are monster stuffings among them, so the impression is quite different.

"It's dangerous nodesu, please leave this to Pochi and go ahead nodesu!"

"I'll wait it to you~"

"Pochi, we'll wait ahead after defeating the demon lord!"

You girls, please do the tour normally. Why are they holding a small drama. Moreover, what do you mean by [Wait], it's [Leave].

<TLN: Tama used [Matasete] instead of [Makase]>

"Master, are they not going to move?"

"Un, they're stuffings after all."

I feel they'd move if they become undeads.

Nana points at the stuffings of a small kingfisher and a squirrel-like small animal.

"It's cute."

"Nn."

Lulu and Mia are looking at a penguin's stuffing. There's one in a parallel world too huh. I pray that it's not a stuffing of penguinman or something.

Oh right.

"Pochi, come here for a bit."

"Yes, nano desu."

I carry Pochi, who has come trotting, under my arm and bring it closer to the mouth of a big monster called Fortress Tiger.

"Wagahai, you, bite whole."

<TLN: Wagahai=I.>

While making odd voice to surprise Pochi, I put my arm inside the monster's mouth.

>[Ventriloquism Skill Acquired]

I didn't intend to though.

"Y, you can't nano desu. Pochi isn't tasty nodesu."

Pochi is panicking and flailing around on my arm.

"Meat, delish."

"Meat is tasty, but Po, Pochi isn't a meat nodesu. That's why eating me is, bad, nano desu."

Since Pochi begins to seriously become scared, I put on the break.

"I'm sorry, Pochi."

"Master is mean nodesu. Pochi was scared nodesu. I demand apology and compensation nodesu."

"Then, how about I make a delicious fish dish for dinner as the compensation?"

"Fish.... Fish attacks so I hate it nano desu."

Well now? Did a fish-shaped monster came out?

I glance at Arisa, who smiles wryly beside us, to ask about it.

"Back when we're going around stuffing ourselves with the cuisines in Gururian city, a fish bone gets stuck in Pochi's throat, it was bad."

"A, Arisa. You promised to keep that a secret nodesu. Not talking about it nano desu."

Pochi has tears on her eyes, unusually so, she's hitting Arisa like a spoiled child. Oh, Arisa's HP is decreasing. Arisa is saying, "O, ouch, ch, Po, Pochi, serious punch is not okay~", like she has some allowance, but in truth, it's seriously painful for her isn't it?

I lift Pochi from behind and her punch stops connecting. Since Arisa says, "Uu~ looks like it'll become bruises.", I give her mana healing with the hand that hold Pochi in reverse.

<TLN: I think I'll go with magic power = mana from now on.>

"Oh~, it feels nice."

"Master, please the mana supplement for me."

"Next."

Since Nana wouldn't understand that this isn't mana supplying, I give the mana healing to everyone who seems to be interested with it.

For some reason, it's become so that I'm healing waist pain of the elderly in the museum too, and since Pochi and the others have been given snacks by the elderly, I can't stop halfway, and finish until the last one. Liza and Lulu accompanied beside me until the end, but the other members go back to tour the museum, maybe because they grew tired. That's unfair.

8-6. Workshops and Museum Visits (2)

Satou's here. I couldn't believe it when I saw the existence of tofu hamburg steak for the first time. Recently, there are a lot of hamburg steaks made with various raw materials, but I say that hamburg steak made with minced beef and pork is the best.

◇

It's already evening huh.

Just how many old men's and old women's waists have I massaged. Everyone was grateful so it was worth doing, but I had hoped that they would hold back a bit.

"Looks like the field hospital is over eh. Here, here, come here."

Arisa and Nana have just come back from sightseeing work of arts and treasures. The two lead me by hands to the Yamato exhibition. There are only a few people around, maybe because it's evening.

"Gozaru~"

"Gozaru nano desu!"

Pochi and Tama who are wearing haori that look like Shinsengumi outfits are taking poses with wooden swords modeled after Japanese katana on their hands.

"Fu fuhn, they look the part right. I've bought them from the cosplay corner, or rather, souvenir corner."

"Arisa, I cannot commend on your wasteful spending."

Liza scolds her, but Arisa's pocket money comes from the salary she's got from Nina-san. I can't get used with, "What belongs to the slaves also belongs to the master.", kind of common sense at all.

There are also a corner exhibiting Japanese katana, but they're treated as [Ancient Swords]. It seem like it didn't get spread.

The dummy of Yamato-san's side arm, the holy sword Claiomh Solais, is being displayed at the center of the katana exhibition corner.

It's a big sword nearly two meters long. From what I remember, Claiomh Solais should have been a one-handed sword in the previous world, but since it's a knowledge from games, it's not a reliable one.

If Yamato-san can use this sword, that person might unexpectedly have large body build.

A huge three meters wide picture is being displayed behind the dummy sword.

It's a picture of Yamato-san fighting against a demon lord with golden body standing on top of a castle. Yamato-san is depicted riding on a dragon's back while wielding the holy sword. Yamato-san looks slightly small, but since the dragon and the demon lord are big, I guess it can't be helped.

Numerous floating swords are pictured there, it's probably the artist's interpretation. It's a scene that seems likely to appear in an anime.

"There is no such thing as human riding on a dragon."

"Eeh~, don't something like dragon knight fire you up."

Liza looks a bit displeased when she sees the picture of Yamato-san riding a dragon. The scalekin might be people who deify dragons.

I somehow understand why Arisa used [Fired up], instead of [Burned]. Mia is nodding besides Arisa, I'm not going to pursue the reason for that.

Arisa, be more modest in being a culture hazard.

Before we could get to the clothes exhibition, a museum official notifies us that the building is closing, so the tour ends. Let's come again if we have time.

According to Arisa who has toured it earlier, there are various cosplay costumes inside, but I think that they're not cosplay but what the people in that era are wearing.

◇

When we get back to the earl's mansion, lady Karina who's got left behind tries to pick a quarrel with me, but she quickly forgives me after Pochi and Tama present her with the matching shinsegumi's haori, and the headband as souvenirs. She's quite calculating.

Lady Karina's maids group raise cheer of joy when I tell them that I'm in charge of the cooking tonight, but since I don't think I could make anything extravagance, it's troubling when they're this happy.

For the sake of fixing Pochi's hate with fish, I'm making a fish dish today.

"How about it, Arisa helped dressed me, do you think it suits me?"

"It suits you really well."

I answer half-heartedly to lady Karina who purposely comes to the kitchen to show me the haori she's wearing. Is she really that happy for the matching outfit with Pochi and the others?

I make the fish into minced meat.

It hits upon me when I see the dumplings for the ration yesterday; the fish meat hamburg steak. I slightly mix in goat fat to add some subtle flavors, since the taste would be too plain with just fish meat. I'm unsure with the amount of eggs I have in stock for this. Since Karina maids group looks to be free, let's ask them to buy some eggs.

"Master, the oil is boiling."

I ask Lulu to fry the potatoes. Potato is a must for hamburg steak.

Next, I quickly make the carrot glace. The potatoes are piling up, I'll make mashed potatoes from it. I put the asparagus look-a-like as the garnish.

The Worcester-like sauce that I've got from the head chef in Gururian city is going to be the sauce. I can make it myself since I've been taught the recipe too, but it's not usable for now since it needs fermentation. Therefore, I decide to use the ones from the parting gift just like that.

"Pochi!""Tama!"

The two people call each other's name and hug when they see the hamburg steak. Are you really that happy? That remind me, they're also overjoyed when I make it with ordinary meat back then. There's no sauce at that time, so I make a faux sauce with the soy sauce as the base.

I tell everyone beforehand that there is no additional serving for the hamburg steak, so they eat it while savoring the taste.

"Delishya~"

"Though it's different from before, it's delicious nodesu."

"Delicious~♪"

Looks like it's quite popular.

"It's the first time I've eaten this dish."

"I'm eating such luxurious dish that even Karina-sama hasn't eaten!"

"Erina, stop being vulgar during the meal."

The mouths that need to feed have increased with lady Karina's and her maid group'. I'm the one who invited them at first, but the maid group are eating together before I know it.

"Pochi, is it delicious?"

"Yes, nano desu!"

"Really?"

"Real, ly, nano desu!"

Pochi bends her body with the "Real", and stretch out her whole being with the "Ly" to express the deliciousness. It's cute, but I have to tell her the truth here.

"Pochi-kun."

"Yes, captain."

Captain is it.

"I have a serious thing to report."

"Aye."

Why are you saluting.

"That hamburg steak is made with fish."

"Fissh meat nano desu?"

Pochi leans her head to one side. Why are you using strange intonation.

"Like I said, it's not meat, it's fish."

"L, lie nano desu! Master is a bully nano desu."

"Pochi-chan, it's not a lie. I was beside master so I saw it too. It was certainly made with minced fish."

"Gaa~n, nano desu."

Pochi falls to the ground while supported by both her hands. Why are you shocked to that extent.

Tama pats the shoulder of Pochi who's fallen down.

"Pochi."

"Tamaa."

Tama strongly puts her thumbs up and continues her words.

"Delicious is~ Justice!"

"!"

Pochi is astonished with Tama's words.

It somehow stinks of a small theatric play, so I glance at Arisa who averts her eyes. So you really are the one behind this.

"Tama speaks the truth nodesu. Delicious thing is supreme nano desu!"

Pochi raises her face, and gazes at the sky with an expression as if enlightened. Since we're indoor, the only thing that could be seen there is the chandelier, but no one is retorting.

For the time being, Pochi has become better with fish. When we're eating fish dish, she asks me or Lulu to take out the bones, but she doesn't dislike it anymore.

◇

"Arisa, do you want to read this book?"

"Nn~? The book you've bought with Toruma ossan? Is there a book for intermediate level light magic?"

Arisa invited me to the bathroom when we were relaxing on the sofa after meal, so I changed the subject to avert her attention. The bathroom here is for single-person use only with a bath tub, so I can't relax if I get intruded during the bath.

"T, these are!"

I show Arisa the magic book for intermediate level light magic, explosion magic, and destruction magic manual.

"Kuh, if I dye my hair to pink, I'd exactly become the heroine."

Yeah yeah.

Next, I take out the space magic book that only has the spells written in it.

"What's this one? The book looks to be very badly managed..."

Arisa's expression changes after she sees the spell.

"Hey, don't tell me this is space magic?"

"It is."

"Don't, say, it, so easily~~~."

I slightly pull away from Arisa who's loaded her words with excessive force while saying, "Uga".

"It surely is unusual, but people who can use space magic aren't that rare right?"

From what I see in all the cities I've been so far, shadow magic is the rarest. I've never seen any user beside Zen.

The runner-ups are explosion, destruction, and mind magic, beside lady Ringrande and Arisa, the only other users of those magic are demons and the demon lord.

Following it are ghost, summoning, and space magic, their users are few, but in a big city, there are several people who can use them.

"What are you saying! It's space magic you know, space magic! It's not a standard cheat!"

"It'd be convenient if there's a teleport magic, but you don't have enough skill points to learn space magic right?"

Arisa's degree of excitement has decreased somewhat.

I'm sorry to spoil the fun, but even if there is a teleport magic, it'd be an advanced level.

"Fuhahaha, since when did you misunderstand that skill points are fixed?"

Arisa looks down from the sofa while looking proud.

That's a surprise.

8-7. Nighttime Training

Satou's here. Recently, on top of being online, save data is saved automatically, making the reset trick like how it's used to be in the past becomes unusable, it feels slightly lonely. There's just something good about reset isn't it.

◇

"What do you mean? Don't tell me, it can be reset?"

"It can you know? Didn't I tell you?"

This is the first time I've heard it of course.

I still have grandly excessive skill points remaining, but since the prospect of leveling up isn't too bright for me, the existence of reset is quite important.

"How do we do it?"

"You acquire the reset skill, 『Reset』, and execute it. You can get back all points from all skills except unique and gift ones."

How convenient.

And how unreasonable. It's an unrelated skill for me who cannot choose reset.

"Hey, don't show such face."

She can see through the poker face skill like always.

"Even reset isn't all-powerful."

If it was, you could change skills composition during a fight. That reminds me, that anime [Esper Senotan] I've watched does similar things.

"You lost 5-20% of your skill point once you use it you know. And there is no way to recover them."

I'll lost 155-620 skill points if I use it huh, the remuneration is too great. I understand why Arisa has never used it now.

"There's also another reason why I don't want to use it~."

When I ask it, she answers, "REALLY, painful."

Then, wouldn't the neighborhood get annoyed if she used reset here. I was going to prepare pain-killer for her, but according to Saga hero, there were records of increased lost points when the person involved used medicines.

"Do you have any place in mind where it's okay to make noises?"

"Wait a bit."

I execute the wind magic that I've learned, <<Secret Field>>.

With this, sounds will not leak out for several hours.

"I've used the magic to make this place private. Sounds won't leak with this."

"Then we can do ecchi things as we please right."

"I'd cancel it you know?"

This Arisa really never changes huh.

◇

I put Arisa who is exhausted to rest on my lap.

After she executed reset, I hugged Arisa on my lap, but not only she clawed my back, she was also going wild on my arms. I was worried that her violet hair would turn white, but it was just an imaginary fear. When the reset is over, she lost her consciousness, so I let her slept on my lap on the sofa, but...

"Arisa, if you're going to sexually harass me, I'll put you down from my lap okay?"

Even after that much pain, what a tough girl. She put herself in a delicate position while pretending to be asleep.

"So, did it go well?"

"Sort of~, I don't quite have enough points, so in exchange of mind and light magic, I've got space magic level 6."

Arisa is feeling accomplished, but I have to warn her beforehand.

"Arisa, this is an order. Barging into the bathroom while I'm bathing or peeking at me changing are forbidden beside during emergency."

"Guha, at least, at least, do that order if I get caught red-handed please. The little bit of reward for a maiden~~~."

She's really thinking about it after all huh.

◇

Arisa requests to have her test her magic to her heart's content, so we go to the underground labyrinth. I inform Liza when we are going out.

The duke's subordinates are on the lookout at the teleport device and the hole that I've made before, so I make a new passage in another place to the underground labyrinth.

"The king has donkey ears."

I understand what she's trying to say, but what would we do if there are soldiers patrolling the area. There's none though of course.

"Stop saying stupid things, let's go."

I carry Arisa on my arms, and jump below. It's not connected to the floor where I fight the demon lord, but another place.

"Haa, I thought I was going to die."

How rude. I regulated the speed properly.

Since I'm afraid that the effect from big magic would be felt above ground, I dive three layers below.

"What kind of place is this? It looks like a labyrinth, but there's no monster."

"It's the remain of a labyrinth."

"Ee~ it feels like the demon lord will really come out."

Hmm?

What is she saying?

"Didn't I say yesterday? When I was hunting demons, I also defeated a demon lord that popped up."

Even though Arisa was saying, "Good work~", or, "It was hard huh~" herself.

"Eh, you were serious?"

"Very serious."

"Lying~ you're lying, if it's true, your title should have become 『True Hero』!"

She's knowledgeable about it.

Might as well, I put on the hero Nanashi style and the title [True Hero]. I do not don the wig, so my hair remains black. I have to buy one next time.

"Uwah, it's true. How did you defeat it? Ah, it must be with a holy sword of course."

Galatine delivers the decisive blow, but the one that does the most works is Durandal, so I show that one to her.

Arisa is returning the sword, but I tell her to keep it.

"The demon lord has been defeated, so I'll leave it to Arisa. I have a lot of other weapons, so it's fine."

I'm thinking of leaving one to Arisa for an insurance if anything happens, but Arisa interprets it differently, and desperately draws closer to me.

"Don't tell me that the repatriation offer from the god has come."

The heck is that.

"After you defeat the demon lord and become the 『True Hero』, it seems that the god will come to ask if you want to be repatriated, or remain in this world as a hero. The story is that if you answer『Go home』then, you'd get sent back to your previous world."

"There's no need to worry about it, even if the god asks me if I want to go back, I'll stay here for the present time."

I can't go back to the previous world in peace before Arisa, Pochi, and the others become strong enough to defeat demons.

Furthermore, I'm not summoned with the normal hero summoning, so there's no guarantee that I can go back to the previous world. If I get the chance to do it, I'll ask to have a letter for my family delivered instead of myself. If I just write [I'm healthy], I feel like they will forgive me. My family are carefree unlike me, so it's probably alright.

"Th, that means..."

Oops, Arisa who's misunderstood is blushing, let's talk about something stupid.

"I haven't finished the sightseeing of this world after all."

"He?"

The angry Arisa is hitting me softly, let's take it contently.

◇

"Did you get any rare drop? Like demon lord core (Demon Core)?"

Although it seems to be something real, looks like the thing called [Demon Lord Core (Demon Core)] doesn't exist.

"There's nothing great. There are two liuyedao that the demon lord uses, but they're too big for human, it's unusable. Moreover, one of them is broken. Other things are belongings of [Wings of Liberty], like demon summoning magic book, or specific magic circle for summoning the short horn, and also, miscellaneous accessories."

Those accessories belong to nobles, so they could be worth some money, but since it'd likely be doubted from robbery, I melt them to become materials instead.

I have a lot of Short Horn, the original collection goal, but there's no need to say it.

"Demon summoning, it doesn't use mobile phone or note PC does it."

"It doesn't."

It's just that, since it's a dangerous book with methods to summon upper demon or the ceremony for demon lord revival, I intend to store it away. I can just burn it, but since there's a possibility that the content of the spell can be applied for other magic, I'm going to keep it.

I test elementary level magic together with Arisa, but it's dangerous to try intermediate and higher level magic with Arisa, so I go alone to a gigantic floor to test them. As expected of real magic intended for attacking, not blacksmithing. You can't joke around with the power.

I can only use [Implosion] of explosion magic, and powered-down [Laser] of light magic when I'm in a town.

I will have Toruma's parent house to create scrolls that are a bit more usable.

"Welcome back."

Arisa who's welcoming me is looking listless on the cushion she's put on the floor.

She's probably totally exhausted. I can smell sweet scent, so she's probably drunk mana recovery potion while testing her magic.

"What kind of extreme magic did you use. I was scared that the labyrinth would collapse you know."

That's strange.

On top of being quite far from her, I covered the inner wall with the barrier magic that I had learned.

"I'm sorry, it looks like I wasn't serene enough."

"It's fine already. I can't get surprised anymore."

In other words, you were surprised huh.

"Rather than that, could you make something like this?"

Arisa is asking me to make a carved seal, that's drawn the magic book, on a board. Looks like it's a unique mark needed to be put at the teleport destination for the only teleport magic in the space magic book that has until intermediate level in it.

"Seems like you'd be able to do trading alone with this."

"Please don't be absurd. It only reaches several kilometers at most. Even leveling up the skill only help to increase number of people that can be teleported together, and decrease MP consumption on this magic."

Presently, Arisa can only take one person along with her. Moreover, she'll run out of magic power by just leaping a bit of distance. The fuel consumption looks bad.

"During a real emergency, I can use [Over Boost], and take everyone along to escape."

Oh, that's the best.

I give Arisa several carved seal boards that I've finished making on the magic granting stand. These take one gold coin and two silver coins to make, it looks like a space magician can easily run out of money.

Since we're here already, I hide one carved seal board on this place.

8-8. At Toruma's Residence

Satou's here. Japanese houses can be described as rabbit's huts, but I think 1LDK is enough for living alone. The cleaning and tidying would be troublesome if it's too wide.

◇

"What are you making this time?"

"It's a wire."

The workshop visits are scheduled for the afternoon today, so I spend the free time to do some handiworks. Even though I say wire, it's not a simple steel thread. If I entwine magic liquid to a yarn, it becomes able to move it at my discretion. It can't move quite freely at will, so it might be good to think carefully on the knit direction.

Tama who sits on my lap has been entangling with the wire, so the work doesn't really progress. I've asked Mia to help me to hold the yarn, but it seems she's having more fun with the wire.

Mia, even if you're tired, please don't play with the wire together with Tama.

"Fuffuffuu, I know what you're actually making!"

Hoo?

"It must be, a whip sword!"

The heck is that?

Is there even any relation with wire.

"I'm just making a normal wire though?"

"Eh, boring."

The whip sword Arisa is talking about seems to come out in a certain anime, it's a fantasy weapon where the sword can detach like a whip connected with wire and back to sword shape. It's probably like a three-secion staff.

I don't think that it's practical at all.

When I tell that to Arisa, she says, "It's romantic." It can't be helped if it's a romance then.

Although, if I have the nature magic [Magic Hand] and [Mana String], I probably won't need the wire that can moves at will, but it might be better not to tell her that.

◇

The workshop visits in the afternoon finishes faster than scheduled, so I decide to come to Toruma's residence as I've promised the other day.

I'm followed by Nana, Arisa, and for some reason, also lady Karina and her maid Pina. Pochi and Tama naturally don't look like they want to go, and since the others also seem like they don't want to meet Toruma, I leave them behind. You've done a great job getting hated Toruma ossan.

Liza asked me to have her also followed, but I requested her to teach Lulu and the others self-defense and left them. If I thoughtlessly let her come, there's a high probably that she'll get offended there.

I've imagined that Toruma's residence will be a 3LDK since I'm told that it's a detached building of the viscount Shimen's mansion, but instead, the residence is easily bigger than the mansion we're staying. We enter from the back door near Toruma's residence so I don't get to see the main building, but it must be an imposing building.

Viscount Shimen is flourishing alright. No wait, the building is probably the fruit of many generations' powers.

"Excuse me for my long absence, Hayuna-san."

"It has been a while, Satou-san. Ara, I have to stop calling you Satou-san. Since you've got a peerage, I wonder if I have to call you with your house name."

Hayuna-san who I haven't seen for a while is wearing a relaxed noble wife-like clothes. They're not gaudy, but it looks graceful and of high-quality. Mayuna-chan is being cuddled by a middle-aged maid who looks to be the wet-nurse.

"I have come back, young organism."

Nana pokes Mayuna-chan with her finger, and the little hand catches that finger. Nana's face looks like it's melting when she sees that gesture.

Meanwhile, lady Karina looks at that situation very interestingly, but she doesn't try to approach the baby at all.

"Do you want to try holding her in your arm, Karina-sama?"

Hayuna-san has offered so to lady Karina, but she only replies by shaking her head. Come to think of it, she's docile in front of Toruma. Unexpectedly, he might have been her first love.

◇

"Have Karina-sama gone to the opera house?"

"No, there wasn't a good opportunity..."

"You should go by all means. You have to hear the miraculous voice of Lulilutoa the fairy at least once!"

"Hee, by fairy, you mean elf?"

"It's difficult to distinguish between fairy, but it's probably an elf."

We're having a chat while enjoying tea and snacks on the terrace.

Hayuna-san is talking about various topics with Karina who's being quiet and meek, but she doesn't respond it well. Arisa follows-up Hayuna-san to help her. Nana is going crazy about the baby of course.

"Oh right, Satou-dono."

"What is it?"

Toruma is going to say something at this time, but it will forever remain a mystery.

That is because the mood has been dyed by the appearance of a woman who pushes through the bushes.

"Ara, Toruma-niisan, I've thought you are eloping, you've come back?"

"Hey, Rin, it's been a while. You've become quite beautiful."

The one that appears is lady Ringrande. She's calling Toruma brother due to the habit since her childhood, but he's actually her cousin. Looks like she doesn't have her armor and great sword today. She's wearing red knight-like clothes with a thin sword hanging. However, judging from how she appears, is she being chased by someone?

"Toruma-niisan, I'm sorry, but can you let me hide here for a bit?"

"No problem. I've never declined a request from Rin right?"

"Thank you, nii-san is always reliable--"

Lady Ringrande scans on the people around while thanking Toruma closely, and immediately after she sees me on the corner of her eyes, she approaches.

"You, after failing to hit on Sera, now you're trying to approach her from the moat outside?"

That's quite outrageous even for a false accusation. The misunderstanding should have been cleared by Sera's explanation in the first place.

Arisa glances for an instant, but I gesture to her not to cut into the conversation.

"Sera-sama most likely had explained it already, but I just met her by chance when I was helping the food distribution on the downtown."

I try to tell her that it's just an unfounded misunderstanding, but the KY ossan talks about unneeded things as expected.

"So Satou-dono is aiming for Sera huh, I've thought that you surely will marry Karina since you've brought her here from Muno territory. It's still not enough with eight huh, I'm really jealous of young people."

"Toruma-niisan, are you speaking the truth?"

"Un? It's mostly true yeah."

Ossan, please restrain yourself from speaking statements that will birth misunderstandings. Eight you say, stop including lady Karina in the equation.

"You're going to make the cute Sera your ninth lover? I won't forgive you."

"Err~ Ringrande-sama? I'll say this many times over, it's a misunderstanding okay?"

She pulls the thin sword and comes toward me.

"Excuses are useless. I'll beat you into shape once to correct your character. Or, is that sword on your waist just a decoration?"

It is a decoration though.

She looks like she'll get mad if I say that. She's already mad even if I don't say it though.

Arisa is grinning while laughing and saying, "Go get her~?", irresponsibly fanning her. Hayuna-san looks troubled even though she doesn't really understand the situation. Nana shows her face and says, "Master, may the fortune be with you.", and goes back to the baby--must be because she trusts me.

At time like this, Karina who's usually the fastest to pick a quarrel is quiet. I've thought that she's still being meek, but she looks grim for some reason. She's muttering, "Ringrande? Cousin Rin? That's the genius magician who's become the hero's companion?" in a low voice. I prefer her usual, "It's a fight desuwa.", than her being like this.

Looks like there's some kind of discord between them, so I won't involve myself with it.

"I understand, I may be inadequate, but please instruct me well."

Can't be helped.

Might as well get her teach me how to fight. I've also been ridiculed by the demon lord, so this is just right.

While walking to the courtyard where she's standing by, I draw the fairy sword, taking the breaths of lady Ringrande, Hayuna-san and the others. I wonder who's the one that murmurs, "Beautiful."

I don't put magic power into the fairy sword, and wield it in its lightweight state.

Lady Ringrande stabs with her thin sword without any preparation. The course is to my cheek. The stabs is quick as one expects of the thin sword.

I prepare the fairy sword in low stance to brush the attack off.

Before the thin sword touch the fairy sword, she retracts and holds it, and when I'm swinging the fairy sword up, she pushes the thin sword to my defenseless chest.

Wait, lady Ringrande? That's going straight to my heart you know?

I'm thinking that she's going to stop before hitting, but she looks like she's thinking that insects that follow lady Sera around should just die, scary.

I'm pulling the short cane with my other hand which doesn't hold the fairy sword to ward off the thin sword. Of course, the short cane will be easily cut if it blocks the thin sword, but as if seeing it as a dagger since I move it in an instant, Ringrande pulls back her thin sword, and opens up some distances.

"Fumu, you're quite good. It doesn't seem like your mithril sword is only for show. You were pretending to be an amateur by having your eyes looked all over the place right. I didn't think that you had prepared your next move beforehand."

I see, my lines of sight huh. I didn't think that.

Afterwards, I learn the way to use my line of sight to feint, reading the breath, and many other techniques that aren't covered in skills.

Misunderstandings are good sometimes.

8-9. At Toruma's Residence (2)

Satou's here. Mad dogs kind of people often appear in tales, but in the previous world, I've only ever seen those kinds during my school days. Are they mellowing with ages? In a parallel world, I feel that they'd get weeded out before they could get mellowed.

◇

"Hoo, the one they call Silver Valkyrie of the Battlefield is playing together with a kid huh?"

The people who are intruding this precious lady Ringrande's swordsmanship classroom are three knights wearing white armors. They're subordinates of Shiga kingdom king, the holy knights, and also; the elderly man, and the humorous yet handsome young man have [Shiga Eight Sword] titles. The humorous handsome young man is called Sharlick Shiga. The third prince of Shiga kingdom.

By the way, by kid, did he mean me?

"Prince Sharlick, isn't it impolite to intrude on other people's house even if he's your retainer?"

"Ringrande, you're too stiff. Heya, little brother of viscount Shimen--."

"Toruma. Your highness."

Toruma supplemented the prince who was hesitating.

Ossan can read this kind of atmosphere huh. In a way, he's really like a noble.

Without looking excited, the prince says, "Sorry to intrude.", and Toruma also allow him like it's natural.

Nevertheless, I know that he has a business with lady Ringrande, but what are these guys coming here for?

"I have some businesses with Ringrande. You guys, step away."

He said it like a request, but that was an order alright.

"Your highness, I'm sorry, but this is my house, and she is my cousin. Even if it's your highness, it'll be better if you avoid being alone together with an unmarried woman."

"Fuhn, what's wrong with fiancees being alone together."

"Our engagement should have been canceled since seven years ago."

Well then, I want to get away from this complicated spot, I wonder what I should do.

"Your highness, you should stop with the troublesome talks, and just do it like this."

The holy knight boy who have been looking like a mischievous kid since earlier draws his sword and comes to me while slashing it.

What's with this guy? Is his head alright?

His rushing speed is fast, but compared to lady Ringrande, his swordsmanship is full of holes.

"Oh you're drawing your sword in front of his highness, it's fine to label you as a rebel then right."

What kind of logic is that. Hair-splitting-ly bad false accusation.

Since he uses a mithril alloy sword known for its hardness, I avoid his attack without blocking with the fairy sword. However, the boy continues attacking relentlessly.

Is he a battle maniac?

"Oyo? That mithril sword isn't only for show eh. Aha, can you block this?"

The boy releases an consecutive attacks technique like tornado.

Is this a fighting game.

I will look too conspicuous if I avoid that, so I receive it with my sword and pretend to be blown back. Lady Karina and Hayuna-san call out my name with worry. Arisa probably understands since my health hasn't decreased, and Nana doesn't seem to worry from the beginning. They really trust me~. They really trust me, right?

Lady Karina literally jumps with Raka's power and holds me on her arms.

OH! fuka, fuka.

<TLN: onomatopoeia for 'soft soft'.>

"Hee, you can use physical reinforcement too eh? If you pick up his sword, I'd be your opponent you know?"

I stop lady Karina's hand that's going to pick my sword. She cannot win.

"You can't, Karin-sama(.)"

Meanwhile, Toruma is doing his best trying to stop the prince. He's quite weak-willed, but work hard.

"Your highness, he's a retainer of baron Muno, and a noble who holds peerage. Can you please stop the man over there?"

"Hou, serving that cursed territory, he must've been quite broke."

Huh? I get slightly angry from the line just now. I might be quite fond of baron Muno and his retainers if I say so myself. Arisa looks quite offended, but as expected, the opponent is too bad, she can't intervene.

"I won't forgive you for insulting our territory, even if you're the prince. I'll make you take back that word, even if I have to risk my life."

"Fuhn, are you trying to gain favor of that kid and join the rank of noble? Women should just stay in the home raise the children you've birthed obediently."

Lady Karina has told me that she has never participated in the upper society even once, so that's probably why he doesn't know her. It seems he's thinking that she's the wife or a mistress of the retainer of baron Muno, in other word, a worthless noble, not his daughter. It's pitiful.

"I am the second daughter of baron Muno, Karina desuwa. There's no reason to treat me like a maidservant you know?"

Lady Karina stands up in front of the prince while she puts her hands on her waist, firmly facing to the front and glares at him.

I stand up while patting my head who has fallen to the ground.

The opponent is a prince, the right thing to do here is to withdraw.

"I cannot remain silent since my master's house is insulted. Even if you're a prince, I'll have you retract your words earlier."

Huh~?

Even though the right thing to do was to wait carefully. I lined up side-by-side with lady Karina, and said such words. It must have been the influence of this teenage body. I'll leave it at that.

At minimum, I'm discreet enough to leave the sword in the sheath. I'm certain to become the target of punishment if I face my sword toward the royal family.

"Karina-dono, our winning percentage is limitlessly zero understand?"

"Raka-san, there are times when a woman must not withdraw."

The two are heating up? However, you shouldn't confront him physically since he's a royal family okay.

"As ever, you think women are only tools for giving birth to children."

Lady Ringrande says so in a voice shaking with anger while cutting herself between lady Karina and the prince.

Toruma comes and claps Karina's shoulder. Her feet are trembling. She was really forcing herself.

"Your highness, the person you've falsely accused is the hero of the Muno city defensive war. Moreover, he's defeated the demon that's appeared in Gururian city, and currently stays in this dukedom capital as the duke Oyugock's guest of honor. Putting aside your highness, I think it would trouble the people over there."

Shifting the blame from the prince to the battle maniac boy huh.

The prince wouldn't back down if he was criticized after all.

"Fuhn, it can't be helped, I suppose I'll leave it here. It'd be troubling if the available forces decreased before the demon lord awakens.

Right, was it Toruma? The only capital is the royal capital. Calling Oyugock city a capital is a blasphemy somewhat."

The prince leaves while firing such parting shot.

I didn't think that Toruma would be the one who restored peace to this place.

Nevertheless, I'm worried with the way that prince is speaking as if the demon lord will be revived here for certain. Don't tell me, the mastermind behind the [Wings of Liberty] isn't the third prince, is he?

◇

"Is that prince going to participate in the martial arts tournament too?"

"No, that's not it--you're doing well after getting that attack."

"I had a magic potion in my pocket just at the right time."

I wave the empty bottle to deceive her.

Toruma answers my question.

"I think his highness is going to attend the wedding ceremony of Rin's little brother, Tisrad, that is to be held after the tournament ends."

Tisrad is a grandchild of duke Oyugock, he's going to marry the daughter of marquis Elett it seems. The next duke is going to be the father of lady Ringrande, and the next one after that seems to be Tisrad's turn. It seem she has also gone home in order to attend this wedding.

"There's also a rumor that his majesty will also attend this ceremony."

"Toruma-niisan, that's a confidential matter. Please don't spread it around too much."

The maid recommends me to change my tattered clothes to new ones, so I leave from here.

Still, the development is progressing by leaps and bounds.

The settled matters are, [The third prince, Shalrick, wants to make lady Ringrande his bride.], [Lady Ringrande does not want that.], [The little brother of lady Ringrande is going to get married], I guess.

The unsettled matters are, [The king might come for the wedding ceremony.], [The third prince and his companions might be certain that the demon lord would appear in the dukedom capital.]

It's scary if a different demon lord appears during the wedding ceremony.

When I'm going to leave Toruma's residence after changing clothes, lady Ringrande calls out to me.

"You're better than I've thought. Come to the castle if you want to become stronger. I'll give you some lessons while I'm in the dukedom capital."

I'd be glad to receive her lessons, but I hate to do it in a conspicuous place like the castle.

"I'll say this just in case, it's not like I've recognized your relationship with Sera alright?"

Like I said, it's a misunderstanding.

When I've exhausted myself telling her that it's a "Misunderstanding", she gets angry instead, "What are you dissatisfied with Sera with". What an incoherent person.

Arisa secretly says, "A tsundere has come", is this tsundere?

◇

"I won't forgive him."

"That's right. It's good that he's the third prince."

"You're right~ That's the silver lining."

It seems that lady Karina who's being indignant cannot comprehend Arisa's and my words.

"See, if that became the king of this era, it'd be hard to live in this kingdom."

"When that happen, I have no choice but to move to Saga empire."

To help improve lady Karina's mood a bit, Arisa and me are joking around for a bit.

"Y, you can't desuwa. Satou is father's retainer, so you mustn't leave."

Lady Karina presses on me as if shaken, speaking worryingly. Close. Lady Karina, you're close. If you're this close, various things will hit--

Nana's breast are great, but lady Karina's volumes are extraordinary. I'm dangerously almost get adrift.

"Kick."

We've been havng a conversation on the courtyard of earl Walgock's mansion, but Mia appears out of nowhere and kicks me. She forcibly puts herself between lady Karina and me, opening some distances.

I tell lady Karina, "The thing about Saga empire is just a joke.", while patting Mia's head. I think she says something like, "Is, is that so, then it's fine desuwa", while blushing for a bit.

◇

In the evening of this day, I get entangled with the grumblings of lady Karina and her maids about the matter with the prince. Someone from the maid trope has brought liquor so I keep Arisa and the others away. I don't want to repeat that tragedy again.

Liza has been dispatched as the watchdog, she's participating in the drinking bout together with me. Liza certainly doesn't get hangover, but she goes to sleep instead. She's sleeping in a beautiful posture while sitting even now.

The two younger maids are smashed, they're sleeping on my laps. Lady Karina's gazes look scary.

"Satou! You should be gentler with me desuwa."

"That's right, chevalier-sama should make a rice porridge for me."

This is why drunkards are.

Lady Karina and Pina are only saying what they want to say each. They probably won't remember what they've said themselves tomorrow.

Raka wisely keeps silent.

I was going to follow its exemplar, but the two were hanging on each of my sides while saying, "Hey, are you listening?", and, "Does chevalier-sama prefer flat chest or kyonyuu, which is it!" One side feels too good, I'm not able to push them away.

Let's decline any invitation for drinking bout from tomorrow on.

Since the drunk Lady Karina is erotic, it's a bit hard to get entangled like this.

Let's make the rice porridge as the main gentle menu for the breakfast tomorrow.

8-10. To the Duke's Castle

Satou's here. During my school days, there was this wonderful catchphrase from the often-airing merchant's CM, "Crossing thousands of miles for meals." Much less thousands of miles, I've crossed over worlds instead.

◇

Why is this happening.

"Chevalier-sama, we've finished peeling the prawns' shells."

"Ah, not like that, you have to cover this with the flour once."

"Are we really going to use these leaves?"

"Yes, please wash the perilla with water."

Lulu and me are frantically making tempura with the duke's chefs in the duke's castle kitchen.

It was several hours before that--

◇

"Chevalier-sama, a messenger has come from the duke's castle."

Shelna-san told me while looking like she was seeing something heartwarming.

Right now I'm being toyed like a dress-up doll by Arisa under the pretext of the fitting session for the ball.

"Did you make any promise?"

"No, the plan today is only for me to attend the ball in the castle from the evening."

I tear off Arisa who has been using the opportunity to touch me all over while taking measurements, and change to the robe that Lulu has handed to me. I see that my hair isn't disordered from the mirror that Liza is holding, so I go to the messenger just as it is.

The one waiting in the room is the duke castle's consul aide--or not, it's the assistant who is taking notes in the back back then. He's saying that the duke wants to meet me in secret.

In secret.

In other words, it must be about the matter with the prince yesterday.

It shouldn't possibly be because of lady Sera. Even if lady Ringrande makes a fuss over the misunderstanding, lady Sera is still a miko of Tenion temple. Her name is also not Sera Oyugock, but [Sera], she's probably the so-called nun. Even if I make advances at her, we won't be able to get married. Before that, I don't even have any intention of making one.

Just in case, I ask about the subject to the messenger-san, but he doesn't know the detail after all.

For now, I'll have Arisa follows me to the castle.

"Arisa."

"What? This looks good on me right? You can praise me to your heart contents now~."

She's wearing the exact same maid uniform as the maids in Muno castle. Her blond wig isn't only styled in twin tail, but they're also loosely rolled. So this is the reason why she's coaxed me in making the hair iron-like magic tool the other day.

"Yeah, it's cute, it's cute. However, we're going to the castle, so take them off."

I tell Arisa to take off the slaver collar that she's put herself. She hasn't been using it recently, so what happens?

"If I wear it with maid uniform, won't you suddenly get a rush of immoral urge and become tempted to push me down?"

"I won't."

She says "Chiee" due to my immediate answer, and removes the collar.

I'm glad that the messenger is in the other carriage.

◇

"Leon's written in the letter that sir Pendragon isn't only well-versed in swordsmanship, and magic, but also in cooking."

Who's this Leon again.

Oh right, it's baron Muno's name if I'm not mistaken. I wonder what did he write in the letter.

We're in the same room as the one I've met with the duke in, a few days ago. Today, there aren't only the secret bodyguards around, lady Ringrande is also here.

"Fuhn, your swordsmanship yesterday is quite good, but you can also use magic huh. Next time when I'm coaching you, I'll have the combined techniques of swordsmanship and magic--"

"Rin."

"Ara, I'm sorry, grandfather."

According to the information from Shelna-san, it seems that the duke spoils his grandchild, lady Ringrande.

I've also got a bonus information that tells the third son of the duke who has kidnapped Sera for the [Wings of Liberty] is currently under house arrest under the guise of recuperation in one of the spire.

Confirming on my map, members of [Wings of Liberty], except the ones who have been gathering in earl Bobi's mansion and escaped to the city's suburb, are imprisoned in the dungeon below the castle.

"And so, I'd like you to show off your cooking skill for the ball tonight."

"I do not know what baron-sama has described in regard to my cooking, but I'm only good at making food suited for plebian's palate, as for high class dishes--"

"Come to think of it, Sera has praised your cooking too, you must've won her favor with your cooking haven't you."

"Rin. Leave here if you're going to pick a quarrel with the guest."

"I'm sorry, grandfather, it wasn't on purpose."

The duke seem like he can't match her, he looks down-hearted.

"I do not mean of you to make every dishes in the banquet. I don't mind if you only make that dish called Tempura that Leon's written."

"Then, I will try to live up to duke-sama's expectation despite my shortcoming."

I wasn't able to bring up the matter about the third prince from yesterday, but it'd be better for me to get good impressions from the duke. I'm not thinking of making him my ally, but at least I don't want to make an enemy out of him.

I don't care if the third prince wants to attack me, but it'll be troublesome if he meddles with my companions.

◇

"You good sir over there, I've got just the riight ideas to perk it up."

Arisa, why are you saying it like an underling.

"Say it normally."

"It's okay isn't it, just for a bit."

Summarizing Arisa's suggestions, they're ideas she's got from dishes in manga. I decide to pick something that can actually be made from among those ideas and practice it.

I'm led to a kitchen by a maid, it's become a battlefield for the people who are preparing for tonight.

"Oh, yer', no, err~, you are the noble they exaggeratedly call miracle chef huh, is it?"

This is the first time I've heard that nickname.

Still, he's trying too hard to use polite speechs.

"I'm sorry, our boss is certainly skilled, but he's not good with words, he can't speak polite speech well."

I see.

"Nice to meet you, I'm Satou Pendragon. It's fine for you to speak like usual if you're bad with polite speech."

When I say so, the head-chef and the chef who's followed him plainly look relieved.

"Oh, sorry bout that. I'm an old friend of the head chef at Gururian viceroy's place y'see. He's sent me a letter praising you."

Ah, that person is it. When I got some free times the day after the banquet, I made him teach me how to make the sauce and various techniques.

"Use this place here, it's a bit cramped, but there are all kinds of cooking utensils available. These two here are in charge of miscellaneous chores, call them if you need ingredients."

"Yes, thank you for everything."

I ask an errand boy in the mansion to call Lulu here. Recently, Lulu's cooking skill has become equal to an expert, so if Lulu who knows my way of cooking comes, It'll really help.

◇

I've prepared three kind of dishes.

The first is the tempuras as requested by the duke. The deep-fried food in this world are mostly fried with oils made from animals, but since it looks like it's bad for the body, I use oil from oily-salad-like vegetable. I'm able to make tempura sauce that's more delicious than usual since there are katsuoboshi in the duke castle's ingredient storeroom, maybe because it can be transported here via the river.

Half of the tempuras are fried and put on the table, and the other half are fried on the spot when someone is going to eat them with the help of Lulu and servers who are standing by near the table, that's the plan.

The second is aspic jellies. It seems to be a normal dish among the commoners, but it's not something that matches the dining table of nobles. Arisa's suggested to make it from colorful ingredients so it looks vivid, and I've unintentionally made its appearance by hand.

Being colorful is one, but there's also another meaning to it--

"Hou, you've splendidly created the crest of our duke's house on the dish."

I'm glad that it seems to be well-received.

However, since it's a family crest, everyone only admires at it, and no one puts their hands on it.

If the gentleman at the prime of his life who was together with lady Ringrande didn't say "Looks delicious", no one would probably have eaten it until the end. I should have thought about the design better.

"Fumu, this is the first time I've tasted this flavor, but it looks like the dish called jelly that has been lost since the era of ancestor king Yamato. It's truly delicious."

"It's true desuwane. This fish thing is delicious, but this red thing is also delicious. ...Kuh, no matter how delicious it is, Sera is off-limit."

This person is really obstinate.

"Hou, he's the man that Rin's mentioned, is he."

"Pleased to meet you for the first time. I'm Satou Pendragon."

"Ooh, the hero-dono of the defensive battle of Muno city is it. Toruma boasted greatly about you. You've also done great in Gururian city I've heard."

This gentleman is the father of lady Ringrande, the next duke.

At any rate, Toruma is the cause huh. Who's a hero. Arisa who's crouching below the table says in low voice, "Toruma is pretty good at lobbying." Looks like she's shrewdly taking the small dishes and enjoying them.

<TLN: Hero here is written as "Eiyuu", different than the usual hero "Yuusha", which literally means "brave person.">

"Sera is a gentle good child, but she's not suited with the lifestyle of nobles. Moreover, right now she's left the duke house for the temple. If you want to take that child back to the secular life, you have to persuade the Tenion temple's Saintess-sama first."

"The thing about me wooing Sera-sama is a misunderstanding on Ringrande-sama's part--"

I explain myself normally to the next duke, and the misunderstanding is cleared. I wish lady Ringrande follows his example.

"Hou, have you changed your job from a remote hero to a servant?"

The third prince appears wearing young noble-like attires while speaking unpleasantly. Today, he's only bringing the holy knight at the prime of his life along, the battle maniac boy doesn't seem to be here.

There's no need for him to come here deliberately, what a troubling thing to do.

8-11. To the Duke's Castle (2)

Satou's here. There are a lot of women who are light eaters, but it's said that that there are even more women who have another stomach for snacks. And then, that doesn't change even in the parallel world.

◇

"Prince, he's the favorite of my father. My father and me are also fans of his cookings."

When I was thinking how to deal with the prince who had come to pick a quarrel, the next duke threw the lifeboat.

It seems that the prince has only seen lady Ringrande and me, he looks surprised when he sees the next duke after he calls out to the prince.

As expected, the opponent is too bad, the prince looks troubled. I can see Arisa's smirking face and eyes behind the table. She's giving a peace sign with her small hand. How nostalgic.

"My, your highness Sharlick, so you're here. Please let us hear about the royal capital over here by all mean."

A woman with a somewhat thick make-up appears after she pushes her way through the crowd and invites the prince.

The prince takes advantage of this, says his farewell noncommittally and goes toward those women.

"Fumu, it'll be good if that man mellows a bit more."

"That's impossible. He hasn't changed in 10 years."

"If we're talking about swordsmanship, he's among the best in Shiga kingdom, but..."

"Father, a person's personality isn't proportional to his strength. If it is, then even Masaki will be, more."

Lady Ringrande was about to complain about the hero, but she put her hand on her mouth and lamented her verbal slip.

"Is the Shiga Eight Swords famous?"

"Are you really a noble of this kingdom?"

"Pardon me, it's because I come from the countryside."

As I'm told, the Eight Shiga Swords are titles given to the eight top swordsmen in the holy knight which is the strongest in the kingdom. The prince seems to be a candidate of being one, but he has been given a permission by the king to wear the kingdom's treasure, the holy sword Claiomh Solais.

By the way, the favorite cane of the ancestor king Yamato is to be used by the top imperial court magician in successive generations. It seems the reason why the king doesn't use the holy sword and the cane himself is because Yamato-san has implemented a system where they can only be used by the right person.

◇

After the next duke, and lady Ringrande leave, the young nobles that have been watching us from a distance gather with great interest, they eat the dishes with great relish.

They ask about my relationship with lady Ringrande, but I honestly tell them that I've just been coached in the way of sword by her.

Even though the amount of food should have been quite a lot, they're completely gone before 30 minutes has elapsed. It seems to be the victory of the appeal of deep fried food, and curious-looking dish.

"Sir Pendragon, can I have your time for a bit?"

Lady Karina came with a man companion.

Although I've said 'man companion', it's not something erotic, he's the little brother of lady Karina, and the eldest son of baron Muno, Orion-kun. He's a 14 years old young man who's studying in the duchy capital. I've been wanting to meet him ever since we arrive in the duchy capital, and I've sent letters many times, but it's always been refused due to various reasons, so this is our first meeting.

"If it isn't, Karina-sama. I presume the one there is the next baron-sama. I am Satou Pendragon. Hereafter, Pleased to make your acquaintance."

"Umu, I'm Orion Muno. Chevalier Satou, please be at ease."

Orion-kun introduces himself while nodding coolly. He might be in the age where he wants to be seen as someone's important with all his might. He only speaks in low voice when he's saying his name, the name given by the hero-loving baron is probably to blame. It's unfortunate.

They go toward the dance hall after we chat for a bit. Just in case, I advise them to be careful of the prince.

Right at that time, the dance party finally begins at the center hall. I don't have any intention of making passes on women since it looks like it'll become rumors in the upper society. After all, the unmarried women are all 13-18 years old, they feel somewhat too young so the fact that I don't feel any urge toward them becomes my reason.

Since the guests who are young women have increased, I decide to announce the third dish.

It's milk crepes, Mia's favorite. I've also added strawberry slices in addition to the fresh cream on the crepe since Arisa's found strawberries in the food storehouse.

"My, it smells good desuwa."

"It'll be done soon, so please wait for a bit."

I interpose the fresh cream and the strawberry in the crepes after it's done. Lulu put the finished crepes on the plate. Grabbing them by hands seem to be NG according to the head chef, so I place small fork and knife on it, and pass it to the young noble woman.

The girl's face is beaming after she bites the crepes once. Her face is full of make-up, but only at that time does it looks innocent and appropriate of her age.

The young noble men who've seen that try to invite the girl for a dance when she's finished eating. Go for it, boys and girls.

"Hey wait, don't show me that old man face."

Arisa said so while eating a small crepe below me.

Isn't it fine, I'm just cheering on them.

I continue frying the ordered crepes from the girls while having no time to reply Arisa.

There was no one who mistook me for an employee, maybe due to the expensive-looking clothes I was wearing. Thanks to that, we introduced each other whenever I took order for the crepe, and I memorized more than 100 girl's names. This was the first time that I began to think I should had used a shorter family name.

◇

The ingredients that I've prepared have all exhausted up, so I ask Lulu and Arisa to bring the pre-made fresh cream and strawberries that are being cooled in the kitchen here.

"It smells nice, doesn't it."

"I'm sorry, we've used up all the ingredients, so please wait for half an hour for your turn."

"My, it's quite popular, isn't it."

When I look up, there's the head-miko of Tenion temple.

Why?

"It's been a while, Satou-sama."

Lady Sera has come with her. There are two arrogant-looking priests of Parion and Garleon temples behind the head-miko. Both of them are thin men with white hair. There are miko girls who have been kidnapped with Sera beside her.

We're chatting while waiting for Lulu and Arisa to come back, it seems that the other two miko are also blood relatives of the duke. They're from branch families, unlike Sera who's a direct descendant. The two are alike since they're relatives, but I can distinguish them easily due to their different black and brown hairs.

Looks like the girls have come here to congratulate Sera's big brother, Tisrad, for his marriage. Since they want to meet him before the wedding day, it's a good opportunity today.

Lulu and Arisa have returned, so I resume the crepe-making. When the crepes enter miko girls' mouths, just like with the noble girl earlier, the composed faces of the miko changes into delighted faces of normal girls.

Sera notices the noble girls who are holding back on ordering the crepes due to the miko girls, and suggests to them to move away for a bit.

The crepe's batter is gone halfway through, so I use Freeze Water on the long and narrow melons that Arisa's brought to make sherbets. I've practiced doing this with citrus fruits in order to raise my proficiency in adjusting magic power, so the result is quite good even if the fruit used is different. Since Arisa and Mia who have eaten all the failed products got stomachaches before, this time I only make a few before ending it.

◇

"Chevalier-sama, would you be fine to dance with me?"

I wonder if my face looks like it's easy to invite. I've been invited by girls who seem to have just debuted in the upper society since a while ago. I can dance with no problem thanks to Society skill. Incidentally, I got [Dance] skill.

Several of the girls that I was dancing with invited me to drop by their houses. Apparently it's not because I've become popular, Arisa reminds me that it's because they expect me to bring snacks as presents for visiting their houses.

I don't have any misunderstanding okay?

"You're quite popular aren't you, Satou-sama."

"That's not the case at all. I was invited to dance as thanks for the snacks."

"That's not the case at all."

It was Sera that stepped up.

Even though her words contained some pricks when she first called me out, she began to giggle later.

"Would you dance with me as well?"

"Yes, I'd be happy to."

Lady Ringrande would probably become noisy again, but I couldn't decline her invitation.

"Satou-sama is quite skilled."

"Sera-sama is also quite skilled."

"The [Sama] is unnecessary. I am not a noble anymore, so please call me [Sera]."

As expected, calling her by name would be bad. I feel like Lulu's and Arisa's gazes are stabbing me, even though I can't see them from here.

"Sera-sama, miko is also quite deservedly enough to be called with [Sama]."

"Satou-sama looks so kind, yet also unexpectedly mean."

Pochi said that to me too the other day. I should note it.

The dance ends safely even while I'm being bewildered by Sera who's acting uncannily intimate to me. It's been decided for me to help the Tenion temple distributing food during our stay due to Sera who's surprisingly good at negotiating.

"Thank you for the delicious snacks today. Please get along well with Sera, alright."

The head-miko drops a bomb in a low voice while leaving.

"I will keep the matter of that night a secret, so please don't worry. You look cute behind the mask."

Why is it blown.

◇

"Must be because of your voice."

Arisa said so while looking astonished.

Dang, I had neglected getting strange voice skill. Let's practice it tonight.

But well, the level and the name are completely different, it's probably going to be fine even if I keep feigning ignorance. The head-miko seemed like she was just baiting me too.

"Thank you for waiting, master, Arisa."

Lulu who had been called by the head-chef returned.

It seems she's been invited to work there. Head-hunting like that, I can't let my guard down toward that old man.

We're allowed to leave as the duke's family has left, but the dance party is still continuing, and we can hear the music from here.

"Young lady, how about a song?"

"Y, yes, I'd be happy to."

I dance together with Lulu among the lights from the mansion. I had been dancing with Arisa before Lulu came, but since it was received better than I had thought, I also invited Lulu.

"Ah, this is like a dream."

"I'm glad to hear that."

Lulu and me together continue to dance round and round forever.

"H, hey wait, how long are you two going to dance, please change with me~."

"Ufufu, oh Arisa, you're cute."

I thought that Lulu would stop when she became tired, but since it didn't, the dance continued until Arisa who was jealous intruded.

The three of us continues dancing together while alternating before the eyes of the maids who occasionally pass through the corridor as if they see something heartwarming.

A day like this is good once in a while.

8-12. Tea Party Days

Satou's here. Tea party was frequently drawn in shoujo manga that I read in my childhood, but I had never seen it even once in reality. The modern tea party might be the drink bar in the family restaurant.

◇

The busy days begins the next day after the ball.

While I keep the visits to the workshops as scheduled, I'm also visiting the noble women whom the invitations for tea parties I've accepted.

Of course, I'm not aiming for the the noble girls in their early teens. I wouldn't let Arisa accompany me if that was really the case.

I can sort of feel some petty grudges from that prince, I have a hunch that I'll get involved with him from now on.

Therefore, I'm following Arisa's suggestion to increase my personal connections with the people that are likely to become my allies in preparation for the time when I get entangled in some kind of intricate conspiracy.

I choose not crepes for the tea party, but something that's delicious served cold. I decide to create western style red bean jam rolls by sandwiching fresh cream, coarse and smooth sweet red bean paste with thin pancakes. I announce the bean jam roll to be a new sweets of Muno city. I write the recipe in the letter for baron Muno that I've entrusted to lady Karina. Gelt-san should be able to reproduce what's in the recipe. I've employed merchants to deliver the ingredients that are hard to obtain in Muno city.

Since it's not good to make the same thing every day, Arisa and I write sweets we remember on the memo, trial-make them, and pick ones that look good. Arisa and the others aren't the only ones who sample the food, the previous earl Walgock couple also ask for it, the food are quite popular. I'm a bit worried that Arisa will become plumper since she eats too much of it.

I've thought of taking lady Karina along to the tea parties, but she's training hard with Liza and the others, I can't approach her. I'm thinking of letting lady Karina get some noble friends, but it doesn't seem like it'll go well.

Lady Karina, Liza and the others are training with the help of a military drill instructor, a woman around her thirties, who has been introduced by Toruma. They're probably getting better training than just sparing randomly with wooden swords. I've also been watching them occasionally. Of course I mean the training, not lady Karina's specific parts.

I had gained some things beyond my expectation doing the tea parties like getting permission to visit the workshops that had refused it before, and some rare ingredients the noble women shared.

The workshops visits have been going smoothly too, the only two remaining are the scroll workshop, and the barrier pillar workshop.

I've got silk threads produced by caterpillars the size of a puppy from the visit to the jade silk workshop yesterday. These silk threads reflect green color from the light just like the name suggest, and cloths weaved from them have the same stab-proof performances as iron chain mails.

When I look at the bait of the caterpillar with AR secretly, it seems there's a secret to it. The caterpillars are mainly feed with leaves, but they're also feed with mithril slag--wastes that comes out of mithril refinery. The green parts of the silk might be composed of mithril. Since there are the same kind of caterpillar species living deep in the forest, it might be a good idea to try doing it once.

◇

"Eh~, these are some good seats."

"You're right, compared to the crowded seating of the general audience in this arena, the noble guest room is a paradise."

I feel bad for not using the noble guest room that they've reserved for us, so today is the first time we use it. The arena is wider than my expectation, it's probably about as large as the Tokyo Dome. Since it's usually used for horse-racing matches, these much area are probably necessary.

Originally, there are servants attending the noble guest room, but I refuse since I have my own.

"Master, I've acquired the target for sniping. Please the permission."

"You can't."

"Requesting reconsideration."

Nana looks toward one of the player who has just entered the arena.

Ah, he's the white tigerkin man who seems to be the brother of that guy who's kicked the sea lionkin kid. No, this guy only tried cut me, he didn't do anything to the sea lion kid right?

<TLN: White tiger in japanese = byakko.>

His opponent is a magic warrior who's working as an explorer with delicious sounding name, Tan. He's equipped with a mithril sword like me and a small mithril shield that looks like a buckler. There are only elimination battle for the real match, both their levels are high. Tan-shi is level 42, the white tigerkin is level 37. I'm expecting high level fight too.

"Uu~n, I can't see their status from this distance. Tan who can use magic according to the advance review is probably going to win right."

"Arisa, you can't say that. Don't make light of the range and power of that gigantic great sword in addition to byakko-dono's big body. Tigerkin are war race that possesses both power and speed. You cannot decide the match from whether they can use magic or not."

Oh, Liza is being talkative.

The weapon of Byakko-kun is a great sword made from monsters' parts like Liza's. The offensive power is weaker than Liza's spear. I've had this doubt since a while ago, I feel that Liza's spear is too powerful for a weapon made impromptu. Is it because the materials are rare, or the place is rare, it might even be both.

"Satou, aa~n."

One of the snacks that Mia holds with both hand enters my mouth.

This is a thin-stick candy, I guess? Sugar are cheap in this duchy capital, they're in the form of brown sugar. Half of them are Ugi sugar that have been brought from earl Kuhano's city. It seems to be cheap since they cultivate the sugar on the great river's downstream. And yet, the price is not at the level where commoners can get their hands on it.

"What's with this?"

"I've bought it."

"A hawker has come to the noble guest room."

Mia only ever uses her pocket money to buy food and drink huh.

Following her, Lulu, Pochi, and Tama have also bought snacks.

"Octopus skewers~"

"I bought squid skewers too no desu."

The two hold three sticks on both their hands. There are enough for everyone, they distribute it one for each.

The match is about to begin.

Ah, our eyes met.

The white tigerkin on the arena turns his great sword toward me while glaring. He still remembers huh. Since there doesn't seem to be any demi-human who participates in the real match, please do your best.

There's a 50 meters wide circle drawn on the center of the arena, and the signal to start the match begin when both competitors enter it.

There's no limitation in using magic, but since this is an [Armed Battle] after all, it's a foul if you do something like defeating your opponent with magic from afar.

When the two enter the circle, the official sounds the horn to signal the start of the match.

"The white person is attacking nano desu!"

"Mugumugu~."

"Tama-chan, speak after you've finished eating alright."

Pochi commented after she had finished eating while swinging the skewer, Tama said something while her mouth is full, and Lulu scolded her.

"It seems that the human fights after strengthening himself with buff magic."

"Diversion."

"Nnn~, won't he cut it with just a thrust of that great if diversion is poor~."

"Expansion."

"I'm doubtful it can stop that body weight and speed."

"Mwuu."

It looks like Arisa and Mia are giving opinions from the viewpoints of magicians.

Oh, it looks like the magic warrior use physical reinforcement from water magic. The casting has been completed in 3 seconds, but that spell should have taken twice that, it seems that he's arranged the spell to make it shorter than the standard one. The rest is probably thanks to [Chanting Shortening] skill.

"Master, it comes with a BOOM, and hit with a BANG."

"Liza can win~?"

"I don't intend to go down easily, but I don't feel like I can win in a straight fight."

Pochi and Tama are too excited, so Liza are carrying them on both her hands like they're stuffed dolls. The two aren't minding it, and watch the match with sparkling faces. Their tails and arms are flailing too much I'm afraid that it'll break.

"Uu~n, he's amazing, while handling the attacks from that great sword, he hasn't failed in casting spells even once."

"Calm and composed."

The two are observing the magic warrior's way of fighting while chewing on the snacks that Mia's bought. Lulu politely sweeps the scraps that have fallen from the snacks.

"Master, am I able to move like that?"

"You might be able to if you can use physical reinforcement well, I think. Even Karina-sama has done movements similar to that right?"

"Tama can do it~."

"Pochi will do her best nodesu!"

As for the fight, at a glimpse, byakko-san seems to have the upper hand, but his attacks have all been blocked. The magic warrior has been doing a defensive battle, but he's steadily increasing his buffs. He just has to use Stick Mist next to slow the byakko's movement down, and the match will probably be decided.

It's developing just as I've expected, and the match end with the magic warrior's victory. However, he slowed down the byakko's movement not by water magic, but by using lightning magic to [Enchant] his weapon and paralyzed him with one blow.

Three more matches were held afterwards, but since they were plain matches between two warriors, Mia and Arisa quickly dozed off. It seemed to be favorites of experts, bold cheering could be heard from the elderly on the audience seats.

"Was that a Hakama? That equipment is splendid isn't it. I didn't think that it could conceal footworks to that degree."

Liza eagerly praised the beautiful woman in Japanese clothing that had appeared just now.

Pochi and Tama who have been dropped to the ground are trying to mimic the haorihakama warrior, but they're not doing so well. The haorihakama person has black eyes and hair, but she's not particularly a Japanese it seems.

I take off my shoes to demonstrate the footwork. I know it from a manga that I've read back then, so I don't have any confidence if it's right.

"Like a slug~?"

"It's slimy and closing in nodesu! I'm the slug degozaru~."

<TLN: Pochi uses "Sessha" to refer herself here.>

When Pochi can't do the footwork well, she sprawls on the floor, and moves like an inchworm. I wonder if it's right to retort, "That's not a slug." here?

"Pochi-chan, who's the bad girl who lies on the ground after wearing her best clothes with much effort!"

"A, au, it's not like that nodesu. Lulu, it's not like that nodesu."

"What's not like that? When you do bad things?"

"I'm sorry nano desu."

"Pochi, repent~."

Oops, it was the time to scold her huh. Pochi is doing a pose of remorse and apologizes.

Tama shrewdly take this chance to turn around Lulu who's angry. Wasn't she squatting just now? When our views meet, Tama takes the [Remorse] pose like Pochi in a panic.

◇

"Master, the airship is producing a young organism. Arisa, urgently, create a cushion in the shape of that!"

"Eh~, again~. I'm already tired~, I'll teach you how to do it, so make it yourself okay."

"That's an excellent plan. Arisa, I implore you for the instructions."

Nana was pointing at a small airship that were anchored. It's an express ship that's come from the royal capital. The one riding it is the king--not, it's the king's shadow. The two ministers that have come together with him are the real ones.

I have a hunch that the wagon will be full of stuffed dolls when Nana has learned sewing.

I'm making leather armors and boots from the armored newt's leather and green silk beside Arisa who's teaching Nana how to sew. I'm thinking of copying the magic warrior's armor that's made from monsters' materials, and with shock and stab resistances better than normal iron armor. I got the [Sewing Skill] from making linings with the green silk. Let's maximize the skill and create inners for everyone.

Come to think of it, I've gotten a hold of a cloth called Yuriha fiber from the thieves' hideout. I'll process this and make robes for Arisa and Mia.

Evening of that day, I work at night to create equipment for everyone, and new shoes for Pochi and the others.

It feels like I've become the fairy from fairytale.

8-13. The Viscount and the Scroll Workshop

Satou's here. Sometimes I miss my students day where I get my speed and capacity cut down during programming using integrated development environment because I'm doing it while reading mnemonic binary conversion list.

I don't want to go back to that time though. Technology must progress after all.

◇

Hooked nose, wrinkled brow, well-cared mustache, and properly swept-back deep blond hair. I can feel strong will from his eyes overflowing with vigor.

Is he really the brother of Toruma?

I can see Toruma's father standing beside him. He looks somewhat old, you wouldn't think that he's still 34 years old.

"Thank you for saving Toruma."

It's weird. Even though I'm being thanked, it feels like being scolded by my boss.

That was Toruma's brother, viscount Hosaris Shimen.

"I'm sorry, Satou-dono, my brother can only talk like this."

"How rude. Toruma, what's wrong with the way I talk."

His words itself are normal, but the way Hosaris talks feels like a stubborn master who's scolding his poor pupils. In fact, I can feel Arisa radiating drooling-like presence. I can't help but feel that she's leaking gleaming aura that's unusual.

My biggest concern, that is the permission to visit the workshop, is given without problem.

I'm also alloted to the the first in line, though maximum priority is impossible, for the promised matter about scrolls as compensation for Toruma's dagger.

"Is that so, you've got into troubles with his highness Sharlick, sir Pendragon, you have to be careful. His highness tends to easily settle disputes with violence."

According to Hosaris-shi, the prince is also regarded as a troublemaker in the royal capital. About 10 years ago, he laid his hands on the daughter of a lord who had been decided to marry (someone else), in no time at all, one earl territory was on the verge of rebelling against Shiga kingdom. This matter was also the reason for the cancellation of the engagement between lady Ringrande and the prince.

Originally he should have been confined in a remote monastery, or rather a royal villa away under the pretense of recuperating from sickness, but he could be forgiven if he succeed as a holy knight due to his excellent swordsmanship. The bad rumor didn't die out even after he had become a holy knight, but it seemed that he hadn't caused any big problem like he did with the territory lord before.

How could they gave that kind of human a holy sword.

◇

"So then, the ink made from the dew on the fireflies lily~"

"We certainly will be able to operate the bestowal stand with precision using that ink, but how much do you think it is."

"But aren't Dragon Scales and Drill Powder that Jung-san's mentioned impossible to get~"

I can hear people's voices beyond the open door on the hallway.

They're probably the scroll craftsmen whom Hosaris-shi has called.

"Master, welcome back."

"Hosaris-sama, welcome back!"

An obese middle-aged man to the point of overweight, and a freckled bespectacled little girl with short ash blond hair welcomed us in the room. The woman who's a gnome isn't beautiful by any measures, but she can't be called ugly either.

"The one here is Jung, the workshop manager. Despite his looks, he's the expert of scroll-making in Shiga kingdom. The girl over there is Natalina.

When it comes to creativity, she's the best in the workshop. They will meet sir Pendragon's expectation without fail."

Creative, in other words, she produces strange scrolls that won't sell, and use money like they're growing on trees for the sake of inventions. She's certainly suited for my purpose.

After introducing the two, Hosaris-shi leaves the room followed by Toruma. He's entered the room just to greet them, so there is no problem.

◇

I show list of scrolls that I want to Jung-san for him to confirm their feasibilities, but the ones that contain advanced level magic aren't possible after all.

Moreover, they won't accept magic that are used by criminals, and spy like [Fake Patch], and [Unlock].

The crime related things are no good even though the battle related ones are okay huh.

And yet, [Through Eyes], and [Mana String] that can be used to open lock depending on its usage are alright.

In order to create a particular scroll, the person who finishes the scroll has to be able to use that particular magic skill, so [Gravity], [Shadow],

[Mind], and [Ghost] magic are impossible.

'Then, you can make [Space] magic?' is my expectation, but it seems the they can only make [Space], and [Destruction] scrolls at only elementary level.

As for holy magic scrolls, they can't be made mainly due to religious reason. It's technically possible huh.

"Hey, chevalier-sama. I understand that you're a collector, but even if you use the magic in this list, none of them will produce any good result you know? Is it really okay?"

"Natalina, use polite speech a bit better."

"Eh~ I'm using it properly right? Chevalier-sama."

"They're a bit broken, but I'm an upstart myself, so if it's difficult for you to use polite speech, it's alright to use normal speech."

When she hears that, Natalina-san says, "You sure? Yay." while banzai-ing, and Jung-san knocks her head.

I promise that I won't complain even if the effects of the spells line-up in the list turn out weak. They have half of the spells in stock, so half of the request are complete.

"These are some strange spells aren't these? They're easy but it's awfully inefficient. I don't think they're at elementary levels, but it'll be hard to use them due to the long chants."

The spells in this world are like [Spaghetti Source] seen in programming. They're like assemblers in the era where there are only powerless CPU long ago, interwoven like puzzles. That's why it was extremely hard to analyze them, to the point that I was suspicious that it was deliberately obfuscated.

Therefore, when I was making my own spell, I modularized the spells into functions in accordance to the paradigm of structured programming. As the result, the spells had became extremely readable, but it also introduced disadvantages; the chanting became longer, and increased MP consumption. The traditional spells have probably been optimized after going through long years.

"You can't make them into scrolls?"

"Ah, that thing is alright. They're a bit strange, but it doesn't seem like they're deviated from nature magic, so it feels like I can somehow do it."

Natalia-san used poor polite speech until the end, probably because Jung-san was glaring at her.

"Then Chevalier-sama. Since it'll need some times to prepare the stocks, would you like to look at the workshop in the meantime?"

"Yes, by all means."

I take Arisa along to visit the workshop. The workshop is in the basement of the viscount's mansion site, there are many guards who are on the lookout vigilantly. All the guards are higher than level 20, and they have skills that are composed for spy prevention like [Sharp Eyes], and [Surveillance].

The workshops are divided into numerous small rooms for handling specific processes. Therefore, there are only a few people who knows the entire process. It looks inefficient, but since it's important to hide the technology, it's quite thorough.

It seems that the scroll's papers are made in another place, their appraisal results describe them as [Scroll Blank Sheet, Second]. From the two's conversation, I understand that the ink needs fine powder made from magic cores. The reason why the viscount went to the royal capital was to purchase magic cores with high purities. Looks like you'll need magic cores from level 30 or higher monsters to create intermediate level scrolls. When they show me the cores for the manufacturing, the red tinges on it looks a bit deeper in color compared to the cores from armored newt back then.

"We make inks in this room."

Jung-san slightly opens the door to show the inside, looks like they can't let me enter. They're making [Ink for Scroll, Shell] here. I understand the materials in general, but one of them is [Ink for Scroll, Second]. This is quite tough.

Even though it's called making scroll, they need more than just writing the spells in the exclusive paper, many processes are required. For that reason, I have to wait 2-4 days for the readily-made ones, and add 1-2 days in the case of order-made ones.

The spells that are in stocks are as follow:

Nature Magic: Flexible Shield (Intermediate)
Nature Magic: Flexible Armor (Intermediate)
Nature Magic: Through Eyes (Intermediate)
Nature Magic: Mana Transfer (Intermediate)

Nature Magic: Mana Drain (Intermediate)

Nature Magic: Break Magic (Intermediate)

Nature Magic: Magic Hand (Intermediate)

Nature Magic: Magic String

Earth Magic: Polish

Earth Magic: Mould

Water Magic: Remove Poison (Intermediate)

Water Magic: Aqua Heal (Intermediate)

Water Magic: Water Heal

Wind Magic: Canopy

They're mostly sample products without recipient. It seems the oldest one is from over 100 years ago.

They're one gold coins for three elementary level scrolls, and two gold coins for one intermediate level ones. The original ones were going to cost me three gold coins, but since I permitted them to copy the spell, it became one gold coin instead.

These kinds of negotiations are Arisa's forte, but when I considered that she would firmly demand sexual harassment as her rewards, I thought that it'd be better if I just paid them more.

Even though there are plain magic like [Polish], and [Mould], among the stocks, I'm happy. With this, I won't need to create sand mould or wood model for casting.

I was looking for multiple small shield magic that Raka used during the fight against the demon in Gururian city--I was taught that it's called

[Multi Mana Scale]--in the stocks, but I couldn't find it.

I consulted to them if they could make it, but since it seemed to be an advance level nature magic, it was not possible. It's unfortunate.

They told me the anecdote that it was originally developed to reproduce the multi small shields the wild boar king used in nature magic, but I couldn't say to them that it needed more work as compared to the real thing that I had seen. Or maybe, it could be equal if the skill level is high?

The order-made ones are as follows:

Nature Magic: Light Stun (Original)
Nature Magic: Remote Stun (Original)
Nature Magic: Sound Record (Original)
Nature Magic: Photo (Original)
Nature Magic: Magick Sword (Original)
Water Magic: Liquid Control (Original)
Wind Magic: Air Control (Original)
Lighting Magic: Electronic Control (Original)
Fire Magic: Fireworks (Original)
Light Magic: Fireworks Illusion (Original)

Space Magic: Clairvoyance
Space Magic: Clairhearing
Space Magic: Telephone

Life Magic: Soft Wash

Life Magic: Dry

Life Magic: Bandage

I've limited the power of stun type magic for inter-personal matters. The recording and photography are for recording and taking photo during the sightseeing. The control type ones are for when I'm making magic tools. The other ones than these are too plain and minor that they don't usually make them in scrolls.

The through eyes is not for making clothes look to be transparent. I'd have thought so if I was in my teens, but its use is for observing the states of things during creation of magic swords.

Magick Sword is a magic that produces a transparent straight swords. The idea came to me after I saw the painting of Yamato-san in the museum. Transparent swords are truly fantasy-like.

In reality, magick sword was supposed to be an intermediate magic, but it seemed that it had touched Natalia-san's heartstring, it was treated like the other original magic.

In the end, the matter about scrolls that were slightly over my budget at hand was balanced out.

When the workshop tour is over, Jung-san tells me about the expected date for the completion of the scrolls. Since the person who can use space magic just happens to be present, the [Clairvoyance], [Clairhearing], and [Telephone] can be done in three days, while [Air Control] will be done in five days. The other magic are after those. The people who can use life magic are particularly in vacation for the tournament, so the work will start after the tournament has ended.

When we were going home, it was hard to take away Nana who had remained with Mayuna-chan.

8-14. The Night before the Final

Satou's here. Back then, I imagined that auction was like a place where the wealthy were dealing with work of arts and jewelries with outrageous prices. My child's mind thought that work of arts should have been better put in the museum.

Nowadays, net auction is what comes to my mind (if I hear the word), Satou's.

◇

"Did something good happen? Satou-san."

Today I've come to help distributing food. After helping with the distribution for several times, lady Sera has changed her honorific calling for me from [Sama] to [San]. She's calling me like Zena-san is, but I feel shy when she does it. Mia will kick me if I'm acting shy, so I reply calmly.

"Yes, some difficult works has been going well."

Thanks to the many scrolls I've acquired from viscount Shimen's mansion recently, I'm able to nicely make magic swords with casting. That said, it's only at the level of the wooden holy sword I've made back then, so it's nothing but a first step. I can't see the prospect for the forging process.

In the book [30 Standard Circuits for Magic Tools] that I've bought back then, there are various circuits that look usable for making magic swords, so I'm going to attempt them one by one. There is also this interesting circuit for making airship, but seems that it needs materials from a monster that flies in the sky called Air Fish. They normally fly around over the open sea, so obtaining the materials is difficult.

"Master, some children who misses the food distribution have come, can we do something about them?"

"There were a lot of adults today after all~"

Lulu and Arisa have brought along two dogkin children like Pochi, and three ratkin children. Their ages are about 4-8 years old. Pochi is about to distribute some baked sweets that she's taken from her pocket. Since Lulu has educated her many times, the baked sweets aren't put directly in her pocket, but properly wrapped in a handkerchief.

"Hehen, thanks for it~"

"Bye~ now~ dog girl~"

Apekin children quickly snatched the baked sweets from Pochi's hand and ran toward the alleyway.

Due to the sudden turn of event, Pochi blinks for a while, and then yells "Wait nodesu! Stealing is bad, nano desu~" while running after the culprits.

"Liza, Tama, please."

"Yes!""Roger~"

I ask the two, and they run after Pochi. It'd be bad if she became a lost child.

I ask Nana to take the five hungry children to the stalls nearby and get them something to eat. I remind Nana not to give them something that's too expensive. Nana has a soft spot on [Young Organisms] after all. Well, Arisa is following them, so it's probably alright.

Soon, Pochi and Tama carry the apekin children while holding them overhead. They're tied with rope from somewhere.

"Master, I've caught the culprits nodesu."

"Sinners, to the gallows~"

"What should we do? They'll be dealt accordingly if we hand them over to the authority."

Liza, did you use [Dealt], not [Judged], just now?

I'm too scared to ask her.

<TLN: They both sounds the same, but written differently.>

The two little thieves are saying, "Sorry", "Won't do it again", but they probably don't really regret it. They'll either end up being slaves or beheaded if we turn them over to the authority. Even in the duchy capital, demi-humans criminals are given harsh punishment.

Let's leave making a mess of someone's life just because of baked sweets to that french-bread like person. I forgive them by only flicking their foreheads gently.

The children are holding their foreheads while rolling on the groudn, such exaggerated acting... or it should have been. Pochi and Tama hold their foreheads while looking like it's really painful. Strangely, even Arisa and Mia hold their foreheads.

I tell Liza to untie them, and have them help cleaning-up after the food distribution. The apekin children are helping with the work while calling Pochi, "Ane-san". They don't seem to have learned their lessons, they try to take the baked sweets from Pochi pocket, and get found out by Tama who then obstruct them. Pochi who's angry downs them with her fist, and they roll on the floor like before. Judging from the decrease of their HP, Pochi seems to have properly held back.

"Hey, Onee-chan miko."

Miko? Miko huh.

"What's the matter?"

"The adults are saying something like the demon lord will be revived."

"The end of an era. Everyone is going to die, they says."

"Will everyone die?"

Not only demi-humans children, human children are also encircling Sera with worried faces.

This was a topic that had come out during tea parties too, typical of the demon lord season to be the end of an era, looked like pessimistic views, and downfall were popular to discuss about. In addition it seems that the vibrations from my experiments with Arisa late at night had reached the ground above, and it became a rumor that it might be an omen for the demon lord revival. For that reason, the next day after that, I dug deep for two hours until a very deep layer to do the experiment there.

"It's alright, it won't happen, the hero will surely eliminate the demon lord."

"Nn."

"It's okay~"

"Master will beat down something like demon lord, like ZUBABAN, nodesu."

"Master, you have a serious responsibility aren't you."

Pochi and Tama hug my waist while looking up with sparkling eyes. Lulu says so happily, but she must not have seriously thought so. Only Arisa who knows the truth looks like she has mixed feelings. It's said that ignorance is bliss.

◇

"Good evening, head miko-sama."

"Ara, Nanashi-san. You're elusive like always."

She looks her age when I see her in the duke's castle back then, but for some reason, she looks young in this room.

"I've come here today to ask about the oracle regarding demon lord."

"Ara? You've annihilated it right? The oracle from Tenion-sama has told us that it's『Annihilated』."

"It must have been defeated by a passing hero."

"Ufufu, let's leave it like that."

She laughs lightly you wouldn't think it comes from an old woman.

Oops, rather than that, I should confirm it.

"There are rumors among people on the streets that the demon lord is hiding itself in the underground of the duchy capital. Did the temple not announce that the demon lord have been annihilated?"

"I've told his excellency the duke directly, but the『Annihilated』oracle haven't come to the other temples, so we can't announce that the demon lord has been annihilated from Tenion temple alone."

Don't tell me, there are other demon lords out there?

I'd hate it if there's something like the great demon lord.

I return the resurrection artifact that has been filled with magic during our conversations to the head miko. I put back the holy sword that has acted as a battery replacement into the item box.

"Thank you, Nanashi-san. I prefer that there won't be a situation where this is needed."

"I'd love that."

When I'm about to leave, I'm given something by head miko-san.

Indulgence.

It's not the same thing as the one for collecting money in the previous world, it's an item that lets you erase one crime that has been etched in the Reward and Punishment. It's not clear what the head-miko intends to do by giving it to me, but since it looks useful, I quietly accept it.

◇

I put on one of the wig that I've got on the downtown, and walk into the night town in Nanashi-style. There are many gentlemen who are walking around in the red district dressed with thin hooded overcoats, so I'm unexpectedly inconspicuous.

My expenditures have increased ever since I've become a noble, so I'm visiting the dark auction that's secretly open during the martial art tournament. It requires a written invitation to enter, but since a lot of nobles who have been sacrificed for the demon lord carry it, I have it in my storage without doing anything.

Since you can employ agents, I decide to dispatch one. The commission fee is one silver coin for each displayed item that has to be paid even if they don't sell. The agent will take 10% charges if the item is sold at higher price than the minimum fee. Since I'm told that items that don't have appraisal's report won't sell well, I have the official appraisal in the auction hall to issue them. There are 10 official appraisals, and even though they all have dark circles under their eyes, they all smile amazingly. It's probably the best season literally. I unintentionally give the person a stamina recovery potion.

I'm going to exhibit medicines and weapons.

The medicine is magic potions with Nanashi sign that increase vitality and partly health.

I realized that they would sell well from the conversations of the family heads old men during the tea parties. It's no different in any world. The raw materials are from armor newt, so I can make them as many as I like, and the market price is also quite expensive. It'll be troublesome if the person who takes the medicine die during the intercourse, so I've lowered the quality to some extent.

I had brought 10 sets with five items per set I made, but they sold at higher price than I expected. I guess I should try making hair regrow and breast enlarger medicine next time.

The weapons are mock magic weapon made from monster's materials, and the result of trial-runs from the magic swords casting. I've got the title [Blacksmith of Magic Swords] when I'm casting the magic sword.

As for the weapons from monster's materials, spears, swords, and bows were selling well among the people who looked like explorers or guards.

People who look like nobles were buying the casted magic swords. That person who's buying it looks a bit familiar. I confirm with AR, he's the military accountant of the duke. The knight who looks like an escort generates magic edge when he pours mana into it. He seems to be quite a user.

He's generously paying 100 gold coins for each, but is he fine spending that much? I'm worried even though it's someone else problem. They're casted from weapons I've got from the thieves' hideout and then melted, the magic liquids are also of common quality, so each of them costs almost zero to produce. Even if the materials are bought, it probably only costs two gold coins at most. The rip-off is only the best part.

The military accountant approaches the agent, and asks if he can provide another 10. Since I can make 10 of it even if I just have one hour, I accept it. The next auction will be held in about three days, so I promise to bring it in the final day.

I get 780 gold coins in total.

It's the sum after the agent's fee of course. The biggest earner is the five casted magic swords that have been sold for 570 gold coins. There are money to be made everywhere indeed.

Since I've made more money than I've planned, I also bid in the dark auction to also reduce the market. Mixed among magic tools, they're exhibiting things like, fallen young noble women, illegal medicines, or medicine to level up. Since the AR tells that the level-up medicine is [EXP +1000], it's meaningless for me. I've bid a drop item from the labyrinth city for 70 gold coins. The price is lower than I've thought, but looks like it's extraordinary even for a disposable item.

It seems that I also have to use the agent for buying things, so I request one. Several magic books and three scrolls. They're things that only appear in dark auction, it greatly smells of crime.

Nature Magic: Fake Patch

Nature Magic: Unlock

Nature Magic: Lock

They're scrolls that have been refused in viscount Shimen's scroll workshop.

The last day is going to exhibit the featured products like, [Princess of the Fallen Kingdom], [Monograph of Ancient Language], and [Air Force Engine of Airship]. Princess of the Fallen Kingdom, she can't possibly Arisa's and Lulu's sister right?

◇

After I've recharged myself in the pleasure quarter, I mass produce magic swords in the usual open space at the interior part of the underground labyrinth. Since I got tired along the way, I also made many spear and halberd type ones. The production cost of halberd is high, but it's also the most expensive in the dark auction, so I make them. There was a circuit for changing mana into electricity written in the standard magic circuit book, so I added it to the halberd afterward. It seem that the users can get electrified if they put wrong amount of mana into it, so I've also added a protection circuit on it.

>Title [Blacksmith of Magic Weapons]

Even though I've used Deodorant to erase the trace, they still find out that I've gone to the pleasure quarter. Women's intuitions are sharp even though they're small.

It seems that the king will also attend the tournament's final tomorrow.

Moreover, lady Ringrande and the prince are going to do an exhibition match before the final. If a disturbance is going to happen, it's either during that match or the wedding.

The prince and his cohorts don't seem to be in contact with the [Wings of Liberty]. It seems the earl's mansion from before has been discovered, the members' number have been halved. The people who have escaped from the hardships are hiding in the sewer.

Since it looks like they'll be decapitated if they're captured, they have no choice but to enter it and can't come out. If possible I want them to make it into their dwellings and live their remaining life quietly please.

8-15. The Day of the Final

Satou's here. There's this famous quote from Shakespeare, "To be, or not to be", but I thought that it was a quote from some battle manga character until after I had entered high school, such was my dark past. Everyone has ever misunderstood something right.

◇

Today Tama has been acting strange since the morning.

Just when I thought that she's walking randomly in the room, she quarrels with Pochi, then Arisa, or rather, she clings to them and rolls on the floor.

"What's wrong? Tama."

"Nn~? Something is itching~"

"Pun pun nanodesu! Today's Tama is strange nodesu."

<TLN: "Pun pun" is an onomatopoeia, kind of like hmph, but cuter.>

Oh? Pochi looks unusually touchy too.

Tama thrusts herself on my lap which has Mia sitting on it as if she's pushing her, and then she's snuggling on my lap. I wonder what's wrong? It's rare for her to cut in by force.

"Chevalier-sama, are you not going to watch the final match today?"

"Yes, I've been asked to make the feast for the celebration of the final, so I'm going to go to the castle after a bit."

I hear that several nobles have asked the duke's butler. Only upper nobles are allowed to participate in the balls and banquets that the king will attend for the next several days, I can't participate on them. As expected they can't say that I have to cook on the balls and banquets I won't participate in.

In that regards, the celebration today isn't only attended by the winner and nobles, but also the martial artists who have participated in the main matches, and influential people of the duchy capital, so I've been asked to make several dishes like on the ball before.

Since the king seems to be attending the final today, lady Karina and her brother are also going to attend.

It looks like Tama has calmed down after I gently brush her back, she's sleeping with difficult face.

Right at that time, the duchy capital shocks.

◇

It was not an earthquake.

It was like an active sonar from a submarine, a signal from search magic was passing through once.

However, the power was not ordinary.

"What was that? Just now?

"Signal?"

"Some kind of bell sound has come nodesu!"

"Master, ready for battle."

Not only me, it seems that half of the members have perceived the signal earlier.

The reason why Tama has become emotionally unstable is probably because she's sensed the antecedent.

Liza has started equipping the new equipments I've given her the other day. Slightly later, Pochi and Nana have also began to change. My eyes are happy, but I can't keep watching it, so I ask Lulu to put a partitioning screen before Nana.

"Tama, change your clothes too."

"Aye~"

According to the map, demons have appeared. They're in the sky above the arena.

The arena is populated with 20 people who are higher than level 40, in addition to lady Ringrande, the prince and his companions. The demons have picked the wrong time. They probably would be eliminated before I could intervene.

"What's happened?"

"It's the demon again."

"Eh~, again~"

Really, I wish they learn some self-restraint soon.

Arisa and the others are also changing to the new equipments I've created the other day. It's thinner than Liza's, but they're all matching white leather. I've replaced everyone's weapon except Liza's with casted magic swords. They look quite different from the ones I've sold on the auction before, and the inscriptions are carved with 'Satou Pendragon'.

Looks like the demons can use [Summoning Magic], [Mind Magic], and [Fire Magic]. They likely will summon various things if they're given time, so let's dispose of them quickly.

After a bit of time has elapsed after everyone's began changing, the sound of duchy capital's alarm, the town bell, begins resounding.

◇

The nobles' houses on the duchy capital have underground shelters in preparation of demons' attack. These shelters are built abnormally strong for the sake of the nobles' own safeties. The ones that are in the upper noble house have the same strength as the outer wall even.

A bit later after the alarm have rung, a maid of this mansion comes to lead us to the shelter.

"Arisa."

"Hoi, hoi~"

"Please take refuge to the underground shelter with everyone. I'll send you a signal if it gets truly dangerous, I want you to immediately teleport to the underground labyrinth with everyone if that happens."

"Aye aye."

I guess this is alright for the anti-demons measure.

I'm asking Liza and the others to deal with another troublesome thing.

"Liza."

"Yes!"

"The carriage of lady Sera is being chased by villains. Go with Mia and Nana by horses to protect her."

"I understand."

"I understand, master."

"Nn."

It seems that all members of the wings of liberty are trying to kidnap lady Sera.

I can go help her directly, but it'll be troublesome if some strange flag gets raised, so I'll leave it to Liza and the others. They should be able to handle it with their strengths. Since lady Sera seems to be escaping toward this mansion, I teach the general route to Liza and the others.

◇

I go together until the duke's castle, refuse to enter the shelter, and go out.

I change into Nanashi, silver masked hero version, and go toward the arena.

For the time being, I activate the new magic [Clairhearing], and [Whisper Wind] to grasp the situation. The focus is the arena where I'm going.

"'Demon, no demon lord, your fate is over now.'"

This voice, it's the prince. It is a level 71 demon, but it's not the demon lord you know?

It's chaotic there, but precisely because it's the final of the martial arts tournament, a lot of domestically influential and powerful people are there, so they haven't been overran it seems.

"'Brave warriors, let's cooperate together to subjugate the monsters. Magician, prioritize supporting the warriors with reinforcement magic over attack magic.'"

This voice is lady Ringrande's.

I guess the demons have summoned monsters as their soldiers, people beside the prince are fighting them. Among the monsters that have been summoned, there are more than 10 with upper level 40. Looks like explorers, knights, and martial artists are cooperating together to fight the high level monsters. The clamor that I can hear is very lively. They probably really like the fighting.

"'Barrier, put up the barrier defense.'"

"'It's no good, the escape passages are collapsed, we have to secure the way out.'"

I thought that it's strange the nobles aren't escaping even though the king body-double is going, so it's because of that. Clairhearing and Whisper Wind are convenient.

I guess the passages for general audiences are fine, people are rushing out from there. There doesn't seem to be anyone who dies from getting trampled. Since most of them seem to be hot-headed people, the worry is needless.

Using Sky Drive and Ground Shrink, I go to the top of one of the spire near the arena, and stand there.

There demon has two heads, yellow skin, and two water buffalo-like horns on its shoulders. Since it has two heads, I wonder if that means it can use magic simultaneously like the golden wild boar-head king.

I want to tell "Read the air" to lady Ringrande and the other skirmishing people, but since there are people I know in the arena, let's quickly clean this up.

First, I guess I'll defeat that important looking upper demon with [Laser] of light magic.

As if waiting for the decision, the space is cracking and a ship is appearing.

While producing ripple of lights as if coming out of water surface, a silver streamlined ship that looks like a space ship appears.

A man wearing blue armor--the hero, Hayato Masaki, is standing on the bow. I'm told that he was level 61 when Arisa met him, but he's level 69 now.

"'The great me, has arrived!'"

I wonder if that words are laden with provocation skill, the flying monsters are heading toward the hero.

"'Hou, hero Hayato, are you prepared to die by appearing in front of us?'"

"'Don't think that I'm always going to be the old me! I'll have my revenge today!'"

I can end it in an instant with [Laser] now. But it's hard to shoot it.

"'Fall back you dog of Saga empire!   I'll prove that hero is not the monopoly of Saga empire.'"

It's the prince. You should've leave it to him.

"'<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais'"

The <<DANCE>> earlier seems to be some kind of password. Claiomh Solais leaves the prince's hand while shedding blue light, and assails the yellow-skinned demon. Oh~ the picture that I saw in the museum back then doesn't seem to be an exaggerated lie.

Ah, it's repelled.

Claiomh Solais sure is weak.

"'The holy sword will cry, prince. That demon is the chief executive of the great demon lord of old--golden wild boar-head king. The highest class demon who has survived for several hundred years. You should withdraw if you don't want to die. <<SING>> Arondight.'"

After receiving the password from the hero, Arondight that he's holding is furiously shedding holy light.

I wonder if there are passwords like that for the holy swords I have? I've become able to read explanations of magic tools thanks to the book of magic tools, but it only has magic tools from the present day written in it, so I'm still not able to read the holy swords'. If it's just passwords, I probably can decipher it, let's check it out when I get some free time.

The hero's companions who have appeared from the ship put reinforcement magic to the hero. Out of curiosity, I use [Clairvoyance] magic, but I shouldn't have done it.

A priest-like beautiful woman of loose fluffy-type kyonyuu casts reinforcement magic. The mole under her eye looks good.

An archer-like long ears-kin woman is intercepting monsters approaching the hero. One arrow splits into 10 along the way and swoop down the monsters. Judging from the red light that it had let out, it was probably a magic arrow.

The monsters that have escaped the archer's attacks lands on the ship, but they got quickly eliminated by a light warrior, and a twin-sword warrior. Those girls also of ears-kin. A tiger ears-kin, and a wolf ears-kin. The tiger ears has ponytail, and the wolf-ears has short hair, they're both beautiful women with well-shaped breasts.

The last one is a beautiful woman with enormous breasts and luxurious blond hair holding a long cane. She seems to be comparable to lady Karina. She's doing something drawn-out, and begins chanting a spell.

In short, the followers are all glamorous beautiful women.

Riajuu, go explode.

What should I do.
Should I clean this up while being like Toruma by not reading the mood.

To shoot, or not to shoot, that is the question.

8-16. The Day of the Final (2)

Good grief, what a farce.

Even if the king is attending, why do I absolutely have to do a mock battle with the prince?

Moreover, the prince is using the holy sword, Claiomh Solais. It's a sword that embodies the [Invincible] Shiga kingdom.

<TLN: Remember, the one who was supposed to do the mock battle with the prince is Ringrande.>

There's no way I can win.

The person who holds the holy sword Claiomh Solais must never lose. That is because doing so means suggesting that the invincible Shiga kingdom is defeated.

Losing is not permitted even if it's just a fantasy.

Although, even if I don't deliberately try to lose, the prince should be slightly stronger than me if we exclude magic.

I can't win unless I use my trump card. If I use it, I would undoubtedly kill the prince. As expected, that's bad.

Aah, this is depressing.

◇

I can hear people from the audience seat cheering my name. There are also cheering for the prince, but isn't it because of the [Prince] title I wonder.

I'm wearing the magic armor Chaftar that I've got when I became the hero's follower, while shouldering the lightning great sword I've got from when I was a labyrinth explorer. The armor grants the same effect as physical reinforcement magic to the person who's wearing it. I can produce mana shield and magic for blocking sniping if I put mana into the magic circuit.

I enter the circle for the match.

Right when the match starts, I invoke the mana shield. Following that, I put mana into the lightning great sword, and activate the lightning edge.

I feel a bad premonition before I can add up physical reinforcement magic, I jump to the side.

A firebolt goes through where I was.

Firebolt Wand?

<TLN: I've just found out that the author uses "Wand" instead of "Cane" to translate 杖 , so I'm going to use that from now on. Might revisit older chapters to correct it but it'll be a PITA...>

That's not a military weapon.

It's not something that you should use without chanting you know?

"Nostalgic right? This is the thing you've made in the school after all."

The prince attacks while drawing blue trails with the holy sword.

What speed.

The legend that states the holy sword (Claiom Solais) user flies in the sky might be true.

I ward the holy sword away with my great sword.

Heavy. My wrist is really hurt.

The lightning clad on the great sword transmitted to the holy sword, and got uneventfully scattered away in the air.

Even though he would have fainted or paralyzed if he had used a normal sword.

Returning the favor, I swing the great sword to the prince's legs.

He invokes the defense film (Barrier) of the holy knight armor and block the great sword.

As expected of the equipment of the kingdom's strongest, the holy knight.

This time I'll entrust my armor to block the prince's sword, and focus my attention to attacking.

Executing Heavy Blow skill. The aim and accuracy are lower, but right now, I need might.

Executing Magic Edge skill. I don't usually use it since it's a waste of mana, but there's no meaning in preserving mana right now.

The great sword is tinged with red light.

Executing Sharp Edge skill. I don't want to kill the prince, but if I don't fight with the intention to kill, I won't be able to penetrate that armor's defense.

"Furious Whirlwind Blade"
<TLN:Senpuretsuha>

I shout the technique's name even though there's is no need to do that.

Looks like I've been infected with Hayato's foolishness.

I was sure that it'd be blocked, but it easily breaks the armor's barrier.

This is bad, he'll surely die if I don't stop.

I managed to stop the blade before the prince received a fatal hit.

However, the prince doesn't miss my unstable posture.

I was splatted to the arena's ground like a ball.

◇

Cheering, screams, and jeers.

It seems I've lost my consciousness for an instant.

The prince shoots pursuing firebolts rapidly. Are you trying to kill me?

It appears that his swelled pride is hurt because I stopped the sword earlier. The prince's eyes have scarily turned bloodshot.

I chant Quick Burst to destroy the firebolts.

However, our fight ends here.

Summoning circles are formed in the sky.

Thatisdangerous.

My intuition tells me the danger as if my head is split.

I begin to chant Break Magic magic. Not good, the prince hasn't realized the summoning circle in the sky. He only looks at me.

I stop the chanting in order to avoid the prince's attack.

I shouldn't have stopped the blade earlier if I knew that it'd turn out like this.

I wasn't able to stop the summoning.

A yellow-skinned demon appears from there. That presence and coercion, it's unmistakably an upper demon. The vibration from the massive body, taller than five meters, that lands on the ground almost makes me fall.

Hayato said this before.

He had only ran away from a demon once.

At that time, half of his companions sacrificed themselves in order to let him escape, he said so while looking so frustrated. I couldn't believe how that absurdly strong Hayato could lose, but I understand now.

That's an order of magnitude different.

Is a demon lord even stronger than that?

It's impossible.

Absolutely impossible.

My soul, not reasoning, is screaming. I want to immediately escape from here now.

The words that helps me keep my heart that was on the verge of breaking comes from an unexpected person.

◇

"Demon, no demon lord, your fate is over now."

Prince, how are you not able to measure the opponent's strength. He doesn't seem to be bluffing. If, at this time, I had any interest in a man who can bluff to a person with absolute strength, I might not had canceled the engagement.

The demon lord tilts its head to the side, and looks at the prince's sword interestedly.

"That sword is Claiom Solais right? A descendant of Yamato eh."

I wonder what's the some kind of howl sound I hear when the yellow-skinned demon is talking. It's the other head of the demon that's chanting.

In order to interfere with the summoning, I throw Quick Burst to the yellow-skinned demon.

It's no good.

The demon casually defends against the weak elementary magic with its hand.

I need more more than speed!

I execute Chanting Shortening and chant Explosion. It probably won't make it. However, I won't let this spell go to waste.

When the yellow-skinned demon complete its chanting, monsters begins appearing from the magic circles that are formed on the ground. Centipedes, scorpions, praying mantis, and even two-horned beetles.

It won't be easy fighting them while dealing with the yellow-skinned demon. The magic Explosion just now didn't give it much damage too.

Oh right, there are the participants of the main match and their friends still. Let's leave the monsters to them.

I call out to the warriors on the place using amplification magic.

"Brave warriors, let's cooperate together to subjugate the monsters. Magician, prioritize supporting the warriors with reinforcement magic over attack magic."

The people who have been fighting the monsters separately begin to cooperate together.

They're veterans. They probably won't lose to monsters as long as there are chances.

A centipede monster is attacking. The prince is also being attacked by a rhinoceros beetle monster.

"Fumu, the hero isn't here after all de~su. The souvenirs that I've brought have no meaning then."

<TLN: The demon is saying desu in katakana, which means death.>

While grumbling, the yellow-skinned demon casts reinforcement magic to the summoned monsters.

I'd have been able to use powerful magic if only the prince could take care of the front.

"That's strange de~su. The blue and the red should have butted in with this much uproar."

This centipede is strong. My sword can't cut it well. If only Hayato and those girls come at this time.

"Ahaha~ Onee-san, you're having a hard figh~t."

"Don't look away, let's go help the prince."

Leilas-dono of the Shiga Eight Sword, and the holy knight boy head toward the prince to assist him. The boy cuts one foot of the centipede as a parting gift.

I defeat the centipede with three consecutive explosions when its attention has turned away. The chanting was long, but since Explosion has Stun and Knockback effect, I was somehow able to do it.

Leilas-dono blocks the yellow-skinned demon's Inferno by using a great shield. He's amazing. He was probably using magic too, but I didn't think that there was anyone who could withstand that much attack beside Hayato.

"Hou? That's a nostalgic shield. How about this then?"

The demon throws white flame that easily pierced through the great shield of Leilas-dono in high speed.

I cannot let him die. The front will collapse if he dies.

I choose one option from among my selfish thought.

"O great Parion, please grant my selfish wish to summon the hero! I am the follower, follower of the hero Hayato, Ringrande."

It is not a chant.

It's a prayer for the god Parion. I don't know how much of my life span decreases with this prayer, but I'll give 10, or 20 years of it than letting my hometown gets violated.

The talisman of divine gift on my chest is shining in respond to my prayer.

Now, come, Jules Verne.

Carrying the hero, to the battlefield!

8-17. The Day of the Final (3)

<AN: This is from the hero's POV, a bit before lady Ringrande's POV chapter.>

"Hey, hey, Hayato. Where do you think the demon lord will appear?"

"Dunno, don't ask me difficult things. To quickly go to where the demon lord appears and defeat it. That's my job."

<TLN: Hayato refers to himself with ore-sama. A particularly pompous way to do so.>

Tsk, Maryest, she can't not know me.

"Ahaha, that's really like hero-sama."

"Can't be helped right. Seems that it's first time the oracle is all over the place."

Rusus the cat ears, and Fifi the dog ears carefree-ly said so.

I know, you girls are on my sides. I touch the ears of the two who bend themselves toward the captain' seat I'm sitting on. It feels really great. We've been together for five years, but it's taken me three years before they let me touch it.

"If I have to reasonably guess the place, it's probably around the labyrinth city, Selbira of Shiga kingdom, or the revived labyrinth of Kubooku kingdom."

The priest, Loreiya, calmly tells her prediction. Since the secretary, Nono, and the magic warrior, Ringrande aren't here right now, I can only really talk with the witch, Meryest, and Loreiya.

Loreiya is hugging my head from behind. Her breasts on my head are heavy. I off-handedly push the breasts aside. Loreiya looks so happy even though I did it in cold-heart.

Breasts are just nothing more than lumps of fat. I don't understand perverts.

"Hero-sama is also stoic today eh."

That doesn't sound like a line from a clergywoman.

Ah, why do my party have nothing but jigglyjiggle.

Isn't it fine to have one little girl at least. There's a taciturn girl, but she's 23 this year on top of having E cup. If there's a taciturn little girl, I'll whisper love to her anytime.

Haa, the girl with middle-schooler-level flat chest who seemed to be a soldier of Shiga kindgom that we saved recently was quite good. If we had just met five years earlier, I'd have absolutely proposed her.

"Hayato, the regular contact from Nono in Selbira has turned up, 『Peaceful and Dull』 she says."

"Is that so."

Meryest and Loreiya have predicted that Selbira is the most suspicious.

Even though Nono are with escorts, it might be dangerous to leave a non-combatant like her there.

"Will someone change place with Nono to Selbira?"

"Eh~, I don't wanna. I want to be near Hayato."

"Right~ we'll fight better if Hayato is near right."

Stress will likely pile up if you're in the labyrinth city without being able to go into the labyrinth, Rusus and Fifi will likely snap and assault the labyrinth.

Half an hour later, the regular contact come from Seina who has infiltrated into Yowok kingdom.

"I'll read it loud. 『The poor small country is also peaceful today. I'm bored~』."

It looks like she wants to change place too like Nono, but the only one who can do infiltration among our members is only Seina the spy. Let her endure it.

Personally, I want the emergence to be in Yowok kingdom. That kingdom has done a great crime of sacrificing my honey for reviving the labyrinth after all.

<TLN: He said my honey in english.>

Not noticing the downfall of Kubooku kingdom since I kept diving into the hero labyrinth is a bitter mistake.

◇

"Isn't there a regular contact from Rin?"

It's not like that punctual Ringrande.

The underground labyrinth on Oyugock city should be inactive, so the demon lord can't possibly appear there. There must be something wrong with the oracle, but since it's the birthplace of Ringrande, and there's a wedding of her little brother going on, it's just right for her to have gone there.

"Hayato is really forgetful~"

"True. So, what does he forget?"

"The regular contact time is changed to afternoon since Rin has some business isn't it."

Tsk, Rusus and Fifi, you're just as forgetful.

Right huh, she complained about fighting against the stupid prince of Shiga kingdom on the regular contact yesterday.

Right at that time.

The Control Orb in front of the captain's seat is flickering intensely.

It seems that someone has used the Talisman of Divine Gift. No, looking at the situation, it's Ringrande, no mistake 'bout it.

"Everyone, take your position."

"Mary, who's used the talisman."

"Wait a bit--it's Ringrande."

As expected huh.

"I'll wait at the bow. I'll leave the steering to Wyni."

"Leave it to me."

I shoulder Arondight and rush to the bow.

◇

Coming out of the dark grey space, the ship appears in the original world.

Alright, let's say the usual line.

"The great me, has arrived!"

Umu, it feels good.

The monsters flying in the air are coming to attack the Jules Verne after taking my provocation.

Maryest reports with the speaking tube.

『Ringrande is safe. The enemy is--』

Meryest is hesitating.

You don't have to say it, I didn't think that that guy is here.

The one over there is the fated opponent.

I met it three years after I had been summoned as a hero. Our party that I thought to be invincible was utterly defeated by this yellow demon. If my companions didn't sacrifice themselves, I might have been killed by this demon.

However, I'm not the same as back then.

I'll show you directly.

I will not hesitate, I'll use my full power from the start.

Activating my unique skills, [Strongest Lance (Nothing cannot be Penetrated)], and [Invincible Shield (Nothing can Penetrate)], and lastly, [Infinite Regeneration (Endless Healing)]. I can only use Infinite Regeneration once in a month, so I've been reserving it for fighting the demon lord, but I'll lose if I hesitate here against that guy.

I'll leave the small fries to my companions, and devote myself to fight the yellow bastard.

My companions go down from the ship and the ship submerges into the dimensional gap with auto pilot. We can't lose the precious ship here after all.

"Fall back, you dog of Saga empire!"

What? The stupid prince huh?

Looks like he can use the holy sword of Shiga kingdom, but you'll make it cry y'know. It's pitiful for the holy sword if you use it like that. Looks like he can at least use holy verse, but he can't pull out the holy sword's power.

I'll have you witness, the guy who can truly use the holy sword!

"<<SING>> Arondight!"

The blue light of the holy sword is more intense than ever.

I activate Flying Boot and plunge to the yellow demon.

Today, Arondight is somewhat different!

8-18. The Day of the Final (4)

<AN: Continuation of Hayato's POV>

I wonder how many times we've exchanged blows with sword.

To be matched by the yellow demon that's supposed to be the magic type, my confidence is shaken y'know. I don't know what kind of magic the demon use, but it's using magic edge on its elongated nails, it's troublesome. To grow back again no matter how many times I've broken it is too much of cheating.

When I look with appraisal, the difference between my level and the yellow bastard is only a little.

Yet, why can't it reach.

I block the yellow bastard's flame attack with [Invincible Shield], and penetrate its barrier with the [Strongest Lance]-powered Arondight. However, the power is getting shaved by scaly barrier that appear around the demon.

Whenever I damage the demon even a little, the three orbs that are floating around it heal the demon immediately. I've tried destroying the orbs earlier, but the demon summons another one whenever I break one.

I'll be gradually pushed back if this continues.

"Hayato, please don't fight alone, we're a team you know."

Dang, I've gotten too heated.

Maryest is right, if we cooperate there's no way we can lose even against a strong enemy.

Fortunately, most small fries on the opposite of the arena seem to have been eliminated by the warriors of Shiga kingdom. I didn't know since I rarely went to Shiga kingdom, but the warriors of this kingdom can't be made light of. The monsters had been separated away from the yellow demon along with the buff before I knew it, since they weren't approaching each other, a considerable distance had opened.

It's as if someone is adjusting it.

I've thought such thing unintentionally.

Ridiculous. Even if they're small fries, those monsters are of upper level 40. If there's someone that has strength to do such thing, I'd scout that person into our party.

The two monsters near us are also being dealt with by my companions.

Rusus and Fifi are in charge of the centipede. It seems to be a hard fight, but it'll be over since Ringrande has come to assist them.

The two-horned rhinoceros beetle is flying around, but Wiyaryi is restraining it as to not get close.

"Wiy, I'm leaving that monster to you. Rusus and Fifi will help you soon, so please stall for some time."

"I understand Hayato. Please leave it to me."

No, Wiyaryi, I wanted you to reply that you could defeat it. Why doesn't she understand even though she's an archer.

"Is the strategy briefing over alreadyes?"

I was wondering why it didn't attack...

I'll make you regret that composure.

"Hayato, please buy us some time for the spell."

"Understood!"

Before I can attack with Arondight, the yellow bastard attacks with flame.

I block the white flame with the holy shield strengthened with Invincible Shield. I couldn't block them all, but Loreiya can always heal some minor wounds.

"As expected, really as expected deesu. To defend against <<White Inferno>>, you've improved desu. Hero is interesting after all desu."

Rusus and Fifi are helping Wiyaryi after defeating the small fry.

"Ringrande, Loreiya, we're starting the chanting."

The three girls use Talisman of Divine Gift to start the forbidden spell chanting.

The talisman has many convenient functions, by synchronizing chanting, the power and precision of tactical magic can drastically jump.

Mary intends to defeat the recovery orbs all at once huh.

However, if you use the tactical magic of forbidden spell here, it'll leave a scar that can't be ignored in this city.

"This is strange desune. Why isn't the blue and the red coming desuka?"

The yellow bastard looks puzzled.

I block the attack of the slightly absent-minded demon with my shied. I feel that this is my chance, but I can't leave the back now.

"Well, it's fine desu. The damages from hero and the others feel good, but it's about time to let the hero have the taste of fear and despair desune."

"Fuhn, you M bastard! Making me feel fear you said? Try if you can do it!"

"Well then, please accept the souvenirs desu. Please taste it to your heart's content desu."

In order to anticipate the demon's attack, I gulp down the acceleration potion. I have nothing more once I use this, but I've got a really bad feeling. I drink the bitter liquid. The effect comes out little by little, the movement of the surrounding gradually becomes slower.

A gigantic summoning circle appear high in the sky behind the yellow bastard.

You think I'll let you do it easily!

"<<SING>> Arondight, <<PLAY>> Tunas."

<TLN: Play as in playing musical instrument, especially string's.>

I recite the holy verses of the holy sword and the holy armor.

Rousing my mana, magic power (Energy) is being produced as if overflowing from the core of the holy armor, the philosopher's stone. And then, that vast power flows into the holy sword.

The preparation is complete before the yellow's bastard finishes with the summoning circle.

"<<Shining Blade>>"

Finishing move should be shouted after all.

Swinging Arondight with subsonic speed, I turn the blade of light toward the summoning circle.

Shiing.

Tsk, that bastard threw one of the healing orb up in the sky and warded off Shining Blade.

I swing the remaining Shining Blade, but this time the demon uses the monster's corpses below to intercept it.

The fight was futile, and the summoning had been completed.

"What..the heck."

A whale is flying in the sky.

It's a gigantic monster bigger than 300 meters in length.

"G, great monstrous fish?!"

"Lies, the one that the golden wild boar king used, that?"

"The legendary aerial fortress isn't it?"

The three people who've stopped the chanting let out voices of shocks.

The great monstrous fish, despite the somewhat silly name, it's a level 97 monster.

I couldn't believe it and rechecked many times.

However, there's no mistake about it.

"We can't withdraw no matter what the opponent is. Wiy, Rusus, Fifi, call the Jules Verne back to the surface, I'll permit you to use this as the main battery. Take Arondight, and go."

We've hidden the precious dimensional submerging warship to protect it from harm, but it seems that's not to be. I'm sorry to the emperor, but it doesn't seem like I can keep my promise of taking the warship back safely.

If we use the ship's main battery in the downtown, it'll certainly become catastrophic.

The hero's name will probably be ruined, but there is no other way to defeat that monster. I hand over Arondight that will become the core of the main battery. I take a spare magic sword from the infinite stowing (Inventory) in its place.

"That's some nice fear node~su."

Damn you yellow bastard.

You'll only keep that conceit for so long. The time when Rin and the others finish their chanting will be your last.

I wonder what the great monstrous fish is thinking, instead of looking here, it's staring hard at one corner of the arena. I don't really understand, but this is favorable. That yellow bastard might have unexpectedly failed the summoning, and could not control it.

"However, the hope mixed with the bitter taste of fear, quite satisfactory desune."

Hope huh. It's fine to think about pleasant things right?

I, after this fight is over, will go visit the orphanage. I absolutely won't die until I get to the paradise of little girls. Taking a bath together, sharing a bed together, the dream spreads.

"As long as the great me is a hero, hope always exist y'know."

"Laughable desune."

I didn't notice it.

The summoning circle that has summoned the great monstrous fish remains in the sky.

That's right, I shouldn't have not noticed the meaning of it.

From the summoning circle that hasn't disappeared even after the summoning is over, great monstrous fish begins appearing one after another.

Including the first one, there are seven of them.

I see, you guys are my death huh.

Hey, Parion-san.

Your world is too hard y'know.

<AN: Next Chapter is from Satou's POV>

8-19. The Battle in the Arena

Satou's here. It seems that they served whale meat for the school lunch a long time ago. I had eaten the meat of the whale that was stranded ashore on the coast when I was visiting my grandfather's house, it was really delicious.

Although that's something from a long ago, so it might've been glorified.

◇

In the end, I lost the timing to attack when I was hesitating.

For the time being, I guess I should ensure that no one dies.

I move from the spire to the audience seating on the arena.

The duke and the king body-double--are still having a hard time.

Alright, let's use that here.

There's this [Magic Hand] among the magic I've acquired recently. A nature magic user who has become able to use intermediate level magic is sure to acquire this magic.

It's probably easier to understand if I say that the effect is close to the so-called psychokinesis. It seems magicians use this magic to reach place where their hands can't, scratch their back, or rub their own shoulders.

Unskilled magicians can only exert the same level of power as theirs with this [Magic Hand], so there's rarely any magician who use this in a fight. Following the mastery of Nature magic skill, the number of hands I can deploy at the same time with [Magic Hand] have also increased just like with magic arrow. Similarly, if someone who excels in mana manipulation uses [Magic Hand], it can reaches quite far. In my case, I can extend 120 hands to around 500 meters each.

It seems that even among the magicians in the world, one that can skillfully use more than two hands is quite rare.

Innumerable [Magic Hands] smoothly extend; it seize three monsters who block the way of the duke and his companions, and throw them away to the arena.

The handling is a tiny bit difficult.

Before long, I get the [Magic Hands] to hold swords, and fight like a thousand-armed Kannon (Senju Kannon).

The duke's escorts are surprised to see the monsters suddenly removed, but it seems they prioritize getting the duke escapes rather than investigating the cause. There are some people looking for the person who have removed the monsters, but no one notices me. Apparently, this is thanks to the skills I've learned during the infiltration mission before.

◇

Now then, it seems that the people who can't fight monsters have finished evacuating.

Of course, I didn't only watch the evacuation as it happened. I was doing work of catching people who got left behind with [Magic Hand], and throwing them to the escape passage.

The monsters near the hero's party and the yellow-skinned demon are a pain. Thanks to the provocation the hero has done in the beginning, the monsters always go back to him no matter how many times I've thrown them away.

I decide to leave two monsters who are particularly stubborn to the hero's party. That tiger ears person, and that wolf ears person will probably defeat them.

There are six monsters remaining.

It'd be nice if the prince and his cohorts help to exterminate the monsters, but for some reason, they're going towards the yellow-skinned demon, so the number of monsters aren't decreasing. Such inefficient people.

The Eight Shiga Sword man has left the battle, maybe because the damage he's incurred from the yellow-skinned demon in the beginning is big. Really, how cowardly.

The battle-maniac boy was fighting amusingly against the yellow-skinned demon, but he has fainted after receiving an attack from the demon's tail. The stomach portion of his armor is dented, but looking at his HP, it doesn't seem to be a wound that'll kill him, so it's probably fine to leave him alone. Looking at his position, it doesn't seem like he'll get caught up in a ranged attack anyway.

◇

"Yasaku, be more prudent with big moves. We don't know if the other people will fall apart. Preserve your stamina."

"Baro, you're just too rigid. It's time to decrease their number with a bang now."

"Hey wait, Yasaku, and Tan, save the chattering for later."

"That's right, if you don't keep your guard up, it'll be dangerous."

The party fighting the War Mantis seems to be fine. A heavy warrior, a magic warrior, a magician, and a priest carrying a pole arm, it's a party with good balance.

Of course, there aren't only party like that around.

"Sir Hoen, I will take care of this, so please stand back."

"What's this, Sir Muzuki, I won't let you be the only one who does great deeds here!"

The knights are compromising to each other in front of a pill bug-type monster.

These two are of lower level 20s, but since their knight retainers are high leveled, they'd be fine.

I wonder if it's okay to take that out here?

No-one-is-looking right?

I use [Stalagmite (Toss Stone)] in secret.

It's an elementary level earth magic, but since it hits the (monster's) weak abdomen from below, it pierces through it, quite helpful. Even though the pill bug is left hanging in the air by the stone lance on its abdomen, it's still alive. The monster's remaining HP is only around 20%. As for the rest, the knights can just rush in and attack from position where they can't be counterattacked, and it's history. Even though they were having a concession earlier, what a calculated bunch.

The next party seems to be a mish-mash.

Even though there are two shield users, they don't seem able to use provocation skill. As the result, the monster aims for the attacker, and the rear guards devote themselves to heal the attacker instead of casting attack magic.

"Kyaa"

"Sosona! Gerca, fix your posture. Don't let Sosona's sacrifice go to waste."

One member of the party got kicked by the cricket type monster and launched into the air. Still, sacrifice you said.... Isn't she still alive?

That's a girl of fairykin I guess?

She's been thrown up around 10 meters high into the air. She had probably protected against the attack with magic, but her HP is rapidly decreasing to below 10%. I catch her in the air with [Magic Hand], and pull her here. Along the way, I use [Magic Hand] to make her drink a not-for-sale potion.

I've made it somehow.

After her HP has recovered to around 90%, I lay down the girl on the audience seat. I've wanted to see her closer since it's the first time I've seen a Leprechaun.

[Magic Hand] is truly convenient. I'm afraid that it'd turn me into a degenerate.

I stealthily invoke 10 Remote Arrows, and snipe at the cricket's leg joints from behind.

They seem to be surprised with the sudden support fire, but with this, I can probably leave them unattended without problem.

This party seems to be the one struggling the most. Even though the other parties are struggling, they're fighting while staying alive. Sometimes they need help, so I absorb mana from the monster while I'm observing the hero's fight.

◇

That yellow-skinned demon seems to be a companion of the ojaru and nari demons from before after all. If I tell it that the demon lord has been defeated, I wonder if this demon will be docile for the next 66 years?

Nevertheless, the three orbs floating above the yellow-skinned demon sure are great. Even if the hero and his party dealt great damage to the demon, the orbs immediately recover it. I wonder if there's a way to summon the orb written in the demon summoning book from the other day? After checking it with my AR, it seems they're called Cure Orbs. I've searched for it, but there's nothing about it written in the demon summoning book. How unfortunate.

Oh?

The crisis perception is warning me to something high in the sky?

There's a summoning magic circle over there.

I don't know what will be summoned, but it's fine to just immediately get whatever POP out of it from here alright?

And then, the thing that comes out of it is--

A whale?

It's flying in the air, and about 300 meters big, but it's unmistakably a whale. I don't think even the blue whale grows this big though?

The monster's name seems to be Great Monstrous Fish.

Any Japanese who sees it for the first time must be saying, "A whale flying in the sky", it's just how the etymology goes.

The hero and his companions look surprised.

Of course they would be.

I mean, when it's that big, I can't imagine just how many meals you can make from it.

If I seriously make yamatoni from it, I wonder how many I could make?

<TLN: https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/大和煮, essentially beef boiled with soy sauce, ginger, and sugar.>

My eyes met with the great monstrous fish's eyes unintentionally.

Well hey, demon.

You can do it if you try after all!

I had almost danced in joy reflexively, but it wasn't only one.

There are another six of it coming out of the summoning circle, terrific.

I've waited more after that, but it seems to be the end. There may be more coming out, so I'll stop myself from destroying the magic circle.

<TLN: Sorry, it was 'including' not 'excluding' on the previous chapter, so there are 'only' 7 whales.>

◇

Now then, since I mustn't damage the meat when I demolish the whales, I decide to shave off their heads with Laser and put them into the storage immediately. I actually wanted to demonstrate Excalibur sharpness for it, but since they're too big, it just won't reach.

A single Laser shot is weak, so decide to use it together with Condense.

The power of a single laser shot is weak, but I've become able to shoot multiple shots after I've leveled up the skill level. When I unify them into one with Condense, the power and the convergence will be increased.

I simulate the Laser trajectory by using Space Grasp and Radar together. The exposure time was going to be slightly insufficient, so I decide to shoot it like an ON/OFF consecutive pulse laser.

I can use the magic consecutively just fine, but it'll take some time, and I don't want them running back to the summoning circle.

Flash, and it smells as if a coffee is nearby from the ozone. The pulse laser strokes the whales on its track, and shoots out beyond the cloud.

Alright, cleared in one blow!

It'll be catastrophic if those gigantic masses fall down, so I promptly use Ground Shrink and Sky Drive together to get close to the whale meat that have began falling, and collect them into the Storage. The whale meat feel hot, I don't know whether because it's been roasted, or because the flesh and blood have evaporated.

It's fresh from the oven.

<TLN: Can also mean "Pleased with myself".>

Even though they've been burned with Laser, there are still a lot of body fluids splashed around. I've heard that blood won't come out from wounds burned by Laser, but I wonder if it's just a hearsay?

It seems that I'm the only one who's puzzling over such thing.

The Arena that had been wrapped in tumult until now has become quiet before I knew it.

Umm~, whales are delicious and all, but I think you shouldn't eat them.

>Title [Great Monstrous Fish Slayer] Acquired

>Title [Phantom Technique User] Acquired

>Title [Light Technique User] Acquired

>Title [Sky Chef] Acquired

8-20. The Battle in the Arena (2)

Satou's here. It's said that the three major desires of man are sleep, appetite, and sexual desire. That's why it can't be helped that I lost to the appetite and did something careless. However, I plan to do my best as to not lose to the sexual desire. Since it's said that lolicon is one of the seven big crimes.

◇

Oops.

Even though it's alright since I'm in Nanashi silver mask mode, I might've been a bit too conspicuous.

Now then, wonder how I should deceive them.

No, this might be a good opportunity. I've been doing something like strolling alone incognito in an MMO hunting ground since some time ago, so if I make it really showy here, it might help in making exposing my true identity harder since it'll be different than my usual self.

Fortunately, the blood from the whales have evaporated into mist, so they should haven't seen me.

There's probably no one that can use [Clairvoyance] like me. I've tested this with Arisa, I can sense if someone is using it to see me with mana perception.

For now, let's do something about my voice. "A, aa, a", I alter my voice to be higher.

>[Strange Voice Skill Acquired]

It has to be the most showy one, so I decide to use [White Mask, Halo options attached].

These clothes were made when I was thinking with Arisa late at night with a strange tension, and went overboard. As for the garment, the clothes is white as the basic tone, and colored with gold threads. On top of having needlessly fluttering cloths in the style of miko, the shoulder, chest, and back areas are made to look gender-neutral.

I don't wear a mantle or an overcoat, and equip the usual white smile mask. The wig is the newly made one with long straight violet hair. It's not made from Arisa's hair of course. It's just a dyed white-hair wig.

I use illusion magic to add three shining halo options there that will make afterimages (blurs) when I move. As a bonus, I put bracelets on my ankles that are shining more intense as I move faster. I only need to put [<<Flexible Shield>>], and [<<Flexible Armor>>] and it's complete with this. I leave the title into [Unsung Hero], matching the Nanashi name.

<TLN: The hero here is the 'Eiyuu' one, not the 'Yuusha' one.>

It's a showy gaudy style that I absolutely won't wear when I am Satou.

Since I'm going to intervene anyway, I turn serious, and use Remote Arrows to destroy the two remaining beetle monsters, and the yellow-skinned demon's orbs. I directed the remaining arrows toward the yellow-skinned demon itself, but it could defend against the arrows. Several magic arrows seem to have been burned by the fire magic of the yellow-skinned demon. Using magic against magic is a good idea. I'll try it next time.

"Who's dhere?"

"Who are you!"

The yellow-skinned demon and the hero asked my identity in overlap.

While keeping distances to each other, both of them seem to be wary of me. I lower my altitude and descend to approximately 10 meters above the ground.

"Nanashi."

I utter my name briefly.

Thanks to maxing out Strange Voice skill, I can freely use any voice I want. I adjust the voice while imagining how a voice actress perform as a boy like. It's giving an impression of unknown age and gender.

The crisis perception warns me of the danger from the beautiful women behind the hero. That reminds me, it's been 2-3 minutes since the chanting begins. It's probably some kind of advanced level magic, but judging from this sensation, it's probably not a magic that should be used inside a town.

Not good.

That, I have to stop that.

It's been awhile since I feel this impatient. I cheeks the log just to be sure, it doesn't seem to be from mind magic.

The best way is to persuade the hero to stop them, but the problem is that there won't be enough time to do it, so I'm going to be forceful.

First, I use [Break Magic] to forcefully stop the chanting.

Of course, disrupting magic that's being composed causes the mana from the source to begin overflowing on the surrounding. I've expected this course of events from the result of doing magic experiments during late nights, so I use [Force Barrier (Mana Section)] to protect the beautiful women. It shouldn't be that strong of a defense magic, but it seems to have protected them without any problem.

However, there seem to be feedbacks from the forced termination of the magic chanting to some extents, they fall to the grounds on their knees.

"What are you doing!"

"That magic is too dangerous you know. Sorry, but I've made them stop the chanting you know."

<TLN: He talked a bit like Arisa here.>

The hero rushes to the women while protesting to me, but I give him the explanation after the fact. I changed my tone a bit to match my voice.

After all, f you're a hero, I'd like you to mind the damage to the surrounding a bit more. Please follow the example of Tsubasaman from the rebroadcast a long time ago.

"This is laughable desu. Are you quarreling among yourselves desuka? You must have used illusion technique, and sent the great monstrous fish back to the summoning gate desune? Your friend has got quite some wisdom there desu."

Huh? You're going to interpret it like that eh.

◇

The hero's silver ship who seemed to have been hiding in the sub-space surfaced. White light emits from the bow of the surfaced ship.

It loiters for a while, but then after hesitating for a bit, it decides on the aim, and shoots a beam.

Unfortunately, it's aiming at me.

Apparently, they judged me as an enemy since they saw the hero was protesting to me. I curse at those simplistic people in my mind, but I do objectively look like a suspicious person after all, so I consent for a little. The mask probably doesn't inspire me as an ally of justice after all.

I stack <<Flexible Shields>> and block the beam from the hero's ship with it. The Flexible Shield's HP rapidly decreases. Looks like it has about 4-8 times the power of my Laser. Since I can't be blocking it forever, I use [Condense] magic to divert the beam's direction toward the sky. It might have been easier if I had [Absorb Light] of shadow magic.

The ship's bow that's discharging the beam has become red hot, so the attack is probably going to stop soon. The hero is shouting something to his companions in the ship, but it looks like they can't hear him.

"So weak hero! <<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais."

Huh? The prince's here.

After the hero's ship, even the prince judges me as an enemy, and shoots the flying holy sword. I shift my face to the side to avoid the sword, and just before it passes me, I catch the grip, stopping it. The holy sword is going wild in my grasp, but it quiets down immediately after I draw out the mana from it.

However, prince, you sure looks quite exhausted.

When I was putting the whales into my storage, there were large quantity of parasite looking monsters falling together with the body fluids, that I didn't put into the storage, toward the arena. They were individually weak monsters, but they were falling just right to where the prince and his cohorts were.

I thought that the prince and his cohorts would be fine so I left them alone, but it seems they unexpectedly had a hard time. His armor is partially destroyed, and there are countless scars that look like they've been eaten from monsters remaining on the bare skin. He's doing well, not dying from blood loss.

The battle maniac boy is in more horrible state than the prince, but he's stabbing the monster corpses while laughing loudly as if he's gone mad.

◇

The yellow-skinned demon creates a summoning circle below its feet like it's trying to get away, so I use [Break Magic] to destroy the summoning circle. Next, I destroy the yellow-skinned demon's defensive magic with [Break Magic], but it seems to be multi-layered, it hasn't completely come off with one shot.

I quickly approach with Ground Shrink, and use [Mana Drain] on the yellow-skinned demon to snatch its mana away.

"Gununu! To have my mana easily stolen to this degree!"

The yellow-skinned demon isn't also letting its mana get stolen freely, it's doing various useless resistances.

"You bastard, you must be the true ancestor of the vampires desune."

This time I'm treated as a vampire huh.

For the time being, I continue to use the combo of hitting it with [Break Magic], followed by [Mana Drain]. The demon is saying something, but I noncommittally ignore it.

I can snatch 300 MP with one go. I've thought that it only has 710MP since it's level 71, but it doesn't seem like it's been emptied even after I've deprived it thrice. Apparently, demons have far larger MP pool than human. Its mana finally dried up after I snatch it for 10 times. Doesn't it have more MP than me?

The snatched mana is too redundant, so I charge it into the holy sword that I've just got. At first the sword is the size of a one-handed sword, but it's growing bigger as I put more mana. If Arisa was here, she would have a weird idea while grinning with loose check, no doubt bout it. The expansion stopped after I put around 500 MP. It's become as big as the replica in the museum.

After I've finished tearing off the yellow-skinned demon magic defense, stripped it off its magic power, and shaved 90% of its HP, I throw the demon toward the hero's party.

The hero's sword bisects the yellow-skinned demon that's come into his view without any hesitation. So it can be easily defeated when its defense magic has been broken after all. If I develop a magic that can break multiple magic at once, I can defeat them easily it seems. The yellow-skinned demon was saying, "I demand a restart noDESu", but what exactly did it want to restart was unknown until the end.

The magicians in his party are burning the remains with magic.

The hero steps before me. He's still drawing his sword. Come to think of it, he's not using a holy sword, but a magic sword. Did the holy sword break?

"What is your intention."

"Wasn't it your fated opponent?"

"Fuhn, I won't say thanks."

"I don't mind you know. You'd have defeated it if you had used the forbidden magic right?"

Judging from the yellow-skinned demon's composure, it probably had countermeasures for it, but it'd be boorish of me to retort with that.

However, this tone is a mistake. It's hard to talk.

"By the way, that stupid prince is going to die, you're not going to help him?"

I turn my view toward the prince from the hero's words, he's being toyed with by small fry monsters after seemingly getting inflicted by intoxicant poison. Looks like he's fighting with a dagger.

It seems that the hero doesn't want to actively help him.

I'm also fine with leaving him alone, but I have to eliminate the monsters anyway, so I decide to help him on the occasion.

It'd be faster if I use remote arrows, but let's try using the holy sword that I've just acquired.

"<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais."

The holy sword Claiomh Solais leaves my hand, and multiplies itself like papers scattering away from a paper stack. It's split into 13 swords with thin blades. The true sword is wrapped in blue light on the exterior.

Aim marks like with [Remote Arrow] are displayed in my AR. I can also set the trajectory in similar fashion it seems. I shoot them at the small fry monsters just like that.

The blade cuts the monsters in successions as they evaporate by the holy light.

They were all around level 20 monsters when I first saw them, but there are some level 50 monsters mixed in before I knew it. It looks like they used skill called [Life Drain] to steal levels from the other monsters and the prince, and then grew up.

I see.

That explains why the prince's hair has become white somehow.

He also didn't have that many wrinkles, and his level should have been in upper 40s, yet it has been dropped to upper 20s now. The battle maniac boy is also like the prince, but he's in considerably better condition than the prince. His level is still in upper 30, and his hair hasn't aged to become white either.

Alas, it would have been better if I had waited to throw Claiomh Solais for a bit longer.

It should have been good enough for them to survive with their five limbs intact.

8-21. The Battle in the Arena (3)

Satou's here. There's this thing called Tabletop RPG. It's a game where you're role-playing as someone in the game's world, but unlike Westerners, Japanese people are generally shy, so in most matches, they talk in business-like manners the whole time.

I'll say this again, there are a lot of shy people among Japanese.

◇

A birdkin scout comes flying from the opposite side of the arena.

Apparently, the duke forces have finally arrived. Confirming on the map, there are 10 iron golems, and 3000 knights encircling the arena. There are also several mobile forts.

"Tsk, coming here after all this."

I'm saying my farewell to the hero who's uttering cursing words. It'll be troublesome if I don't leave soon.

"Hero, I will have to go soon. I don't want to get too close to influential people."

<TLN: He's using boku to refer himself here, mostly used by polite males, but can and is rarely used by females too.>

I'm sorry, I'm actually already on the side of those influential people.

"I understand that feel. You can probably see it already, but I'm Hayato Masaki. It may be confusing, but Masaki is the family name. You're also a Japanese--no, with that hair, a reincarnated person huh. You're a former Japanese right?"

"Japanese or not, you already know from seeing me don't you? I'm the [Hero without Name], Nanashi. We might meet again in a battlefield someday."

<TLN: Alright, the unsung hero thing isn't going well with how Satou's using the title for lol. It can still mean either way though.>

Do I regard myself a hero--nope~ it's embarrassing enough that I feel like rolling on the floor. It's like installing chuuni language converter tool in a smartphone.

I'm really glad that I have the poker face skill.

"Wait! Won't you fight with me together? I want you for the battle with the demon lord."

Gross.

At least, please say, "I want your power" instead. Being a homo on top of lolicon is unreasonable.

"Is that a proposal? Thanks for the invitation, but no thanks. The sca~ry onee-sama bunch behind you are glaring after all. Bye then, ladykiller-san."

What the heck is with [Ladykiller-san]!Someone please stop me. I wonder if it's because I'm aware of my gender-neutral speech, I have become a strange character.

I've cleared the objective of becoming a character that won't be associated with me (Satou), but it's too gross, I'm dying.

◇

The scout unit that have raided the audience seating begin to call out [Yamato] when they see me.

What?

After I look at myself, I understand.

13 Claiomh Solais splits are floating around me like options from old shooting games, or bits.

They probably see it like the picture of Yamato in the museum.

However, wasn't Yamato a big man who wielded a two meters long great sword?

As expected, the current gender-neutral look of me can't possibly be likened with him I think. No, when I think again, the soldiers are pretty far away from me, so they probably can't measure my height.

Now then, let's heal the prince's and his cohort's wounds before leaving the stage. If I leave them alone to die here, it'll be like MPK, leaving me with a bad aftertaste.

Since it's troublesome to take the prince and his cohorts buried in the wreckages of the monsters, I put the wreckages into my storage, and then heal them who are left on the ground with water magic. I intended to only heal them for a bit, but they got completely recovered instead. I wasn't able to heal his white hair and aging, but I don't have any interest to help him that far. Have the temple look for it later yourself.

Looks like their destroyed equipments have been stored inside the storage along with the monsters remains, they're half-naked. I feel that it's pointless, so I put mantles I've got from thieves back then on top of their bodies.

"See you later, hero."

"Ah, let's meet again in the battlefield with the demon lord next time!"

Oops, I forgot to tell him that I've already defeated the demon lord. There's going to be an oracle from the god before long anyway, so I guess it's fine.

I climb several hundreds meters high with Sky Drive, and fly away beyond the sky with the Wind Magic: Air Cannon. When I tried it back then, the speed exceeded 100 Km/H. Let's try to see the maximum speed soon.

To disappear beyond the sky like this, I feel like a hero from Showa era.

<TLN: This time he's saying Hero in English. In this context, he means the superhero in TV kind, and probably Ultraman in particular.>

◇

When I'm up in the sky on top of the duchy capital, I confirm that Arisa and the others have properly evacuated into the basement of the mansion. Sera seems to have been safely rescued too, she's in the same room with Arisa and the others. Looks like the previous earl couple and the employees are all safe too.

I'm glad that lady Karina, and little brother-kun are also safe in the scroll workshop.

I land in a suitable-looking forest.

It looks like I'm being watched by monitoring magic, though I don't know if it's from the hero's companion, or the duke's subordinate. Once I had landed in the dense forest, I used [Break Magic] on myself, and the monitoring goft canceled.

I thought that it'd be troublesome if the sky drive got canceled, so I made a landing, but it seems that break magic only affects the designated target magic.

I go back to the duchy capital while flying close to the top of the forest. When I get close enough to see the capital, I descend to the ground and continue moving.

I infiltrate the duke castle by using the route I've used to sneak into the duke's third son room before. According to the map, it seems that the duke and the king's body-double are in the same room.

Looks like the hero, followed by lady Ringrande, and the imperial princess Maryest, are coming to the castle to have an audience with them. Since I can't find the other hero's companions and his ship, they've probably gone back to the sub-space.

"Please forgive me for the sudden visit."

I've entered the room brazenly, but it seems none of the guards notice me until after I've opened my mouth. Are these guards alright?

The guards are coming from the roof by breaking through it, and from the hidden room.

It's troublesome to deal with them, so I use [Magic Hand] to make them unable to come closer.

"Who are you."

"I'm called Nanashi."

I answer the duke-san question. Duke-san instructs the guards with gesture, and they go back to their hiding places. The head miko-san might have told him about me, but to be in the same room as a suspicious person without guards like this, quite a daring person.

Only the duke's butler remains. If this was a manga, he'd be a dexterous type, but this butler seems to be of domestic affair type.

"I'll listen to your business."

"It's nothing much. I've come here to return this."

I unwrap the cloth while saying so, and hand over the holy sword Claiomh Solais.

Since they asked me how I got it, I told them the course of events honestly. For some reason, they were surprised when I talked about how the holy sword split into 13 when I recited the holy verse.

"This is too abrupt, I cannot believe you."

"There have been several people who can make the sword『Dance』by reciting the holy verse, but there were none who could release the true form of the holy sword."

They asked me to demonstrate if I really could do it, but isn't it bad to draw a sword before the king, regardless if he's a body-double?

"You don't need to worry. I've heard the story from the head miko. If the story about you defeating the demon lord is true, then you can kill us even without drawing a sword."

You're awful, duke-san. It is a fact, but you're going to shatter the guards' prides.

Since I've already transfered all the mana that I put into Claiomh Solais to other holy swords, I charge mana into it once again. It's fine with 500MP right.

Not only the duke, and the king, even the hiding guards are also surprised to see the holy sword growing.

"<<DANCE>>"

Just like before, Claiomh Solais splits into 13 swords and floats around my body.

"Ooh, the legend is true after all!"

"Beautiful, that painting truly wasn't an imaginary work."

They're too surprised.

The body-double-san even looks like he's going to go into spasm anytime, scary. Even getting excited should be done in moderation, okay.

Since it looks like they've admired enough, I release the excited state of the sword, and transition it back into one sword. I retrieve the MP that I've put into the sword, wrap it with a cloth and pass it to the body-double-san.

"You can keep holding it."

"Is it fine to do so without getting permission from the royal capital?"

Hey now, body-double-san, you shouldn't say thing like that without getting permission from the real king alright. I vaguely ask if it's alright to do it without the permission from the real king. The duke also nods when I glance at him.

"It is the spirit of the ancestor king Yamato-sama."

I don't really understand, but maybe there's some kind of will left behind?

It's a convenient sword, but it's not like I'm in trouble even without it. Let's make up something suitable as a reason to give it back.

"Don't you need it for the defense of the royal capital?"

"I don't mind, there is another holy sword in the royal capital."

Ah, that casted holy sword huh.

I've made swords with the same technique myself so I know, that sword is weak even compared to Gjallarhorn. It could cope with lower demons, but it probably wouldn't be able to match upper demons.

I have swords already, so I want to refuse, but it seems that once the sword has decided on its master, it will go back to its master if anyone draws it out. Normally, the master is decided with a dedicated ceremony, but it seems the case this time is extremely unusual.

Looks like they really want personnels who can subjugate the demon lord, when I receive the holy sword and the mood becomes hard for me to refuse, the talks about service, peerage, and such comes out. Of course since I don't have any such intention, I gently refuse it. It's already quite enough. I got interested when there was a talk of marrying the princess, but when I heard that she was a nine years old princess who hadn't got a fiance, that interest disappeared. Tell that to Hayato instead.

Since I feel bad for taking the holy sword for free, I decide to trade it with the famous holy sword in Shiga kingdom.

"T, this is, the holy sword Gjallarhorn that was stolen by the demonic man 17 years ago!"

"Ooh! God! The holy sword tempered by the ancestor king Yamato-sama has returned once again to the Shiga kingdom!"

I didn't think that they would be this delighted. It might have been better if I returned it earlier. By demonic man it must be Zen huh.

Since the hero and his party have arrived in the castle, I decide to bid my farewell.

The arena is ruined, so the final is postponed for one month, but a banquet ceremony is going to be held under the pretext of 'Upper Demon Subjugation'. It seems they've decided that the great monstrous fish were just illusions that the demon used.

Late night at that day, I make a casted holy sword the size of one-handed sword modeled after Claiomh Solais in one section of the underground labyrinth. The Claiomh Solais' sheath is among the garbages that I've put into the storage, so I reproduce it with the exact same look.

>[Counterfeit Skill Acquired]

>Title [Holy Swords Blacksmith] Acquired
>Title [Counterfeit Specialist] Acquired

At dawn, I sneak to body-double-san's bedroom and leave the replica on the bedside.

I put a note that says, "I've prepared the replica, please use it as you see fit.", together with the replica. With this, even the nitpicking nobles of pedigree can probably be effectively deceived. If the kingdom protector holy sword went missing, they would find someone to blame even if the duke and the king had given their permissions.

However, I'd have preferred a beautiful woman's bedroom if I had to sneak in anyway.

8-22. The Hero and Satou

Satou's here. People have different sense of values, but the saying, "The grass is greener on the other side of the fence." exist in any country. Of course, even in the parallel world.

◇

"Hou? 『Tempura』 huh."

That's the first word from the hero who comes to the banquet while taking along a lot of beautiful women. Looks like he deliberately used Japanese language for the tempura part.

"No, this is a dish called tempura. It's a secret specialties of the people in the know from the northern part of the dukedom."

"Hey, Sato."

"It is an honor to have my name remembered by hero-sama, but my name extends on the end, so please call me Satou."

"That so, sorry then. Satou."

"No, no, please do not mind it."

I don't mind if the hero finds out that I'm a Japanese when I'm as Satou, but it'll be troubling if it gets exposed with all observing eyes here.

The hero receives the tempura that Lulu presents on the plate.

"This is, I'm surprised. I've gotten used with beautiful women around me, but this is the first time I've seen a girl as beautiful as you. Wish I met her five years earlier."

As expected, even the hero was tactful enough not to say the "Five years earlier" part out loud. I didn't think that I got to read it with lip-reading skill.

Lulu's face is turning pale as if she's been insulted with an indirect sarcasm in public. It seems the hero gets secretly scolded by lady Ringrande. The two people beside the hero are smiling, but their eyes aren't.

I pat Lulu's head lightly, and ask her go to the kitchen to get some ingredients.

I'll follow up properly later.

The hero hardens when he sees Arisa who comes as the substitute.

"My honey!"

"Oh my, hero Hayato-sama, it has been a while."

Arisa who understands TPO talks in prim and proper manner. Still, honey he said.

Lady Ringrande, and the imperial princess Maryest confirm with each other that they don't know Arisa in low voices. The other hero's party members don't seem like they're interested with the hero's love life, they're busy eating the tempura and the aspic jellies. Aren't they the hero's harem?

"I'm really happy that you're alive, princess Arisa."

Noises like, "Princess?", or "Who is that maid talking with hero-sama?", are coming from the outfield.

"I thought you had died after getting rolled up in the political strife--"

The hero approaches Arisa while looking very happy, but then his expression freezes.

Ah, I have a bad feeling about this.

We move for a bit, and now there's a table between me and the hero.

"Oy, Satou! Have you forgotten the spirit of YES lolita, NO touch!"

So he really saw Arisa's title, [Satou's Slave]. Even so, I'm not interested in the young ones enough to be needing such spirit.

"Hero-sama, what exactly are you talking about?"

"That's right, Satou-sama was the one who saved me from predicaments. The reason why I'm a slave is because I've been put on Geass magic during the Yowok kingdom invasion."

She whispered the matter about being a slave to the hero so only he could hear it.

The hero confirmed something to the imperial princess Maryest, and the priestess Loreiya-san, but both of them waved their heads. Even the hero's party cannot remove the Geass huh. Just how strong it is. Come to think of it, I also asked head miko-san about it through Sera, but she couldn't do it too after all.

In the end, I proved them that I hadn't touch Arisa to he extent of getting myself checked with Loreiya-san's Truth Judgment magic. From my standpoint, there was no need for me to be subjected with Truth Judgment magic, but since I didn't want to be misunderstood of being a lolicon, I accepted it.

"Is that so, you didn't touch her! Well well, I really want to drink some nice liquor with you."

"I'm afraid I cannot."

It seems like he'll talk about little girls all night long until I vomit.

There were some things we needed to talk about, but since I couldn't keep monopolizing the hero, we promised to meet again later, but there was no opportunity to talk with the hero again today.

The women who followed the prince back then were trying to butter the hero up, but lady Ringrande, and imperial princess Maryest overwhelmingly rejected them.

Girls of 12-13 years old were also talking to the hero, but he acted normally with them, maybe they were out of his strike zone.

◇

It was hard consoling Lulu the evening of that day. The fight with the demon lord might have been easier even.

"Lulu being cute is really the truth, the hero, Arisa, and me see Lulu as a beautiful girl."

"Thank you very much, I'm happy even if it's a lie master."

Even after I whispered sweet lines close to Lulu's ear, she only perceived it as consolation words.

When I told her that she could request her favorite dishes, she told me every kind of sweets that I had made until now. I'm very happy that she's reached the point where she can say something selfish.

Since it'll take too much time to make them, I take out the finished sweets I've put in the storage on the kitchen, and bring them to the dining room where Lulu is waiting.

I knew that Mia, Pochi, and Tama are waiting beside Lulu, so I had prepared the shares for four people. Of course, there's nothing for Arisa and me. Arisa has been taking excess calories lately, so she's presently forbidden from sweets. I don't need to do the diet, but I'm abstaining from indulgence food to accompany Arisa.

Today I've made a new cake to surprise Lulu. It's a custard pie made from a type of fruit which has the same name as Lulu.

This lulu fruit looks really unappetizing when it's unpeeled, it's a fruit of misfortune. In addition, when eaten raw, it's so sour, not something that should be eaten. However, when it's heated, it strangely turns into a peach-like fruit. From what I've heard from the person who's given me this fruit, they process it by pickling them, not heating.

"My new creation today is Lulu custard pie."

Lulu hesitated when she heard the name, but as if giving up, she cut a mouthful and put it into her mouth.

"It's delicious."

Large drops of tears are falling on Lulu's cheeks. Huh~? I didn't expect this development.

"That sour fruit becomes this delicious."

"Moreover, the color looks beautiful right?"

"Yes, thank you very much. I understand what master is trying to say somehow."

That is good above all.

Lulu continues eating the pie on the large platter while crying.

I wipe the mouth of Mia who's watching that intensely with a handkerchief. I take out the prepared pie from the Storage from under the table, and cut it for three people's shares.

"Delicious."

"Sweet~"

"One hundred points nanodesu!"

"Uuu, I have to keep dieting.... It's alright with just a mouthful, a mouthful..."

Arisa is saying that like a bad loser, no good. She's absolutely going to say 'just another one'.

That day, I slept together with Lulu, and whispered "Lulu, you're cute." until she went asleep. Since Pochi and the others played janken, I had a feeling that it had been decided there would be a daily special of whispering from tonight on.

Please drop that expectation, by all means.

>[Soothing Skill Acquired]

◇

The next day, I'm going to accompany lady Sera to the orphanage in the morning, and visit the barrier pillar workshop in the afternoon.

Although there's a missionary purpose for doing the consolation visit to the orphanage, it's still called consolation visit, so the main objective is healing the children who are sicks with healing magic.

Our little girls are very popular here. Pochi and Arisa are particularly popular, strange plays, and learning cards are being spread around. I've warned Arisa to take care with the culture hazard for once, but it's all up to her for the self-restraint.

I'm not bringing Lulu and Nana today.

Since children don't hesitate to speak what they think, they will most likely say hurtful things to Lulu in barrage, so I leave her behind. The reason why I don't bring Nana is because she wants to take the young orga--children back home.

"Oh no! H, hero-sama is coming for consolation visit."

"Eeh! What should I do, maybe I should use some make-up."

The nursery workers, or rather, the onee-san staffs are getting excited. Wait, aren't you all married.

When the hero Hayato comes, the boys and the onee-san staffs follow him around. Putting aside the children, I'm envious of him being pampered by not only the beautiful women, but also the soothing staff members. Furthermore, before I knew it, the director's daughter who's unusually unapproachable has followed him too.

Dang you good-looking guy, go explode.

"Chevalier-sama, chevalier-sama, look at this~"

"Uina has made one too, look at this."

I'm being surround by groups of 5-6 years old little girls. They've made shell accessories I've taught before. Although they're rough, each of them has characteristics of their own, interesting.

Even though the hero is surrounded by beautiful women, I'm stuck babysitting the children, I can feel the gap in society.

Since my eyes met with hero's, I greeted him. I couldn't get away from the little girls, so we were slightly apart. For some reason, he looked awfully envious, I wonder why. It can't be, even if he's a lolicon, are these such young girls included on his targets? It can't be indeed.

About the trouble from lady Ringrande who saw me getting along with lady Sera during the consolation visit, since it's redundant, I'm omitting it.

◇

The visit to the barrier pillar workshop are only with my own companions that hasn't happened for awhile. The tour continues while I'm joining hands with Pochi and Tama. Barrier pillar seems to be a magic tool that's mainly for preventing monsters from invading villages. Its effect can reach 100 meters wide in radius with just one standing. However, since it's not a physical barrier, rampaging monsters, and monsters that are being chased by human can still pass over it, it seems.

The barrier pillar can function by absorbing mana from the earth vein, but since that'll wither the land, local spell-users supply the mana every few days instead.

The pillar is made of many magic cores, so there's some concern of thievery, but after it's erected on a land, it's casted with fixture magic, so it won't be easy to steal the pillar. Looks like even thieves who have attacked a village don't bother with the barrier pillar. It seems that the lord of the region will deploy their army for certain if anyone put their hands on the barrier pillar.

I wonder if the story is too difficult, Pochi and Tama have fallen asleep while holding both my hands, so I carry the two in corpse poses on both my arms, and continue the workshop tour. Liza offered to change for me, so I left the two to her along the way. They're cute when they're awake, but there are cuteness that are different than the usual when they're sleeping.

Peace is the best after all.

8-23. The Hero and Satou (2)

Satou's here. When I played fighting games, at first I was having fun with special attacks, but then I got gradually charmed with reading and creating combos.

Although as expected, I didn't think that the day where I would move like a fighting game character myself would come.

◇

"I'm coming for you, my honey!"

Hero Hayato opens the door and enters. Tama who's curling up on my lap is surprised and thrusts her claws on my lap. It's bit painful. Pochi, and Mia who are both on my sides harden.

Intruding the peaceful picture book reading time like this, what a troubling hero.

"What...the hell."

And, also, why are you in shock, hero Hayato.

Just what is he surprised about.

There's nothing particularly strange. Pochi had just pestered me to read her a picture book. I'm sitting down on a large sofa, and enjoying the afternoon in carefree after a long while. I'm wearing a refreshing tank-top and short-pants, but since this is a private room, there's nothing wrong about it.

Lulu, and Nana relaxing on the carpet below are wearing one piece that don't, although thin, expose their bodies. Liza was listening to me reading the picture book while calmly standing like meditating with her eyes closed. I can sense slight anger on her eyes. Liza unexpectedly likes to hear picture book reading after all. Is she angry because it's been disturbed?

Mia is scared of Hayato's eyes, she's slipping behind my chair, it's ticklish.

"Oh my, hero-sama, entering a room without even knocking like this, that's a bad manner you know?"

Even though Arisa is saying that in prim and proper manner, she's doing it while caressing my leg, it's a bit laughable. Geez, please stop with the sexual harassment while you're pretending to listen to the picture book.

"Let's fight Satou! You have angered me!"

The hero who screams with a face that looks as if it's crying blood gets pinned down by lady Ringrande and her group from behind.

Good grief, I don't understand what he's going on about.

◇

I change my clothes to easy-to-move knight clothes so as to keep me off from being impolite to princess Maryest, and go out. I don't intend to fight the hero in the least, but I cannot not go to where the hero and his companions are waiting.

"Are you really going to fight?"

"Of course not."

Lulu asked worryingly, I replied lightly.

Even if I fight, it'll only expose my true power, there's no advantage to it.

"You've come at last Satou!"

The hero who is being swarmed by big-breasted maid-san from the main building while shouldering Arondight is on the arbor of the courtyard.

"Let's have a fair fight!"

"I refuse."

The hero challenged me to a fight while pointing Arondight straight here, I flatly refused while smiling.

It seems the hero didn't expect that he'd be refused, he looked befuddled. I'd like to ask him for an hour why he thought that I wouldn't refuse.

After all, even if we fight, there are only disadvantages for me right?

"Let's hear your reason."

"There's nothing for me to gain in the fight."

"Hee, you don't say that it's because you can't win huh."

The hero asked, and princess Maryest retorted.

"Of course, there's also the fact that there's no odds of me winning, but even if, by any chance, I win, there is no benefit for me. It's useless to fight right?"

"To cross swords with the hero, it's a very rare honor even in the empire you know?"

You really want me to fight the hero don't you?

"Please pass that honor to the knights, and people who fight in battle tournaments instead."

"You don't think that you will lose to Hayato either right?"

"Maryest-sama, that's an unreasonable thing to say. He's the hero-sama see? There is no way I can win against an existence that can match the demon lord."

I don't think I would definitely win against a veteran warrior in a straight swordsmanship fight, although it'd be a different story if it was an anything-goes fight. In fact, I had been ripped apart like getting checkmated in a chess match when I fought against elder Dohar, even if I was hiding my ability.

"Really? You're not harboring admiration, envy, jealousy, and also fear even when you're in front of an absolute strong. Am I wrong?"

I guess so.

"Oy Mary. Don't hinder my fight with difficult talks."

"Oh my, I'm sorry. This child's reaction is quite unusual, so I just inadvertently."

Now then, going back to the main problem, what should I do.

Come to think of it, Arisa sure is quiet.

"Gufufufu, 『Please don't fight for me』, what a delicious situation."

What are you saying in whisper.

"Alright, then let's do it like this. You're betting princess Arisa. As for me, I will grant you anything I can do."

Something big comes out.

Then, I'd like his ship.

"The dimensional warship, his holy sword, and his holy armor are the properties of the empire, so those are off-limits."

Princess Maryest firmly tells me as if she's read my mind. I've heard from baron Muno's long talk that the hero appears with a holy sword when he's summoned, I wonder if that's not true?

I can collect information as Nanashi, so I don't particularly need to do it as Satou. That's right, let's make him an insurance for the time where I alone am not sufficient. I can't cope if demon lords appear in two different locations at the same time after all.

Moreover, if I have some connection to Saga empire, I can take shelter there if I lose my place in Shiga kingdom.

◇

In the end, it's going to be with the hero and observers.

There were three conditions I gave him.

First, we're going to have the duel in a place where no one is watching.

Second, the hero is not going to use unique skills, or active battle skills.

Third, if Arisa's ownership is transferred to him, he has to give priority to Arisa's will when he's successfully released her from the geass.

However, since Maryest showed her disapproval, one person from each side was given permission to observe. Lady Ringrande wanted to come along too, but since various problems would arise if she saw the fight, she was prevented to.

I should have also followed the second condition by not using battle skills, but since Arisa insists that it's not fair, they let me use them.

The four of us have come to an abandoned arena under the duchy capital.

I know this place from an acquaintance who lives in the subterranean tunnel, it seems to be a place where dark martial art tournament was being held until 100 years ago.

Princess Maryest uses light magic to illuminate the room.

It's 10 meters high, and there are around 20 meters wide in radius. Since that also includes audience seats, the actual fighting location is smaller.

I asked Arisa about her true intention before we got here, and she said that I should deepen my friendship with the hero without going overboard, and exchange information. I felt that the distance between Arisa and the hero was quite enough already, but I wasn't moved even though I was entreated, yet when Arisa was being secretive like this, she would only get worse, so I accepted her reasoning.

<TLN: This is a jumbled mess even in the original raw, basically Satou doesn't believe that's all there is to Arisa's intention, but he's not going to press further since it'll only get worse if he does when she's like that.>

The [Don't go overboard] part is difficult since the opponent is the hero, but since it's not a serious fight, it'll probably be fine as long as I don't use weapons from my storage, don't hit him with intermediate magic, and don't use my bare hands to block his sword.

"Looks like it's fine to have a somewhat showy fight if it's here."

I've changed to white leather armor before we come here.

"I'll properly stop before hitting, so don't worry."

"Yes, I trust you."

Even though I replied out of courtesy, who would believe you when you have that carnivorous expression.

"Here-sama, this is not a serious battle you know. You lose if your opponent dies. I will go after Satou-sama if that happen."

"Umu, I'm good at holding back, leave it to me."

Arisa gives him a stern warning, but it's questionable if he really understands when he's fawning over her like that.

"There are three matches, winning two matches means victory."

Princess Maryest tells the victory condition.

"It's forbidden to lose on purpose alright!"

"But of course, my honey. Let's build a white house in the imperial capital when we get married. We'll keep a big dog at the garden."

Arisa was probably speaking to me, but Hayato who misunderstood had begun to talk about something. His taste is unexpectedly girlish.

"You really~ must not hold back okay!   Please remember that, not only me, Lulu would also be gone!"

Arisa reminds me again in low voice.

I don't understand what kind of reasoning is that, but even if she doesn't mention Lulu, I don't have any intention of handing Arisa over. If Arisa truly wish for it, then I'll send her off with a smile, but if that's not the case, then she should be beside me.

"It's alright."

I nod to Arisa who looks really anxious. However, she's someone who doesn't have confidence in strange places.

◇

The hero is prohibited to use not only unique skills, but also active skills huh. I guess I should turn off the menu to make this fair. Even if I turn OFF the menu, the last setting of companion column seems to be kept anyway, alright then.

I turn OFF the menu after a long while.

The view is wide.

I'm with the fairy sword, Hayato's with a holy sword. I want to tell the hero to restrain himself, but he replies back saying that it's easier to stop before hitting with a sword that he's used to, I don't answer back.

"On your positions, the match begins when this coin touches the ground!"

Arisa flips a coin above.

I've learned various things after the fight with the demon lord.

The eyes movements.

The position of the center of gravity of the body.

The slight change in silhouettes reflecting from the movement of muscles.

And also the breathing--

I dive under Arondight's tip, and thrust the fairy sword toward his heart.

The match is concluded before the the sounds from the coin that's hitting the ground stops.

"First match, Satou's victory♪"

Oy, umpire.

"What are you doing Hayato! Even though he didn't move that fast, you let him win on purpose, you're being rude to your opponent."

Princess Maryest is scolding Hayato from the outfield, but it doesn't seem like it reaches his ears.

"This is surprising, was that really a level 30 movements?"

More than the hero, I'm surprised at my own movements myself. My body feels lighter than usual. As if I've switched something on, I feel that informations are entering me vividly to the point of being surprising.

The trajectory and timing of the hero's Arondight's blow were in accordance with my expectation. I've understood Hayato's habit after seeing his fight with the yellow-skinned demon, but more than that, I can predict his movement as if reading the future.

In order to confirm that sensation, I fight on the second match.

I avoid the horizontal slash by swaying back at minimum.

The sword is coming back abnormally fast, I block it with the guard on the reverse side of my hand that holds my sword.

When I show an opening for a very little bit, the hero kicks toward my side abdomen

I predict it, handle it, and purposely receive the attack while breaking the opponent's balance.

It feels like when I fought a strong player in a fighting game. I want to fight with elder Dohar again. I should be able to fight decently without feeling like I'm being led by the nose this time.

More, and more.

The tip of the sword swing for a bit before it's swung, the subtle difference in the gripping power of the sword's handle, there are information everywhere.

I relish every corner of my body during the fight with the hero.

And--

The fun time is over all too soon.

>[Foreseeing: Anti-Personnel Battle Skill Acquired]

>Title [Sword Dancer] Acquired

8-24. The Hero and Satou (3)

Satou's here. Wedding is a joyous moment. Regardless of anyone, it's a joyous moment. My wallet might become a tiny bit desolate for the congratulatory gifts, but it's a joyous moment. That's why, please, spare me from three weddings and more in one month, Satou's here.

◇

"Even if I didn't use active skills, I didn't think that I would lose five times in a row."

"You were able to win in the end weren't you."

"That's cause I wouldn't be able to show my face in front of my companions if it was a complete defeat."

The hero who's slumping on the ground on all fours is restarting himself.

The fight was supposed to end after the first two, but we got too absorbed, we fought for many times consecutively. It was because the hero started saying, "One more fight.", when he was defeated for the second time in a row.

Thanks to it, I acquired [Foreseeing: Inter-Personal Battle] skill, but I might have gone overboard.

Maybe because he couldn't use his usual battle-related skills, the hero was full of subtle opening during the battle, so it was easy with the Foreseeing.

I peel off Arisa who's been hugging my shoulder and repeatedly poking my cheek while I'm sitting. "Ehehe~ You didn't want to let go of me so much you forgot yourself~", she said. For both our sakes, I won't tell her the truth.

The hero is talking about something to princess Maryest, but then she goes back ahead of us toward the underground passage. Since the white crocodile has become a landmark, she probably won't lose her way.

"Geez, even though you didn't move that fast, you foresaw all of my attacks--and so, are you a transported, or a reincarnated person? You used a unique skill of continuous movement earlier right?"

The hero asks with confidence.

"No,--"

"Ah, it's not like the matches' result is annulled y'know."

I wanted to deny since it was a groundless claim, but the hero held back my hand.

That's right, there's no other people here anyway, I guess I should exchange information with each other. The hero probably sent princess Maryest back first since he wanted to do that.

I told him about how I wasn't sure if I was a transported or a reincarnated person myself, the possibility that the memory just before and after I got transported to this world was missing, and various details about how I met Arisa and the others. Of course I didn't talk about my unique skills, the matter about meteor shower, and level.

"Satou, do you know about a kingdom called Rumooku?"

"Yes, I have an acquaintance from that kingdom."

"Is that so, you might have been summoned by that kingdom."

From the hero's story, the empire sent an earskin spy who had infiltrated there and confirmed that the kingdom summoned 7-8 other worlders.

The third person who should have been dead was also under the spy's care.

After he was saved, he did intelligence works with the spy for several months, but when the spy was going to take him along to the Saga empire, he went missing. They've confirmed that he didn't have special power when they were together, so the empire didn't even deploy something like a pursuit team. He also ran away right after he was summoned, what a self-reliance guy.

We've exchanged various information, but excluding trivial things, most of it are the things I've said earlier. Of course it's not like there's no benefit to this. After Arisa slightly pesters the hero, he's going to give us advanced magic books, with the exception of forbidden and tactical magic that are matters of national defense. Since they're made by manual writings, it'll take at least half a year at the soonest.

Moreover, he's also going to arrange a pass to Saga empire, and a written guarantee of Saga empire embassy for us.

These looks useful for when we're sightseeing on Saga empire in the future.

Oh right, I make him to promise with [Hero's Vow] to keep the matter about me being an other worlder a secret. I don't know how much I can trust him, but since other worlders are seemingly decent enough, it probably won't become a big problem. Also, the hero seems to be convinced from my stories that I am the eighth person from Rumooku kingdom.

"There is this the absurd beautiful girl before, and there's this boy, these two have made me realize that there are still strong people out there. Just level isn't everything huh."

My ears hurt from the hero's words.

However, seeing how the words don't seem to have any sarcasm, he doesn't seem to think that that was me. However, beautiful girl he said, I didn't disguise myself as a woman in particular, and I didn't show my face either, so where did that [Beautiful] came from.

"Beautiful girl?"

"Yeah, it was a monstrous fellow who mowed down the great fish that appeared in the duchy capital's sky with a single beam, and toyed around with an upper demon like it was a child. Since she had a violet hair, she was probably a reincarnated person."

"Oh my, that's really amazing huh."

Arisa, your prim and proper way of speaking is disturbed y'know.

Apparently, the hero suspects that the masked hero is Arisa. The violet hair certainly matches, and Arisa is hiding her unique skill from the hero. So it's not strange if the hero thinks that she has a unique skill that lets her change into adult form. It can't be helped if he misunderstands.

It seems that he doesn't think that I'm Nanashi at all. I'm really glad that I changed my way of talking. Yup, let's decide that it's a good thing.

Just in case, I try confirming something with the hero, it seems that a reincarnated person doesn't always have violet hair, but a reincarnated person who has violet hair is sure to have unique skills.

Arisa turns her face to me with a swoosh. Even though she moves like Pochi, it feels more like a horror rather than looking cute.

She speaks only with her lips without voice, "It's you right?", as she asks, I nod.

"Was it, by any chance, your favorite type?"

"I couldn't see her face, but she was 15 years old. If she was five years younger, it might've been dangerous."

Spare me from BL!

Let's stop using that masked hero way of speaking in the future.

Arisa is shaking a little. She's probably enduring from laughing out loud, but it'll expose me to the hero, so please do stop it.

Later, when we're practicing at night, Arisa bursts out laughing until she runs out of breath after she hears about the details of the beautiful girl. I'll make better upright clothes later. I promise so in my heart.

Later, I'm almost made to wear woman's clothes, but that alone, I refuse firmly.

"Putting love things aside, I want to meet her once again. I forgot to say thanks to that fellow for saving my life, and protecting the reputation of hero. My principle is to give back debt as soon as possible after all."

Well now? He certainly said, "I won't say thanks" though. Was that about me reducing the demon's health?

He also wanted to apologize for the rudeness of his companions. Did the hero's companions do anything rude to me? I don't remember any, but I can just ask about it when I'm back to the masked hero mode.

Since the hero party are going to stay until the duke's grandson's marriage, I guess I'll go once until then.

◇

"Beautiful~""Nanodesu!"

"White dress."

"Wonderful right~ white dress are better than kimono for wedding after all~"

"Master, I wish to reproduce the flower decorations that are on the bride."

"Quite a gorgeous parade this is."

"She looks very happy. I want to be like that bride."

After the wedding of the duke's grandson, lady Ringrande's little brother, is over, they're debuting to the commoners on a parade. Since the parade is going to pass through the road exactly in front of the mansion we're staying, everyone is lined up while watching the parade.

Lady Karina is attending the wedding with her little brother, so she's not here. I feel that the little brother has been accompanying lady Karina quite often recently. He's probably a siscon.

Pochi and Tama are in high tensions, I guess they're charmed by the wedding dress even though they're still kids. Tama has climbed on top of my head, and Pochi is flaying around her arm while grasping my sleeves. Mia is copying Tama, but since it's dangerous, I catch her midway, and let her getting carried by me on my back. Liza is the only calm one, but she's intensely watching the bride, so it's not like she's not interested.

"Chevalier-sama, a messenger of viscount Shimen has come."

"Ah, I'll go soon."

I am guided by the mansion maid to meet the visitor. I've checked on the map earlier, the visitor is Natarina-san from the scroll workshop. The ordered scrolls have most likely been completed.

"Then, these are the requested items."

I fully paid the scrolls I ordered at the beginning that had been completed faster than scheduled.

"I gratefully accept. Right, the variation of Magick Sword we've talked about before is complete."

"Is that true? It hasn't even been three days since we talked you know?"

It's a new magic that comes upon me when I was watching Claiomh Solais' movements. Fighting while magick swords are flying independently. There's already an auto-moving magic, [Nature Magic: Dancing Blade], so it was easier to make than expected.

I ordered several more original magic, and magic that aren't available in scrolls for sale. Of course, I pay the advance payment in cash.

I'm told that they can only make 3-5 scrolls in a month, so it's going to be close to when I'm about to return from Bornean forest, and thus we're going to hire a trusted trading company to transport them.

Since I can visit them alone anytime with Sky Drive, it's fine.

◇

I'm providing the dishes for the wedding reception tonight. I somehow feel like a servant of the duke, but it's not all bad.

"Heya, Sir Pendragon, I've made the rounds in hurry to come and eat your dishes."

"You too eh earl Houen, I'm also crazy with the shrimp tempura."

"Marquis Lloyd, the red pickled gingers are surely easier to eat than the tempura."

Just like that, I was able to talk freely with relatively upper ranked nobles. I don't intend to be successful as a noble, but it's a good thing to have someone to rely on if anything happens. The demerits are the troublesome adults who occasionally asks me to marry girls of primary and middle school ages. Most of them pulled back when I said that I had a fiancee, but sometimes there are persistent ones that were troubling.

Several nobles show their consent to invest and send exchange students to Muno city, so consul Nina can probably feel relieved.

However, even though I've refused Nina-san's letter, I end up going by her plan. It's mysterious.

"Chevalier-sama, what are today's snacks?　I'm looking forward to it."

"Even though Muno roll is delicious, crepes is the best."

"To celebrate Tisrad-sama's occassion, I have prepared a special dish."

"My, I look forward to it."

"Yes, it's something to look forward to."

Recently, I've made more beautiful women acquaintances, not only girls. It's sad that most of them are married, but there's no problem to enjoy the love (bad) from afar right.

The sweets today is a lulu fruits and strawberries hall cake. I was finally able to bake sponge cake the other day, so I've made an extraordinarily big hall cake for this wedding.

I feel that this is a culture hazard, but when I see the dishes on Gugurian and duchy capital, it's probably only a matter of time for the dishes I make, so I present it without worry. Arisa didn't stop me too, but it must be because she had lost to her appetite. However, it might have been better if I hold back with the mayonaise and the fresh cream. I'm afraid that a lot of people might become plump.

I treated everyone in the mansion with the strawberry cake trial-runs, but it became a grand outbreak that does not only involve the youth tropes, but also Lulu and the maids. In the end, I baked the cake until everyone was satisfied. One person probably ate one hall cake I wonder. In addition, Arisa and me got only one slice. Diet is a severe and drawn-out fight.

"Aah, the bitterness from the cake that I couldn't eat myself won't disappear~ It was hard for an unmarried woman past thirty to celebrate her own birthday with a convenient store cake."

A, Arisa, please stop with the realistic sob story. I'll let you eat as much as you want when the diet is over, please endure it firmly for now.

"Pay attention everyone! To commemorate the wedding of Tisrad-sama and Miniem-sama, proudly coming from baron Muno territory, Sir Pendragon the miracle chef presents the lost dish from the era of ancestor king Yamato-sama! The entrance of the wedding cake!"

I'm already accustomed to being called miracle chef. They will probably forget about it soon after I leave the duchy capital.

The maids carry the four columns of the cake from the carriage. The cake is deliberately wrapped with cloth on the outside to instill special feeling. Of course it was Arisa's idea.

"Well then, the bride and groom will cut the cake together!"

Even though the the people here are awfully excited, Arisa is strangely depressed.

"Ah, even in this world, I'm on the side of the people who congratulate these wedding couple huh."

"Mou, oh Arisa, didn't you say that you'd get master to do it in 10 years."

"T, that's right. Alright, I'll polish myself hard to become a woman!"

Lulu cheers her up until she's revived, but you shouldn't rouse her that far. So maiden-like.

Unrelated with Arisa's determination, fireworks color the sky while matching the couple cut the cake. It's a grand fireworks magic by fire and light magicians groups lead by viscount Shimen.

Not only the newlyweds, couples that are on this wedding hall are joining their shoulders together while gazing ecstatically at the fleeting lights of the large flowers that illuminate the sky.

Pestered by Pochi and Tama who have seen this fireworks, that night I show them various fireworks in the garden of the mansion.

Not long after that, I make a set of firework magic tools.

8-25. Parting at Duchy Capital Night

Satou's here. Infiltrating the enemy camp to save your friends and lover who have been caught. It's a classic scene in movies, but it's something that doesn't quite happen in real life. However, looks like it's common in the other world...

◇

"Hufh, it's karaage af-ter-a-long-while."

"Yay~?" "Karaage nanodesu~"

Arisa is delighted to see karaage on her own plate.

She was also prohibited to eat deep fried food for the past one week after all. I forgot Arisa's age, so the diet was too effective, thus I changed the plan to only forbid her on snacking, and overeating. Of course, I did not tell Arisa about the miscalculation. I only told her that I'd make it laxer.

Mia's shares are seasoned rice in a bamboo shoot and boiled vegetables. Even though the bamboo shoot looks like a green bamboo, it can be eaten like a normal bamboo shoot, it's a fantasy ingredient. I'd have liked if I don't have to peel it, but it wasn't quite that lenient.

"Euh? What's this karaage? It's not a chicken, nor a pork. I think I've eaten this before, but I can't remember~."

When Arisa is still chewing one piece of the karaage, the three beastkin girls ask for more, so I take out the [Whale] karaage from the heating magic tool and put it on the platter.

I have a lot, so eat as much as you like.

It was outside of my calculation to have that much. Considering where it comes from, it's not like I cannot hold a whale meat festival carefreely, but it'll be a waste.

If I had just acquired it sooner, I could bring it to baron Muno territory via transporter, but the food situation in the territory has already been improved. Or I should say arranged instead I guess.

During the tea parties, the chattering noble women told me about nobles who were troubled as to where they could direct those kind of items. Thanks to that, I procured things like old rice, dried fish, and pickled vegetables in large quantities cheaply. They're currently being transported to baron Muno territory. I've hired guards to escort them due to the sheer quantities. Since they're introduced by the viscount Shimen, an influential man in the duchy capital, they must be reliable.

Let's return to the topic.

While Arisa continues chewing, she finally remembers what the meat is made from.

"I know, it's whale right!"

As expected of Arisa.

"They came out as Yamatoni, or Tatsutaage during lunch a long time ago~ but, you did well to get something like whale meat."

"Yeah, the goods arrived just at the right time."

Yes, Arisa didn't see the great monstrous fish. Therefore, she doesn't notice that great monstrous fish = whale. There's this words of wisdom that says ignorance is a bliss.

"Hamburg steak is the strongest, but whale karaage is eveen stronger nodesu!"

"Delish~"

Tama wolfs down the karaage while doing impression like a Nagoya person. I'm glad that it's to their liking.

"Master, isn't this meat something that's quite expensive? I feel like my power swells up every time I bite it."

I wonder. I didn't experience such thing when I food-tasted it in advance for poison before, but that might be Liza's expression for the deliciousness.

"Every biteful~""The meat is pulsing nanodesu."

Un, Pochi. I understand, that you like it, but eat it calmly. Please don't say scary things like pulsing meat.

You made me remember meat-man that came out in an old game.

"It's truly delicious. Pochi, Tama, I have reserved that karaage. Be content with the karaage on the forks on both of your hands. Ah, Nana, don't eat it so off-handedly, savor the taste more. Lulu, don't be so modest, eat more."

And also Liza, calm down.

Everyone asks for second helping so much, they can't eat calmly. It might have been a mistake to take the karaage out of the heating magic tool to the large platter.

Seasoned bamboo shoot rice and whale karaage go well together, but I should prohibit it.

"Uuu, Satou."

I have to promise the sulking Mia a new sweets, but well it can't be helped. I should invent more food other than meat.

I thought of treating lady Karina and her maids too, but they were out for the promise with the little brother-kun.

We're planning to depart from the duchy capital in the morning of the day after tomorrow, so I guess I should make a bit of feast for tomorrow night.

◇

The last day of the dark auction is wrapped in bizarre enthusiasm.

The princess of the fallen kingdom is going to be exhibited today, that might be the reason. I feel like this world have poisoned me a bit as I have become someone who can plainly accept the fact that people are being sold like commodities.

This auction hall is as large as a theater hall, the first floor is filled with seats for general bidders, while the second floor has box seats-like seats for nobles. Since the agent man from before has secured one seat on the noble seating in consideration of me, this time I can bid the exhibited items relaxedly. As expected, the people who work as agents are nicely attentive. They'd make me misunderstand like I'm a VIP if they gave me such service.

The first exhibition was for my casted magic sword, and it was immediately won. I tried to offer 10 set of it in jest, but they were all sold just like that. The one who's bought it is the military accountant that has requested it. The casted magic swords have the name Nanashi inscriptions just like before. The swords are sharp-pointed one-handed swords, which are the most popular form in the duchy capital.

Actually, there aren't only these 10 casted magic swords, I have scattered another 10 to be exhibited. It's not only swords, I've also mixed in Magic Halberds among them. I've added it since there's this person who lost the bidding against the military accountant before. I also made three times more the same kind medicines as before to be exhibited here.

Since the agent is excellent, they're probably going to be sold out soon.

There's a rare item called [Gift Orb] being exhibited.

It seems like it can give the user a skill. The one being exhibited now is the [Fire Magic Skill Gift Orb]. After some fierce competition, it was sold for 200 gold coins.

According to the agent's story, Gift Orbs always gets sold at high price. They comes from the labyrinth city, and only five of them appear in the market in a year it seems. Looks like Gift Orbs that are not used for 10 years will lose their effects.

I ask the agent if there's anyone who has Chanting skill Gift Orb, but he doesn't seem to know. It'd be troublesome if he became suspicious, so I didn't ask about [Chanting] in pinpoint. I asked about 5-6 skills.

The bidding for [Aerodynamic Engine of Airship] is unexpectedly unpopular.

Calling it match-fixing would be bad, but it seemed that it was arranged for the powerful nobles who wanted this kind of item.

Of course I also didn't bid.

When I was visiting the airship garage at the duke castle, the factory manager whom I became acquainted with told me that they will be servicing a broken air power engine in a few days, so he was currently in break. It's most likely this one. I'm going to prepare for departure tomorrow, but I'll go there and ask if I can see the exposed parts of the engine.

The thing that I wanted the most [Research Book of Ancient Language] turned out to be something that went way over my expectation.

However I look at it, it looks like a half-size note book. It's probably a belonging of a transported person. I had told the agent that I would bid up to 40 gold coins, but I raised the limit until 300 gold coins. With this, I'll cry if the note contains things like self-poetries, or grudge notes.

Thanks to a guy who competed desperately, the price was raised too much. I could have easily bought it for 10 gold coins if that guy wasn't here, but he opened the bid with 114 gold coins outright.

The agent told me the bidder, so I looked at him, turned out it was an acquaintance.

The heck are you doing hero.

I had prepared myself to compete with the hero again for the next item, [An Unknown Black Plank], but since he didn't bid for it for some reason, I was able to buy [Smartphone] for 23 gold coins. I've never seen the phone, and it also has unfamiliar maker, but it's probably a smartphone. I wonder if the battery is drained, the electricity doesn't run even after I've pushed the switch.

It's probably something that the human who has [Research Book of Ancient Language] kept. I asked the agent if they could sell me the way they obtained the items. I set the upper limit of the information to be 10 gold coins.

◇

And then, the [Princess of Fallen Kingdom] is exhibited. It's a 9 years old girl who's completely white.

Tama is cuter, but this girl is quite cute too.

She's a former princess of white-haired tigerkin. That reminds me, the tigerkin kingdom was invaded by the weaselkin kingdom wasn't it.

I finally understand now.

This is the reason why several beastkin people are gathering in the sewers since a while ago, they're going to infiltrate this hall. Looks like some of them are infiltrating from the ventilation duct. There's no one who guards that place so it's fine, but the operation will be blown if anyone sees them. I secretly push back a squirrelkin girl who's broken her balance and is going to fall with [Magic Hand].

The bidding is getting heated, it's been raised until 120 gold coins. Both bidders are humans. One is a noble from the duchy capital, but the other is a noble from a kingdom I've never heard. The former is easy to understand from his lustful expression, but the latter has bloodshot eyes that are scary. Looks like he has some kind of grudges.

I feel the presence of magic, so I look over the location where it comes from, there's a man who produces a black ball. Apparently, that ball is going to erase the illumination in this room.

A voice shouts out "Fire!" with a cliché voice from the direction of east exit and come the white smoke. When the panic is building up, the light disappear, and the rescue team that has infiltrated from the sewer saves the tiger princess.

Nice~ I feel like seeing some kind of movie.

Since it seems like they'll be surrounded by the guarding soldiers, I secretly give them helps them with [Magic hand] under the cover of the darkness. Since the foreign noble from earlier had started to chant Firebolt magic, I used [Magic Hand] to make him faint with a suitable-looking jar. What a dangerous guy.

I invoked [Clairhearing] beside the tiger princess, so I could hear various things.

>[White-tigerkin Language Skill Acquired]

Oops, they're conversing in their native language huh. I allocate a bit of points to it. It'll be fine to just complement the small nuances in my brain.

『Princess Runya, I've come for you.』

『Galgaoron-sama, I believed that you would surely came to help me.』

『Gal-aniki, we should escape soon.』

『That's right, leaving aside the weaselkins, we absolutely won't be able to escape if the duke guards come.』

『Alright, let's pull back!』

『『Ou!』』

Since the voice sounds familiar, I look at them in darkness, they're faces that I know after all. It's the white tiger-kun and his follower from that time. Even though he's someone who rescues a little girl, he's also kicking sea lion-kin children huh. I intended to help their escape, but that has disappeared somehow. Do your best for the rest.

When I heard about it later, some tigerkins lost their lives to the pursuit force, but it seems that the tiger princess has safely escaped. I'm not that interested with them, but I check the map in order to avoid getting involved, they're moving through the forest toward the royal capital of Shiga kingdom, not the tigerkin country. They're probably going for the self-dominion of beastkin. Since they're going to the opposite direction to where we're going, we won't meet them again.

Actually, a human former princess was going to be exhibited after the tiger princess.

However, since the auction was suspended due to this disturbance, she was entrusted to the duke's house by the duke's recommendation. I'm not privy of the detail, but she seems to be an illegitimate princess of the kingdom where the fiance of princess Menea comes from.

Now, then, after earning abnormal amount of income, and shake off the ones tailing me, let's go on a stroll on the night town.

I have no ulterior motives, I'm just going on a stroll.

Even though I returned with candy set as souvenirs, I got accused of playing around at night for some reason.

8-26. Parting at Duchy Capital Night (2)

Satou's here. I'm reminded of my graduation when I hear the word departure. I don't make a connection between departure and final farewell, maybe because I come from a world where it doesn't even take 2-3 days to meet people on the other side of the planet. Is it a bit heavier on the other world?

◇

The result of the dark auction last night is better than I've thought.

The cast magic swords were sold at the expected prices, but the cast magic spear, and the cast magic halberd were all sold at quite high prices. The cast magic spear particularly, due to the bidding fight between a man who looked like an explorer, and another man who was wearing an elegant armor, it was sold for 270 gold coins. I wonder if the added paralysis effect from the electricity was the cause of this success. I probably shouldn't think about the cost.

Since I had gained more profit than I expected, I decided to donate 10 gold coins for the Tenion emergency food distribution and the orphanage each. Since more than this would be out of common sense, I restrained myself.

About the note book that I've won, the other half of its inside is torn in two. Furthermore, it looks like the one who's written this note book is a cautious guy, it's written in original cipher. When I was deciphering it, I acquired [Decryption] skill, so I solved it easily.

The way to make soap, the way to make glass and mirror, the way to make gum, etc....

Various technologies that look like it'll be useful for someone who has just arrived in another world are written in the note book. However, I can already make most of them, unfortunately. If only I got it earlier.

The lucky find is his curry recipe. There's also the method to create spice written. The problem is if I can find the spice or not. Since there are even ways to create soba and udon, this might be a bargain.

Unfortunately, there is no information about the owner.

I think it's the third person that hero Hayato's mentioned, since he's a shrewd guy, let's pray that he's currently enjoying the other world life.

◇

"Good evening, hero Hayato."

I visit the hero's room in Nanashi mode wearing slightly modest clothes in the night before the hero party departs from the duchy capital. Since some members of his party have good noses like Pochi and the other, I've used [Deodorant] magic.

"Nanashi huh, how did you infiltrate here?"

"With cheat."

It's a convenient word.

Right after I entered the room from the window, the earkin girls who seemed to be the hero's companions suddenly apologized. Since forgiving them like that was 'that', I was allowed to touch the girls' ears as the compensation. Un, it's quite nice.

Afterward, the hero thanked me.

He said the same thing he did when I was Satou, but when he said, 'want to feel my ears as a thank?', I involuntarily dropped my fist on the hero's head.

I thought that lady Ringrande, and princess Maryest would complain since I hit the hero, but it seems that he was usually dealt like that anyway, so everyone looked like they thought it was a matter of course. Princess Maryest even told me not to go easy on him. Is it fine hero.

When he offered some kind of item as a reward, I told him I wanted an Aerodynamic Engine in a jest since I didn't need anything particular, but the hero tried to hurriedly take out the aerodynamic engine of his ship which seemed to be called Jules Verne. Since I had planned to create the aerodynamic engine myself, I declined the rare offer. Princess Maryest looked obviously relieved, the engine was probably quite precious.

In the end, it was decided that the hero is going to give me various rare metal like mithril, and orichalcum. He got them from the inside of the labyrinth, but since he loaned them to the empire's arsenal, he didn't have any in hand.

Orichalcum makes my heart feels excited, although I'll only get it later.

Oops, I forgot the main reason I came here.

"This is?"

"I guess you've never seen one? It's a magic tool that can change a person into a demon you know."

I took out a short horn from the Storage and threw it to the hero. It's the one from the demon that came out in Gururian city.

"What did you say?!"

"W, where did you get this!?"

The former is princess Maryest, and the later is lady Ringrande. By the look of her expression and words, apparently, lady Ringrande has heard the thing about the short horn from the duke. Since the demons have been subjugated in various cities of the duchy, there's no way that people who are related to the duke don't know.

"Did you know about it? Ringrande."

"I'm sorry, since I learned it as a young woman of the duke family, I couldn't disclose it."

What a weirdly stiff person. Although the duke probably couldn't openly declare it due to his position, I think he leaked it to her so she could tell the hero.

"Hey, onee-san. Is this short horn unusual?"

"Yes, this is the first time I've seen it. Even in the long history of Saga empire's fights with the demon, this item never appears even once."

It's a new item huh.

"I obtained it when I defeated a lower demon in another territory. Looks like it can't be used anymore, so I'll give it if you want, you know?"

While thanking me, princess Maryest timidly receives the short horn, and gets it stored in the hero's infinite stowing (Inventory). Although it might not be needed since she looks like someone with a good head, I give her a firm warning, "Handle it carefully okay."

Due to this item, I'm made to hold a magic tool that can be used to communicate with each other. Looks like he's been intending to give it to me from the beginning, the tool is quickly taken out of the hero's inventory. I don't have particular problem with it, so we decide to activate the communication together at 0 hour late at night every 10 days to keep in touch with each other. Since I only have hour hand to check on time, they give me clock magic tool.

This is something that I know later on, but the time on this clock went out of order when I put it in the Storage, so I left it to tick in the Item Box.

I'm worried if it has a tracking function, but it seems that it can't tell location beside at the time where I activate the communication. Since it's used to contact spies who infiltrate another countries, it's made to be undetectable beside at the time of communication. I want to dismantle it for a bit, but let's restrain myself.

◇

I'm unexpectedly free the day before the departure.

Since I was doing things like going around greeting my acquaintances, and buying ingredients, and flavoring--particularly sugar--little by little everyday, there is nothing left that need to be done in a hurry.

Everyone has been finished getting baptized in the Tenion temple this morning.

>[Holy Magic: Tenion Belief Skill Acquired]

This is for the sake of the revival ceremony by the head miko-san in case of emergency.

For some reason, Arisa and me were the only two who didn't get baptized. We did receive the ceremony itself, but we didn't get the [Believer of Tenion] title like everyone else.

Although it seemed that no one around me knew about it, lady Sera said, "With this, Satou-san is also a believer of Tenion.", while looking very happy.

"Satou-san, please accept this."

Lady Sera handed me an item called [Tenion's Bell]. After deciphering the item explanation, it seems to [Resonate with the big bell on Tenion temple]. Apparently, the big bell in Tenion temple rings when an emergency happens. This bell is a magic tool that can resonate with the big bell, it can sense the danger even if they're separated with the distance between the royal capital and the duchy capital.

Looks like it only acts as the receptor.

"Look, I have it too. We have a matching pair right."

"That's right."

I cannot reject lady Sera who's genuinely happy, I take it obediently.

It's probably, or rather, it's 9 out 10 that it was instigated by the head miko-san, but I still wore the bell.

◇

When we've returned to the mansion after the baptism, some visitors are waiting.

It's the next baron Muno, the little brother-kun of lady Karina. He doesn't have an appointment, but he's the young lord of my employer after all, I guess it's fine.

"Sir Pendragon, please forgive me for intruding suddenly."

"Young lord is always welcome to visit me."

I'm going to the (airship) garage in the noon, so let's finish this quickly.

"Let's hear it frankly then. Do you have any intention of marrying Karina-neesan?"

"I do not."

Oops, I should have been a bit more indirect.

The little brother-kun is angry with red face.

"Are you throwing away my big sister after you've done playing around with her! Just because you're a direct retainer of father--"

"It's a misunderstanding."

Although it's rather rude of me, I cover the words of the enraged little brother-kun with another.

"I'll say this again, it's a misunderstanding. Karina-sama and me are not in a relationship you know?"

"However, weren't you two getting along well like a couple during the banquet at Gururian city!"

The way he says it as if it's be better if we don't get along. You siscon.

"The viceroy had sent invitations for both Karina-sama, and me to attend the banquet. Since we both didn't have a partner, I went together with Karina-sama."

Thanks to that, I had to shell out some big expenses, but since I was able to see the volume and the valley, I don't have any regret. That was a good scenery.

"Orion! What are you doing exactly!"

Ah, even though I purposely didn't call his name. Lady Karina, you're heartless.

The little brother-kun's name is Orion Muno. He's the victim of baron Muno's hero hobby like me. Well, I chose it myself in my case, so victim isn't quite right.

Now then, I guess I should work out the misunderstanding.

"Karina-sama."

"What is it?"

Karina-sama replies with a slight caution.

"Do you like me?"

"Na, wha, that--"

"Aneue?" <TLN: Something like, "esteemed older sister.">

"T, there's no way that's true! Thing like me liking Satou, there is absolutely no way that can happen!"

So it's true, this type does self-destruct if openly confronted. I was slightly troubled in case she answered "Yes", but I wouldn't be this cold-hearted if she was that sweet.

"Orion-sama, as you can see, the rumor about us being lovers is groundless. Karina-sama is more suited to a young man from old and honorable lines of a great noble."

"U, umu, I'm glad that you know your place as a chevalier. Please take care of me from now on."

"Yes, likewise."

In other word, Orion-kun probably came to warn an upstart noble that he was not a match for his relative. I pray that it's not aggravated by the siscon. This Orion-kun seems to be engaged with the duke's daughter who has different mother than lady Ringrande and Sera. Since the partner is still 7 years old, the marriage is still a talk for the future.

◇

I visited the duke airship garage in the afternoon since they were going to dismantle the previously-mentioned aerodynamic engine.

When I was going to the garage, I looked for the moving person in the painting before, but I couldn't see it since the hanged paintings had changed, I wondered if they're rotating it everyday. I asked a maid-san who were taking care of other artworks, but she said that she didn't know such painting while looking at me dubiously. That reminds me, when I talked about it during the tea party back then they thought I was just boasting. I wonder if I was half-asleep and was mistaken. It's a mysterious story.

There were unusually lot of people in the garage, so I couldn't see the engine closely. It couldn't be helped, so I moved away for a bit and used [Distance View] to inspect the engine. The aerodynamic engine was like an air cooling radiator with many fins.

Looks like the fin parts are made from Air Fish's materials. It seems the fin gains buoyancy by sending magic through the air.

Since it doesn't look like how hot-air balloons work, the mechanism doesn't follow the law of physic that I know.

When I check my storage, several parasites that crippled the prince have parts that can be made into fins on them, so I dive to the labyrinth late at night, and dismantle them. Since they can't be used as is, I'll process them along the way to Bornean forest.

I had materials from the land reclamation back then, so I made an ark that could even hold the wagon. I intend to put the aerodynamic engine in this ark. I might possibly carry it with [Magic Hand] until the completion of the aerodynamic engine.

However, I guess this is the last time I can use this place. Since it's truly convenient, I'd even like to settle down in the duchy capital.

◇

Next morning, the previous earl couple with all their employees sent us off as we departed from the duchy capital.

Lady Karina had also wanted to tag along, but since I left her with the large amount of documents and letters for Nina-san, she reluctantly agreed to go back to baron Muno territory. There are collections of recipes for Gelt-san in Muno city among the documents. Since I had sent the necessary ingredients in advance, it's probably alright.

I also entrusted cast magic swords for sir Zotor, and Hauto. Since I made it with fluid control magic that I had acquired, their structures are completely different than the ones I sold in the dark auction. The outer appearances of the swords are rounded like the ones I've made for Pochi and the others as their peculiar characteristics. I wonder if you can imagine it if I say that they look like sword-length stretched rice spoons? I've made the sword's tip looks like a sharpened reverse R for stabbing. They have Satou Pendragon inscriptions, not Nanashi.

Also, I secretly give the maid manager, Pina, the traveling expense for their trip back. I heard remarks that young unmarried women shouldn't do like getting spared from sleeping in the barn since they were working as merchants' escorts during the long journey, so please enjoy the return trip at least.

When the ship has begun to depart, lady Sera comes to see us off. Please stop waving your hands while crying like it's a final farewell. I feel a bit embarrassed.

After spending one day and one night, we got off the ship in a town along the way that had less than 10.000 total population. From there, we're traveling on the wagon after a long time off. Along the way to Bornean forest, There's going to be another town with the same scale as this one, but beside that, there are only several villages. I'm glad that at least it's not an unexplored region.

Now, let's go, to the elven forest.

Intermission: Dance and Tea Party

Tomorrow is my debut in the upper society at last!

Even though I had been asking mother for a long time, she didn't let me to because it was still too early for me she said. But, at last. Yes, I've finally gotten permission to attend the ball at last.

"You're really lucky Lina."

It looks like Onee-sama is vexed to see me debuts at my 12 years old age since Onee-sama didn't debut in the upper society until she was 14.

But, but, but.

Since the permission comes suddenly, I have to use an old dress that mother used during her childhood. I can't say such spoiled thing like wanting a new dress like Onee-sama. If I said that, the talk about going the ball would be likely gone.

◇

Uwah, the castle! It's the castle!

"Wait, Lina. Your mouth. You're a lady from today on, pay attention to child-like gestures."

"My, oh Fia, you were also like that when you saw the castle for the first time. You two are really siters~"

"Hey, Teena. Please don't do that in front of Lina. There's this thing called older sister's dignity--"

Onee-sama is talking about something with Teena-san of viscount Brates house, but it passes through my ears.

Cause you know, look how many carriages there are in the castle! I wonder which house is that carriage from. Its round body is cute. My, there is even a golem carriage! Amazing, I want to ride it at least once~

"Now then, young lady, please your hand."

The castle footman opened the door, and father who was waiting outside held out his hand. Father is going to be my escort today.

"Hey, Fia. Why isn't the next baron Eto-sama escorting you."

"No way, Teena. That love is already over. Today the prince has especially come from the royal capital."

"If you're aiming too high, you'll miss your chance to get married you know?"

"You're one to say that Teena. Rather than that! Even if aiming for the prince is impossible, I can still go for his accompanying holy knight or the other attendant who has a promising future."

There are a lot among influential nobles who are engaged even before they're 10, but for middle nobles like us, many are still unmarried even after they become adult. There are some who have too high of ideals, they remain single even after they're over 20, but as for myself, I want to to get married by 17 years old at least. I'm alright with the other person looking ordinary, he just has to be gentle.

◇

Uwah, amazing.

I have a bad head if I do say so myself, I don't have any other word beside that.

Father escort me to the ball room with more than 100 gentlemen and ladies who are having pleasant talks.

But! It was too early to be surprised.

"Lina, this small hall is a waiting room for people who are debuting in the upper society."

There's this many people who are debuting! I wonder if everyone is aiming for the prince after all?

I go around the small hall greeting everyone while father introduces me.

Ah, this is the first time I call my name this many times.

"You're in the way. Move it."

"I, I'm sorry."

When I was standing on the passage to the hall, I got scolded. He's a scary person wearing a white armor. I wonder if he's a knight? I apologized and conceded the way.

"You're not bad. Were you trying to immediately greet the prince?"

"Ah, Onee-sama. It's not like that, I was scolded for blocking the way."

"Blocking the way you said, a thin girl like won't be enough to block the way even if there are 10 of you right?"

When I think about it again, that's true. I wonder if there's some kind of reason?

◇

"Haa, I'm tired."

"Ara ara, let's wet our throats with something."

Together with Onee-sama and her friend, we're sitting on the sofa inside the ball room, and watch the ball. I didn't think that the ball I had always wanted to go was this hard. I don't remember most people whom I introduced myself to.

"Of course that would be so. I was seeing from the side, you were looking down the whole time you were being introduced right?"

"I mean, everyone was older than me, it was a bit scary."

I quench my throat with the fruit water that the maid-san's brought. As expected of duke-sama, not only it has fruit that I rarely eat, it even has ice.

"Mou, you two, it's too early to become tired."

"I'm sorry Teena. Leaving that aside, what is with the crowd earlier?"

"It seems there were specialties delicacies from baron Muno territory, but nothing had remained on the plates when I got there. It might have been really delicious, uncles and his friends were competing to eat it."

To even make the older men who are used to gourmet food to compete with each other, I wonder if it's that delicious. I want to eat it even only for a mouthful.

"Disappointing huh. However, this is the first time I've heard baron Muno territory, is it a distant territory?"

"What are you saying, it's next to the duchy. There was a rumor of it getting attacked by the demon's army right."

"Ah, that! It was an epic about a magician with demi-human mercenaries who repulsed ten of thousands monster herds wasn't it."

"However, since the story came from sir Toruma, it's better if you take it with a grain of salt."

I've also heard about it.

The opponents who annihilated the army without even letting them get ready were turned around in a blink of an eye with just a small troop. He must be a giant man with scars covering his whole body. There are beautiful women on his side at beck, and if he wears an eyepatch, his atmosphere might be even strong--

"Lina, are you tired?"

--Ha. I indulged in my delusion. Since different dish are being displayed on the place with baron Muno cooking a while ago, we're going there to look around.

◇

Sweet smell tickles my nose. What smell is this?

Thin batter is spread and fried on top of a heating magic tool, some kind of red fruit and white soft thing are put on top of it and it gets enclosed.

What a skillful movement!   I've seen the chef in my house cooks before, but it's completely different.

"Okay, here you go. Small lady-san."

"T, thank you very much!"

The chef presents the cuisine while smiling sweetly. I accept the plate that the black-haired attendant gives me.

When I look closer, this chef person isn't a servant is he?   I mean, he's wearing such expensive-looking clothes. He's young, but he's surely from an influential noble house. Even Onee-sama, and Teena introduce themselves before they receive the cuisine.

I also give my name in panic. I understand when we are talking that he's a honorary chevalier-sama. Onee-sama and her friend seem to change their interest toward the dish after they've heard his peerage, but I think it's amazing to acquire a peerage with his own power even though he's this young.

I think of such thing until it's time to eat the dish. I sit down on the chair near Onee-sama and her friend, and use a small knife and a fork on the plate to put the dish on my mouth.

Delicious!

White soft sweetness melt in my mouth. I wonder if I'm chewing that red fruit? The slightly sour taste mixed with that white soft sweets are mixing, the inside of my mouth is in bliss. It's no very ladylike, but my lips begin to open involuntarily, and a smile leaks out.

"U, um, nice to meet you!"

"Y, yes, nice to meet you!"

When I've finished eating and handed the plate to the maid-san, a young gentleman calls me out. He also looks nervous, but my heart is shaking to the point like it'll explodes.

I was invited to my first dance by that person. Although I stepped on his foot since I was nervous, he also stepped on mine, so we were even. After we had finished dancing, his friend tried to invite me, but since he was a bit overbearing, I was afraid and somehow able to decline.

Men are a bit scary after all.

◇

I wanted to eat the [Crepes] from before once again, but it was already over. It seemed that the white soft things were all used up, "I'm sorry." he apologized kindly.

It's strange. Even though his nose isn't high, the area around his eyes aren't deep, and he can't be called handsome, I can't take my eyes off. I wonder if it's because of his calm demeanor, and his gentle expression?

"C, chevalier-sama! Would you dance with me if it's alright with you!"

"Yes, I'll be glad to."

I've invited him to a dance involuntarily. My voices were loud because I was too nervous, the eyes of everyone around were gathered to us. Ah, my face is hot.

Chevalier seemed to be slightly surprised, but he immediately agreed.

"Please don't be so nervous, it's fine to think the people around as trees and stones. Please think of me like your brother or father, and be at ease."

He patted my tense shoulders gently, and whispered so. Just a bit, really a bit of the tension in my shoulders come out, and I've become relaxed.

When the music starts, I'm dancing unlike falling like before. While we're dancing like fish in the water, he whispers "It's alright", "Be more relaxed there.", "Like a princess riding on the flow" which feel good, and then the music stops. To have this much fun in dancing with a skillful person! I have to exercise dancing more seriously from now on.

I wanted to dance for another tune, but since other girls were waiting for their turns, I refrained myself. It looks like I'll get bullied if I monopolize him.

"Lina, were you that skillful?"

"It was because Chevalier-sama was very good, I danced spontaneously."

"Fu~n, I have a rule against someone younger, so I'll pass."

Onee-sama is smiling badly while hiding bottom half of her face with a folding fan. She must be thinking of something, but if you don't do it moderately, you'll be late to get married you know?

◇

"Thank you for inviting me today--"

When I saw the person who visited the tea party I was having with Onee-sama and her friends at the salon, I almost dropped my cup.

Why is chevalier-sama here?

"Ufufufu, since he looked like Lina's favorite, I sent a written invitation together with your letter of thanks."

"You should thank Fia. A lot of girls from other houses have sent their invitations, it seems they're still competing even now."

Onee-sama, and Teena-sama whispered to both my ears.

Even though Chevalier-sama is surrounded by Onee-sama and her friends who look so attractive, he seems very calm not befitting of his age like always.

Tetra-sama! Pushing your b, breasts on him while pretending to talk is cheating.

Ah, even Shiona-sama, are you two aiming for chevalier-sama who's of the same age? I feel annoyed somehow in my chest.

If the house maid didn't come while bringing the present brought by chevalier-sama, I might cut myself inbetween them like a child.

The sweets are called Muno roll, and it taste like between the crepes from before and gururian. It's a bit heavier than crepes, but it suits the blue tea well. The blue tea are presents from Teena-sama, so I've never drank one with a brand though.

I was surprised to hear the story about the time he's granted the peerage when we were talking about the story concerning the cake. I mean, chevalier-sama is the hero of that defensive war of Muno city! He doesn't like it at all. I mean, his hair is silky, his arms are slender and supple, they hardly look like they swing a staff or a sword.

Since he had some business, he unfortunately couldn't accept the invitation to a dinner tonight.

When chevalier-sama was going back, father handed him a bag with fruits and they had a long talk about something. Those fruits are something from the orchard of our house. It's really bitter, and on top of being sour, it looks bad, so insects don't harm it, making it non-labour intensive fruits, but it can only be eaten by making it into pickles, however nowadays gabo fruits pickles have dominated the market. I wonder if that's why our house's fortune is slightly slumping.

◇

"Good day, Lina-sama."

"G,gud dai, chevlier-sana."

I was surprised to meet chevalier-sama when I came out of the passage out of the garden. Because of that, I fumbled. Ah, it's embarrassing.

Father looks restless, I wonder what happens? It smells really nice.

It looks like the black-haired attendant of chevalier-sama hands over a white box. What kind of sweets are those I wonder? Ah, even though I know it's improper, my lips are loosing.

"This is, sir Pendragon! W, were you really able to make a new use for that fruit?"

"Yes, I baked a cake using that fruit."

That white soft thing can certainly hides the sour fruits, but isn't that because of the white soft thing, not the fruit?

As a proof, that fruit's color become completely different because the slices have been wrapped with a lot of that white soft thing.

"This is, it doesn't look like that fruit, have you put something else inside?"

"No, the one on the top is that fruit. It changes color when heated."

Heating fruits? You usually cool them with well water.

To make that brown fruit becomes pink. The color looks really beautiful.

The maids cut it, and I timidly put the [Cake] on my mouth. People are just staring at it, and no one eats it.

Amazing! It softly melts. The texture is different than crepes, it's different than any sweets I've ever eaten.

This time, I put the sour part of the fruit on my mouth while being prepared. It's soft sweet and smooth. As I chew, the fiber feels different than strawberry, or apple.

I want to eat a bit more.

However, unfortunately, it seems to be over with one slice. The fork on the plate with the remaining white soft thing is taken, I endure the impulse to eat it. I'm already a lady who's made her upper society debut.

"I'm thinking of presenting this cake for the wedding of Tisrad-sama."

Ah, father is trembling with chevalier-sama's bomb remark. It's a terribly great honor to have the fruit used as a dish for the wedding of the next-next duke-sama. I understand the feeling of father who nods with trembling body from the unexpected offer.

Perhaps, this cheap fruits can sell more, and our house's finance will become better maybe.

I was called to father's room this night, and got asked if I wanted to send marriage proposal to chevalier-sama. Even though father hated and called honorary nobles shams in all his life.

Ehehehe, Lina Pendragon eh. It'd be nice if Chevalier-sama accepts. And then, the two of us will dance every night. It must be fun, no doubt about it.

I've eaten a delicious cake, and heard a wonderful story, it seems I will sleep pleasantly today.

It'd be nice if tomorrow is also a good day.

Intermission: Orc Alchemist

I am of the ancient perished race--Ga Hou the orc.

The descendant of fools who followed the demon lord, made an enemy of the whole world and got themselves destroyed several hundreds years ago. There should be several groups hiding around the world even now, but no race would probably accept us. Even though the orc empire has been destroyed more than 600 years ago, the world never forgets the crime committed by orcs. Since we're long lived, we have learned the wisdom and techniques to survive with subsistence on the corners of the world, we are already unsuited to appear on the world.

"Ga Hou."

"Ru Heu huh, what's wrong. Did a guest come to the shop."

"Yup, it's the usual masked guest."

This place is rarely visited by human even for a place situated at the downtown outside of the duchy capital great wall. Since it's located beside the sewage filtration facility, the stench is quite terrible, beastkins who have sharp noses also rarely come near it. Although, if this filtration facility that was built at the time of orc empire didn't exist, the mother large river would have been more polluted. When I think so, I can forgive this stench--no, sorry, this stench is unbearable after all. I put on the usual perfumed mask, wear the hood, and go to the shop's front.

"How long do you intend to make me wait!"

"I, I'm sorry, then de requests, here are all the sleep inducing drugs."

When I'm talking to a guest, I always talk with stutters, and use a strange accent. If the other person looks down on me, it's a success.

Wonder why is this man always this exasperated whenever he comes here. I think he should relax his mind a bit more, but there is no need to give an advice. He'd only snap back if I gave him one. I will not do useless thing.

I begin explaining the small bottles that has been passed passed to and lined up on the counter. Even though he probably ignores it, I don't want to forgo my work ethic.

"One small bottle ish, six silverr coins. Dhere are three bottles, how many gold coins ish that?"

"Fuhn, you savages, can't you count. It's three gold coins."

Fumu, he didn't lower it too much. I'll let it off if it's just by three silver coins.

"A, as expectedd of noble-sama. Y, you count fast heu."

"Fuhn, this kind of things are easy for those who are of Shiga kingdom nobles."

Even though the thing about him being a noble should've been a secret, he plainly admitted it. But well, this guy's wallet is adorned with his metal family crest, so there's no need for him to imply it. Since the man himself seems like he wants to hide his identity, I'll keep silent.

The man lined up three gold coins on the counter, took the bottles into a leather case, and went out. He's probably not going to use them for something decent, but I have stopped worrying such thing 400 years ago. I guess I'll give these gold coins to Ro Han's community. I don't need thing like money for living in the sewer of the duchy capital.

◇

"Ga Hou, that."

There certainly is a suspicious group at the place she's pointing. I've seen those clothes. They were the same people who shouted crazy doctrine, "We should become demons in order to not get destroyed by the demon lord.", on the downtown's square. They're called Wings of Liberty--a fanatic group.

The ruin of the labyrinth should be up ahead. The labyrinth is completely dead anyway, and the teleport device to the underground labyrinth should be sealed off. High level cipher has been applied on the seal that no normal humans can possibly solve. Yes, let's believe they cannot enter.

Ru Heu leaves that place, and I approach the group.

When I check them with appraisal skill, there's one with [Abnormal Status: Demonic Possession]. I don't know what kind of demon is it, but I'm bad with fighting. I will flee from here.

Before the effect of invisibility skill wears off, I've left the scene.

◇

"Let me hide here, Ga Hou."

Blood-stained Ro Han falls down into the shop.

Looks like he quarreled with a wolfkin man. Of all thing to do for an orc, how pitiable. A young man who hasn't even lived for 50 years doing as he pleases like this, truly sad.

Right now is the season of the martial art tournament that opens once every three years. There are a lot of rowdy people strutting around, so someone who can't restrain his arms shouldn't have gone out.

I leave the treatment of Ro Han to Ru Heu, and go outside the shop.

It'll be troublesome if the authority comes here.

Fumu, I haven't seen a wolfkin in 200 years, do they have four arms now?

They should have one head if I'm not mistaken, but isn't there another head beside the hairless one.

Now then, let's stop the self-concealment around here.

Apparently it's a lower class demon called short horn demon. It has decaying poison on its claws, a bothersome thing. Its saliva is a strong acid huh, how's the body doesn't get dissolved.

I can't let it runs amok in my shop right in front of my eyes.

I'm bad at fighting, but let's push it out to some place away from the shop.

I put on the magic activator ring, and consecutively chant [Exoskeleton (Shell Armor)], and [Physical Reinforcement (Light Boost)] in low voice. They were lower class magic, but I gave priority to the shortness of the chanting.

I pull out a wooden pillar nearby and set it up. The demon who's playing around with the chivalrous mercenary man is turning toward me. Before it stopped turning, and in unnatural stance, I strike it with the pillar with all my might, and push it away to an open space at the opposite side of the street.

People are running from the open space like they're rolling.

There are demi-human mercenaries nearby who are chivalrously assaulting the demon in succession. What a brave thing to do. I guess I'll go against my principle, and help them here. Alas, I don't want to see those brave young men fall victim to the demon's claws.

"■■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■■ ■■■■——"

I drank the reserved magic augment medicine. It's working.

"——■■■ Exploding Flame Dragon (Drag Ignis)"

The mercenaries who were holding down the demon got rolled up on the magic for a bit, just for a bit. They should just get off with large burns, probably.

The demon is dying after getting burned by the Drag Ignis of advanced level magic. Even though I've become weaker with ages, to not die after it got hit by that much magic, quite resilient. I pick a spear that has fallen below and throw it to the demon who's inching forward despite its burn. The spear that was thrown with physical reinforcement in effect pierces deep into the demon, killing it.

Fumu, my body reacts to the first advanced magic since 100 years ago after all. I should have shot several intermediate magic to defeat it after all. I'll get Ru Heu massages my lower back when I return to the dwelling.

I take out the magic core from the crumbles of the demon, and toss it to the chief-like man of the mercenaries who have fought just now. A magic core this big is valuable, but this much quality isn't needed for medicines that I make. You guys can drink to your heart contents this night.

While the chief is thinking over picking the magic core, I pick up the demon horn that's fallen near my feet. It's an item called [Short Horn] according to the appraisal skill. Since the explanations that float in my mind are written in demon language, I'll check it on the dictionary when I return.

The content that I got from checking the dictionary was shocking.

That thing is an item that transforms a person into a demon. The demon that I defeated was probably the form of a young wolfkin that had been transformed.

Dreadful.

Demon--no. I'm worried that people will not retain their reason if the existence of this item becomes known. I can't help but wish that the nightmare of demi-human hunting from 400 years ago won't rampage on this land once again.

◇

Around three days after that, I feel turbulent waves from the underground.

Don't tell me that the ancient great demon lord will revive. I hope it's just an unfounded fear.

◇

I can feel intense tremors since awhile ago.

There shouldn't be a hypocenter in this land. If this is caused by someones' fight, it must be between the hero and the demon lord. However, at the very least, I hope it's not dragons.

Ru Heu who finally couldn't keep still in the dwelling went to the underground passage where the wings of liberty group occupied for reconnaissance. It's not like I'm not worried, but there's probably no human that can see through Ru Heu's invisibility, although it's not quite at my level.

A few minutes after the underground tremors had stopped, Ru Heu returned like she was tumbling.

"Oh no Ga Hou. My face might had been seen."

As I understand, looks like her face was seen by a masked man who was flying at high speed when she was moving in the underground passage. To see through Ru Heu invisibility! I should be surprised at that, but why was he flying in an underground passage! I'm a bit lost at whether I should question that or not.

"If he was flying in high speed, then it should just have been in an instant. I don't think your race was known within that instant. However, as a precaution, you shouldn't approach the underground passage for a while."

Just to be sure, I guess we should go to a different continent for at least 100 years until it's been cooled down.

I also have to contact the family of Ri Fuu on the royal capital.

I go to the basement of my dwelling, where the teleport gate (portal) is. This artifact in the shape of constructed stones can connect to the same kind of portal that has been connected with space magic.

I gaze the portal that has been booted up after spending three days. The vermilion stones are truly beautiful.

"Torii has to be like this after all."

<TLN: Torii is the traditional Japanese shrine gate. They're usually painted vermilion.>

A voice came out of the place where there shouldn't be anyone, my heart felt as if it would flew out of my chest.

Ridiculous.

Ridiculous, ridiculous. Invisibility technique that surpasses my perception ability? There wasn't any report from the conspicuous white crocodile familiars that I had made to lurk. Were them all eluded?! Impossible.

A silver masked man is there.

I calmly talk to the intruder whom I normally would have eliminated.

That is because I've seen his title.

"Do you have any business, hero-dono."

Yes, he is the hero. The warrior of god that matches even the demon lord. A transcendence being whom an ordinary person will never exceed. Since I've been found out by that hero, elimination is impossible.

"Ah, it's nothing much. It looks like I have surprised your orc friend in the underground passage some times ago, so I've come here to tell you that I don't intend to spread it around."

What a useless consideration.

"I also don't intend to tell others about this teleport gate, so please be at ease. I won't talk about it to a third party either."

"Is that alright?"

"Isn't it a secret?"

"Umu, I cannot let them get abused, they are our race's inheritance after all."

"I see, so the broken gate from before was your creation too huh."

Around here, there's one around Seryuu city. There should be a simple teleport gate for monitoring the dragon valley. There should be only one abandoned teleport gate in this continent. Since the teleport gate that was on the small country group near the Saga empire was completely destroyed without a trace, young humans can't possibly know it.

"May I hear where it leads to?"

"I'm sorry but I cannot say it. My brethren are ahead of this teleport gate, few in numbers they are. I cannot disclose it for the sake of their safety."

This teleport gate is also going to disappear soon. The hero will probably survive, but everything in the radius of several hundreds meters around this teleport gate will be ejected beyond the sub-space, and get annihilated.

Farewell, Ro Han, Ri Fuu. Please forgive me for going to the samsara together with Ru Heu ahead of you.

The <<Overdrive Ray>> from the teleport gate fills the open space.

It abruptly disappears.

Death is quite disappointing.

Darkness and silence wrap this body.

"I'm sorry for ruining the mood, but since it was dangerous, I've dispersed the mana from the teleport gate. If I left it on rampage, it might affect not only this duchy capital, but even the royal capital, and this continent after all."

He's said that extremely easily, but dispersing mana from a rampaging teleport gate isn't a technique of human. Moreover, for him to recognize the destination of this teleport gate that I have protected with my life, regrettable.

"Right then, I'll vow with the name of hero, and the Parion god that I will not tell this to others."

To even promise in the name of god!

It's impossible for him to break the vow he's made in the name of his god. My see through skill also tells me that he's not lying. Let's believe on him, the hero, here.

This is how I meet Nanashi, the hero with a strange name.

While drinking the liquor and eating the snacks he has brought with relish, I begin to talk about the old story of the orcs after he begs for it. When I tell him that this sewer and the clean water facility are the heritages of orc, he exceedingly admires it. We even purposely go to the clean water facility for him to study the construction, what a diligent man. I begin to involuntarily talk like an old man about my various past successes, boastful stories, schemes, and even hardships. He listened to it to the end happily without looking tired. Truly a strange youth.

"However, what the wild boar king did is surely a crime. To fight the whole world that even drag its own race."

"It couldn't be helped, Nanashi. At that time, excluding our Orc empire, and the Saga empire, all demi-humans were enslaved by human. The wild boar king, despite knowing that he couldn't win, turned on the world, reduced the power of the human, and got annihilated by the hero."

The human at time that were ruling 90% of the world. When the ancient empire which controlled the majority of the world was destroyed, the orcs' battles were over. The wild boar king who had become the demon lord and couldn't maintain its ego probably marched toward the saga empire, which was the only empire that protected demi-human, to seek its own death.

I won't forget the sight of the hero who tried, until shedding tears of blood, to stop the death march of our brethren who had been manipulated by the five upper class demons. The hero ordered for the heavenly dragon's light breath with trembling voice while warped with crying voice. Exactly because he(?) found a nation that we didn't harbor our meaningless ambition, and lay dormant underground.

He left a single great sword as a proof of our friendship when he was leaving the duchy capital.

There is no inscription.

Thus, I will give it the name.

"■■ Name Order. Holy Sword『Nanashi』"

We will hand down our treasure until the final moment when Orcs perish.

Intermission: Tenion Head Miko [First Part]

"Head miko-sama! It's terrible!"

Mou, what a hopeless child. To lack composure when he's going to be 40 like that, I think it's a bit problematic. Maybe I should better give him some stern advice now?

<TLN: The head miko talks like a playful woman in Japanese.>

"What's wrong, head priest. You are higher than me in the temple, so you shouldn't use 'sama' to call me."

"I'm sorry, head miko-sama. No, this isn't the time to talk about that!"

"Calm down. What's happened?"

"Miko-dono of Parion temple, and even of Garleon temple have been kidnapped by someone."

My, such thing.

Kidnapping the miko of oracle in the middle of demon lord season like this.

There are seven miko who have received oracles in this duchy capital. They are Sera and me, head miko of Urion temple and Zaikuon temple, the apprentice miko of Heraluon temple, and the two kidnapped miko.

Normally, one would have sufficed, but last month, by duke-sama's order, every temple was to undertake an oracle for hints of the demon lord revival. Yet, instead of narrowing down the possible revival location, each temple received different response. Although it's normal for the details to be different between people who receive oracles depending on their gods, this is the first time the difference is this much.

My oracle points toward the duchy capital. If possible I want it to be a miss, but it's the same place as the prediction of the location of the demon lord revival 66 years ago. There is no mistake that the demon lord will be revived here. Before, there was a hero near me, but that person has left us, and gone back to the original world. No good aren't I, wishing for something that doesn't exist.

The oracle that Sera's received points to another continent. Even though our oracles are from the same god, I wonder why do we receive different ones. For me to try guessing what the god is thinking, it's really not clergy-like at all isn't it.

Oh right, Sera!

This isn't the time to get lost in thoughts.

"Head priest, check the place where Sera is."

"Yes, head miko-sama!"

I admonish the head priest who have begun to run in a hurry to make him order other people for it. Mou, what are you doing being the gofer yourself. I ask the head priest to contact his excellency the duke if sera's whereabouts can't be confirmed. Since this child is flustered like this, he looks like he'll just collapse.

◇

Even though the priests have looked everywhere, Sera's whereabout is still unknown.

The matter about the three kidnapped miko have reached his excellency the duke too, and his knight and guard subordinates are searching the duchy capital even now. Although I haven't got the report from the bell tower, since I can see that the lights from the ships outside the harbor aren't moving, the harbor is probably blockaded. That's relieving.

However, since the opponents have defended against our detection magic, it looks like they have a powerful magician that can use advanced level magic, or a person who holds powerful artifacts. I wonder if it's that group who were spreading rumors about the end, [Wings of Liberty], that the priests had been talking about.

Sera, please come back safely.

I take the resurrection artifact that's hanging on my neck on my palm, and pour mana into it, even though I know that this is for nothing but a peace of my mind.

Not good, it's impossible to pour mana into the artifact when my heart is disarranged.

This isn't because I'm bad at using magic tools at all, but one needs delicate mana control to pour mana into an artifact. Like putting a thread to the pinhole of a needle on the ground from the top of a tower, that is how precise yet with a far off mind the work is. Having a disturbed mind is like sending wind to the hanging thread. There's no way the thread can get through the pinhole.

I'll use the forbidden mind magic to put my mind back at ease.

Tenion-sama, please give your protection to your believer.

◇

I woke up in my room that's begun sinking into darkness.

Looks like I've fainted.

It can't be helped with my age right. To faint while I was pouring mana into the resurrection artifact like this.

Fainted?

Losing consciousness in this consecration?

I can't believe it.

This place is near the sanctuary where ritual magic is held, and is filled with divinity. Even for an old woman like me, I'm just like a young woman--that's too exaggerated isn't it. Although I can move as well as a youngster, fainting in such place like this, maybe I don't have much time left.

I'm already 80 years old after all. It might be a good time to soon go on a journey to where my friends who had died earlier went.

I didn't notice it before when I was lost in such thought, but there's no shaking today is it. I'm glad that the tremors that had been assaulting the duchy capital for the past several days is gone. It was troubling to deal with nobles who came almost everyday while asking "Is it going to be alright?" you know. Though since they're donating, the head priest doesn't seem like he has any complaint. I'd like to entrust the admonishment job to the high priest soon.

◇

I wonder if I'm really going senile.

There were many assassins who had intruded upon this sanctuary before, but this is the first time one has gotten so close. Wonder if my crisis perception skill is getting rusty?

While feeling dubious with the lack of thirst of blood from the intruder, I take the initiative to greet him.

"Ara, the assassin tonight is quite excellent."

The one who appears from the shadow as if gliding on the ground is a young boy wearing a white mask. There are two wrapped clothes in his shoulder--are those people? Is he an assassin who also happens to be a kidnapper I wonder?

I could see with [Status Check], but I couldn't see his name. Since I could see the name of the two people on his shoulder, it wasn't like the skill wasn't invoked. The two are the miko of Parion and Garleon who have been kidnapped together with Sera.

His level is 70 like the hero of Saga empire, but his title is [Saint]. He can't be called anything but abnormal to have such level at his age even though he's not the summoned hero of Saga empire.

Moreover, that [Saint] title. Although there are other people who have [Saintess] title like me, there shouldn't have been anyone with [Saint] title for the last 100 years here. I wonder who. I'd have consented if he had the title of hero instead.

"Nice to meet you, Yu Tenion Head Miko-dono. I am Nanashi."

"Hey, Nanashi-san. Won't you show your face. It's hard to talk with that mask."

I endure hard not to let my voice trembles.

Hey, what about Sera?

I want to ask that.

However, my intuition as a miko has told me. That child is already no more.

"Hey, Nanashi-san. Don't you know the whereabout of our kidnapped miko, Sera."

"I knew."

Ah, as I've thought.

That child has died isn't she. I can't, it's still to early to cry, for that child's sake. As a miko, I have to ask him now.

"Was the one who deprived Sera's life the humans of『Wings of Liberty』? or-- the demon lord. That's right isn't it, Sera has been sacrificed for the demon lord."

"That's right."

Ah, I can't hold back my tears.

Even though I have to ask for the deployment of the saga empire hero, and even though I'm not sinking in sorrow, I can't stop my tears.

"Is that so, that child wasn't able to go against her fate."

Nanashi-san takes out a handkerchief out of somewhere and wipes my tears with it. Although he's wearing a strange mask, he's a gentleman isn't he.

I talked to him about the catastrophe that would befall this land while crying. In order to pull him as a war potential before the hero arrives here. He gave indifferent replies when he heard the story about the demon lord revival. Does it not feel real to him? Or perhaps--he has already exterminated it?--That can't be right.

◇

"Yu Tenion head miko-dono, are you able to use resurrection magic?"

"Yes, I'm able to."

I answer Nanashi-san's sudden question.

He probably wants to bring me to where the Sera's body is, and use resurrection magic, but that's impossible. This resurrection artifact hasn't been filled with enough mana to be usable.

"What, that sort of things huh."

Nanashi-san took the resurrection artifact from my chest, and began to dazzlingly pour mana into it.

It's an unbelievable sight.

Doing the precise mana filling just like that. Normally you'd need one hour just to adjust the mana before you even begin to fill it.

However, he still has the body of human after all.

The amount of mana isn't something that can be filled by a person alone. While this is happening, the 30 minutes after-death condition becomes the shackles and resurrection will be impossible.

"Excuse me for a bit."

Nanashi-san takes out a holy sword just like when he took the handkerchief earlier. It's accompanied by brilliant holy light that brighten this room as if it's daylight. Even though it's this bright, it a gentle light that doesn't hurt my eyes. I've never seen a holy sword with this much overflowing power. I can feel an order magnitude different in strength compared to the holy sword that my hero-sama wielded, Joyeuse.

But, what is it for?

I don't think that it's to hurt me. Just what on earth--

"I'll fill it up right away, so please excuse my discourtesy."

--Nanashi-san is absorbing the holy light from the holy sword as if pulsing. And then Nanashi-san pours mana into the artifact without looking agitated, like he's just breathing. Don't tell me, he's using his own body as an intermediary to transfer mana from the holy sword to the artifact?

Such absurd method doesn't exist even in fairy tales you know?

While I was taken aback by that absurdity, the mana filling on the artifact was over. Completing a process that'd have taken several years in just 10 minutes, I am speechless.

He's done so much already, I'll show him that I'll run fast to where Sera's body even if I have to whip out this old body.

As if ridiculing that determination, Nanashi-san summoned Sera's body right in front of me. He doesn't have summoning skill though? Did he summon without the skill I wonder. Maybe he used the infinite stowing

(Inventory) like the hero.

No, he said that it's only been a few seconds since the death of Sera's body. Time passes even for the hero's Inventory. Perhaps it's fixation magic? No, that shouldn't be able to be used on living things or corpses.

Don't tell me, time magic? Even though it's a magic that only appear in fairy tales, it's mysterious that I feel that Nanashi-san could possibly use it.

The body of Sera which has appeared in front of me is beautiful without a single wound.

Nanashi-san who has noticed that the body is naked puts a cloth on it.

Rather than that, I have to concentrate now.

It'd be a disgrace as a woman if I wasted the miracles that Nanashi-san had created.

Intermission: Tenion Head Miko [Latter Part]

"Head miko-sama, I'm home."

Sera enters the sanctuary while looking livelier than ever. This child always looks happy, but it's rare for her to be this cheerful.

"What's happened Sera. Did you meet your lover?"

"I, it's not like that! Chevalier-sama isn't my lover."

This child is really bad at lying.

Since I was a bit interested, I asked about that chevalier person.

"There's this chevalier-sama who helped me with the food distribution, it felt like I had met him mysteriously, it's been on my mind. Right, he's a person with similar atmosphere to head miko-sama, tender, or rather, flexible, how should I put it--"

While hearing Sera speaks fondly of her love, I've had my suspicion that this chevalier person might be Nanashi-san from the other day, even though it's unfounded. I wonder if it's because I've been thinking about Nanashi-san all the time lately.

It's not a love at old age you know?

I received an oracle from the ceremony that I did at the dawn of that time that the demon lord who was supposed to revive in the duchy capital had been annihilated. Of course I immediately sent a messenger to duke-sama, but it can't be announced publicly yet since there are other temples' honors to consider. Of course, the king had promised that he would definitely announce it, so the announcement about the annihilation of the demon lord would probably be told during the kingdom conference in the spring.

"Head miko-sama, you look really happy about something you know? Did you get a lover?"

"Ufufu, I was just engrossed with thoughts about Nanashi."

It looked like she wanted to counter, but she's still soft huh. To be so upset about my joke. Ufufu, her heart is restless like she's really in love. When the demon lord season is over, it might be a good time for me to retire from head miko position soon.

I don't think that Sera will forget her duty, but let's give her a warning to keep the relationship at healthy scope just to be sure. A miko won't be able to receive oracles if she loses her virginity. It might be cruel for a teenage girl, but she has to wait until an oracle that states the demon lord season is over descends.

◇

I met Sera's lover--it might be better to call him a candidate of one--in the duke castle. He's really popular, and surrounded by girls. Ara ara, oh Sera. If you have such face, he'll laugh at you you know?

Still, what a nice smell. It's not just sweetness from sugar. I know that it's out of stock.

However, this voice.

It's exactly like Nanashi-san though. I wonder if he's his twin brother?

His level is half of Nanashi's, and even his skills composition is different after all. The things that are the same are his age, voice, and hair color, I guess his height is about the same too.

Since I was together with old acquaintances from Parion and Garleon temples who I had happened to meet across when I was congratulating Tisrad-sama for his wedding, I whispered him (Satou) leading words directly, but rather than getting shaken, he was perplexed instead. Looks like I was mistaken.

I might be thinking about Nanashi-san too much.

Ufufu, I shouldn't be one to make fun of Sera. I look like a maiden in love.

◇

"Good evening, head miko-sama."

He's really elusive isn't he.

How did he invade I wonder? I didn't feel feedback from space magic, so I think it's not that.

"I've come here today to ask about the oracle regarding demon lord."

"Ara? You've annihilated it right?"

"It must have been defeated by a passing hero."

He wants to play dumb that it's not him to the end huh.

"You won't announce that the demon lord has been defeated?"

"I've told his excellency the duke directly, but the『Annihilated』oracle haven't come to the other temples, so we can't announce that the demon lord has been annihilated from Tenion temple alone."

Each temple is most likely questioning whether the [Each of the foretold demon lord] is annihilated, not the one in the duchy capital underground.

In other words, the demon lord season this time is not over yet--in that regards, the fact that the duchy capital is already excluded from that might be a small blessing. Thanks to Nanashi-san.

Just in case, I tell Nanashi-san about that, but he too has already expected it. He simply murmured, "So, it's like that after all." His atmosphere is like, "It's just demon lords, they can come at me no matter how many ." It's very fun to guess the invisible expression behind that mask.

Nanashi-san put the filled resurrection artifact on my neck. It's really amazing. I wonder if it's the prejudice of old age which make me thinks that the labor of nearly 20 years is fruitless.

"Thank you Nanashi-san."

However, I mustn't forget to thank you.

Although I asked him about chevalier Pendragon, he only replied, "That young noble who they call miracle chef right.", and he didn't seem to know the detail. I wonder if it's just my imagination that his "don't know" manner looks exactly like him (Satou's).

The [Indulgence] that I've prepared will become a waste if he (Satou) really is an acquaintance of Nanashi-san.

I wonder what'd happen if that third prince meets Nanashi-san?

I can't help but feel a bad premonition. I had hoped that the king didn't send such troublemaker during this difficult time.

It's not that is it.

That king shouldn't have been one to do such mistake. That unbending king should be able to predicts three moves ahead for sure.

I see, he's getting rid the nuisance the prince.

The king has predicted that the demon lord will appear on the labyrinth city. To push aside the prince to the uncertain element, the duchy capital. I have to complain directly to the king.

I don't know whether he'll accept it or not, but I will hand over the

[Indulgence] to Nanashi-san in case he eliminates the third prince by mistake.

I actually wanted to give him the bell of Tenion, but I couldn't bring myself to since I was afraid I'd incur his displeasure. It's a bit unlike me isn't it.

◇

The world crisis came unexpectedly early.

Despair? I think that word is more hopeful than the scene right now.

At the duke castle seen from the sanctuary, the great monstrous fish (Tovkezeera) emerges from the huge summoning circle nearby. It's the incarnation of destruction that brought about the deaths of many countries during the time of Yamato-sama. The aerial fortress that the great demon lord employed. I can't see the status since it's too far, but I can't let out words from its overwhelming presence.

Thinking that it'd be fine as long as Nanashi-san is here might be too optimistic of me.

I collapse on the sofa without even having the margin to worry about Sera who has gone out.

Several of the monster that can destroy the duchy capital alone appear from the summoning circle and swim to the arena.

Seven great monstrous fish.

Far from just Shiga kingdom, all the countries on this continent will disappear.

Ah, wonder if I have no choice but to call the heavenly dragon even if it means destroying the kingdom. It's the friend of Yamato-sama who's living on the range of mount Fuji. There's no choice but to use the dragon summoning crown (Fellow Crown) shining on the king's head that can be used to summon the dragon just once.

It's as if seven demon lords have appeared.

I want to rush to the arena to support them, but I have to be here. Since Nanashi-san most likely has filled the resurrection artifact as an insurance in case his friends die.

I watch over the end of duchy capital while patting the head of apprentice miko who are frightened. There's no meaning in taking shelter underground if it can cause damage over the defense magic of the sanctuary.

That is a flash.

When the light subsides, there are figures of severed great monstrous fish. Those are also dissolved as if the sky wipes them off. No, maybe I should say that they disappear.

The sudden attack on the duchy capital disappear more abruptly than when it arrived.

It'a all too soon, no one even falls victim.

Nanashi-san, is that you I wonder.

I was convinced that was it as if I received an oracle.

Ah, Tenion-sama.

Thank you very much for sending that person to this land.

Author's Note: It's not Satou's POV this time. It's a short story from Lulu's POV.

SS: Arisa and The Devil Box

Today we're having [Barbecues] on the courtyard of the mansion.

"Kuh, I can't have enough of the burning smell of the meat."

"Tarararari~""No desu!"

Tama-chan, I wonder if she was so happy, she couldn't say "Tamaranai". It sounds a bit like she's singing, it's really cute.

However, Liza-san who seriously watches over the meat with bones that are being grilled is a bit scary.

Since master had prepared a lot of meat skewers, everyone ate to their heart's content.

◇

Today's prototype is pudding.

It's very delicious, but since master keep getting dissatisfied with the [Caramel Sauce], he's having a hard time.

"U~n, no good. It's just sweet, there's no bitterness at all."

"Deliciouss."

Even though Mia-chan and me think that it's delicious, master and

Arisa are still not satisfied. Oh Arisa, even though she's complaining, she still eats it all. Didn't she just have a showdown with Pochi-chan and the others with [Fried Rice] which she heavily consumed?

Since she's in her growth period, her appetite is big, but I wonder if it's fine to eat that much?

◇

I got praised by master when he saw the kombu that I had bought from the grocery on the downtown. I was hesitating since it was a bit pricey, but I'm glad that I've bought it. I will give my thanks to the shopkeeper who's recommended it.

I mean, master not only praised me with a smile on his whole face, but he also [Hugged], and patted my head.

Ehehehe~, I won't wash my head in the bath today.

"Crab nabe is the best after all~ but, how'd you get this crab fork."

"Ah, I've made that one just now."

"Kuu, dang you cheat, but, you're forgiven. It doesn't feel right to eat crabs without this after all~."

Just as Arisa's said, it's easy to take the crab meat with this fork.

The crabs are delicious, but everyone is quiet. Mia-chan looks a bit lonely, but she's steadily eating the [Pilaf] that master has exclusively made for her.

"Mia, let me try a mouthful of the pilaf."

"Arisa, overeating."

"It can't be helped right, I have to with all these delicious things~♪"

Isn't she really eating too much?

◇

When Arisa sees the magic tool with a round board connected to a wooden box by a pole that master is carrying, she runs away from the room in full speed.

I was surprised. That Arisa can move so quick.

Pochi-chan and Tama-chan whom master had ordered came back to the room after they caught Arisa. To make Arisa become that unwilling, I wonder what is that magic tool? Since it's something that master's brought, I think it's not a bad tool.

"Then, Pochi is next."

"Yes, nano desu."

When she gets on that board, it looks like the needle on the disk moves. Master scolded Tama-chan when she was going to touch the needle.

"It's a bit heavy, but I guess it's within the standard range. Since her race is different, there's no meaning to BMI, but I have to write down the body weight and the change."

Body weight is it? I had never heard that word, but for some reason I took a step back as as soon as I heard it.

"Lulu, you're next."

"Y, yes."

I hesitated for a little, but then I jumped on it decisively.

"You don't have to be so forceful, be more gentler okay."

"Yes, I'm sorry."

"There's no need to apologize. Lulu is slightly lighter than the standard huh. I guess it's better if she eats a bit more meat and dairy products during meals."

I'm relieved that it looks like I've passed judging from master's expression.

"No~, I've promised my dead grandmother to never get on that devil instrument again~"

I thought Arisa's grandmother-sama had died even before she was born though?

Even though master has said, "Resign yourself and get on it", she's still resisting. In the end, master gets on the tool while carrying Arisa, checks the number, and puts Arisa down, then he gets on it again and checks the number.

At first I thought what is he doing I wonder? I've thought such thing, but master is amazing, I've noticed that master is trying to find out the difference between the two measurements to get Arisa's body weight.

"Arisa."

"Uu, I've been sullied..."

"Noisy, you're slightly obese. From tomorrow on, you're forbidden from eating meat, and another helping. Of course snacks and sweets aren't allowed too."

That's why I've warned her that she was eating too much.

I wonder why do Pochi-chan, and even Tama-chan look like their life are over? Even Liza-san and Mia-chan are silently praying for Arisa.

"I'll accompany you with the diet, so let's make the goal to have you go down by five kilograms in one month."

"I, I hate diet~~~~~"

Arisa's sad screams is resounding in that afternoon.

Postscript.

Thanks to the [Non Calorie] dishes that master has prepared, Arisa's [Diet] transitions safely it seems.

I feel that Pochi-chan and Mia-chan who innocently cheer for her have become a bit plump too. I also have to be careful. Let's do the upping and stretching exercises like usual, no three times more than usual today!

Intermission: Mia and the Dietary Restriction

Human race food are delicious. They're really delicious you know.

But, they're very dangerous.

I've learned my lesson you know.

That was recently--

"Hamburg steak is the strongest nano desu."

"Yum yum~"

"I like something that's firmer, but it doesn't shade the tastiness of hamburg steak. It's truly delicious."

"Even though it's made of grounded beef, I wonder why is this so delicious~"

"Arisa, you're eating too much you know?"

"I'm on my growth period, I can't help it."

"Nn."

Satou has made hamburg steak from beans for me, it's for my sake you know?

I was always envious whenever I saw Pochi and the others eating hamburg steak so happily.

That's why I taste this hamburg steak one bite at a time.

I mean, it'd be wasteful if I ate it too fast right.

"Does it suit your taste?"

"Nn."

Mou, it's the best. I'm in bliss.

I don't know how is he able to make this delicious dish from beans. It's mysterious!

The grated daikon on top of the hamburg steak is a bit bitter, but it brings out the sweetness of the carrots. Of course it matches well with rice too you know?

◇

After the meal, I dive onto Satou's lap while feeling happy. I jumped you know?

Since the best place is already taken by Tama, I endure it beside her. But, but, I think it's not fair that it's always only Tama. I wonder if it's alright if I protest.

"It was delicious~"

"I want to eat again nodesu."

"Nn, delish."

Words of gratitude are difficult. It's also embarrassing if I talk long, I wonder if it's transmitted well? It did right.

"Arisa, you're going to get fat if you eat sweet things right after meal."

"It's a dessert. Sweet things go into another belly, so it's fine."

Arisa is amazing. She's still going to eat more even after eating that much!   Even Pochi and Tama are taking a bite from Arisa!

I wonder if all human and beastkin eat this much?

No, they don't. Lulu and Satou don't eat that much.

◇

"Fish are delicious, but you have to eat meat once in a while after all."

Arisa isn't a picky eater, she can eat anything, she's a good girl.

"Sweets go into another belly don't they. Yummy, crepes. Why is sampling food this delicious I wonder."

"Nn."

These many varying tastes, it's a wonder. Satou can use cooking magic. He must be. But, I think sampling is just for one biteful. If you eat the same amount of shares as Arisa is eating, you won't be able to eat during dinner, it's true you know?

"Arisa?"

When we're changing our clothes, I call out to Arisa who hardens after she sees her own body.

I wonder what's wrong? I'm a bit worried.

"No~ well~ it's nothing. It's child's body right~. Yes, this is because of the child's body."

What is she persuading herself for? I wonder if she's not? However, she looks like that.

"It's finally, finally here, sponge cake! Hey hey, it has to be with fresh cream and strawberries after all right! Kuuh~ to be able to eat cakes even in this world, truly a bliss."

She really likes it. She does, doesn't she.

Eating half of that big cake alone.

I stop to reflect when I taste it for a mouthful, I mean, it's so delicious! It's too delicious.

Afterwards, everyone is eating greedily. I mean, it's delicious.

◇

"Everyone, get on this one by one."

Satou brings some kind of magic tool that looks like a box, or rather, a stand.

When I get on it, the needle attached on the side is spinning, round and round. I want to touch it, but since Tama was scolded for trying to touch it, I endure it. I endured it you know?

Arisa grimaces when she sees the stand. I wonder why?

"No! I've bid farewell to that devil instrument in my past life! I've promised in my heart to never get on it again."

Arisa refuses with all her might. She hates it so much.

However, she gets on it after Satou unusually [Order] her. Arisa is saying, "Clothes! My clothes must have been heavy!", but that clothes are made of thin cotton, it's very light you know? It's as light as a feather.

Satou tells Arisa with words that I've never heard before. I wonder what obese is? It's on my mind.

"Arisa, snacks are forbidden until you lose 5 kilograms. I'll take off deep fried stuffs from the menu."

"Nyu! Fried stuffs are gone, for everyone~?"

"W, wait a minute nodesu! Fried stuffs are essential nano desu!"

"I feel sorry for Arisa if it's only her, so I'll change the menu to stuffs with less fat."

Fat? The decrease of oily stuffs is to my liking.

But, Pochi and Tama look heart-broken. "Pochi~""Tamaa", they're hugging with pitiable voices. Liza is also looking at the sky as if enduring something. Is it hard I wonder?

But, it seems necessary to cure Arisa from her plumpness. Satou said so.

I think her plump stomach looks cute, is it a sickness I wonder? It's a sickness isn't it.

Let's all cooperate together to cure Arisa's plumpness.

Do your best, Arisa. I'm cheering on you, do your best.

"I hate diet~~~~"

How long does Arisa's scream continue to echo.

This is the first time I know that delicious meals can be dangerous.

Satou, you're a dangerous person aren't you.

Author's note: Not Satou's POV. It's in third person after a long time.

Intermission: Hime Miko

"Ringrande!"

Voice of a young girl echoes in the spacious private room.

"Ringrande!"

A girl is slapping the cushion she's carrying to the sofa as if she's spitting out her black emotion inside.

"Riin, graaan, de!"

With the strength of a powerless girl, she only makes light sounds, "poof", and the waterfowl feathers don't even fly out.

She probably doesn't normally exercise, the girl runs out of breath after only swinging the cushion for a few minutes.

A muffled laugh leaked out of a boy then.

"Who!"

The girl's anger is revived along with the settling of her rough breath. That is because she had ordered the maids in this room to clear out of this room before she began acting violently.

"You're in a bad mood huh, Sera."

The one who comes out of the shadow while smiling is the girl's (Sera's) older brother, Tisrad Oyugock. The name of the one whom Sera was screaming about since earlier is of the two's older sister.

"Tisrad-niisama! Entering without making a sound is rude."

"Sorry."

The boy who is smiling kindly eludes the threatening attitude of Sera like a willow tree. He seems a bit mature for his 10 years old age.

"You were calling Rin-anesama, what's happened? Did you hear some backbiting from gossiping maids again?"

He seems to have hit the nail on the head, Sera puffs her reddening cheeks, and turns away. She normally seldom shows such childish actions, but it's not that rare in front of her brother, Tisrad.

"Humph, it's just like usual--

『Hey, hey, did you hear? Ringrande-sama has restored the lost magic they said!』

『You've just heard that old story now? This time she led the holy knights and exterminated the floor master of the labyrinth under the labyrinth city! The proof is with the lightning magic sword she's obtained you know?』

『Oh my, I wonder just how many hundreds of gold coins is a magic sword from a labyrinth? She's really amazing~』

--they said. Furthermore, in the end they said, 『Compared to her, Sera-sama is normal isn't she』. Don't you think that it's none of their business? I know that myself already! Only the younger sister of a genius older sister knows the hardship of having a genius as an older sister!"

The boy smiles bitterly while listening to his little sister who mimics the maids voices. That is because he has just heard similar talks with the position of his sister replaced with himself from the butlers and the maids. Therefore he purposely came here to cheer his sister up who must be in the same circumstance.

He's really just cheering for his little sister. He's not a wimp who licks each other's wounds. If he is like that, in the future he won't be able to unite the foolish, sly old nobles who are spanning over this vast territory passed down from his grandfather and father.

"Sera, stop comparing yourself with nee-san. That person is special. She's a great woman who will stand alongside people who leave their marks in history like ancient king Yamato, and the wise of restoration, Ozara-sama. If you compare yourself to a huge tree, you'll only lament your shortcomings."

"Uu~, I know that, but! It's not about the theory!"

They're not words that should have been said by a mere 7 years old, but Sera, who is far smarter than other children of her age, understands what her brother is saying. Yet, her child heart cannot admit that it's right.

"If you're always angry, wrinkles will appear on your forehead you know? Don't complain to me if a boy you like in the future dislikes you for that."

"H, humph. I'll have ani-sama make me your bride if that happen, so it's fine!"

Sera rubs her forehead even while saying abusive words--although it's slightly cute--to her elder brother. Her young girl's mind seems to be growing quickly.

◇

"Baptism?"

"Yeah, the head miko of Yu Tenion will do it personally."

"Hee, that's amazing. I'm glad for you, Sera. To be baptized by the Saintess of Salvation-sama, isn't it due to father's request?"

The [Saintess of Salvation] is the second name of Yu Tenion head miko which she's gained from her role as the follower of hero, and her [Saintess] title. She rarely ever do baptism due to her old age. In fact, the one who baptized the heir of this dukedom, the boy Tisrad, and lady Ringrande, wasn't her, but the head priest. Although, since the head priest is technically higher ranked than her, it is unreasonable to complain about it.

Sera is having a smile on her whole face while being hugged by her father and older brother.

She likes being special.

Since her older sister is too excellent, most special things went to her sister after all.

After three weeks of preparation, Sera proceeds toward the Tenion temple accompanied by her older brother. Normally the rite is held in the worship room inside the castle, but in order not to be discourteous to the head miko, the baptism rite is to be held in the sanctuary inside the Tenion temple.

"You are Sera right."

"Y, yes. Head miko-sama."

Sera is ashamed for being unladylike by using loud voice since she's too nervous. The head miko gently brush Sera's head and whispers "Raise your head, being cheerful is a wonderful thing you know?" close to her ear. It's unimaginable how that gentle-looking figure fought the demon lord together with the hero.

Head miko hugs Sera on her lap until she calms down while gently brushing her hair. After confirming that Sera isn't nervous anymore, she takes her hand and leads her to the rite magic circle.

"Listen, think about your favorite person during the rite."

"Is it alright for me not to pray to the god?"

"Yes, calm your heart and think about your favorite person, that warm feeling will reach the god."

This is the head miko's method, it is not the official teaching of Tenion temple. Normally, you only have to make her stand on the magic circle, chant the baptism spell, and it's over.

"Have you imagined your favorite person?"

"Yes, head miko-sama."

"Ufufu, I wonder who's on your mind. Is it your future husband?"

"I, it's not. Sera won't be getting married."

"Ara ara, do you want to become a miko?"

"Yup, Sera, will become a miko!"

Sera speaks like a child as head miko teases her to lure it out. Of course, she doesn't notice it herself. It's as if memories of her playing around with her older sister when they were children went adrift.

"Ufufu, ■■ ■■■ ■■ Baptism (Initiation)"

As if responding to head miko's spell, the magic circle releases warm blue light. Little blue lights that rise from the magic circle happily dance around Sera as if blessing her. Lightly, as if a little fairies coming out of the fairytale.

One light among them disappears as if inhaled to Sera's chest, and the rite is over.

"Open your eyes. Miko of Oracle, Sera."

"Yes."

The head miko suddenly changes to dignified tone unlike the kind old woman before, and Sera replies to that with slightly transparent voice. The head miko can see the [Oracle] gift, and the [Tenion Miko] title on her.

People who receive gift from the baptism rite are extremely rare, but they do exist. However, there is no precedent of someone receiving oracle gift (from the rite) even in the long history of Tenion Temple at the duchy capital.

As a proof, everyone on the surrounding beside the head miko and Sera are hardened in their initial postures from when the rite begins as if they can't follow the situation. They need quite a bit of time before they can move again.

◇

"Sera Oyugock, will you leave the house of Oyugock and serve on Tenion's side?"

"Yes, head miko-sama."

"Then, from now on, you are just Sera. Now, stand up Sera. Tenion temple welcomes you."

After the formality dialogs are over, the girl throws away the wealth and social position of the daughter of Oyugock's house, and enters into miko apprenticeship of Tenion temple.

There was no one who objected, including the girl herself. Among the people in this duchy capital--the 200.000 of them, there are only seven, and among the more-than 700.000 people in the whole duchy, there are only nine people who have [Oracle] gifts, and in order for those gifts to be nurtured with the techniques owned by the temples in certainty, there is no choice for them but to live in.

Although it has some limit, this [Gift] has power to ask a question directly to the god. This is the only mean to receive divination about great disasters from the god.

Therefore, the training of miko of oracle are fierce.

◇

"Sera, Relena, Roza, line up here. Listen, you're safe as long as you are inside that magic circle. Do not lose your composure."

The three girls are clad in different kinds of miko clothes. Each have symbols that signify Tenion, Parion, and Garleon sewed on the clothes.

Relena, and Rouza are nine years old, one year younger than Sera. They're girls who became miko one year after Sera. The two are Sera's blood relatives, they are [Special] girls who have [Oracle] gifts since birth.

This place is a secret graveyard that's shared by the joint of seven temples in the duchy capital.

It's a secret place that only extremely few people know even among the temples.

"Kyaa."

"Oh, god."

"Kuh."

On the other side of the magic circle, several undeads are creeping out from the depth of a wide wide passage blocked with iron bars.

It's a nightmarish scene as if the door to the afterlife has opened.

"Calm down, miko apprentices"

"Now then, put these vengeful ghosts to sleep peacefully."

"Chant it, the edict of blessing!"

"""Blessing!"""

The girls strengthen their backs, and wipe their fear with the words of the guarding priests.

"■■■ Bless"

"■■◆ Bless"

"■◆■ Bless"

However, these young girls fail the most basic magic due to their extreme mental strains. Beside Sera, the two have failed their impatient chanting.

"Calm down. Relena, and Roza, you two chant again. Sera, stand by."

After several failings and rebukes from the instructor priest, they finally succeed the chanting. As if ridiculing the girls who feel relieved, the undeads from the other side of the iron bars are throwing their detached arms and feelers noisily. Bless only gives minimal damage to the undeads.

However, that's quite enough.

"■■ Purification (Turn Undead)"

After several purification magic from the high priest who is waiting nearby, the undeads finally stop moving and go back to just being corpses.

Enormous experiences from defeating countless undeads flow to the three girls and the high priest. The pain from the rapid growth assaults their bodies as if tearing it. The girls hug their bodies who's having rapid growth (level up), and writhe in agony on the floor. That pain is the proof of growth, they cannot use healing magic as it will disturb the growth.

Those girls don't know.

The priests have used forbidden spell to produce these undeads in order to quicken their growths.

From now on, they have to undergo this secret ritual for many times.

And then, the girls who have grown up receive the oracle.

The future is harsh.

Oh god.

I pray that the future of humanity and the girls, the unfortunate event--

Intermission: Sera

There are unfamiliar men on the place where my uncle's invited me. Ah, even though I've been warned about this, am I stupid for believing my relative.

I was kidnapped and made to swallow an egg-like something. I blocked my throat and tried to vomit it out many times, but they forced me to swallow some kind of medicine, and I lost consciousness then.

The next time I open my eyes, a familiar ceiling, and the face of head miko-sama comes to my view. I'm also right for thinking this place is familiar, since it's the sanctuary of Tenion temple here.

I tried asking the details of the incident, but since the head miko-sama told me, "Everything is already over. There is already no one that will harm you.", I fell asleep as if I was leaving my body to head miko-sama that day. It's like I'm a child, it's a bit embarrassing.

◇

I had a dream that night.

A dream about me talking about something with a man wearing a silver mask. The one who's talking with the tone of voice I've never heard before is certainly me. But, why am I naked. Ah, if you swing your arms that much. If this wasn't a dream, I would have jumped off the top of a tower.

Ah, I'm even sitting with one knee up while being naked...

I'm in agony of embarrassment inside my dream.

◇

There has never been a day where I cannot wait to wake up from sleep like this day.

It's too much even for a dream.

It can't be helped if I get depressed. Let's renew my mood and work hard.

First, it's the morning duty!

"Ah Sera. You've been instructed by head miko-sama to not use magic for 4-5 days. Please help with the food distribution for a while."

"Yes, chief miko-sama."

Taking out the wind out of my sail all of a sudden.

It's really regrettable.

◇

Mou! It's terrible today.

There are always people coming and causing trouble during the food distribution, but just how many times are they going to disturb us until they're satisfied. It seems that they usually act like that during the tournament, but this year, due to the demon lord season coupled with the strange group [Wings of Liberty] spreading preposterous rumor, they're venting their excessive anxiety with violence.

The aunty who were helping with the distribution got hurt when she was washing her face. I can heal her bodily injuries, but I cannot do that to the wounded heart. I can only calm her down at most.

If a lizardkin woman called Liza and a little girl called Arisa didn't help to subdue the quarrel, the food distribution might have been canceled today. Since there are a lot of children who depend their life from this food distribution, I didn't want to cancel it.

"Thank you, we're saved."

"It's nothing, even master would surely tell us to help people in trouble."

Master?

I asked that girl called Lulu out of curiosity, turned out the girls are slaves of a honorary noble. Aren't they looking too neat for slaves?

I wasn't only surprised by their neat appearances, but the apparent lack of degenerate impressions that slaves usually have. I can't believe these girls who look so cheerful and free from worry are slaves.

As I was distributing the food, I listened about their master from the girl called Lulu. It's as if he's her lover--no, it's as if she's talking about her unrequited love, that kind of pure love. For someone who cannot fall in love like me, I feel slightly, yes, only very slightly envious.

I wonder that's why?

When I met their master--chevalier Pendragon, it didn't feel like the first time.

"Um, we've met somewhere haven't we?"

I involuntarily said such thing, I add another words in a hurry to varnish over it.

"No, this is the first time we've met. Sera-sama."

"Is it so I wonder..."

But, it feels strange when it's denied. Are we really not acquainted?

I feel like I've seen him somewhere.

I can't remember.

"Sera-sama, the people are tired of waiting for the food."

Err, did I perhaps keep staring at chevalier-sama's face?

It's embarrassing. If head miko-sama finds out about me staring at a man in public, she'll scold me. No, that person will surely teases me happily.

It seem chevalier-sama is the master of Lulu and the others, he's helping with the works of the aunties who are commoners without putting on air.

"You're pretty good despite being a noble. If you don't succeed your house, how about working in our shop? I'll let my daughter becomes your bride."

"N, no, you can't."

Even though the aunty was just playing around like always, I was surprised at my own reflexive reaction. When my eyes meet with Lulu-san who's said the same things, I start laughing.

I mean, for some reason laughter fill my heart.

This is the first time my heart is excited like this.

Even though he helped even until the clean-up, since I was surprised with the sudden arrival of Rin-anesama, I wasn't able to say thank you.

I wonder if he thought of me as a rude girl?

◇

The second time we met was when I went to the ball in the castle to congratulate Tisrad-oniisama's wedding.

However, I wonder what is this irritated feeling.

I wonder why is my heart feels irritated when I see chevalier-sama getting surrounded by younger girls.

"It's been a while, Satou-sama."

I don't know myself why am I calling chevalier-sama with his first name. I feel the gazes of the girls around chevalier-sama vigorously gather at me, is this person perhaps popular?

That can't be it right?

I unintentionally thought of a rude thing, but I understood the reason after I ate the snacks that he had made. A snack this delicious. Even though the castle's head chef is excellent, I feel that this snack is incomparable.

I feel happy with every bite.

It's such feeling.

When I see chevalier-sama dances with the girls, I feel the irritated feeling from earlier gets even stronger. Maybe I should invite him to a dance?

"You're quite popular aren't you, Satou-sama."

Ah, even though I didn't intend to speak with sarcasm.

Yet, he replies with a misdirected criticism of himself. That was funny, and made me involuntarily laughed. It looks like he strangely assesses himself low.

However, even though he's kind, he's unexpectedly mean. Even though I plead him to stop adding [Sama], I couldn't quite get his consent. Even though I rarely ever do such thing.

Oh right, he's not just skillful at cooking, but at dancing too.

◇

"Did something good happen? Satou-san."

"Yes, some difficult works have been going well."

Satou-san keeps the promise he's made during the ball, and he's been helping with the food distribution several times after that. And at last, we've started calling each other with "Satou-san", and "Sera-san", without the "Sama" at the last distribution. Since everyone at the temple calls me with "Sama", I've always yearned for friends that call me without honorifics.

Fufu, it's only a matter of time before we call each other without honorifics.

I, it's not like I want us to become lovers.

I'm a miko after all!

◇

That's right, Satou-san resembles Tisrad-niisama.

The way he always doesn't forget to smile, the way he eludes women, or the way he looks troubled yet never raises his hands when I'm mad at him.

I wonder if I've been lonely since I seldom meet niisama after I've become a miko.

It's like, I'm a child.

I received two tickets for the diva performance from Tisrad-niisama, so I gathered my courage and invited Satou-san, but he accepted it cheerfully. He said, "I've been wanting to see it" at face value, but I'm frustrated. Why didn't he look a bit more embarrassed.

The diva's song seemed to be wonderful.

I'm sorry, even the wonderful song only passes through my ears.

Because!

The seats that niisama has given for this performance seem to be for lovers, there's practically no gap between us?! It's the first time I've ever been this close to a male beside niisama, my heart is thumping as if it'll burst out.

Satou-san is like usual, he only smiles back even when our eyes meet, and completely doesn't look like he's nervous. I think it can't be helped that it makes me want to pinch his unruffled cheeks. Of course I only think that inside my mind, I can't possibly actually do it.

As we're sitting this close, I feel like something deep inside my body is being pulled to Satou-san. It's as if cogs that have been put together, something in my heart tells me that this is my place, yes, it's as if my soul is attracted, it's that kind of mysterious feeling.

I wonder if this is what the my colleagues at the temple call love.

But, I think it feels a bit different.

Even though my own feeling is clear, I might be a coward.

◇

I wonder why does he have slaves?

I thought that he was someone who couldn't believe other people, but he doesn't look like that at all. When I see Pochi-chan and the others, they look like they're really cherished, and I don't think he can't afford to employ servants.

"Ah, it was because I protected these girls that had lost their master in the labyrinth, and took them along to the above ground."

"F, from the labyrinth?"

"Yes, if master wasn't there, we, who didn't know how to fight, would only become preys of the monsters in the labyrinth."

"Peerless and wonderful~?"

"Master is the strongest nanodesu!"

Because of that, everyone trusts Satou-san that much don't they.

"I was going to free them after we left the labyrinth, but they didn't like it...."

"I will serve master until I can repay the favor."

"Goetsushudon?" "Chain taxi nanodesu."

I don't quite understand what Tama-chan and the others are saying, but I wonder if they are more like servants than slaves.

<TLN: 'Goetsushudon' is meant to be 'Goetsudoshu'. Chain taxi = 'Ichiren Takushii', she meant to say 'Ichiren Takusho'. Both are Japanese proverbs that mean, effectively, together till the end.>

"As for us, we've been bound with『Geass』by an evil magician. Even if we're going to be released, it'll only get canceled."

[Geass] she said?

There's no one who can use it even in the duchy capital. It might be released with the prayer magic toward god, but since the compensation is too big, head miko-sama will probably refuse even if I ask.

"Sera-san, will you let me know if you know any way to release the 『Geass』?"

"There's this holy magic called 『Prayer(Wish)』. That magic might be able to release it, but the compensation is too big."

"The compensation is?"

"T, that is...."

I reflexively fumbled the words.

The degree of compensation for [Wish] can change. Since sometimes it shrinks your life span by 10 years, it's also possible for it to use up all your life.

Maybe Satou-san had realized it after seeing me hesitating, he didn't ask more after that.

◇

"There is you know?"

"Eeh?"

Head miko-sama easily replied in affirmation when I asked about it.

"Zazaris, the pope of Parion temple should be able to release『Geass』. I can also do it, but it's impossible for two people. My life would have ran out after I released one of them."

However, I couldn't tell Satou-san about this. I mean, if pope Zazaris, the one they call [Avarice] knows of a great person like Satou-san, he will surely not overlook him. I'm sorry for Arisa and Lulu, but please wait until the time I can use the prayer magic.

They won't have to wait for long.

In 10 years, no within 5 years, I will reach the supreme top without fail.

At the dawn of the time those girls are liberated, I will surely--

SS: Orion and Rumor

A letter comes from father who had lost contact with me for a long time.

I'm told that due to a demon, the baron territory was on verge of collapse. At that time, thanks to a merchant and his escorts who had just arrived at Muno city, the territory escaped destruction.

Can mere escorts of a merchant fight a demon?

Isn't father being deceived by that merchant?

That suspicion only became deeper when I heard that father had conferred honorary peerage to that merchant.

◇

Nina Rottol? I don't know the name, but she seems to be a honorary noble who has become the consul according to the same letter from father.

Since she's just a honorary viscount, she's probably satisfied with becoming a subordinate of a broke noble, but her rank as a noble is higher than father's. Even if a territory lord is treated like an earl, I can't imagine why would she become a baron's subordinate.

"Nina Rotol? Don't tell me, the Blood and Iron Nina?"

"No, it's Rottol the Orc Eater right?"

"Is that really true? Wasn't she the mistress of the next duke?"

Even though I just lightly mentioned her name, all of my friends in the same grade seemed to recognize her. If she's a famous person, I think it'd be better for her to find a job in the duchy capital.

◇

A letter has arrived from Soruna-anesama.

Foolishly, she says that she's engaged with a commoner in the letter.

This can't be.

Father is a baron. Moreover, he's a lord of a territory. He's treated like an earl at least, yet why isn't she marrying a noble, but a commoner instead.

I send a passionate letter about the prides and responsibilities of a noble back to Soruna-anesama. It'd be good if she corrects her conduct with this.

◇

A letter from consul Rottol has arrived.

It seems that that upstart honorary chevalier merchant has fallen in love with Karina-anesama. A mere upstart honorary chevalier wanting to make the daughter of his master into his wife, there's a limit even for forgetting your standing.

She wishes for me to mediate between the two, in the letter, that's outrageous.

Perhaps that consul Rottol is trying to hijack the baron territory using that honorary chevalier?

Father is someone that can't doubt a person.

I have to do something to unmask that chevalier's true nature.

◇

I met the honorary chevalier for the first time at the evening party of the invitation from the duke-sama with father as a proxy. He's been trying to directly meet me up until now, but I've always refused it with suitable reasons.

"My name is Satou Pendragon. Delighted to make your acquittance."

"Umu, I'm Orion Muno. Chevalier Satou, be at ease."

Fumu, his face looks like the antithesis of ambition, but they say that all swindlers look like good people. I must not be deceived.

The next day, I've heard about the deeds of that honorary chevalier from my friends. He intrudes upon the house of the girls he's met during the evening party under the pretext of doing tea party, and proposes to everyone without minding who is it.

What the heck!

I have to protect Karina-anesama by any means.

I won't let her be used by that man as long as she's in the duchy capital.

I grasp my fist tightly, and swear to the setting sun that encroaches my room.

SS: Pochi and Scary Thing

"Pochi, would you like to hear a nice story?"

"That face is a bad face nanodesu. Arisa is going to trick Pochi nodesu."

"No~way, I won't do such thing you know?"

Arisa talked about some great thing nodesu.

I can say goodbye to the fish life with this nodesu.

"Master! It's terrible nanodesu."

"What's wrong?"

"Um, um, yes, Pochi is scared of meat nodesu."

"Hee, that's terrible."

"What if you're shown grilled meat?"

"I'd be so scared, I'd collapse nano desu."

I cover my face with my hands, and do my utmost best to do 'I'm scared' appeal, just like Arisa's told me nodesu.

"Then, what if you're shown steak?"

"I will scream and faint nodesu."

This time I put my arms on my head and squat down.

"I see~, it's terrible for Pochi huh."

"Yes nanodesu, it's terrible nanodesu."

Master is laughing just like Arisa's said.

There are going to be a lot of meat tonight nanodesu!

I mean, I can whiff the nice burning smell of the meat nodesu~♪

I'm excited with the anticipation of the dinner nano desu!

"Delicious~"

"It's tasty, master."

Huh? Huh? Wait a minute nano desu.

It's strange desuyo?

Even though there are steak on everyone's plate when I look around, on Pochi's plate it's.

"Why is it a grilled fish nanodesu?"

"Pochi's said that meat are scary, so I make it a fish for you. You should have said it sooner."

Master is smiling while laughing. I feel slightly happy, but that's not it. When I was being flustered while holding the plate, Arisa called out with a bad smile on her face nodesu.

"What's wrong Pochi? Fish are also delicious you know?"

A, Arisa, you've tricked me after all nodesu.

"Alright, since Pochi might be scared of tea too, here's the water."

Master passes a cup of water while giggling. Earlier, I've already said the punchline that Arisa taught me nodesu.

I have neither dream or ingenuity nodesu.

When I was staring at fish-san while slumping, Lulu traded the plate with the one with steak.

"Mou, master, and also Arisa are playing around too much with Pochi-chan since she's cute."

"Sorry, Lulu, it just happen."

Meat, meat nanodesu!

When I look around while surprised, everyone nods nodesu.

"Master, is it alright to eat them?"

"It's alright, eat a lot."

This time, I tell master normally that, "I want to eat meat nodesu."

And also, Lulu, thank you nanodesu.

SS: Christmas

Funfunfu~ Funfunfu~ Funfunfun, fu, fu~

"Arisa is disgusting nodesu."

"Are you awright~?"

Mumumu, how rude!

"I'm just preparing for Christmas."

"Kuisuasu?"

"Is it fun nodesu?"

Gununu. Unpleasant memories from the past comes into my mind.... Calm down Arisa. Today you're having a Christmas with your beloved person aren't you. Although it's not just the two of us, the god of fortune rarely ever gives this much service for me, so I have to enjoy it.

"It's fun you know. You eat on a feast, and everyone plays together."

"Like usual~?"

"Everyday is a Christmas nano desu!"

No, that is true, but it's different.

Kuh, the magic of bullet list is obstructing me!

"During the Christmas, a person wearing red clothes called Santa-san delivers presents."

"Purezento~?"

"Something like a gift."

"Meat nanodesu?!

"Whale karaage is nice nodesu!"

Ah~, that was delicious~

Oops, I've been taken in by these two's paces.

If it stay like this, I won't make it in time to prepare the Santa cosplay.

Alright, let's kill two birds with one stone.

"However, you see, only good kids receive the presents."

"Tama is a good kid~"

"Pochi is also a good kid nanodesu!"

"Ara, is that really so? Even if you think yourself a good kid, other people might not think the same you know?"

"Unyu~"

"I, it's not like that! Arisa is mean nanodesu!"

"Bad kids, you see"

I cut my words, and attract the two's attentions.

"Black Namahage wearing bla~ck clothes will come"

I gradually lower my voice for the play.

Waiting for when the two hold their breath.

"Are there bad kidds here~!!"

"No bad kid~!"

"Pochi and Tama are good kids nanodesu~~"

I shouted loudly while raising both my hands, and the two went downstairs while screaming toward the room where master and the others are.

Yep, they're good kids who are worth to tease at.

◇

As an apology for scaring them at the daytime, I present Pochi and Tama with socks.

When I teach them that they will get presents from Santa-san if they leave it on their bedsides, they hang the socks while looking really happy.

Mia is also hanging the over-the-kneesocks that she usually wears, but those are thin, so they'll stretch if you put presents into it you know?

The four people are lying on the bed, and sleep happily.

◇

"Ara? It seems Arisa has also fallen asleep."

"Then, let's put the presents and go back."

"Yes."

So Arisa won't participate in the Christmas night performance.

Even though I've prepared a magic tools that play moody music, Hors D'oeuvre, and adult-like tablewares, unfortunately.

While healing myself by looking at the four who sleep happily, I quietly close the bedroom door.

<TLN: This whole last part are Satou's.>

Intermission: Night of the Party

Satou's here. I feel that I spent a lot of Christmas in the office after I had become a working adult. If March wasn't the end of the fiscal year, maybe I could have passed the end of year more relaxedly.

◇

"Master, Arisa is looking strange."

Arisa has always been strange though, but since it's Lulu who's saying it, she must be even stranger now.

When I look at the place Lulu points to, Arisa is humming a parody of Christmas songs, like "Siilent night", "loonely night", questionably in a dark room while staring at the fireworks afar.

Did something happen that stimulated her past trauma?

"Looks like she's remembering something unpleasant, so let's leave her alone."

"Y, yes..."

To relieve Lulu who's worrying about her little sister, let's hold a fun Christmas party and overwrite Arisa's bad memories.

◇

"What is it, so suddenly? There are no Christmas or Valentine over here you know?"

Arisa seems like she's rebounded but since she murmurs, "Riajuu, serves you right", looks like there's still some lingering effect.

"Is that so, I thought that the past heroes had spread them."

"Christmas is just an urban legend. Just like there's no Tsuchinoko here, there's also no Christmas here! QED, conclusion!"

No, that's very forced y'know? It can't be completely proved in the first place.

Well, it's fine.

"I've thought of holding a feast, and do something that's Christmas party-like, but I guess I should not."

"Feas~?"

"Meat festival nanodesu?"

"Fruits festival."

The youth troop reacted to the feast word.

"Are there going to be a roasted whole turkey, champagne? Is there going to be (fried) chicken with bone too?"

"I've never seen a turkey, but there are chicken-like birds, so I'll make them if you're fine with it."

"Yahoo! Then, I also have to make Christmas outfits! Do expect mini skirt Santa!"

It might just be a bravado, but it seems she's become a bit more energetic.

◇

"Master, about the lulu fruits that we're going to use to make the cake--"

According to Lulu, ever since the wedding of Tisrad-shi, the fruits are always sold-out. Erina and Talna pair who I've asked to help Lulu carry ingredients are slumping on the chairs after using up all their strength.

I guess I should directly ask viscount Emlin to get the fruits. It'll be awkward since I've declined his daughter's marriage proposal, but but the viscount probably wasn't serious anyway, so it's fine right.

"I'll do something about that. I want Lulu to make the sponge cake, can you do it?"

"Yes! I've trained intensively, so I'm fine."

Lulu is a hard worker. I'll entrust Lulu with the preparation for the cakes and the cookings, and borrow the maids of baron Muno for the parts that can't be done alone. They should be able to at least peel potatoes.

◇

"Chevalier-sama!"

"Heya, Lina-sama, it's been awhile."

The second daughter, Lina, greeted me in the house of viscount Emlin.

The viscount offered me with Lina's hand in marriage the other day as a thank for making the value of lulu's orchard instantly rises right. No matter how you looked at it, I felt sorry for her to be married with a countryside lower rank noble, so I properly refused it.

I praised her new dress until viscount Emlin came to the parlor. She had told me that her dress from before was her mother's, so maybe it's because she was happy for her new dress that she was turning around happily when I praised it.

"Hou? Christmas party is it?"

"I've found it written on an ancient document when I was researching for the cuisines of the ancient king Yamato's era. When I inquired it to hero-sama the other day, he informed me that it was a festival in hero-sama's birthplace, so I want to try reproducing it."

I'll use Hayato as an excuse for this occasion. He doesn't live in the duchy capital anyway, and he should be busy, so they won't suspect that it's just a random talk.

For now, after we've discussed about it, they're going to let me have some Lulu fruits. It seems that he's instructed the orchard's caretakers to harvest the best fruits. He's kind like always.

When I was idling in the viscount's mansion, I told Lina as a lip service, "Please come to the party if it's fine with you." Lady Karina and the others are going to be there anyway, the more the merrier for a party.

◇

Next, I head toward the ingredient market in front of the harbor.

I'm searching for rare fruits for Mia's fruits festival, and vegetables to color the dishes.

"Masta!"

"Nana, there's masta."

When I turn toward the source of the lisp voices, there is Nana who's carrying sea lionkin children on both hands. For some reason, Sera is also behind her.

"Hello, Sera-san."

"Good day, Satou-san."

As always Sera begins to smile sweetly when our eyes only meet.

However, there shouldn't be food distribution today, I wonder what's happened?

"Yes, I was doing some errands, so I came here, and happened to catch sight of Nana-san."

"Seera, masta listening to."

"Nana, masta's lover?"

"I have cross-examined my relationship with master, I announce that it's a relationship between a master and his attendant."

Sera is gesturing them to stop talking with a reddened face, but it's probably impossible to expect these three to read the mood.

However, I think miko-san isn't allowed go out with the opposite sex, but I guess she's at that age, so she's interested with such talk.

I keep Sera company with the nonsensical chatter as she's trying to change the subject. I invited Sera to the Christmas party while we were at it.

◇

When I was on my way back, I joined with Liza who was carrying fir-like tree on her shoulder.

It looks quite genuine.

Back in the mansion, it's been decorated with many ornaments. Erina carried several samples to the artisan street on the downtown, and mass produced them. Arisa seems to be the one who's requested it, and made me pay the bill. When I was going to hand over gold coins, they told me that several big copper coins were enough. Geez, the wage here is cheap.

I left the decorations to Mia and the maids, and went to help Lulu in the kitchen.

"Welcome back! These sponge cakes should be enough right?"

"Yes, they are."

Or rather, aren't there too many?

Well, if there are leftovers, I'll just give them to my acquaintances.

As I'm preparing for roasting the birds, I think about the party's lineup. It'd be gone in an instant if it's just roasted whole bird, and karaage.

I continue the preparation to make the simple whale karaage in large quantity since it's easy to mass produce. I've abstained to use the whale due to everyone's reaction to it, but since there isn't any particular effect after that, it's probably alright. I might as well share the potatoe chips and the whale karaage to the children of the orphanage.

I caught Talna who was snacking on the karaage, and made her the one in charge to deliver them to the orphanage.

"To be prohibited to eat while surrounded by this smell! Chevalier-sama is an ogre~"

"Ogre is too much. You're free to eat as much as you want in the party, so work hard with the delivery okay."

I wonder if she's delighted with the 'eat as much as you want' phrase, Talna vigorously drive the carriage to the orphanage even while having her usual sleepy face. Please be careful with the traffic okay?

I've made too much karaage, I guess I'll share them with Ga Hou and the others later at night.

◇

"It's terribwle~"

"Master! It's terrible nanodesu!"

"I see~ it's terrible huh."

When I was decorating the cake, Pochi and Tama were running while looking flustered. Since I was concentrating, I gave some random reply. Liza who's helping with the cooking scolds the two for raising the dust. Mia also came a bit later.

"Is Tama a good kid~?"

"Is Pochi a good kid nanodesu?"

"Good kid?"

You three, why are they questions.

"Everyone is a good kid."

"Yay~"

"With this, Santa will come at night nodesu!"

"Avoided Namahage."

Arisa, what did you tell them this time. Or rather, various things are mixed in!

◇

The youth troop, young maids and Nana are wearing mini skirt Santa outfits. Pina and Liza are wearing long skirt type ones, maybe because they're embarrassed with it.

I was almost made to wear short pants type Santa outfit, but I evaded it somehow.

"I've come for the invitation today."

"Welcome, Lina-sama."

Lina's arrived slightly late. She's wearing a different dress than the one in the afternoon, it's a dress with open neckline to emphasize sexiness that doesn't suit her age. It's a bit too stretched. She should be able to wear it without forcing herself in five years.

Since she's worked hard, I give a lip service, "You look like an adult today", which prompts her to put her hands on her cheeks, looking shy.

A new guest arrives right at that time.

"Good evening, Satou-san."

"Please come in, Sera-san."

Sera looks a bit different than usual. She's wearing fiercer make up, and ceremonial-like miko clothes that emphasizes on its mysteriousness. She's also wearing several refined accessories that match the miko clothes, and aren't standing out.

When I was praising Sera's miko clothes and accessories, Lina who was at loose end joined the conversation. I wish lady Karina will follow her sociability.

"Sera-sama! Is chevalier-sama acquainted with the miko-sama of oracle?"

"Yes, He's been helping the food distribution at the downtown with me."

"Satou-san, is the lovely lady your acquaintance?"

Huh? Aren't there some sparks flying?

"Ara? It smells nice. Are you having some kind of party?"

"Welcome back, Karina-sama."

Pina and the maids are welcoming lady Karina who was going out with her little brother, Orion-kun, in a hurry.

"Ammazing beauty."

"Oh god, why are people born differently...."

Lina is speechless when she sees lady Karina. After Sera saw lady Karina's breast, she confirmed her breasts with her palms, and then she complained about something to the god. Sera, it won't be a joke if the miko of oracle does that.

When everyone was present, I cut the cake and started the party.

Mia is playing the lute, and Arisa begins singing while matching her.

She's even deliberately prepared lyric cards for the guests. Judging from these rounded handwritings, looks like they're written by Pochi and Tama.

"Jingle bell~, Jingle bell~"

"Meat are falling~"

"Today is fun."

"Meat festival~""Fruits festival~"

"Nanodesu!"

It's wrong, the song is definitely wrong. Arisa presents the independence Christmas dance with the youth troop and Nana in mini skirt Santa outfits.

I wonder what is this heartwarming feeling as if I'm watching the elementary school festival.

Everyone is enjoying the party while eating the cake, enjoying the seasonal fruits, and the chicken karaage. The potato chips that I've made in bulk are unexpectedly popular. I wanted to get the carbonic drinks, but since it was transported for orders, I couldn't get it.

◇

An unexpected person appaeared while we were playing twister game that Arisa had prepared.

Lady Karina was the sole winner of this game. On top of having soft body, since her balance and strength are supported by Raka, she won't collapse no matter what place she ends up on. I also lost quickly and was watching it, it was exceedingly eye-pleasing. The cause of the lost isn't due to balance, but a pair of ultimate weapons, and even though Mia and Arisa are telling me Guilty, that's a cheap price to pay.

"Yo, Satou! I've come after hearing you're doing Christmas."

"""Hehhero-sama?!"""

Yusha who's holding champagne and his followers intrude somehow, and the party's degree of chaos is increased even further.

"Haven't you departed the duchy capital this morning?"

"Ah, I got some bothersome thing from an acquaintance. So I needed to have some talk with the duke, and so we decided to stay in the duchy capital for a while."

So it's because of the short horn I've given them yesterday.

The hero murmurs, "This pork is way too delicious", while chewing the last remaining piece of the whale karaage.

Nice! Hero!

Thanks to his ill manner, the raw material doesn't come to light.

Hero has appraisal skill on by default, so I was almost exposed.

I ask Lulu to bring out the cakes, and the prepared giant bird teriyaki.

The hero receives the hors d'oeuvre from the maids while opening the champagne that he's brought. Since Lina looked like she wanted to talk to the hero, so I introduced her, she asked for a handshake instead.

"Sera? What are you doing slipping out of the temple!"

"I did not slip out! I've properly acquired permission from head miko-sama."

Such sisterly quarrel, well, it's fine since it's heartwarming though.

"Isn't fine with being late to marry, what's wrong with it anyway~"

"That's exactly true desuwayo. I have 100 siblings anyway, isn't it fine if one of them doesn't get married?!"

"That's right! I'll make a society where a woman can live alone! It's woman's movement!"

Arisa, and lady Maryest are getting excited for something troublesome. Arisa shouldn't have drunk the Champagne that the hero's brought, but she's excited with her talk with lady Maryest.

Or rather, isn't this Champagne's dosage too much?

"Nyahahaha~"

"It's karaage speed eating nanodesu!"

"Do you girls always eat this tasty dishes."

"I'm so envious!"

The two beastearkin and Pochi and Tama combo are having speed eating contest with the karaage, but since I've made heaps of it, it probably won't be gone for the time being.

"Please enjoy the whole roast here. It's quite something when you eat it with this leaf wrapping."

"Oh! This is delicious."

"To make someone who hates vegetables like you to utter such impressions."

Lulu recommends the whole roast bird to the long earkin archer girl from the hero's party. I've never seen the dark elf-like long earkin beside her, but it seems she's one of the hero's party.

"Chicken meat is wonderful after all. Savoriness of the meat is one certain thing, but bird meat is the best for tasting to the bone."

"I think that having no bone is delicious~"

"Pina-san, stop eating the rice porridge and eat these karaage!"

"Talna, this rice porridge isn't just a simple unflavored one. It's using the soup stock from the birds, creating its deep flavor. Do you hear me--"

"Talna, I'll leave you to deal with the two. I live for the meal!"

"Wait Erina, escaping is unfair~"

Liza and the maid company seem to be enjoying the dishes in their paces.

I'm being pressed by lady Karina who's wasted, and priest Loreiya on both sides, and enjoying the blissful feeling. I'm glad that I'm holding the Christmas party.

"Guilty? That's right, it's guilty! Don't you understand Satou? You don't do you. Breast isn't only about bigness! It's not you know? It's alright as long as it's soft you know? It's true you know?"

I wonder if Ms. Loreiya made her drink, Mia's become talkative.

Mia occupies my lap in place of Tama who's busy with the food, and preaches to me, but since the huge volumes on both sides are too amazing, it passes through my ear.

"Satou? Do you hear me? You don't! You can't do that you know? Listen to me properly. If you don't, I'll do the last resort you know? Yes, my trump card!"

Looks like she's mad at me for not keeping her company properly, she hugs my face with her chest from the front. No well, it's having the opposite effect if you hug that strongly. Her ribs are hitting me, it hurts. Of course I don't say it out loud. She'll get seriously mad if do so.

I waited until Mia is satisfied, I made her sit normally and knitted her hair. It looks like she's satisfied when I care for her. After a while, wonder if she's lost to the alcohol, I hear her sleeping breath, so I put her to sleep.

"Nana, terrible."

"Masta is going to get taken you know?"

"We need recapture strategy! I announce the start of mobilization!"

"Aye."

"Nana, work hard."

I don't remember much of the time when Nana attacks me from behind.

It's a very, very happy night.

That night, starting with Arisa, everyone has hanged socks beside their beds, so I put the prepared Christmas presents inside.

While imagining the delighted faces of everyone after seeing the presents, we hold the Christmas night part.

Sipping Champagne while listening to the moody music is nice once in a while.

Status in Country of Origin :

5 Volumes (Ongoing)

14 Web Volumes (Ongoing)

Official Vol 1 - 5 end here

C9-1 is Vol9 Chapter 1 [of the web volumes]

9-1. To the Town of Magic Hunters

Satou's here. My workaholic father had been returning from work late at night, and going to work early in the morning since I was a child, maybe that's why I don't remember meeting him much. Although, I never thought that I would be in the same position before I got married.

◇

It's been awhile since our last wagon journey. We always rode on the wagon when we were in the duchy capital, but the duchy capital main street with its neatly prepared soil is quite different than the undeveloped narrow road at the back country. Since the branch of the great river runs along the main road, there are only a few carriages that are running here. Most are transported by small boats on the branch river.

"Gatagoto~" "Gotogoto nanodesu!"

<TLN: Japanese onomatopoeia for rattle.>

Pochi and Tama are looking awfully excited ever since we've gone out of the town. They've been pulling and shaking my sleeves on both sides by matching the shaking of the wagon, so it's hard to read book in the menu.

"Mou~, just what do you girls find so fun."

"Don't you know nodesu?"

"Arisa is still green~"

"She's no good nanodesu~"

"Mukka~ So cheeky even though you're just Pochi and Tama~"

Arisa is saying something like some kind of kid boss in the block, but she seems to say it for the sake of saying it and doesn't mean to offend.

Seeing Lulu who's been giggling while facing the road on the coachman's seat since awhile ago, it looks like she knows the reason.

"Lulu, don't laugh, tell me if you know it."

"You~can't, since it's a 『Quiz』, you can't ask the answer from other people."

Arisa is growling, "Gununu", such unladylike groan from Lulu's reply. Since Lulu's used the lines that Arisa usually says to everyone, she probably can't rebut it.

However, I also don't know, I guess I'll ask for a hint.

"I'm sorry, Pochi and Tama. I also don't know though?"

"Gaan.""Na, nanodesuu."

Tama, please stop speaking sound effects out loud. I pat the head of the two, who look like puppies that have been betrayed by their master, as if to gloss over it. I wonder, am I the bad one here?

"Monopoly of master~""It's nice to be together nodesu."

"I see."

Come to think of it, when we were in the duchy capital, especially the latter half, we hadn't been together beside during the meal and sleep. Since, during the latter half, I was like an overworking father who came home late after everyone had gone to the bed, let's pamper them a bit now.

"Satou."

Mia who was scouting with Liza, and Nana, together with the hornless beast comes back. She jumps from the hornless beast toward the wagon, so I receive her and put her down on the wagon. Even though she's gained a bit of fat, she's still quite light. Looks like she'll be fine even without going through dietary restriction like Arisa.

"Master, a fallen tree is blocking the road up ahead."

"Master, the way the tree has fallen looks unnatural. It feels like it's been artificially made."

<TLN: It's impossible to tl but Nana's always used "Masuta" to call Satou while all other members uses "Goshujin-sama". They both mean "Master" in English.>

The fallen tree is probably the handiwork of thieves to stop carriages. Since I found the thieves on top of the low hill a bit apart from the highway when Liza and the others went scouting, I've already dealt with them with [Remote Stun]. Magic is convenient after all.

"Pochi, Tama, change into your work clothes. Let's remove the fallen tree."

"Roger~""Hear hear~ nanodesu."

I told Liza that I would remove the fallen tree with magic, but since she wanted to use the tree as a training by likening it to a monster, it was refused. This is just right to check the performance of everyone's magic swords. If they can't properly hold back when they're going against thieves, they will surely kill the opponents.

"Master, I wish for charging nodesu."

"You can't~"

"Tama is right. If you don't charge it with your own mana, it won't be a training."

I somehow evaded Pochi's request attack that came with upturned eyes while she was presenting her short magic sword. It might have been dangerous if Tama didn't support.

No one can use magic edge like Liza, but Tama and Nana are able to charge mana without problem. However, Pochi is the only one who's having a hard time with it. According to Arisa's investigation, it's not only because she's short on MP, but she also needs to instantly operates large amount of mana, so it's not going well for her. Although, there aren't any difference between mana of Tama and Pochi.

"Yay, it's done nodesu!"

Pochi who is finally able to put mana into the short magic sword turns to me and puts out "Praise me" aura, so I praise her, "You've done well", while patting her head. Her tail looks like it'll break.

"First turn, Nana will go. 『Shell』."

Nana freely displays the raised physical strength from the physical reinforcement nature magic by wielding a shield that's larger than her body and a one-handed sword.

Although the sizes of the magic swords of Nana, Pochi, and Tama are different, I've put the same magic circuit on them.

After filling it with mana, once you recite the password (Command), the magic circuit carved on the sword will activate. 『Shell』 generates cylindrical mana field around the axis of the magic sword.

It's a magic circuit that's normally put into shields or armors, but you can use the sword as a blunt weapon with it, and it's also useful when you fight against monsters with acid or putrid bodily fluids, so I try to experiment with it.

At first I made a magic sword carved with a magic circuit that could generate fire, but it seemed that the heat from the fire is too bad for the material, when I tried to use it, the sword broke. I put the plan on the back burner until I get some material that's stronger against heat. Since it'll burn your hand when you hold the sword after using it for a long time, I also have to find insulating material it seems.

It's a plain magic circuit, but it's probably ideal for dealing with thieves that we've been going through a lot this time.

With just a single strike from Nana, a fallen tree the size of three of my waists is snapped right in half until the inside.

"Second turn, Tama's going~"

"Third turn, Pochi nanodesu!"

Tama is wielding two short swords now due to the influence of the martial art tournament. She's keeping her balance nicely to the point that you won't think that she doesn't have dual wielding skill. Pochi keeps the same style as before with a one-handed short sword, and a shield.

Tama utilizes the weights of the two magic short swords, no, she's skilfully utilizing the inertia from her assaults, striking the fallen trees as if dancing. Each of her strike is only about 20-30% as strong as Nana's, but since she's hitting a lot, she cuts the thin fallen tree and branches in succession.

Pochi simply wields the short sword, and charges ahead. She's powered up with the heavy blow skill properly. Yet, it's only about 80% as strong as Nana, I wonder if it's because of her physique, or her weapon.

"Fourth turn, 『Magic Edge』『Heavy Blow』."

Liza attacks in a low posture while leaving red trails of light. The reason why she doesn't use Thrusting skill is probably because striking damage is more important than piercing for this.

However, spears have too high of piercing power after all, she only leaves a big hole on the fallen tree, unlike Nana and the others who've smashed the tree.

I should make an attachment for Liza's spear for when she's fighting an enemy with piercing resistance.

With Mia's Baloon magic and Arisa's Repulsion magic, the fallen tree that's been torn into pieces are removed from the road.

Since the thieves had recovered during the meantime, I made them sleep once again with [Remote Stun]. I've already collected their weapons with Magic Hand. There isn't anything noteworthy, so I'll melt them to become raw material.

◇

"Do you guys have some business in the village?"

"No, we don't plan to stop by in particular. It looks like some things have been burned, did some thieves attack?"

When we were passing near a farm village, we got challenged by some armed farmers. This farmer looks to have some burn injuries, but the farmers behind him seem to only have some kind of scar injuries. In addition, their weapons are all crudely made, you can even call it improvised. Things like wooden spears with only the tips shaved, or spears with smashed obsidian stones attached on the tips.

There are hatred and fear on the eyes of the farmers.

"I, it was someone even worse than thieves. It was a noble."

The young man announced as if vomiting. I feel some glance from a far away house. We should get away from here as soon as I've gathered some information.

"Was it a noble from around here?"

"No, I had never seen him before. He asked if we were hiding beastmen, when we told him that we didn't know, he burned our houses with magic, and threatened us to confess."

A fire magic-user noble who's searching for beastmen.

I'm terribly reminded of someone. It's the foreign noble who had tried to buy the white tigerkin princess in the dark auction. Since I don't remember his name, I search for him by limiting to only around up to the neighbor town from here. Looks like he's staying on the town of Puta that we're heading to. Let's mark him at least. It'll be troublesome if he mistakenly attacks Tama.

"That's unfortunate. We also have to be careful as to not get involved. These are thanks for the information, please accept it."

I take out three lower-ranked potions from the accessory case in the wagon, and pass it to the young man. Since he looked doubtful, I told him that they were cheap magic medicines (potions), and then the wagon departed before he could say something.

"You're quite generous eh~"

"They were just dummy that I've made for the wagon, they were really cheap stuffs you know. One is worth one copper coin at most."

"Chea~p."

They're leftovers from when I was mass producing military-use magic potions, from the alchemy book I had bought in the dark auction. They came out when raw materials weren't enough, or after I omitted some step. The lower-ranked potions from earlier are about the same as lower ranked magic potions I usually make that are 20 times more diluted. Nevertheless, they're not inferior to lower-ranked potion that's on the market. However, since you can make the dilution without magic cores, it's quicker and easier to make the potion normally considering the trouble.

Since the [Diluted Lower-Ranked Potion] that are made from this method has a weak effect, I can freely give it to people, it's convenient.

◇

And then, three days after we depart from the riverside town of the great river, we can finally see the town of Puta at last. This town is congregated by people called magic hunters that are working by hunting monsters to collect their magic cores. Even though the job sounds strong, most of them are not higher than level 10. In this duchy capital, there are several towns where magic hunters are gathering like in this Puta town.

I've learned the circumstance of things around here from Tarina-san of the scroll workshop. She was complaining when the magic cores that had arrived from Puta town were small and had low purities.

Around the forest near this Puta town, there are eight nests with about 100 demi-goblins each, they're separated for 10 kilometers apart from each other. Small nests with about dozen of demi-goblins also exist here and there. They're probably controllably hunted so that they won't become too many, or die out.

Humans don't seem to be the only one who hunt demi-goblins, various snake, lizard or frog monsters are loitering around near the nests.

Even now, there seem to be several magic hunter parties that are hunting the demi goblins, loitering around in the forest. One of those parties seems to have just been returning to Puta town, and from what we can see from here, they're having some kind of trouble.

Good grief, there's a lot of troubles in this world.

9-2. At the Town of Magic Hunters

Satou's here. I often did part-time jobs during my school days, but I rarely ever had money problem. I might have been lucky for having avoided the incomprehensible wage structure during internship.

◇

There are a group of five people having heated arguments in front of the gate.

"That's why I said we should've asked for an advance payment since we wouldn't be able to pay the tax for entering the city."

"Why should we have to do something so annoying."

"That's right~, who was the useless one who begged to take him with us while saying that he would be useful."

"Getting tired right after he began carrying the luggage, and drinking all the water himself."

"The worst part is how he wrongly cut the fur on the corpse of the Crimson Fox we had defeated after much trouble."

The four women dismissed the protest of the boy who only has one arm while sneering at him.

If we're in a tale, this is the scene where we go help the boy, but I wonder why. I can't help but think what the women have said are justified.

I wonder if the boy who's being a drag is also desperate, he's still persisting. He's not discouraged~

"Then, by the evening of this day, come to the purchasing counter in the bar. When you come, we'll give you one sixth of the reward, that are three copper coins as promised in the beginning."

"Hey wait, I've defeated four goblins myself haven't I. You forgot four copper coins as the commission y'know."

"You~, you just killed goblins that were already dying from our attacks from the side right?"

"How could you even demand rewards for that. You're really shameless."

"I still did defeat them!"

While looking down on the persistent boy, the tall girl who's the leader shrugs her shoulders, and proposes a compromise.

"Okay, okay. However, those four goblins weren't defeated by you alone, half. I'll give you half the rewards, two copper coins. Come to the bar by the evening."

Ridiculing the boy who looks relieved, the surrounding women are smiling badly.

"Hehe, if you don't come quick, the money will all turn into alcohol y'know."

"Al~right, let's bet for whether we have finished drinking before the boy comes or not."

"Nice~, I put one big copper coin for before."

"I'm betting five copper coins for before."

"Gyahahaha, there won't be any bet the~n."

Looks like they will really drink it all if he takes too much time.

The boy seems to have the same opinion, as he begins to negotiate with the gatekeeper in a hurry.

◇

"You've heard our talk earlier right? If you let us enter now, we'll pay the fee later properly."

"Humph, I'm not fit to be a gatekeeper if I believe what you magic hunter bunch say. How about hunting beasts that you can use as a payment in kind before the evening?"

"There's no way we can catch beast without trap or tools."

"Then, give it up."

Ho, so you can use payment in kind, I didn't know.

The gatekeeper who has noticed our wagon coming closer drives the boy the side. The boy was going to rush toward the town during that chance, but another gatekeeper toppled his feet, and kept him on the ground.

"Hey, welcome to Puta town. I've never seen you before, are you a merchant?"

"No, we only want to stop by during our trip."

I show the gatekeeper my silver plate ID.

"This is, excuse me. You were a noble."

"Excuse me noble-sama, you've said that you're on a trip, but this is Puta the farthest town. Where in the world are you going? Don't tell me you're going to the nest of the Wyverns beyond the mountain to take their eggs?"

"Oy, Gatts."

When I check on the map since I'm interested with the gatekeepers' words, there are certainly Wyverns in the mountain along the way. Wyvern's egg must be big I think.

"I do want to cross the mountain, but I didn't know about the Wyverns. Taking the egg you say, is it delicious?"

"It mite' be mighty delicious, but they sell handsomely. The rumor says that you can exchange them for gold coins, weight-for-weight, if you bring them to the royal capital, or the Silga kingdom on the other side of the mountain."

"Although I've never seen the real thing, but they turn it into the Wyvern steed for the dragoons."

If the egg's weight is 500 grams, then it'll be around 150 gold coins huh.

Silga kingdom seems to be a neighboring small kingdom beyond the mountain range to the east. By the way, the Bornean forest that we're heading to is over the mountain range to the southeast.

"Hey, noble-sama!"

"Shut up you."

The gatekeeper quickly silents the boy, who have talked to me, with the tip of the spear he's holding on his hand. I think he doesn't need to go that far.

"It's fine. What is it, boy."

The first half is for the gatekeeper, and the latter half is for the boy who's still being trampled.

"Noble-sama, I need it for entering the town. Lend me two copper coins!　I will return it without fail."

"At least use polite speech!"

"I don't know such thing like polite speech. Isn't it polite speech already if I just use『Sama』."

However, if he borrows two copper coins from me, he'll be left with three copper coins even if he pay it back with no interest, is he alright with that?

"Okay, I'll lend you some."

"You sure!?"

"Chevalier-sama, this guy is a magic hunter y'know? They're bunches who can't keep money overnight. You absolutely won't get your money back."

"Don't say unnecessary things after he's agreed. I'll absolutely return it!"

I give two copper coins to the boy who's slipped out of the gatekeeper's foot. I wonder if he hasn't taken a bath for a long time, he smells chokingly bad. No, this is, there's probably smell of goblins' blood, and cut meat mixed in.

The boy receives the money from me with his only arm, and gives it to the gatekeeper like he's throwing it.

"That's right, noble-sama! If you haven't decided on your inn, go to that gate inn you can see from here. It's really expensive, but it's famous for their delicious food."

After telling me so, the boy goes to the main street while buzzing his arm.

Now then, what should I do with this tepid gaze from the gatekeeper.

"Chevalier-sama, I think being a good person is a virtue, but there are a lot of people who only indulge on those virtues without feeling thankful in the world, y'know?"

"Oy, leave it. Chevalier-sama is troubled."

"No, I appreciate the concern."

Looks like he's concerned for real, so I thank him. For the time being, seems there's no problem in entering the city.

When Lulu is going to depart the wagon, the gatekeeper looks like he's remembered something and warns me.

"There's an insane foreign noble staying in the place of baronet Poton, the governor here, so it's better for you not to get close there."

When I check on the place of the governor--if I'm not mistaken, it's a town consul that functions like a magistrate--baronet Poton, there's the aforementioned fire magician near him.

The fire magician is called Dwot Dasles. It looks like he's a marquis of a kingdom called Makiwa. Since the kingdom's name doesn't appear in the traveler's journal, I don't know where it is. I think it's probably among the group of small countries near Rumooku kingdom or Silga kingdom if it has something to do with the tigerkins.

With [Arson], and [Murder] that he has on his Rewards and Punishments, how could they let him into the town.

◇

This Puta town is quite small, unlike the towns we've been to up until now. It's only one kilometer wide at most. The city is roughly divided into four blocks around the small mansion where the governor is. The west block where we are now, the north block where the harbor is, the east block with the pleasure quarter, and the south block where the workers quarter and the slum are located. Looks like each block has a residential area.

The races are composed of 70% humans, and then ratkins, sea lionkin, and rabbitkin form the 20% with the same ratio each. There are other races beside them, but the number is low. The slaves are around 10% from various races, but the human slaves are relatively numerous.

It looks like the only nobles in this town are the house of baronet Poton and marquis Dasles.

I should be visiting him as a noble, but there's no need to deliberately get myself into trouble. When I check on the nobility correlation chart that I've bought from Toruma's house, it seems he's among the lowest seat of nobility from the house of marquis Lloyd, so not visiting him probably isn't going to become that big of a problem.

Nevertheless, this correlation chart is convenient. Let's make some toys for Mayuna-chan as thanks next time.

When the wagon has entered the inn's courtyard, a girl who seems to be the helper comes running. I leave the wagon to Lulu and the others, and go into the inn with the girl leading. I only take Arisa and Nana along.

The innkeeper who's waiting inside changes his expression into one that looks like he's found a source of income when he sees me. This is strange, I don't think I'm wearing expensive-looking clothes today.

"Welcome young master, I have just the right room for you."

He leads us to the room while rubbing his hands on his big hairy arms. The room is on the third floor of a different wooden building, you can even pay more to hire guards during the night. If we stay for more than five days, the guards will be free. The inn charges one silver coin for one night. Compared to the gate inn on Seryuu city which charges one big copper coin for a night, this is probably cheap in comparison.

There's a bathroom in this building, but there's only a bathtub which only fits one person, and of course there's no hot water facility either. You can boil water, but it'll take time, so they ask for us to do it anytime beside during meals if possible. Looks like you can draw water from any channel beside from the drinking water reservoir, but aren't those shared with the drainage? Well, I can just use [Pure Water] on it before I draw the water.

The innkeeper advises us to bring our luggage to the warehouse in the building since thieves often come in midnight. There's nothing inside the luggage, but to not draw unnecessary attentions, I bring them all into the inn.

"Yo, is this the place where the noble-sama is staying?"

A hunter man who looks like a boss of thieves enters the inn courtyard while bringing a big baggage on his shoulder. There are dismantled deer meat inside the cloth.

"Hou, Goku. You've brought a big game."

"Yeah, it's been awhile since the last one. Is the young master over there the noble-sama? How bout it, they're just at the right time for eating. There's no entrails since I've eaten them on the day of the hunt though."

Gahahaha, the man laughs, apparently this hunter is selling the deer. The price is two silver coins, half of the duchy capital's. To inform the market price like this suddenly, this man sure is poor at doing business. I feel that he knows about the information (about Satou) too fast, but he probably heard it from the gatekeeper.

Since there is no kitchen in the separate building, I leave the cooking to the inn chef.

Since there's still some time before dinner, I take Pochi and Tama, who are full of vigors, on a stroll. Just in case, Pochi and Tama are equipped with thin mantles with hoods, leather armors, and wooden swords, just like they've been in the duchy capital. I'm wearing simple clothes that are a white shirt, and trousers.

With these very plain appearances, I probably won't get entangled with some strange guy.

9-3. At the Town of Magic Hunters (2)

Satou's here. I remember the time when I got a burn during my visit to my grandfather's house in the countryside, it wasn't cured with over-the-counter drug, but by applying ripped aloe that had grown on the garden to the burn. It was a folk's remedy, but I remember that it worked well. I wonder if there's aloe in another world.

◇

"Where are we going~?""Nodesu?"

"We're going to the harbor. Looks like they're selling many rare fruits there, so we're going on a sightseeing."

I reply to Pochi and Tama who have just asked about it when we're walking on the street while holding hands.

It's about 10 minutes walk from the inn to the harbor. According to the innkeeper, it's not a market, but just several stalls and food carts that are selling food and drink for laborers and sailors, so I'm just going to take a look.

Mia and the others seemed to be interested too, but since she looked like she was planning something with Arisa, I left them in the inn. Liza was also going to follow as a bodyguard, but since the security looked bad, I asked her to guard Lulu and the others. Nana was particularly fine with either, but since it was dangerous, I left her. There are a lot of sea lion children in the harbor we're going now.

There are a lot of one-story houses with good ventilations in this town, maybe it's due to the fact that the temperature is like everlasting spring here. Every house is built about 30 centimeters high above the ground, although not to the point of being a high-floor type houses. The roads are bare soil, and weeds are growing on the berm. There seem to be some vacant lots here and there too.

Overall, the people walking in the town are wearing thin clothes with short skirts. As expected, women older than 20s are wearing longer skirts, yet their ankles can still be seen. A lot of girls that are minors wear short ones above the knee. I couldn't care less about the men, but many are wearing nothing on the upper half, or bold open-neck shirts. There are a lot of children of around upper grade elementary school ages wearing shirts that display their bellybuttons on full. Apparently, it's not because of fashion, but because they're wearing old clothes that don't fit their bodies anymore. However, I think these make it feels like we're in a southern country. Many children who are below that age are wearing baggy shirts, but the rest are naked. At least, they're wearing loincloths, but they're running around in barefoot energetically.

Tama suddenly parts her hand and runs to the berm, apparently she's picked some grasses on the roadside and come back.

"Found ninigi grass~"

Ninigi grass is a medicinal herb for treating fevers. They can only be used in compounding since they have weak poison if used as is, you need to compound them in order to make them into potion. Therefore, most people don't recognize them as medicinal plants. Their poison only cause upset stomach, so they can also be used as laxative if diluted.

However, Tama does a good job remembering them even though we've only ever found them for 2-3 times during our journey.

I receive the medicinal plants from Tama, and put it in the bag into the Storage. While praising Tama, I search for [Ninigi Grass] in one kilometer radius. Apparently, the medicinal plants are growing commonly like grasses in the vicinity of this town. It's not a medicine that I use much, but I guess I'll secure some as a supply.

In the vacant land along the way, the ninigi grasses like earlier are growing en masse, so I ask Pochi and Tama to gather them. I search again just in case, and besides the mugwort-like plants that can be used to stop bleeding, there's no other usable plants. Besides having red veins on its leaves, the mugwort-like plants look just like normal mugworts. Of course I've warned the two to not pluck the mugwort-like plants. The local people here probably use them as common medicinal herbs.

After seeing Pochi and Tama, children from the neighborhood also begin to gather the ninigi grass and put them on the mat that I've put on the ground beside me. I wonder if they think this as some kind of play?

When half of the ninigi grasses growing in this lot have been collected, I announce that it's over, and give little something to the children. One penny for each. I feel that it's too cheap, but from the story of the aunties during the food distribution on the duchy capital, looks like it's enough. In fact, the children receive the money delightfully.

"Yo, Nii-chan, what are you trying to do making the children gather poisonous plants. Are you going to serve it to the damned lord?"

"They can be used as laxatives indeed, but they will turn into fever medicines if you compound them."

His words make him sounds like a hooligan, but it doesn't seem like he's trying to pick a fight. He's really just interested it seems.

This human young man seems to be a laborer. He's tanned with bulging muscles. However, since he's only level 4, Pochi and Tama are probably stronger.

"So you're really a pharmacist! Please, I'll pay the cost no matter what it takes, can you give me some medicine for burn?"

Burn huh....

I have a bad hunch, so I ask for the detail, and it's just as I've expected. The stupid noble from before came to them to ask about the white tiger princess, and threw several fire bolts toward the houses of beastmen, burning many of them to the ground. At that time, the big sister of this young man tried to save the beastmen children and got seriously injured by the large fire.

I ask the young man if the guards of this town do anything to him, but since the stupid noble is under the protection of the governor of this town, baronet Poton, they don't throw him into the jail. After the day the stupid noble started to be confined in the house of Poton, the servants of Poton house began to search for the whereabout of the white tiger princess. However, they're not getting any clue, and the servants' actions have become violent.

Of course there won't be clue. They (white tigerkin) are heading toward the royal capital after all.

The white tiger-kun party probably pretended to flee here to spread false information. I think it's quite effective, but it's troublesome.

"Nee-san, I've brought a pharmacist."

She only replies with a whimper. From the information on the map, she's a 22 years old, and should be single. No, her single status doesn't matter. Yep.

I ask Pochi and Tama to wait near the entrance in the room, and go to the interior room after the young man.

This is awful.

The burn is not spread, but it goes from her right hand to half of her face. The young man sends his nephew and niece to the room with Pochi and Tama to empty the space for me. Is she perhaps a single mother? No, it's nothing.

She can be easily healed with just one diluted medicine, but to do it without leaving a wound seems like it'll be difficult.

I guess I'll observe the effect in exchange for the medicine. I make the woman drink a magic potion with normal concentration without the boost from mana healing and titles. Since one bottle heals for 300 HP, it can heal the woman even if she's in critical conditions 10 times.

The young man beside me is holding his breath.

Yup, I understand that feeling. No matter how many times I see it, the swift effect of this magic potion feels unpleasant. New pink skin is already forming on the muscle tissues that can be seen.

Just in case, I make the woman eat things with high calories, and sleeping medicine that I've made for treating serious injury. She should be completely recovered by morning with this.

The young man thanks me to the point as if he's going to kiss my shoes, and as the reward for the treatment, I ask him to lead me to the place where that stupid noble has gone wild.

Three-story tenement? But, it's been burnt down. Several people are lying on the mats that have been spread under the shadow of the wreckage. Since I perceive that the beastkins are getting on guards from the humans us who are approaching them, I let Pochi and Tama to lower their hoods. The beastkins slightly drop their guards after seeing the two.

"What do you want. Human."

"I'm Hyona's little brother. I've brought a pharmacist."

"Come to think of it, I've seen you before. Go heal Hyona rather than us. It's already impossible for the fellows here. It won't be enough to buy medicines even if we sell ourselves."

It's certainly expensive if you buy them from shops.

However, this town shouldn't have problem with materials for potions if the magic hunters hunt the demi-goblins, the magic cores must be exported to the duchy capital after all huh.

There are two rabbitkins and one ratkin people who are sleeping. The degrees of their burns are more terrible than the young man's big sister. Their wounds are only covered with big leaves that seem to be for soothing fever.

They were recovered by just making them drank the same potion that Hyona-san had drank thought. I feel that the recovery effect is better, I wonder if it's because beastkins have good endurance. Since the three also look famished, I give them high calories food & sleeping medicines.

Since there are several people who have slight burns near the tenement, I leave one bottle of burn ointment. It's just a small bottle with 20 grams of it inside though. It's also a leftover from when I was experimenting for its effect, but it should be more effective than the one on sale.

◇

"Young master, here it is."

"Young master, it's here."

I said my farewell to the beastkins who expressed their gratitudes exaggeratedly, and arrived at my original goal, the harbor. The daughters of the rabbitkin, who are a 9 years old, and a 6 years old, that I've saved earlier have guided us.

Baskets full of fruits are lined up on the mats. There are small melon-like fruits inside a basket. There are also tachibana citrus and Japanese pears-like fruits. It seems everything is something that are growing wildly in the forest near this town.

"How 'bout it, anything is one penny."

Cheap.

Since we're here already, I buy various things and share it with everyone. Of course, with the rabbitkin girls too. It seems that the children have increased before I knew it, but it's fine. The melon is quite delicious with its watermelon-like thin sweetness, although there are also unripe fruits. I'm buying several of them as souvenirs for Mia.

The fruits peddler laughs while saying, "I'm gonna close my shop early today." jokingly. I wonder if he gets into it halfway through, he distributes the fruits to the children for free. he's a good-natured man.

"Yo nii-san, how 'bout some vegetables good for your health?"

Another man who seem to be attracted to this comes to pitch his vegetables.

No, I didn't come for vegetables.

I could have immediately declined him, but since Pochi and Tama were still chewing half of the melons I had bought, I asked him to show the line up while putting small aprons on the necks of the two. Putting these aprons now might have been too late. Let's clean them with [Soft Wash] before returning to the inn. Lulu will be angry if they return like that.

In the bastket that the man has brought, bitter gourds, paprikas-like vegetables, and red tomatoes!--It's probably tomatoes--are lined up.

Since he says that I can try it, I bite one of the tomatoes. It's a tomato alright, although it's a bit overripe. Seems they're called red fruits around here.

Pochi and Tama also take a bite out of curiosity, but looks like it doesn't suit their palate, their faces look complicated. Children relatively dislike tomatoes don't they.

"Are these all the red fruits you have?"

"There's a lot more on the field. But, it's still a bit more until they're ripe enough for eating."

I rather have ones that aren't this ripe, so I ask him to deliver them to the gate inn. When I gave him 10 copper coins as the payment, he vigorously rowed a small boat upstream as if he had grown wings to fly, and came back with the crops. There seems to be a small farm village on the upstream from here.

◇

Afterwards, we're trying various things like grilled dried oval squids, and grilled dried small fish.

What's with this pied piper of Hamelin situation.

After Pochi and Tama amiably shared their own shares, even though it wasn't excessive, it became like this. Well, they're something I've bought for the two, so they're free to do what they want with it.

However, seems I need to disperse them.

I pick up a decently-sized stone below, and play with it. I thought that it was light, when I check with the AR, it's not a stone, but a coconut-like fruit. It's probably unripe for eating, so it's been thrown away.

The stupid noble shows up his face on the corner of the road.

"There you are, you cursed white beasts! ■■■ ■■"

The people of this town are probably aware of this stupid noble's face.

Both the adults and the children are running away scattered. There's no helping it since the opponent is a level 20 magician. Men who look to be the stupid noble's retainers, and the baronet's personal troop follow behind him. Looking from their expression, they probably also want to stop this stupid noble's act of violence.

Since he's obviously aiming for Tama who is beside me, I throw the coconut to the face of the noble who's chanting fire magic in the downtown. While leaving a comical sound, the stupid noble fell from his horse. Since he was falling on his head, I reluctantly used [Magic Hand] to kill the momentum at a bare minimum.

However, I don't need to concern myself with stopping the retainers from stepping him with their horses do I. His health decreased fast, but thanks to his level 20, he narrowly escaped death.

The retainers dismounted their horses in panic, confiscated a cart from the nearby townspeople, put the stupid noble in it, and carried him to the baronet mansion. Sheesh, what busy guys.

I clap the shoulders of Pochi and Tama who have taken up their wooden swords and stood before me, removing their tensions. The two came forward and guarded me when the stupid noble began to chant magic.

Cheers break out from the townspeople, but please excuse me from this.

9-4. At the Town of Magic Hunters (3)

Satou's here. False accusation is never missing in any society, but in a world that has social positions, they can unreasonably accuse you of crimes. In Japan, you can entrust it to the court and your lawyer, but in another world, being passive seems to be fatal.

◇

Two guards dismount their horses and come toward us.

"Oy, come with us to the station."

"That person is still a noble even though he's like that. Come obediently. I'll let you try to appeal for your life at least."

Oy oy, you're going to treat someone who threw a fruit to another one, who was trying to do something that was like firing a gun, or rather an explosion inside the town, like a death row criminal. It looks like I'll have some bad time if I follow them obediently.

I take out the silver ID from my chest, and show it to the guards.

"T, this is, so you were a noble-sama! Just, how long have you been here."

"About several hours ago. Rather than that, I've never seen that noble even in the duchy capital, where is he from? I don't think even any honorary noble of Shiga kingdom will try to use magic attack in the middle of a town."

What a thing to say even if I do say so myself. For now, I'll warn them while speaking bossily. Putting honorary thing aside, he's pretty bad of a person for trying to use magic to burn citizens in a town.

I drive it further toward the guards who are hesitating to say anything.

"Is baronet Poton aware of this behavior? Depending on the situation, I may need to inform duke-sama and marquis Lloyd of this."

The guards are averting their gazes from me.

This must mean that the baronet is an accomplice, or rather he's authorized the acts.

I have a reason for cornering the guards here.

The baronet in question is coming here followed by several bodyguards. If I had let myself caught, I would need to physically suppress them and made the talk complicated.

"Oy, guards! That's the criminal who raised his hands against marquis Dasles. Arrest him quick."

The baronet who's just arrived orders the guards arrogantly, he's a plump 40s years old man who looks like an underling. He becomes disturbed and avoids my eyes when he just looks at me who's folding my arms calmly.

"Marquis Dasles? There shouldn't be a noble like that in our kingdom. A person who should have been protecting the town couldn't possibly not only overlook the atrocities of a foreign noble, but even aid him could he?"

I calmly approach the baronet who's closing and opening his mouth. Since I'm empty handed, the guards aren't doing anything.

I take out a letter from my bag and give it to the baronet. It's something that marquis Lloyd has written when I told him that I was going to Puta town.

Baronet Poton drops his line of view towards the letter while looking doubtful, but when he sees the sealing wax that's pressed with marquis Lloyd's house crest, his face becomes cramped. He opens the letter timidly, and reads it, then his face turns blue and he's fainted just like that.

There shouldn't be anything significant written in this letter, at most there's probably an instruction to accommodate me while I'm in this town. However, the fact that I'm an acquaintance of marquis Lloyd, and a close one at that, is probably conveyed with this letter. If I report his deeds here to marquis Lloyd, at best he's going to be stripped off his duty, although he probably won't be executed, but his peerage might be passed down to his child and be forced to retire.

Truly a fox that borrows the authority of a tiger!

<TLN: Japanese idiom, means "a small man who's acting arrogantly through borrowed authority.>

I didn't think that I would get to use my connection like this.

"I'll stop by at the baronet Poton's mansion tomorrow. I expect you to give the proper judgment to this Dasles person before then."

I tell it to the guards around in place of the fainted baronet. These people should be the kinds who will try to save their own necks, so they will probably deal with the troublesome stupid noble. A fire magician he is, it'd be a different story if he was healthy, but now that he's half-dead, they should be able to easily restrain him.

For some reason, applauses break out from the surrounding, it's very embarrassing.

Do your best today too Poker Face skill.

>Title [The Official who Protects the People] Acquired

>Title [Condemner] Acquired

◇

After the uproar, I decide to go to the firm to collect some information.

Unfortunately, the firm doesn't have any important info. At most it's only information about the road that goes to the mountain range where Bornean is. The road seem to have been used until 200 years ago when the wyverns and beast monsters have began to inhabit the mountain range.

Even for now, the farthest village 10 kilometers from here have been engulfed by the forest, or rather the grasses.

Even if that's true, I can just cut grass with wind magic and fix the soil with earth magic I guess.

When Pochi, Tama and I have arrived at the inn, the smell of something good is drifting.

"Ha ra ha ra♪" "Ha ra he ri~♪"

The two are singing the songs for when they're hungry while buzzing their arm that are connected with mine. They spontaneously create these hunger songs according to their feeling at the time, so even I don't know how many are the types.

<TLN: "Hara hetta" is a Japanese slank for "I'm hungry.">

"We're back."

"Welcome back~ Ah, good. The innkeeper's told that the meal will be ready soon~"

"Master, they say that they can bring the food here, but they recommend us to eat at the dining room since the guests are sparse today."

"Did you ask whether it was fine for non-humans?"

"But of course. It's okay he said."

A, arisa. Wasn't that phrase old even for Showa.

I pull myself together, and give the melons to Mia as her souvenirs.

"Then, let's might as well go to the dining room."

Looks like the ordered tomatoes have arrived from the harbor earlier, they've been put in the basket on the table. The five seedlings that I've requested, complete with the soils, are lined on the table. With this, I can secure tomatoes even after we've arrived at the labyrinth city. This will be pointless if they sell tomatoes normally there, but if that happens, I can just cultivate it in Muno city then.

The cooking are a simple whole roast.

Looks like you eat it by scraping the meat, dip them in the white sauce put on the bowl, and eat it after you roll them with red-leaf lettuce-like vegetable. There are also other plates with steamed vegetables and pilaf lavished with plenty of vegetables for Mia.

Looks like the white sauce is mayonnaise. I didn't spread the mayonnaise since it'd have increased people who would become fat at the duchy capital, but it exists normally huh. Since I didn't see it at the duchy capital, I wonder if it's a local specialty of this town.

However, this is--

"Roasted deer meat with vegetables yummy."

"Mayo mayo~"

"Mayo nanodesu!"

"Mayonnaise is delicious indeed, but I think it's good if you eat it without adding anything first."

"Ara? It's delicious but, this mayonnaise is."

Lulu who's about to eat the roasted deer meat rolled in vegetable dipped in the mayonnaise looks around as if confirming something. Yes, the mayonnaise here is very heavy. I don't know if it's because the type of the fat is different, or if the it's due to the composition, but it feels like I'll get a heartburn if we eat too much of it.

While poking the cheek of Mia that's pouting as she's eating her pilaf in silence, I warn everyone not to eat too much mayonnaise.

"Noble-sama, does this white sauce not match your taste?"

"No, it's very delicious. Did the innkeeper make this white sauce?"

The innkeeper who had seen the situation called me out.

However, an intruder came before he could reply. The single-armed boy from earlier enters the inn while swinging his left arm.

"Kuuh, what a nice smell. Noble-sama, thanks for before. These are the two copper coins I've borrowed. It was really helpful."

I receive the two copper coins he's presenting. There probably was some quarrel when he was getting his rewards. The edge of his mouth is cut, and there's a bruise on his right cheek.

"Occhan, get me the same thing as that noble-sama's, I'll pay the bill."

"That's impossible, there's no ingredients left."

"No way~"

"You wouldn't be able to pay it even if there was any. I'll make some grilled fish with white sauce set, our specialty."

"Okay, that's alright."

The grilled fish with white sauce here is two copper coins. Is it fine, spending so recklessly like this.

"If you spend so much, won't you become unable to enter the town again?"

"That's a talk for that time. I don't know when I will die, so I'm gonna eat delicious things when I can."

Is it philosophical, or is he just not thinking the consequence.

I'm a bit worried with the three beastkin girls who are nodding to it.

"Oh right, you were talking about the white sauce. A magic hunter man with one arm who came here three months ago taught me about it. He was shrewd, unlike this Kon kid here even though they're both one-armed. Even though the price for this white sauce was quite exorbitant, I've had my money worth."

"Hey, don't liken me to that man with bad look on his face"

"Did you hear the name of that man?"

"Yeah, he said he was John Smith."

John Smith you say.

I asked about his characteristic, but the innkeeper only remembered that his face was chiseled, and he had black hair, and no left arm. I somehow assume that he's the third summoned person from Menea's kingdom.

"He disappeared from the town before anyone knew it."

"Maybe he was killed by monsters since he was a magic hunter."

"That man didn't seem like he would die so easily though."

The boy eat the fish set meal with his left arm skillfully.

He occasionally secretly looks at the whole roast of the deer meat enviously, then devours the fish set meal, so I put some deer meat on a small plate, and give it to him. It should be fine with this much.

Nana who has finished her meal earlier examines the entrance, and suddenly stands up.

Nana reinforces her physical strength while concealing her body, then moves so fast, your eyes can't caught her, to the entrance. Nana comes back with a big smile on her face while holding two ratkin children on both her arms. The children are struggling desperately to escape, but they're no match for the physically reinforced Nana.

"Master, I have safeguarded young organisms. Requesting permission to feed them."

What, feed them you say.

The three beastkin girls look like they've finished eating, and there are still a lot of the deer meat remaining anyway, so it should be alright. When I give the permission, Nana feeds the deer meat to the ratkin children while looking really happy. At first, the ratkin children were surprised themselves, but when they understood that they could eat, they began to eat like gulping down. After that, various things happened like Pochi who stuffed her throat after sensing the impending crisis, or Liza who preached the ratkin children as if she was going to eat them, but the dinner ended with a lively and fun atmosphere.

There are three people who will be guarding the separate building. They're quite unreliable since they don't have see-through skills on top of being level 5. Since the presences of these guards act as impediment for the thieves, it might be fine just like this.

Even though we're in an inn, I decide to have three rotations of night watches just like it's always been during the night camp.

I think I'm being too vigilant, but there's no one who restrains the subordinates of that stupid noble, so they might come attacking after all.

9-5. At the Town of Magic Hunters (4)

Satou's here. There are a lot of stories with revenge as their themes, but few of them end in happy endings due to the themes of the stories. I'll pay you back 10 times! The characters shout out their exasperation like so, but I wish they don't brood over it so gravely.

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"I said wait! That person is also a noble! He's not someone who would do bad things."

"Move out, Kon."

"That's right, we'll be given one silver coin by just joining the encirclement on the inn."

"Right, right, how many goblins do you think that is."

"Even a good-for-nothing like you can get some money you know? Only fools would miss this chance."

I'm hearing this conversation from the magic hunters who are gathering in the bar.

That arsonist noble is still trying to do something huh.

I check on the map, there are around 20 magic hunters gathered on the vacant lot near the governor's mansion. There are also as many young people beside the magic hunters, they seem to be a gathering of outlaws when I look closer. Considering there aren't any of the guards among them, looks like baronet Poton isn't involved this time.

There are about 42 people, but there aren't anyone who has magic skills, they're only warrior or thief types. Since their levels are only ranging from 2-7, even excluding me, they aren't matches against my companions.

The foreign noble is staying in the baronet's mansion without moving. I can guess why since the alchemists in this city are low leveled, as he's only at 30% of his max health, and his bone fractures are terrible, he won't be able to move even if he wants to.

At the bar in front of me, there are the one-armed magic hunter boy, Kon, the four magic hunter women who were with him before, and also eight magic hunter beastkins. This beastkin called Ord, and his friends are strong even among magic hunters as their levels are around 7-9. The other hunters here are level 2-7, not much differences than the magic hunters on the vacant lot.

"Ord and the others, please stop drinking and make nee-san and her friends stop."

"Isn't it alright, let them go."

"Wa, Ord!"

Apparently, the beastkins are neutral, and won't help the Kon boy.

"If you don't move away soon, I'll hit you with my fist."

"Please, nee-san."

"Kena, not gonna stop you though."

"What's this Ord, it's not like you to give advice to other magic hunters."

"This isn't an advice, but a warning. We're on the side of the noble at the inn. He's the benefactor of sis boss, and we've been requested to protect the inn noble by the assembly of the beastmen."

Hoo? Is it a thank for curing their burns? I don't know who is this sis boss, but she's probably one of the people who have been cured from the burn.

If I didn't hear this conversation, they might become victims of my remote magic along with the magic hunters employed by the foreign noble.

Now then, I can't keep listening to them secretly forever can I.

"You serious? Ord, I know you guys are strong, but the opponents aren't just the twenties something magic hunters. There are also more than 50 guards right?"

"Don't worry about that. The guards won't come out."

"Who told you that? Your mother? Stay out of this!"

I cut into the conversation between the big rabbitkin man with one eye (Ord), and the leader of the women (Kena). Kena sharply spoke as if spitting out without turning around to me. Did she mistake me for some magic hunter?

"I've stopped baronet Poton with the connection from the duchy capital. He won't let out the soldiers unless he's an unparalleled idiot who's all about ruins."

When I was talking, Kena and her companions turned around after noticing Ord's eye signal. The woman companions of Kena stands up and put their hands on the grips of their swords when they see me who's armed with a sword.

I introduce myself while waving to Kon boy who's being trampled by Kena's foot.

"Heya, nice to meet you. I am Chevalier Satou Pendragon."

I calmly look around the bar while introducing myself, and confirm the consistency of the information from the map.

"I didn't intend to eavesdrop, but I've heard your talk. You're--miss Kena right? Hopefully, you guys can accompany me in a drinking bout in this bar today."

"Drinking bout? Are you trying to coax us to become your friends?"

"I'm not. I've come here to gather the latest information about the mountain range beyond the farthest village."

"Hah, if you've heard our talk, then you should know the situation you're in right? Isn't it better for you to quickly move out of the inn to escape? If you ask Ord over there, he'll open the gate at least."

Oh, this is unexpected. I didn't think that she would give me advices. She was only tempted by the silver coins reward, she doesn't seem like a bad person. Then maybe I should ask them to help smash the path of retreat of that arsonist noble.

"I have something to discuss, is it alright?"

◇

The attack on the inn starts way past midnight.

I ask Pochi and Tama who have quickly noticed it to wake everyone up, and I stop doing handicraft that I've done to kill time.

Since everyone have taken naps with armors worn, the battle preparation is quickly completed. Since we're pretending to be sleeping, there is no light. I peep through the window on the third floor, there are three separate suspicious groups coming from the street. Kena and the others have successfully slipped in behind one of the group.

I asked the women to arrest the retainers of the foreign noble, or stop them from escaping.

They're caught red-handed attacking a noble of Shiga kingdom at night. It's unfortunate that the person himself isn't present, but he probably won't be able to escape getting deported outside the kingdom if I just pull some connections.

"Bows, three people~?" "There's also one on the shadow of the roof there, so it's four nanodesu."

Pochi and Tama who were watching outside found the archers. I shoot through the shoulders of the two, who have murders on their punishment (status), with a single shot from the crossbow. In addition, I use [Remote Stun] to make the other four fall unconscious. Since there wasn't anyone beside the archers, they probably don't know that they're being ambushed.

I also use [Remote Stun] to neutralize the other people who seem to be thieves approaching nimbly from the roof. It was troublesome to match the timing as to not make them suffer serious injury from the falls.

"Then, shall we go."

Leaving Mia, and Arisa, the magicians, and Lulu who's holding the magic gun on the top floor, I bring the vanguards downstairs.

When we've arrived on the first floor, the guards of the inn who have finally noticed the unusual situation are furiously knocking the door to tell the state of emergency.

They looked surprised when they see us coming out fully armed, but I forcibly made them to go to the main building of the inn to protect it.

When the masses have encircled the inn, one of the retainers of the foreign noble step forward and begins his speech, or rather, proclaiming death sentences. Looks like these retainers are lower nobles.

However, doing speech here like this. What was the point of approaching here without light then.

"Upstart who has foolishly taken the side of the cursed white tigers!"

Is this guy a genuine idiot?

"Your sin is supporting the filthy beastkins!"

You shouldn't discriminate people by race.

"Your sin is injuring our great master, Dasles-sama!"

It's like speaking in unison during demonstration.

I thought that they shouldn't have said his name, but they may be thinking that they're not doing anything bad.

"Your sin is--"

I wonder if it's bad if I don't hear it until the end.

From what I can infer from the retainers' talk, it seems that even though marquis Dasles had taken the white tiger princess party, who were running from the weaselkin chase, under his care, they suddenly massacred the family of the marquis, stole his money and treasures, burned the houses of the citizens, and massacred the people. In addition, the late king who was visiting the mansion at that time was also killed too.

I'd like to say that then it can't be helped that he harbors grudges, but it's too unnatural. Killing your protectors bears nothing but disadvantages, and there's even more no reason for them for burning and killing the people.

Instead, it's easier to understand if you presume that the weaselkin who would be in trouble if the late king helped humans and tigerkin to join hands, so they laid the blame to the white tigerkin princess and her cohorts.

Well, regardless of the situation, they still have to be dealt, so the details don't matter.

I open the gate on the courtyard from the inside, and come out before them.

"Aren't you satisfied yet? Your speech is too long, the outlaws around you would grow tired y'know?"

"You're making a fool of yourself. I'll make you regret for deliberately appearing from the other side of the wall. Do it! Slaughter this guy!"

The man who was having a speech comfortably gives the order while his face is reddening in anger. The outlaws around reply that by taking out their weapons. They sure are excited~

Kena and her friends slip beside the two retainers of the foreign noble who are behind the mass. Those two have higher rank than the one who was giving speech.

"You DTs, declaring that I will be your opponent."

<TLN: DT=Doutei=virgin guy.>

Nana provocated the outlaws who were attacking, and then jumped out.

There's no sense in that right? Yet, several people are facing Nana, so it might be effective.

Pochi and Tama activate [Shell] on their magic swords, and mow the outlaws down like we're in a gag manga.

Nana who puts on physical reinforcement pushes several people with her large shield, and repulses the magic hunter who has a great axe with her [Shell]-activated magic sword, she's quite reliable.

And, Liza pierces the shoulder of the retainer who was giving speech earlier with her spear while leaving red afterglow.

Eh?

Red afterglow?

Wait, Liza?

When I look at Liza's condition while feeling uneasy, she's just put too much fighting spirit into it. She didn't really activate magic edge, so the retainer didn't die.

Thanks to that injury, the other outlaws have also begin to run away as if it's an effect of the punishment.

"O, oy, isn't that a magic spear."

"Those three are also magic sword users."

"Oy, oy, I didn't sign up for this. Like I'd fight those guys even though I'm not a knight."

A lot of the outlaws turn their back and flee.

I'm fine with leaving anyone but ones with serious crimes, but they've been neutralized after Mia shot [Mustard Bomb], and Tama threw stones toward them who had stopped while coughing violently.

I knock out the two retainers whom Kena has caught with the fairy sword while in its scabbard and have them arrested. Kon who's sprawling on his feet doesn't seem have any serious injury too.

By the way, the outlaws on the opposite side of the inn have been arrested by Ord and the others with cover fires from Arisa and Lulu.

◇

"S, sir Pendragon! What is this uproar so late at night."

I've come to the mansion of baronet Poton while bringing along the outlaws who have been tied together with the retainers of the foreign noble. The first speech of the baronet when he saw us was that. Apparently, the uproar this time doesn't have anything to do with the baronet. However, let's follow Arisa's advice, and act as if the baronet involvement has been decided to make him run toward his own self-protection.

"You said that as if you weren't involved yourself. The retainers of that Dasles had brought these many outlaws to attack the inn where was staying."

Ah, I really can't get used to this noble-like speech.

"Wa, it doesn't have anything to do with me. I'm unrelated."

Alright, I only have to make him arrest the foreign noble and take him to the duchy capital, and it'll be a mission complete.

However, the situation advances outside my expectation.

"So you've even harmed our retainers, you pawns of tigerkins! It can't be helped like this, I'll take care of you with my own hands!."

Dasles comes out while shaking and supporting himself with a cane. Since his coat is only hanging on his shoulders, I can see many bandages covering the upper half of his body. The fool started to chant fire magic, so I threw the nut that I had prepared beforehand on his head.

When Dasles kneels on the ground, the guards who finally react, pin the guy to the ground.

"Baronet Poton. Just now, Dasles had tried to shoot fire bolt toward me with clear intention to kill. Moreover, you were beside him. As a governor, you have to give your judgment."

"S, someone with low rank like me cannot give death penalty. First, we have to transport him to the duchy capital, drag him to the royal capital from there, and entrust the judgment to the king."

Oh, he can't be punished at the duchy capital huh.

Since he could meet the white tigerkins if he goes to the royal capital, I'd like for him to be prisoned at the duchy capital. Well, whatever.

"You've heard him. Guards! Arrest that criminal quickly. The ring on his right hand is a tool for invocation. Don't forget to take it off."

You can actually invoke magic without invocation tool, but the power of the magic and accuracy considerably fall.

Moreover, there's a tool for rogue magician in the baronet mansion, Dasles is tied with something called [Chain of Magic Seal]. If he tries to chant spell, the mana will flows to the chain of magic seal and get dispersed, although it cannot always prevent it.

They put Dasles who's struggling while being tied with the chain of magic seal to the underground dungeon.

It's case closed with this huh.

I can just leave the treatment of baronet Poton to marquis Lloyd at the duchy capital.

Now then, I guess I'll go back to the inn and take a nap.

9-6. At the Town of Magic Hunters (5)

Satou's here. 'Rewarding goods, and punishing evils' reminds me of period dramas, but unexpectedly, it also exists in novels and manga. Of course even in the tale of another world.

◇

Early in the morning the next day, that marquis Dasles and his retainers are to be transported to the duchy capital together by ship. Since they could try to escape, about 20 guards are accompanying them.

Looks like they'll be transfered to a large ship on the town before the great river.

Now then, there's actually quite a complicated reason as to why baronet Poton was accommodating marquis Dasles.

First, marquis Dasles seemed to carry a letter of introduction from the previous earl Bobi at the duchy capital. With the backing of the previous earl Bobi, he earned the cooperation of a certain organization in the duchy territory.

And, it seemed that the son of baronet Poton who went to the school at the duchy capital admired this organization. There'd have been no problem if it ended with that, but this organization was the [Wings of Liberty], and he was in the wanted list from the duke, so it was a bit problematic.

Even though his son was put in the wanted list, that didn't mean that he would be relieved of his duty as a governor, but there were many people who wanted his position, so it was very possible that someone would use it to drag him down.

And, at that time, the fact that the son of baronet Poton was a part of [Wings of Liberty] wasn't well-known.

Furthermore, it seems that this son is safe and currently taking shelter at the other hunting mansion of earl Bobi house at the duchy capital. Of course, if the authority at the duchy capital find out about the location, the son will be arrested, and probably executed later.

Thus, marquis Dasles held the cards for the [Scandal], and the [Life] of baronet Poton's son, and forced the cooperation and submision of baronet Poton.

Of course, he didn't openly talk about this at first.

He told various excuses like he was threatened with fire magic, he had a debt from the person who introduced the marquis, earl Bobi, or that got some bribes, but since they were all full of holes, he finally confessed after I raised the Interrogation skill to maximum.

I've made a deal with him.

Normally, I should have reported to the duke and the kingdom authority about the remnants of the [Wings of Liberty] holed up at the hunting mansion, but I decide to leave it to marquis Lloyd as the leader of the faction to deal with them. As expected, I cannot overlook them.

Marquis Lloyd might try to hide the scandal of his faction, but I expect him to dispose the remnants of the [Wings of Liberty] in the process.

Marquis Lloyd will probably rescind baronet Poton as a governor of this town, but at least he can avoid the worst scenario where this is used by his political opponents to execute or deprive him of his peerage.

Since I've sent a letter for marquis Lloyd pertaining the details, the issue with baronet Poton will probably gradually subside in time.

Now then, I demanded three things from him.

First, distribute the fortunes of the arsonist noble to his victims as the reimbursements.

Second, establish an orphanage in this town.

Third, establish a place for the young magic hunters to train under the retired ones.

He had shown disapproval for the third, but we compromised by making it monthly course instead of permanent one. Since it's for the sake of decreasing loss among the magic hunters, it's (the course) probably going to be alright even if the governor change.

I didn't expect that he accepted the second one easily, but it seemed that there was an orphanage that opened until the end of service of the previous governor, so the building itself still remains at the outskirt of the town. The fund for the orphanage stopped once the governor changed, but since I requested it in the letter for the marquis Lloyd, it's probably going to be alright. It's a request through and through. I'm not coercing him.

Now then, as for the management of everyone who has attacked the inn, they're all turned into slaves.

Of course it doesn't apply to the people who I've asked to infiltrate.

The outlaws that have attacked the inn, and most magic hunters are turned into crime slaves.

However, if too many of the magic hunters were decreased, this town's main specialty, magic cores gathering would stagnate, and so the ones who didn't have offenses before the incident were picked from the ones who had first-class crimes, and turned into common slaves with time limit instead.

The ones who become common slaves are to work under the official of Puta town, and their terms as slaves are decreased in exchange for their compulsion to hunt monsters.

Lastly, I actually got a lot of things from the incident this time.

First, I got equipments confiscated from marquis Dasles, and the money that he had used to pay the assailants, moreover, I also got some of the money from selling the crime slaves to the slave trader.

The latter aside, I don't know why the former comes to me. When I inquired, it wasn't bribes, but payments for capturing criminals from the administration. Ah, confusing.

To be honest, I didn't need the money, but I thought that I could just distribute it after, so I accepted it.

As rewards for this incident, I gave several bottles of diluted potion, and some silver coins for Kena, Ord, and the others. Kena and the women were pondering hard whether to sell the potions for money, but in the end they decided to keep it. Life can't be replaced after all.

I also intended to split it among the victims of Dasles who had their houses burnt, but they gratefully refused.

Instead, I got several baskets of nuts and medicinal plants that they've gathered in the forest first thing in the morning. Since it seem to be thanks for the medicine yesterday, I gratefully accept it. I make baked sweets from those nuts, and pass it to Pochi and Tama for them to share it among the children. The two came back totally exhausted, so it must've been accepted delightfully. Since Nana who had gone with the two looked glossy even while being expressionless, there were a lot of children it seems.

It's decided that baronet Poton is going to pay for the compensations of the villages that Dasles has attacked, so there's nothing in that front from me.

And also, I don't know who's spread the rumor, but it seems that it has been decided that I like tomatoes. Merchants come visit me to the inn while bringing a lot of tomatoes as presents.

There are different kinds of tomatoes than the one at the harbor mixed in, but tomatoes aren't going to be unneeded no matter how many I have, so I gratefully accept them.

However, I firmly refused the suggestion to have a bronze statue of me, as the town's celebrity, put on the harbor. As expected, something like a bronze statue is too embarrassing. They asked me to receive at least the [Puta Citizens Medal of Honor], so I accepted it.

Do the people of this world like medal or something?

◇

"Oh, it moved! It moved just now right?"

"Yeah, if you keep it up, you'd be able to move it like I've displayed earlier, work hard."

"Un, thank you! noble-sama."

Even though it was something that I made to kill time while waiting for the raid, it's working properly huh.

I've given a simple artificial arm made of wood to Kon boy.

The artificial arm has mitten-like part that has movable fingers. When you spread mana on the artificial arm, the magic circuit on the joints will react and the wire will be winded and move the the fingers. If you stop the mana supply, the spring board will spring into action, and the hand will open. Since the opening and the closing response is slow, it's probably impossible to hold weapons to fight with it.

You can also wind it manually for the possibility that he can't handle the mana well. Of course I've also made the lock function.

This artificial arm is a bonus for Kon boy. If he didn't do his best, Ord and the others who were acting in behalf of me would have been included among the criminals.

I've also left him with a leather armor and boots from wolf leather, and also a breast plate and a helmet made from the shell of rhinoceros beetles that are strong for its lightness. I've also made a shield from the rhinoceros beetle shell that can be attached on the joint of the artificial arm.

Since his weapon is a keepsake from his father, I only fix it by sharpening it.

"Uwaa, is it fine, this many! Look at me nee-san, I'm like an explorer!"

"However, if a beginner like you have these kind of equipments, won't the idiots take them away from you?"

"It's going to be alright, I didn't use expensive materials."

Kena is slightly concerned toward the boy who is honestly rejoicing.

I've thought so at this time, but in the future, I find out that these shells of rhinoceros beetle are unexpectedly expensive materials in the labyrinth city. Since the rumor that these materials aren't expensive spread in this city, it's probably alright.

"Then, then, make some for us too."

"I'll reward you with my body."

"If it's your body, far from rewards, you'd need to pay him instead."

"How cruel! It's no different than yours."

Since I've expected these fussy reactions, I've already made breastplates from the rhinoceros beetle shells to give them. They're just simple enlarged Japanese archery-type chest protectors that can be attached to leather armors.

Of course they're not free.

In exchange, I ask them to bring Kon boy together to hunt monsters, it's fine for just one month. In this world, if there's an opportunity, and you can survive, it should be easy to level up.

I feel a bit too busybody, but it's fine if it's just this much.

That's why, Arisa, stop that grinning.

◇

Several days after the raid, we're finally able to depart Puta town.

The wagon would be buried by nuts and tomatoes if we stay any longer.

"Then, young organisms, we'll be parting briefly."

"Nana, you go? You're going?"

"Nana, won't stay together? You can't?"

"Nana, don't go."

After saying goodbye to the 3-5 children, Nana mounts the horse.

I've thought that she'd want to take 1-2 of them, this is unexpected.

"They are in a base now. I have judged that the journey is dangerous for young organisms' life."

By 'base', she probably means the provisional orphanage.

Although the bed are just only spread mats, it's better than sleeping under the hanging roof outside people's houses, or under the trees. There are around 50 orphans, whom Nana has gathered from the downtown, living in the provisional orphanage. The orphans are actually three times that number, but we weren't able to gather them all.

I was going to donate several gold coins to the caretakers of the orphanage, but they gently declined it. There doesn't seem to be any place where gold coins can be used in this city. It couldn't be helped, so I donated 100 kilograms of rice and 100 copper coins. I pray that they won't embezzle it.

We leave the town with the grand farewell from the children, the beastkins, and the magic hunters.

Several fast children are running in parallel with the wagon, but they quickly become tired, and get left behind.

Nana seems to turns her head toward the city several times as if she's reluctant to part.

The wagon continues on the highway, or more like an animals trail overgrown with grasses.

First, toward the farthest village, then cross the mountain range on the southeast toward the forest of Bornean.

9-7. Highway of Weeds

Satou's here. I liked science experiments during my primary and middle school days. Among them, I was really thrilled with electrolysis that separates oxygen and hydrogen. I feel that making up magic tools bring the same kind of excitement as these days.

◇

Not less than half a day after we've passed through the farthest village with population of 200 people, the road begins to be overgrown with weeds and can't be seen.

"The road's condition is just like we've heard isn't it. Are we really going to advance on this road?"

"Yeah, let's cut it for now."

"Leave it to me~" "I'll work hard nodesu!"

I got off the wagon while saying so, Pochi and Tama chased after me after taking grass sickles from the toolbox in the wagon. After posing as if 'clink'-like sfx written on the background, they begin to push their way through the thickets.

No, you girls, I'm going to use magic here?

Since the two are so eager while looking like they're having so much fun, I can't bring myself to stop them. I guess I'll wait until they're tired.

"Master, permission to participate the strategy meeting. Reporting for a different style of grass cutting."

I don't know if the figures of Tama and Pochi cutting the weeds touched Nana's heartstrings or something, but I took out a long grass sickle and pass it to her.

"Master, it looks like the three are motivated to cut the weeds with the sickles, but we don't know how long until we arrive to the base of the mountain. How about we hire the people from the village earlier to cut through it, or spread oil and burn the weeds?"

"It'll be bad if it turns into forest fire, so the burning is forbidden. I'll cut them with magic after Pochi and the others are tired."

That reminds me, I heard that Mia created road in the forest during their way to Muno city back then, but when I asked her, she replied, "Impossible". She can probably only use it for a short course.

Since there are ingredients for medicines and cuisines mixed among the weeds, I leave Arisa and Mia to gather them. I ask Lulu and Liza to prepare for lunch.

"I wonder what~ is that?"

"Hmm? It's a kiln."

Since I saw characters in the manga I had read a long time ago baked pizza with a kiln, I made this one by using earth and fire magic. I must say that I've done a good job for an improvised thing. Even though it's simple, to be able to make it faster than making a cup ramen is too wonderful.

While having a sidelong glance to Arisa who's fallen to the ground with a dry smile, I take out the pizza dough that I've left fermenting in the Item Box.

I take out the tomato sauce I've made in Puta city and spread it on the pizza dough. As for the toppings, there are cheese of course, and also bacon and salami that are standard for pizza, I've also another type of pizza with lots of vegetables like sliced tomato, asparagus, eggplant, and paprika.

Since the pizza dough is thin, seem that it won't be enough to satisfy the appetites of hara heri girls. I guess I'll make some cube steak and french fries as the side menu.

"It stretches~?" "Hot hot, nanodesu."

"Uwa wa, stupid good~"

"Nn, delicious."

The juvenile troupe are awfully excited, looks like they like the pizza. Pochi and Tama get sticky from the dripping cheeses, they have to wash their faces later.

Lulu and Nana seem to like it too, but not to the degree like the four. After eating one slice of the pizza, Liza sets her sight to the unmarked cube steak. She's really unwavering.

I'm glad that they're eating it happily, but I stop Arisa who looks like she'd eat too much. She looks at me reproachfully, but she seems to understand after I explain about the dreadfulness of rebound. The diet back then was hard after all.

That's why Arisa. Please stop looking like that at Pochi and the others eating pizza.

◇

Since Pochi and the others are satisfied, I decide to open the path with magic from the afternoon.

First, I fire [Air Blade] that follows close to the surface of the ground along the road.

The wind released from the short wand cuts the weeds while leaving 10 centimeters of it above the ground. The wind continues on while cutting some slightly elevated grounds, and bushes along the way. In the end, it finally stops 200 meters ahead on a small five meters tall cliff.

"You, you really should learn to stop overdoing it."

"Nn, destruction of nature."

Was it too shocking, Arisa grumbled with more unreserved tone than usual. Is it because you're scolding me that Liza is taking regretful pose.

The fact that the trees along the road are cut is within my expectation, but for even the cliff to be cut in two and crumbles is beyond my expectation.

If we advance just like this, the horses can sprain their legs from the unseen ramp, and soft grounds, so I decide to prepare the soil with earth magic.

This time I'm not using [Wall], but the very thing itself, that is [Flat Land] magic. Seems it's a magic that's used frequently by not only the army, but also the general populace. It was a magic from the scroll that I had bought from the firs magic shop I visited in the duchy capital, but I didn't have opportunity to use it until now.

I set the range to be the course of the road and exercise the magic. Since the ground is covered by weeds, I don't know if the soil really has been prepared, so I check the terrain on the map. Looks like it's been leveled without problem.

Since the cut weeds are hindering the horses feet, the wagon isn't speeding up. The wheels are also looking like they'll slide. I instruct the wagon to running slowly at only several kilometers per hours speed, we're going while opening the path anyway.

I'm leading while using magic, and Pochi and Tama who are walking while picking up herbs and medicinal plants from the cut weeds. Liza and Nana are removing bushes and fallen trees that are out of bounds from the road. Arisa and Mia are sorting the gathered materials.

However, it'll inevitably take some time. Naturally, the road to the mountain range is not just extending straight, and not flat as there are undulations too. Particularly, the road goes around hills, low-laying mountains, and valleys.

Since I don't have any other good plan, we're advancing on while opening the highway, and I decide to camp on the bank of the streamlet 10 kilometers ahead.

Although there are around 20 demi-goblins 1 kilometers away from the planned camping ground, they seem to have become frightened by the sound of vegetations cutting and ran away very fast. It's going to be safe tonight.

I left the dinner preparation to Lulu and went back to the place where I started to clear the path, I put a rough 100 meters wide mud wall [Wall] there. With this, there won't be strange rumor about the road that suddenly appears.

◇

That night, I've assembled an aerodynamic engine that's been half completed.

However, the control is difficult.

After it was finished, it did float when I tried to put mana into it little by little, but it was bad after that.

After the engine fed on a certain amount of mana, it rotates down to the ground with a plop, and then it powerfully plunges to the nearby tree.

Apparently, the fins that are composed on the aerodynamic engine each has its own fixed output on top of having the so-called power band. Due to that, you can't just pour mana into like normal magic tools as it will rotate off-balance and accelerate suddenly.

Looks like it needs a control circuit for tuning the output, but there's nothing about that in the documents I have at hand. There isn't also anything about how the control of aerodynamic engine is difficult written in the documents, don't tell me that the author of this document actually hasn't assembled the engine himself.

"Or maybe the control itself isn't something that's impossible to do?"

Although the frame of the engine that has hit the trees and the shrubs are broken, the fins and the magic circuit themselves are fine, so I'm going to challenge it again. I can more or less make the aerodynamic engine floats for about 30 seconds, but since I have to concentrate on it all the time, it's too bothersome. If it's like this, even lifting the wagon with [Magic Hand] is better.

I'm searching for any other hints until late at night.

◇

The following day, we're going to travel by air.

Of course it's not like I've found some breakthrough way to control the aerodynamic engine.

I've just switched my way of thinking--that's a bit presumptuous.

If it can't be done with magic, then I can just make use of science!

I've only noticed that.

I've become too reliant with magic just because I'm able to create some magic tools. I'm just going to make normal balloons and use them to travel in the air.

Although it was hard after I got the idea.

At first I wanted to make hot-air balloons, but when I thought about the number of the people and the horses, I abandoned the idea. It's a bit too heavy.

Therefore I decided to fill it with light gas like blimps.

The problem is the material for the balloon. When I was doing the preliminary calculation, it seemed that it was necessary to make an ark big enough to carry people and horses in the air.

I search through the storage, and the parts from the parasites of the great monstrous fish seem usable. The specimen that stole life until it became level 50 had particularly grown quite big, so I'm going to use it.

Since there wasn't place that was convenient enough, I flew back to the open space in the underground labyrinth at the duchy capital. The place is not the one I usually use, but on the lower floor that's half submerged in water.

I've decided to make the balloon for the blimp, and the hydrogen for the buoyancy here.

I successfully made the balloons from the parts of the parasites, but I couldn't make something too big, only ones with just enough length. Thus, I decided to make small balloons with one meter diameter and stuff them into a big web.

To create the hydrogen, I make use of [Pure Water], [Discharge], and [<<Electronic Control>>] magic. Since I use [Air Control] to prevent the separated gas from mixing, it's progressing relatively well.

I might as well store the oxygen I've separated into different balloons.

I made a mistake during the operation once and the balloon exploded, but since I immediately deployed [Air Shield] at once, there wasn't any victim like burning clothes, although I was a bit surprised. I'm glad that it's a sturdy labyrinth. It's worth the trouble of going far.

Since the force of hydrogen explosion was greater than I expected, I combined the hide of the great monstrous fish and armored newt's bones to make fire and blast proof ceiling on the ark. The hide of the great monstrous fish are something that I've taken when I was cutting the meat. Since the hypodermis is thick, I only use the epidermis this time.

I make another hydrogen balloon explode as a test, looks like it can defend against it without problem.

I go back to the place where I experiment with the aerodynamic engine, place the ark on the trees around the area, and attach the balloons on it.

I go toward the camping ground while imagining everyone's face when they see the airship.

9-8. Air Travel

Satou's here. I've boarded airplanes for business trips before, but I've never ridden on a flying blimp. I have made some hot-air balloon in my school days, but there are many different things between a dummy model and the real thing.

◇

"Hey, won't you raise the altitude? Don't the beasts that hang around the treetops will want to get on the airship?"

"Nah, it's alright."

Arisa's concern is right on mark.

Actually, the airship has been jumped on twice since its departure by beasts that are brimming with curiosity. Of course since it was dangerous, I stopped their momentum with [Magic Hand] by matching the timing when they were about to jump.

All kinds of birds are also coming, but since none of them is like the crow from western anime with beak that looks dangerous for the balloons, I leave them alone.

Thinking for if the airship crash, the airship is advancing only slightly higher than the top of the trees.

I use [Air Control] magic to propel the airship forward. Since it's not originally a magic for flying an airship, the airship only flies at 15 km/h max. Since there's a high probability that the web holding the balloons breaking if I use [Air Cannon] like I've done when I was using Sky Drive, I won't use the magic.

The speed itself is slow, but since it's going in a straight line, the airship covers more distance than the wagon.

I fold the wagon's canopy and put it inside the airship ark along with the horses. I've thought of putting the wagon into the storage, but since the airship can float just fine with it, I leave it outside.

I've made observation windows on all directions in the ark. Even though I've said windows, they're just holes with covers. I've made the side wall higher than the horses. The ceiling, or rather a protective wall, that's separating the blimp and the ark is made of the great monstrous fish's material.

Tama has climbed and sat on that side wall, she has been watching the passing scenery since a while ago. It's dangerous, but since I will pick her before she hits the ground even if she falls, I let her do as she pleases. Tama probably won't fall.

Nana seems to be gazing outside from the rear window. Even though Nana herself seems to think that the rear scenery is the cutest, I don't understand just how is it cute. The day where I can understand it might come soon.

Arisa, Mia, and Lulu who don't have anything to do are playing ayatori since awhile ago. Putting aside Arisa and Mia, I didn't expect Lulu to not be afraid.

And then, whenever Tama leans forward out of curiosity, the ship sway--

"Tama, it's dangerous nodesu! What would we do if we fall nodesuka!"

"That's right! Tama, behave yourself. Sky, we're up in the sky. We can't fly if we fall you know?"

Pochi who is sitting on my lap while I'm sitting on a captain-like chair, and Liza who's holding the back of my chair diagonally behind me without moving an inch warn, or rather, reproach Tama.

"It's alright~"

Tama answers in her own pace.

"I, it's not alright nodesu. Master! Don't laugh, put your hand here nanodesu. It'll be dangerous if you don't hold on properly nodesu."

"You hear me, Tama. It's punishment time if we fall to the ground you know?"

Seems Pochi and Liza aren't good with air travel.

Their voices have been seriously scared since a while ago. I've already expected Pochi to be scared, but I didn't even expect Liza to be frightened.

Whenever the airship shakes, Pochi jolts and petrified on my lap. Pochi's ears are closing down since a while ago. Looks like she's still uneasy with just sitting on my lap, she makes me put my hand on her stomach.

Liza aren't only holding the chair, she's also secretly clutching the sleeves of my clothes. I pretend not to notice it.

Of course Tama's lightweight body isn't enough to incline the ship.

The culprit is me.

Since Tama was leaning her body like she was going to fall, I used [Magic Hand] to match it and shook the airship, but for some reason, it wasn't Tama, but Pochi and Liza who were overreacting.

Since Pochi's reaction is cute, I've done it a few more times inadvertently, but let's refrain myself now.

◇

Now then, even though it looks like it's going smoothly, there are more problems with air travel than I've expected.

The first problem is about toilet.

I intend to build it during the camping tonight, but for now, I'm going to carry the members down one-by-one with sky drive in regular interval.

I wanted to carry many at once, but instead I was made to carry them with princess carry one-by-one somehow.

The second problem is meal.

Since fire isn't allowed, we're going to have a meal with bento I've made in the morning.

"Chicks~?"

"Uwaa, it's chicks nanodesu!"

"Flowers."

The three seem to be really happy as they show me the inside of the lunch boxes.

Err, I'm the one who made those.

Pochi's and Tama's shares are patterned with chicks, Mia has chicken rice without the chicken and vegetables in the shape of flowers.

"You're really~ hardworking aren't you. I didn't think that I would see characters bento here (this world)."

"Ara, even Arisa likes this one better after all?"

Lulu makes fun of Arisa who's looking amazed.

"Will it break if I eat it~?"

"Is it okay to eat this?"

"It's okay, they're food after all."

"Nn."

"Look really delicious~."

The two who are looking at the character bento and me alternatively in delight and anguish look cute. Mia seems to hesitate as to where to start.

Except for these three's bento, the dish for everyone is the same, though there are individual differences. Liza gets a lot of meat, while it's lighter for Lulu and me.

"Pochi, Tama! I will safeguard those characters bento. If you eat something that cute--"

It was a failure of me for not anticipating this kind of reaction from Nana for the characters bento.

"You can't~"

"You can't nanodesu."

As it will be dangerous if the horses get agitated if they make a ruckus in the narrow ark, I raise the three of them with [Magic Hand] to stop the racket.

"Master, this is an unfair capture. Requesting liberation."

"You made a ruckus in the narrow ark, so you're guilty."

"Please reconsider!"

"No. Eat in the air just like that for today."

Good grief, we can finally continue the meal now.

I'll make characters bento for Nana too tomorrow. No, maybe it's better if I don't make characters bento while we're traveling by air.

"Master."

Nana isn't giving up today--

Whatisshedoingiwonder?

Using unthinkable sexy technique, she slips out of the restrain.

Nana is approaching Pochi and Tama while her top is bare, but the two seem to have finished their meals. The lunch boxes might have been too small.

Lulu puts a cloth on Nana who's fallen down and placed her hands on the floor.

Using sexy technique like that, she's grown up.

No, that's not it. That is not it. I have to lecture her later. Yup, let's put the scene earlier in the folder inside my brain. Pictures aren't crime.

Of course I didn't use the photography magic.

◇

The third problem is that it attracts attentions.

Since we're deep in the mountain, there's no need to worry with people, but there seem to be curious monsters and animals as they are following from behind without letting go.

We've arrived at the base of the mountain in the second day, but it was hard to clean up the animals that had gathered when we went down to the camp ground yesterday. Since Pochi and the others were happy with, "Prey!", let's treat it as a good thing.

Originally, it should be unexpectedly hard to ascend and descend with something like an airship. That is because you need to adjust the buoyancy. However, in our case, since the buoyancy decreases if I put the balloons into the storage, we can easily descend. After putting away some amount of the balloons, I can use [Air Control] until we descend to the ground, and then I can retrieve them all afterwards.

Today, the airship is anchored on the side of a lake.

Since the part with the balloons is about 20 meter wide, it's hard to find a place to put it down. Today I lower it on the water surface and retrieve the balloons.

After putting the airship on the bank, Liza and the others immediately intercept the monster. The opponent is the Horn Snake that has been running in parallel with the airship ark since a while ago. Since Arisa and Mia are backing them, I prepare the dinner together with Lulu.

After everyone is done with the hunt, let's go on a stroll around the lake by riding horses while also making them exercise.

◇

"Arisa! Hold back the snake's attack for moment. Nana! When the snake stops moving, put your shield up again."

They seem to have an unexpectedly hard fight.

Pursuing Liza and Nana, the snake that's come breaking out of the forest is quite big. I can't see how many meters is its length, but it's at least as thick as Mia's waist.

The horn is between its eyes pointing straight about 50 centimeters long. This snake's horn seems to have paralyzing poison, but before that, you're going to be seriously injured if you're pierced by this horn.

I'm on alert while deploying [Magic Hand], and [Flexible Shield] so that I can intervene anytime.

The snakes stands up forming sickle-shaped neck about 3 meters high, and as Nana is about to assault it, Arisa keeps the snake in check with the space magic [Isolation]. This magic seems to make a wall out of space gaps, but it's quite fragile. When we tried it before, I broke it by just hitting it without even using [Magic Break]. Arisa was somehow mad, but wasn't it alright since it was an experiment.

According to Arisa, one should have needed to use [Magic Break] or [<<Remove Isolation>>] of the same space magic to destroy this [Isolation] magic.

As for me, I feel that I can destroy magic that intervenes with [The Other Space] like shadow magic or summoning magic just fine.

Leaving that aside, Nana puts up [Shield] again, and seems to have finished chanting [Sharp Edge].

Arisa removes the barrier, and the second round begins.

First, Mia fires off [Water Cutter], but the horn snake easily avoids it.

Continuing on, Nana executes provocation.

"Now, come! I declare, I'll make you realize that you don't have arms or legs."

<TLN: Japanese idiom for 'can't do anything.'>

No well, snakes don't have arms or legs.

The horn snake uses its horn to repeatedly stabs at Nana. Pochi and Tama are attacking from the sides aiming for its body, but their attacks don't quite reach since the tail obstructs them.

Liza activates magic edge and is taking a posture to attack, at that time--

That thing appears from the shadow of the forest.

--It's not aiming for fisherman's profit right?

<TLN: Japanese proverb for 'profiting while others fight.' Why don't I just use that then? Because it's the next chapter's title. ;>

9-9. Fisherman's Profit

Satou's here. During the midsummer day of the ox, it's nice to be able to eat something that you don't usually eat like kabayaki, or winter solstice pumpkin, isn't it. Although, there are arguments from both side when it's about valentine day...

<TLN: From wiki, Kabayaki (蒲焼) is a preparation of fish, especially unagi eel, where the fish is split down the back (or belly), gutted and boned, butterflied, cut into square fillets, skewered, dipped in a sweet soy sauce-base sauce before being broiled on a grill.>

◇

The thing that appears in the forest sky is a wyvern.

Its aim is not us, but the horn snake, as it's swooping down on the defenseless body of the horn snake while completely ignoring us.

The horn snake which was obstinately attacking Nana seems to notice it too, it stops its attack and turns its sickle neck towards the wyvern.

"Liza, leave this to me."

"Yes! Pochi, Tama, take some distance. Arisa, Mia! Use attack magic while the horn snake stops moving."

I strike the wyvern from the side with the short stun that I haven't used for a long time.

It didn't seem to think that we would attack it, the magic hit it directly and it crashed to the forest, mowing down several trees along the way.

The wing span of this wyvern is about 10 meters long. Rather than a dragon, it looks more like a Pteranodon. It's really like a fantasy wyvern to have poison on its tail.

<Rathalos approves>

The horn snake gets half of its body cut by Arisa's [<<Dimension Cutter>>], and its blood grandly scatters. Mia attacked the horn snake with [Water Blade] slightly later, but it seemed that the snake had resisted it as the water dispersed when it hit the body surface.

The horn snake, which didn't expect to suffer great damages, began to try to escape.

Of course Liza and the others won't allow it.

"Nana, we can't let the horn snake runs away."

"Understood. You snake, the preparation for making kabayaki is complete!"

Thanks to Nana's questionable provocation, and the barrier that Arisa had put on its retreat path, the horn snake had stopped trying to escape. Liza's magic spear, and Pochi's and Tama's short swords alternately attack the wound that Arisa has opened.

And then, when the snake movements has become dulled due to the blood loss, Nana pierces through its mouth with the [Sharp Edge]-strengthened sword, and it stops moving.

"Ey ey." "Ou nanodesu."

Pochi and Tama are having victory cry on top of the horn snake, but it's still too early.

"Pochi, Tama, you must not relax your guard. Nana, use the reinforcement magic again. Arisa, Mia, do you still have enough mana?"

Liza gives instructions, and the preparation for the next battle begins.

She's quite reliable.

Since Nana, who's in charge of the front line, is slightly hurt, I heal her with [Water Heal].

◇

Slightly later after that, a kaiju-like roar comes out from the deep of the forest. Apparently, the wyvern has finally awoken. I was cautious as to whether it could use magic by roaring like demons, but it seemed to be just a normal cry.

The advantage of wyverns is their flight ability.

Thus I thought that it would go out to the lake shore to accelerate in order to fly, but---

"Wait, that's a wyvern right?"

"Monkey~?"

"It's bouncing around nodesu."

The wyvern ran up two trees by kicking them alternately, and flew to the sky like that. Seemed that it properly used its talons to gain speed while running on the trees.

I pass some crossbows to Pochi, Tama and Lulu. They're originally anti-wyvern tools. Let's put them to use.

The wyvern is circling in the sky to amass speed, then it lower its altitude and comes attacking from the other side of the lake. It's not breaking through to the center, but looks like it's gliding while grazing the lake surface.

"Mia, strike the wyvern with [Balloon] when it reaches that bush over there. The three of you attack the wing--yes, aim at the right wing. Arisa, use the cutting magic from before on its wing. I don't mind if you cut it whole if you can."

Liza has given instructions to everyone.

Previously, it was Arisa who instructed them, but since she couldn't do it while concentrating on magic, Liza took her place.

I also set up [Magic Hand] and [<<Flexible Shield>>].

Usually I won't interfere, but since this wyvern is level 33, and the snake earlier is level 24, I'm ready to support them anytime.

When the wyvern was nearing the bush, water vapor that suddenly erupted broke its posture. The timing was a bit late, so it didn't seem like its posture got completely broken.

"Mwuu."

I pat and gently brush the head of Mia who's slightly pouting.

Following her, Arisa's [<<Dimension Cutter>>] hit the wyvern, it only scratched its shoulder, either because her level was too low, or because it was resisted.

The bolts that Pochi and Tama have fired at the same time only shallowly injure the tip of the wyvern's nose. Lulu's bolt seems to have flown toward the day after tomorrow. It's hard to hit a flying object even if it's flying straight to you after all.

Looking at this, I guess the opponent is a bit too much?

Nana blocks the wyvern attack with the [Shield] that she's put in front of her, and her own big shield. The wyvern is probably accustomed to combat as it's not using head-butt, but its talons to attack from the side. Since Nana's health gauge is rapidly decreasing, I quickly put the flexible shield between them. Mia has begun chanting to heal Nana, so I entrust it to her.

The wyvern kicks Nana once again and then goes back to the sky. Liza's thrust seems to have grazed its foot, but it doesn't seem to give much damage. I use ground shrink to catch Nana who was hurled away. There's not enough softness. Damn you armor.

Mia has joined the wyvern pursuit, so I heal Nana with my magic.

The bolts from the crossbows, and the attack magic successfully hit the wyvern by aiming for when it's slowing down while trying to go back to the sky. Lulu's bolt seemed to have hit it too. She's taking a triumphant pose beside me, so I congratulate her.

However, the wyvern only suffers some small injury, it's not enough to defeat it.

Seems that it has recognized us as formidable foes, it begins to aim for weaker individual. It's coming for Arisa while not slowing down, trying to catch her with the talons on its hind legs. Nana provokes it, but its aim is unmoving.

As expected, I can't call this a training if a victim falls. I move in front of Arisa with ground shrink and kick the wyvern.

Since it was going to escape over head, I quickly grabbed its tail and slapped it to the lakeside.

They should have enough anti-air training already, so I quickly approach, and cut the wyvern's neck with [Magick Sword].

The magick swords looks just like the shield and protection magic from nature magic, transparent like glasses. I can freely change the blade from the size of a dagger to a two-meters long great sword. It can become extremely sharp, but in exchange it will become thin and brittle, so it's hard to use it without sword skill.

Since I was troubled during the whales extermination back then, I've improved the latter magick sword version that I've ordered to be able to produce 20 meters long blade. Since the blade's strength and the likes are impossible, I don't know just how practical it is.

Arisa and Lulu have leveled up from this battle. Lulu doesn't seem like she's gained new skills. I've let her read magic books recently, but I wonder if her training isn't enough. It's unfortunate.

"It's just one point, just one point more~~~"

I ask Arisa who's stamping the ground what happens, seems like she's short of one point to raise the space magic skill level.

◇

The grilled wyvern is too bitter, so it's lacking, but the kabayaki from the horn snake is superb. It might be nice if I served it on rice boxes like Arisa had requested. I've made tofu hamburg steak for Mia's dinner. With faces full of conflicts, Pochi and Tama compare Mia's hamburg steak with the kabayaki, but they lose to the charm of meat and eat the kabayaki and the grilled wyvern in frustration somewhat.

Since the wyvern's innards contain poison, I buried them in a hole.

And then, we wash our sweat on the open air bath I've made on the lake shore after dinner.

Open air bath under the sky that's full of stars is nice after all.

Arisa who has just got out of the bath, Pochi and Tama are gathered, they drink the fruit milks that have been cooled with ice. I don't think it's good for a girl to drink it in one gulp while putting her hand on her waist, but I leave her alone, since she's properly wrapping the bath towel on her body.

"Fuuh, after some delicious meal, taking an open air bath on the lake side along with the reflection of the starry sky! On top of that, there's even the cold fruit milk, the rest has been decided, right!"

Arisa turns her head to me who's drying Mia's hair.

Please stop that guhehe laugh. I feel the danger to my body. I'll gladly welcome it after 10 years though.

"Hoi, Mia. It's over."

"Nn."

I think it's faster if I just use [Dry] of the life magic, but since Mia shows dislike while shaking her head, I still use a towel even now.

Arisa, whose mood has worsen since ignored, leans her body on my back while rambling like a drunkard, so I lift and throw her to the bed.

I plan to take the airship on the mountain range course that's away from the mass of wyverns on the summit of a mountain. I intend to take a look at it once, since I'm worried with the air current near the summit.

If anything unreasonable happens to the airship, I will fold the blimp and use [Magic Hand] to carry the airship.

While thinking about Bornean forest on the other side of the mountain range, I set off from the campground alone.

9-10. Mountain Range Encounter

Satou's here. They say that negligence is one's greatest enemy, but I think it's fine when you're at least aware that you're being careless. Recently, I've begun to think that the real scary thing may be self-conceit.

◇

The next morning, I have a reason for going ahead alone.

There's the fact that I want to look at how the wyverns react toward the air current, but I'm confirming things ahead since halfway of this mountain range is a different territory. I think it's most likely Bornean forest territory, so for the sake of my companions' safety, I should properly confirm it.

Actually I went out last night, but the air current was different, and the monsters weren't moving at night, so I went back because it was meaningless. Going back straight was embarrassing, so I cull out the stronger monsters around the perimeter of the camping ground. There were two horn snakes among the monsters I swept, I'll make another kabayaki next time.

Now then, the highest peak of this mountain range is about as high as the Everest from my original world. Wow, many 8000 meters tall mountains are lined up. Even the valley where I'm going isn't less than 4000 meters high, so it can be called a nature's stronghold.

The wyverns are most numerous on the southwestern 6000-meters tall mountain. Several dozens of them are there.

There is no wyvern on the mountain-crossing course that I've chosen, but the fan-shaped form that can be seen scattered away from the summit of the mountain along the course catches my attention. I wonder if there's something in the summit that attacks those wyverns like the wyvern from yesterday. The enemy search on the map works only in the mountain range, so if there's really something, it's probably beyond that.

Now then, enough about the wyverns, there are several hidden villages scattered about on this mountain. Any one of them is a small village of 10-20 people. There are various races like humans, fairykin, bearmen, and such, but since they're separated quite far from each other, they don't seem to have cultural exchange or competitions.

I didn't intend to get in touch with any of the hidden village, but I saw a girl-san who was being chased by a pack of wolves, so since I didn't want to abandon her, I routed the wolves with [Remote Stun]. My figure was seen, but since I was in silver masked hero mode, it was alright.

◇

I choose a route where I won't be in a near-miss situation with the hidden villages, flying about 100 meters high above the ground along the mountain. Due to that, wyverns and flying beetle monsters attacks me in droves. Thinking that they would be heralds for the airship tomorrow, I cut them with [Magick Swords] whenever I encounter them.

I use [Remote Arrow] only for the monsters called land urchins that shoot out lance-like needles from the ground. I feel like I'd suffer pointed-tip phobia if I fought such hedgehog-like monsters up-close.

However, there sure are a lot of monsters.

There are only a few of them around the outskirts of the hidden villages, but if these many monsters attack the villages on whim, it looks like they'll be annihilated. Let's take care as not to use magic that are too noisy or showy.

I set up the [Magick Sword] against the wyvern that's come out of the mountain recess while feeling a bit fed up with it, but the wyvern doesn't seem to have me in mind.

'Perhaps', I think so while checking the map, and I understand the being that's chasing the wyvern.

I see, no wonder it's running.

While smashing the summit that the wyvern is detouring, that being appears.

A dragon.

Black dragon.

The jet black dragon calmly flies, and then, after it glares at me while flying in the sky, it catches the flying wyvern with one bite from its jaws.

It's a large dragon that's about 100 meters long from the tip of the horn on its head to its tail. However, it's slenderer than the [Bulking and Heavy Western Dragon] in my imagination.

So they haven't become extinct huh. I immerse myself with selfish relief.

Now then, what should we do about this.

The black dragon has been really glaring at me since a while ago.

『GROOOUUUUNN！』

>[Dragon Language Skill Acquired]

For the time being, I guess I should talk. I raise the skill to level 5 and activate it.

"Little one, prostrate yourself. You're before the king of sky."

"Heya, nice to meet you, black dragon-san."

I wonder if I should have added honorific title? Black dragon-san sounds like a medicine's name, what's up with that. In preparation for if the other party is short-tempered, I adjust my position and put my back to face the mountains.

"Hou, you understand dragon language huh, little one."

In reality, it's hard to speak this language. If I didn't have ventriloquism skill, I might not be able to speak the words even if I understood it.

"Well then, you disrespectful one. Let's fight."

Why become like that.

To start a battle even before introducing itself, there's a limit even for battle junkies.

When my mouth is hanging to begin negotiating with it, I successively put up [<<Flexible Shield>>], and [<<Flexible Armor>>] while the crisis perception is kicking in.

Jet black color fills the view, and the mountains suffers the blow together with roaring sound.

Even though I immediately moved using the Sky Drive and the Ground Shrink, two out of the eight flexible shields I had put up were gone.

Dragon Breath.

I see, this is indeed.

Two mountains have been hollowed with just one attack. It's good that I changed my position. It probably won't reach the base of the mountain where Arisa and the others are, but in case of the worst happening.

"Hou, you've evaded Black Flame (Breath) huh. As expected of a hero."

"Thanks. I don't want to fight if possible though?"

"This is inevitable. Dragons and heroes, it's a fate for them to fight if they meet."

Wait a minute. Didn't they fight alongside Yamato-san?

The question is lost along with my voice from the second Black Flame (Breath) roaring sound. This time I'm a bit late from escaping, but it seems that I can defend against one blow of it if I use all eight of [<<Flexible Shield>>].

The black dragon has caught up with me since I was inspecting that.

Its tail attacks me from a blind spot.

It's several times heavier than Wagahai-kun's, but lighter compared to an attack from the wild boar king.

In other words, it's not a strength that I can't endure huh.

This time I counterattack the black dragon that has lost its momentum and stopped in the air. By combining Sky Drive and Ground Shrink, I strike the heart of the black dragon with fighting game characters-like kicks.

Many scales are broken the moment a kick connects, but the kicks doesn't pierce through it. That was dangerous, I mustn't forgot that I should not kill it.

However, there were responses like glasses breaking before the scales were broken. There probably are magical defense fields on surface of the scales.

The black dragon, that has become quiet after I fling it to one of the mountain, pushes aside some debris and gets up.

It howls once on that spot--looks like it uses magic.

I'm shot with black lightning.

＞[Lightning Magic: Dragon Skill Acquired]
＞[Darkness Magic: Dragon Skill Acquired]
＞[Darkness Resistance Skill Acquired]

This is the first time I've acquired two skills from one magic.

It's quite strong, maybe because it's a compound elemental magic. It sips through even the gaps of the dense flexible armor formation, and burn the leather armor inside. The flexible armor still has 80% of its endurance, but the leather armor has been torn.

I feel tingling for a bit, but there doesn't seem to be any strange additional effect.

Now then, what should I do.

It looks like it'll die if I shoot it with an intermediate-level magic, and using holy swords will turn it to pieces.

Of course it doesn't seem like the black dragon is open to discussions.

Can't be helped, let's talk with body language.

I drop the black dragon that's trying to fly to the ground with [Air Hamer]. I've already expected the 150-meters radius crater that it produces. Since the dragon suffers even less damage than I've expected, I randomly pound it not directly, but with [Air Hammer], and [Short Stun] while 'oraoraora'-ing, breaking the black dragon's spirit.

While taking notes of the black dragon's health, I repeat the environmental destructions.

I guard against the Black Flame (Breath) that it's thrown out of desperation with [Aqua Wall]. Apparently, the Black Flame (Breath)'s strength is in proportion with the black dragon's stamina, it doesn't have the trace of power like it's shown in the beginning. [<<Water Film>>] might even be able to guard against it unexpectedly.

Nevertheless, the black dragon's attack isn't stopping even though it's been cornered this much. Just how much of a battle junkie this dragon is. It's used not only the [Lighting], and [Darkness] magic from before, but even the [Fire], and [Wind] magic, yet everything is blocked by the flexible armor, there's no meaning to it.

"Guhahaha, this is fun hero. It's been since my fight with the heavenly dragons that I use this much power to the limit."

This dragon must have certainly troubled the heavenly dragons.

Is it intentional, or unconscious, this conversation is probably for the sake of getting my guard down. Scraping sounds are mixed in the conversation as the dragon seemingly casts magic, jet black feelers that look like shadow whips arise from the shadow of the mountain in the surrounding below me at once. They're not only appearing from below, but also the surrounding shadow, wrapping me.

According to the log, it's a magic called [Dark Snap]. The darkness version of shadow whips huh.

By tying me, is it going to use Black Flame (Breath), or a secret advanced-level magic, or maybe a forbidden magic like the hero's companions was using.

--at this time, I was careless.

The next black dragon's attack is not magic.

It's fangs.

One bite of the primitive fang.

It's said in the picture book that I read for Pochi and the others.

The fangs of dragons penetrate through everything.

The fangs of dragons destroy even the demon lord, it's the ultimate blade.

The black dragon fang penetrates my flexible shield, and tears through my flexible armor.

And then, fresh blood overflow--

9-11. Mountain Range Encounter (2)

Satou's here. Newcomer's welcome party, year-end party, and new year's party. There are various types of feasts, but I feel that they're lubricant for communications. Drunkards who don't know their own drinking tolerances are troubling though.

◇

"Whoa!"

Just before the fang thrusts into my shoulders, I drive my fist onto it without holding back. The broken fang injures the black dragon's mouth and blood overflow from it. Well, it should be healed immediately since it's a dragon. Probably.

I twist my body using that momentum, and hit the side of the black dragon's head with a roundhouse kick.

However, carelessness really is one's greatest enemy. I didn't think that the flexible shield and the flexible armor could be smashed that easily. I was thinking of countering it when the fang was to be stopped by the flexible shield, but since it was easily drilled through, I lost my composure.

I look at the black dragon who has fainted right beside me.

Did I kick it a bit too hard? I think that there was feeling of the skull cracking, but a dragon will probably be cured immediately. They're the strongest creatures after all.

However, after waiting for nearly one hour, and even after the [Fainted] status has disappeared, the black dragon isn't waking up.

Is it playing dead?

Come to think of it, the dragons that are depicted on the picture books all like to drink. There are a lot of dragons that are heavy drinkers too in my world, I guess I should try it. If it's a non-drinker dragon, we can just fight once again. I won't let my guard down this time.

I put a barrel of liquor near the tip of the black dragon's nose. It's a strong liquor even among the breweries at duchy capital called [Dragon Slayer]. The strong drink here (this world) is different even though the alcohol strength matches, this one is famous to be severe from the first taste.

I use the broken fang to break the liquor barrel's lid, rich liquor odor spread to the surrounding. The black dragon's nasal cavity has expanded before I knew it.

The black dragon peeks, but it quickly closes its eyes in panic when it meets mine.

Err, you're too late.

"You've awoken right? Why don't we exchange cups of liquor in praises of our good fight?"

"Uuumuuu, very well, I'll make an exception for this special draw. However, this amount isn't enough for exchanging cups."

While keeping up begrudging attitude, the black dragon gets up. I understand that you're trying to keep your dignity, but it's a fail if you stare at the liquor barrel so fixatedly like that.

I'm being tactful here, and urge the dragon to go ahead and then, it begins to taste the liquor. It's surprisingly obedient.

"Umumwu, excellent. Liquor that humans made really are tasty. But, dragon liquor won't lose to it y'know? I'm returning the cup, now taste the dragon liquor--"

The black dragon howls for very long like it's singing. It is a fantastical magic that summons a spring which gushes out liquor called [Liquor Spring (Soul Well)].

Since it doesn't feel right with just drinking, I add a roasted whole wyvern, and 200 kilograms of grilled whale meat on skewers as appetizers to accompany the drink. I use the whale's small bones for the skewers. For heating, I use furnace flame (Forge).

During the feast, when I was cooking the food, I contacted Arisa with [Telephone] magic. Since there were howls and sounds of destructions like it was some kind of kaijuu great battle at the mountain where I was heading, this was to put them to ease. Arisa and Liza seems to have been worried although not to the degree like before.

And, I've told Arisa and the others that I will be back after I clean up the mess, but--

"Umu, good, good, nectar indeed."

"The liquor from this spring is also delicious. How should I say, it really goes well with meat."

--This has become a simple drinking party.

We exchange cups while I'm listening to the black dragon's stories that are mainly about its battle journey.

I'm most relieved to hear about the dragons among the stories of the black dragon.

There were only 70% of the whole dragons in the dragon valley, while the remaining 30% are located in other continents. I'm glad that they're not on the verge of extinction or something.

The dragons on this continent--except the ones that were on the dragon valley--are the black dragon in front of me, the heavenly dragons that reside on the sacred mountain to the west, and several young dragons, beside those, there are only lower dragons.

Lower dragons are more or less dragons, but they don't have clear intellect, and are no different than beasts. According to the black dragon, likening lower dragons to dragons is like lumping goats and humans together because they are both mammals. Using goats in analogies seem to be the black dragon's favorite. I wonder if he really likes goat meat, it often comes out in his stories. Unfortunately, I don't have goat meat left in the storage, so I can't treat him with it.

While feeling relieved, I put another cup of the transparent green liquor from the spring on my lips. Drinking ginjoushu-like liquor in the depth of a forest, it's a mysterious flavor.

<TLN: A grade of sake, google it if you're curious. :>

I've only noticed that we have fought for half a day when I look at the watch after the battle is over. The black dragon's stamina is amazing. It doesn't look like a level 68 at all. In fact, I feel that he's stronger than the level 69 hero.

I'm hungrier than usual, maybe due to having a fight that lasted half a day. I must have eaten about 10 kilograms of meat already although it might look little compared to the gag-manga like scene of the black dragon gulping down meat in front of me. I have to end this soon.

In spite of that thought, I keep on consuming the appetizers one after another as the feast continues until morning. I've stopped counting after eating 30 kilogram of meat. I feel slightly worried as to where the things I've eaten are gone to while staring at my flat stomach, but that worry vanishes by the slight drunkenness.

I'll bring the dwarves along to drink together next time.

>Title [Friend of the Black Dragon] Acquired

>Title [Mountain Crusher] Acquired

>Title [Hearty Eater] Acquired

>Title [Glutton] Acquired

◇

In the dawn of the next morning, I'm crossing the mountain range on the back of the black dragon.

I want to ride on a dragon just once.

Coming out of the sea of clouds, I overlook the dwelling of the black dragon on the highest peak, and we pass the mountain range. The morning sun shines on the [Sea of Trees]. It's a forest that continues on to the horizon.

And then, at the center of the forest faraway, there's the thread that extends to the sky which I can always see ever since we've entered the duchy territory. Mia has told me the true nature of that thread.

The world tree.

However, it doesn't look like one no matter how I look at it.

If anything, it looks like nothing but an orbital elevator. Was this not a fantasy world but an SF?

"What's wrong, my kindred-spirit, Kuro. Do you find the world tree unusual?"

<TLN: Kuro can mean black.>

The Kuro that the black dragon refers to is me.

This is something that happened during the drinking bout, by the black dragon's request, I gave him a name, Heiron. He had intended to ask for a name when someone that could equal him appeared. Looks like dragons don't have habit to give inherent name among them.

Maybe because I was nanashi (nameless), I've also acquired the name Kuro from the black dragon Heiron. About this Kuro name.

From what I was told, it was the name of a child that the black dragon raised on whim 900 years ago. Since this name is pronounced with definite Japanese language, that child might have been a reincarnated person. It seems he doesn't remember the child's race nor hair color. Even the name Kuro seemed to have resurfaced like a flash from the corner of his memory.

Going back to the main subject (leaving that aside), it's about the world tree right now.

"Yeah, I'm thinking just how far it's extending."

"That continues on to the void. I don't know how many days it'll take even with my wings."

Is that so, dragons can fly to the space huh.

It must not have anything to do with aerodynamic.

Since I'm outside the duchy territory, I use the [All Map Exploration] after a long time.

The forest before my eyes is really [Bornean Forest]. However, although it's certainly written that the forest is on the neighborhood of the duchy in the traveler's journal, I wish the distance was also written. It's no wonder that the person who's written the traveler's journal doesn't have a description for Bornean Forest.

The place where the world tree is located is in another map, yet the area of these sea of trees are a little wider than the duchy territory. Merely thousands of elves live in such vast area. And then, about 10.000 fairykins beside the elves are living in small villages scattered on the edges of the sea of trees.

"I'd like to take you to the world tree, but the high elf hag will be noisy then. When I got close to it back in the day, thunder cloud descended upon me, and half of my top scales were torn. I was in pain for 100 years until it was time for shedding. Therefore Kuro, you too should only get close around here."

I see, so the defense mechanism of the elves can repel dragons huh, amazing.

I should contact Mia's parents with [Telephone] and have them come pick us up after we've crossed the mountains.

I sure want to meet a high elf once.

◇

I parted with the black dragon Heiron at the place where we were fighting yesterday.

He didn't need the fang that was broken yesterday since it would grow back in 100 years, so I received it. He doesn't need to put dentures in huh.

Since there are broken pieces of dragon scales when I search around the area of the fight, I collect them all. Although the [Liquor Spring] will seemingly turn into normal water spring after a few days, it's still gushing out liquor now, so I fill the barrels I have in hands with it. I'll send some to elder Dohar and Galhar when we get back to civilization.

I have to clean up one thing first before I get back to Arisa and the others.

Due to the utter rampages of the black dragon Heiron yesterday, monsters and beasts are making great migrations. Due to that, the village of the girl that I've saved from the wolves yesterday is in trouble.

I immediately rush to the sky above the village using Sky Drive.

Bizarre ants are besieging the dwellings that also acts as forts with the acid that can penetrate through the wall of rocks. They're just level 3 monsters, but there are a lot of them. If this keeps up, the village will be overrun in less than a few hours.

They're shouting something, but I don't understand the words.

>[Silga Language Skill Acquired]

I decide to quickly exterminate the ants with [Remote Arrows] since casualties will arise if I do it while being carefree. I finished them all after five volleys.

I put one point to Silga language skill along the way. Although I'm hearing it in prattle, they seem to be shouting something like angel, or Garleon-sama toward me.

I might be treated like an angel or god because I was shooting magic while floating in the sky. The bizarre ants acid attack was stinky so I didn't lower my altitude much.

This is only a village with 19 people, so it's probably going to be tough cleaning up the bodies of all these ants. While moving like gliding using sky drive, I put them into the [Bizarre Ants] folder in my storage. If I find an area where slimes are growing en masse, let's throw these there.

The village people who have come out are prostrating themselves on the ground.

Thin fumes are coming out of the hands and feet of the prostrating people due to the leftover acid on the ground.

"Face, raise, stand."

The words for conversing are troublesome. I raise skill level to three, enough for everyday conversations.

I heal them with [Aqua Heal] since they're a bit scalded. The elderly are saying, "The pain on my knee has disappeared", and the women "My scars disappeared". However, the voices that say, "My eyes, I can see with my eyes", or "Lila is standing", mixed among it, catch my attention. It's not supposed to be able to heal loss of body parts though?

I'm using [Pure Water] to remove the acid from the water well and the ground while being treated like a god. I don't know how effective it is, but this was the only magic that seemed usable.

The fields have become tragic after getting trampled by the ants, so I leave them with rice and smoked wolf meat as food for the the meantime. I'll leave the recovery of the fields for themselves to take care on their own.

I feel a bit meddlesome, but I also leave them with 10 bottles of diluted potion, and large quantity of medicines for avoiding monsters that have no purpose with me.

"Farewell! Live in good health."

With skill level three, the vocabulary is strange huh.

"God, please your name! Please tell us your name."

Who's a god.

The girl whom I had saved from the wolves before asked for my name. I'm undecided between Nanashi and Kuro, but I guess Nanashi will do. Let's use Kuro exclusively for when I meet some dragon.

I told the girl, "Nanashi", and left that village.

Since there were three villages that looked like they'd be in trouble, I made walls on the surface of the mountain to change the courses of the monsters and the beasts, avoiding the crisis before it happened. I pray that there won't be any monster who climbs over the wall when it sees it.

>Title [Savior] Acquired

>Title [One who is Worshiped] Acquired

I wonder if it's because of the hardships, the airship ark that we are riding crosses the mountain range without any problem and finally arrive at the border of the Bornean Forest.

9-12. Bornean Forest

Satou's here. You can discern those who like to ride amusement park's vehicles and those who don't from their screams. Different people have different suitabilities of course, but perhaps they can enjoy it because they trust those game machines.

◇

After we've crossed the mountain range, the airship ark descends on a narrow grassland between the forest and the foot of a mountain.

"Ah~, it's finally the ground."

"Oh Arisa, wasn't it just half a day long."

"But, I hadn't thought that it would be shaking that much."

What Arisa's saying is true.

There were more strange air currents than I thought, so the shaking was worse than I expected. Thanks to [Canopy] magic, we didn't experience the effect of temperature fall and atmospheric pressure change, but since the [Air Control] couldn't absorb the radical change of the air current, I couldn't prevent the shaking.

"E, earth nanodesu."

"Yes, it's the mother earth."

As the result, Pochi and Liza look a bit pitiful.

They fall down to the ground with a plop. The eyes of the two are a bit unfocused. I didn't shake the ark this time though. Rather, it might've been better if I supported it to prevent the shaking.

Maybe I should had let them sleep like the horses that I gave sleeping medicines.

Arisa and Mia seem like they had motion sickness, they looked a bit unsteady. I gave them some anti-motion sickness medicine, but it didn't seem to work well.

Nana is operating like usual. Even now, she's poking on a little flower below that's swaying from wind.

Tama seemed like she was really enjoying the unexpected shaking, she was frolic from the beginning to the end that now she's like a child who has just gone to an amusement park, drained of her battery. She's currently sleeping on the grassland with a satisfied smile.

Lulu was afraid and looked like she would get motion sickness, but she screamed, "Kyaa kyaa" as I caught her on my arm like she was riding a jet coaster, she was smiling until the end. I didn't have any objection since her flushed cheeks was cute.

There's still a long time until the nightfall, but since everyone is totally exhausted, I decide to camp here today.

There's no monster in Bornean forest, but there are some on the boundary here. However, there's no particularly strong monster around, so I leave Nana to guard everyone.

I've found the mithril vein I've always yearned for in the mountain range, so I'm going there to mine it. Since the mitrhil vein is quite deep at one kilometer below the ground, I make a shaft until the depth of my goal after using 4-5 [Mud Wall]. I don't know how much will the mithril decrease after refining it, but several tons of it are probably enough. If it's not, I can just come back here.

It's still a while before it's time to prepare for dinner, so I fly around the mountains, gathering things like clays for making earthenwares, stones for building, and rare earth minerals. There are also gold and silver veins, but there are too little gold per square meter area, so I won't touch it. I can just melt old gold coins if I need some.

◇

There's an unexpected guest when I've returned to the camp ground as the sun begins setting.

Even if I said guest, it's not a person. It's an unicorn living in Bornean forest. Unlike the unicorns in Muno forest, it looks like a zebra with its stripes instead of a white horse.

The unicorn and the hornless are getting along well as they eat the horse fodders I've made myself.

"This is?"

"Mutual love."

"Two hours ago, it came wandering about and they began to flirt. Riajuu, or rather RiaJUU, die."

<TLN: The JUU above mean beasts.>

"I won't subjugate or capture it since it's not hostile, but what should we do with it?"

Arisa curses them dejectedly, but please don't pick a quarrel with even unicorns. After telling Liza that she doesn't need to subjugate it, I begin to prepare for dinner together with Lulu.

Tonight I'm making tofu hamburg steak as the main menu per Mia's request. I also make chicken-less chicken rice, potatoes, and custard puddings. I was going to make fried prawns and sausages, but I made fried bamboo shots, and macaronis instead. Finally, I stab the shaped chicken rice with toothpicks adorned with flags, and it's complete.

"You're really diligent~ after characters bento, now it's kid lunches eh."

"Cute."

"Peerless and wonderful~"

"Yes nanodesu! If just hamburg is the strongest, it'll be peerless with this many additions nanodesu!

Pochi has recovered enough to make you think her exhaustion a few hours ago is an illusion. Her tail isn't enough to show it as she's even swinging her arms. I'm glad that she's excited, but she could faint if she's too excited.

"Master."

"What is it?"

Nana is looking at me with eyes that look very dissatisfied. Since Nana seems like she would go on a rampage, I've restrained her with [Magic Hand] ahead of time. It's unfortunate that there's no tactile sensation.

I've made everyone's shares properly this time. Nana also has one of course. I've especially added all three kinds of the flags for Nana's plate. She probably won't rampage now.

"Keen insight. Praising master for having made something truly wondrous."

I'm glad that Nana is also satisfied. Arisa grumbles, "I'm not a kid.", but it seems it's just spoken words.

Since I feel sorry for them if there's no meat, I pile up wyvern karage on another plate. I use wyvern meat that I've pickled with liquor soup since yesterday. I hear Liza is saying, "It's even more delicious than yesterday.", so I'll use seasoning for wyvern meat from now on.

With this kind of menu, it's easy to tell their habits of eating food; Tama starts from her favorite ones, while Pochi and Mia start from their least favorites. Although the food on the large platter are Pochi's favorite too, so she's eating it.

"Satou, delicious."

"Nn."

I reply Mia who's unusually speaking using two words by mimicking her.

To Mia who firmly demands another helping, I serve it. Pochi and Tama who have finished eating earlier after battling for karage with Liza present their plates while saying, "Another~", "Another nanodesu." when they see that scene.

When the big pot that I've prepared with chicken rice becomes empty, everyone is full as they sprawl on the sheet for sleeping while patting their stomachs.

I leave the cleaning up to Liza and Nana as I begin to make a simple electric fan.

Even though we're beyond the mountain range, we shouldn't be located that far to the south, so we've become a bit sweaty, I'm making the fan to make our sleep more pleasant. By the time I realized that I could just use [Air Control] to create some breeze, I had completed the electric fan.

◇

The next day after breakfast, I asked Mia the way to enter Bornean forest, but since she had never gone out of the forest, she didn't know.

Then, I guess I should ask someone who knows.

I search Mia's parents, Lamisauuya, and Lilinatoa from the menu and mark them. Now then, I guess the one I should contact is the mother.

I invoke [Telephone] magic with Lilinatoa as the target. This magic won't be properly invoked if the other party doesn't want to talk. It's good that it can't be used to attack with prank calls.

"Who?"

The reply is a voice that sounds exactly like Mia's. Only I can hear this voice. It's certain since I've tested it with Lulu and Pochi before.

"Pleased to meet you, I'm Satou, a human. I'm sorry for calling you with magic--"

Right at then, Lilinatoa-san's voice cuts in.

"My! Satou-san you said?! Are you the one Dohar's mentioned? That's right isn't it! Then, perhaps you've brought Mia along? You've brought her right? --"

She's talking like a machine gun, just like Mia is when she's drunk.

I'm made to listen to her for five minutes straight without any chance to talk back. Looks like they know my name from Dohar-san's message. I'm glad the words that Mia's said in the dwarven hometown like "Mutual love", or "Eloping", aren't taken seriously by them.

In contrast, the letter from Seryuu city's manager-san, Yusalatoya, hasn't arrived yet. It seems Dohar-san employed magic transmission which made his message arrived first.

They're going to pick us, but they don't know our position, so I shoot a fireball to the sky as a signal.

A little while after the fireball has disappeared, two elves appear from the forest that has been divided in front of us.

They're wearing green clothes like the elves in the picture books.

""Mia""

"Laya, Lia"

Parents and child who call each other with their names are hugging.

Really, this is quite a moving scene.

Arisa is pulling the sleeves of me who's being moved as I watch the reunion.

What? Even though it's at the good part?

"Hey, they're Mia's parents right?"

"That's right."

"But you know~"

I understand what Arisa is trying to say.

Mia's parents look like they're only slightly older than Mia, they look younger even compared to Lulu. They seem to be a race who grow slowly, Hayato will be delighted.

The father's face looks exactly like the elf manager-san at Seryuu city. They might be blood-related, their population is few after all.

"Satou."

"Thank you."

"My, Satou-san right? You're Satou-san aren't you. You're younger than I thought? You're young aren't you--"

I greet the parents whom Mia introduces.

Nevertheless, the father seems like a taciturn person like Mia. There's no middle way between this couple, it's really hard to talk with them.

We're going to enter the Elves' hometown as we're invited by Mia's parent.

9-13. Bornean Forest (2)

Satou's here. In anime and manga, I've seen a lot of scenes where the character mistakes the mother for the child, but I've never encountered it in reality. You can't deceive the wrinkles and the skin gloss after all.

However, in a different world with long life species, it seems to be a relatively common scene.

◇

"■■ ■……■ ■ ■ ■■■■■ Forest Maiden Summon (Summon Dryad)"

Mia father sure is fluent when he's chanting.

His summon calls out a little girl with bare skin and long green hair that appears from the trunk of a tree. She looks exactly like the dryad near the maze of Trazayuya. Since she's level 30, she's probably a different one.

However, the dryad talks to me candidly when our eyes meet.

"Boy! It's been awhile."

"Are you perhaps the dryad I've met on the withered mountain?"

If that's true, she's leveled up very fast.

"I guess you could say that, or not like that at all. This body's status will change depending on the tree used as the cost, but the inside is the same."

Is it something similar to how the running software is the same even though the PCs are different?

"Dryad."

"Wait a minute."

Mia's father calls the dryad, but she treats him irresponsibly, and gives priority to talking with me. Oh? She can defy her summoner huh.

The dryad floats a bit above the ground, clings her arms on my neck, and presses her body. Your face is close. Close I said.

I push back the body of the dryad who's being overly close.

"That time was delicious. I want to taste it again."

"W, wait, are you cheating? You're cheating right!"

"M, master."

"Mwuu."

The dryad most likely deliberately leaves out the word, "Mana", and Arisa who's heard it approaches me while howling, "Ugaa."

Even though it's groundless, Lulu looks at me while looking very sad, and Mia who's hiding behind is scratching my back.

That dryad goes under my armpit as if peeking to see Mia's face.

"Oh~? Oh oh oh~? The one over there is baby-chan right?"

"You're mistaken."

"I'm not you know~? It's about time you pay the compensation I wonder~?"

The dryad chases Mia like a cat who has found the rat. Please stop running in circle around me you two. You'll soon become like melted butter y'know?

Even Mia's parent begin to question her when they heard 'compensation' word from Dryad.

"Mia!"

"Wait, Mia! Don't tell me you asked something from dryad? You did didn't you? Even though I've warned you so much! I've warned you right? --"

"Mwuu, emergency."

While Mia's mother is having a long talk, Liza is supplementing, and it seems that Mia had borrowed the dryad's power for making a shortcut on the forest during the Muno city incident. Mia's mother tries to negotiate with the dryad, but it seem they're not reaching an agreement.

As it is now, the dryad will suck Mia's mana and life force, turning her dry. I don't want to see that.

"Dryad, is mana fine as the compensation?"

"Of course, it's alright~ I'm only going to drain the stamina since the mana isn't enough. If it's the boy's mana, I will gladly take it."

"I understand. Then you can absorb it."

When the dryad is coming for my lips, the voices of Mia's parents and Arisa stop her.

"Wait."

"That's right, wait Satou-san. Dryad is a glutton, she can eat no matter how much you know? She will absorb, sip sip. Do you want to become dried thing even though you're so young? You don't do you--"

"Gyaa, nonono! Those lips are mineee~~~"

"Mwuu."

My lips are mine.

Mia thrusts herself between the dryad and me. It looks like she's trying to protect me, but looking at her trembling body, she seems to fear the dryad's going to drain her.

I ask the dryad a question while slowly avoiding Mia's side.

"Dryad, can you absorb besides from the lips?"

"I can you know? You like the lewd one better?"

The instant Arisa hears dryad's "lewd", she's boiling. Since the talk didn't progress, I quickly blocked her mouth with my hand.

"Without the lewd one."

"Then, how about I drain it by kissing on above your heart?"

When I picture it, it looks like a crime, but it's alright if it's just that I guess.

I take off the knight-style coat and my shirt. I feel that Arisa and Lulu are staring at me, but it's probably just my imagination. Why would they look now when I've always changed clothes beside them.

Since Mia's parents are worried, I tell them that I've transfered my mana to the dryad once before, putting them at ease.

"Then, thanks for the me~al."

Mia's parents are right to describe her as a [Glutton].

My mana are being drained at an amazing rate. Due to me having mana sensing now unlike before, I understand the flow of mana. Moreover, since I've grown accustomed with mana operation, I understand that the dryad is adjusting the flow of the flowing mana to eliminate the waste. In fact, I feel that the efficiency of the dryad's absorption has improved compared to when she started to drain.

It seems the mana that the dryad has drained go toward the forest, it's spreading through the roots of all kinds of trees.

However, just how much she's going to drain.

I feel that she'll really drain it all if I leave her alone, so I stop her when she's drained 1500MP in total.

"Aahn, more."

"Stuff it."

All the trees around the surrounding have become in full bloom.

Depending on the type of the trees, there are also some which have its branches bending due to the fruits that have ripened. They shouldn't have been there just now. There are no overgrown weeds, I wonder if the dryad has controlled it.

"Well~ It's been awhile since I eat this much. Just say if you want some helps in the forest. I'll save you 2-3 times for free."

"Thanks for that."

I'd have liked her help with the weeds highway.

>Title [Guest of the Forest] Acquired

>Title [Lover of the Forest Maiden] Acquired

Who's the lover of whom.

◇

I leave Lulu to wipe my breast with a wet towel, though it's not like it's dirty. You don't have to rub it so strongly you know? Although I think so, I'm not saying anything since I'm overawed by Lulu's serious expression.

Nana was going to imitate the dryad, but Arisa stopped her. That's rare, usually it's Arisa who would to try to imitate such thing.

Looks like Mia's and Mia's parent's surprised expressions have settled when I've finished wearing clothes.

I thought Pochi and Tama were quiet since a while ago, turned out they were being held on Liza's armpits while she put her hands on their mouths. Since they ask for help with their glances, I tell Liza to release them.

"The gate."

"Right, right, I've forgotten haven't I. It's only for a bit you know? You've called the dryad in order to create the road to Bornean hometown. Isn't it?"

"That's right."

"Understoo~d. Forest Lead (Alf Road)."

With Mia's father's urge, the dryad uses a magic.

A road has opened between the forest, countless firefly lights appear from the ground, and the space is dyed with the golden color from it.

It's quite beautiful.

"Now, go~ It won't open for long."

"Let's go."

We tread upon the golden road with the guidance of Mia's father.

>[Forest Magic Skill Acquired]

Looks like it's a road made in subspace as the map only shows, [Area without Map].

"You can't look back okay~ you would become a lost child."

Please don't say such thing from behind. Pochi and Tama catch my hands, looking uneasy. Forbidden from looking behind, it's like Orpheus' and Izanagi's road to hell huh.

Later, I learned that looking behind was no problem. However, you could stray off the path if you do, thus they warned so.

When we come out of the road, we are near the center of Bornean forest.

◇

"Fuhaaa, TRU-LY, a town where elf lives right!"

Usually I would have stopped Arisa's shrieks, but it's impossible this time.

Houses where people lives made in the interior of gigantic trees are spread in front of our eyes. There's a fountain made from blue crystal in geometrical shape at the center of the open space, and around that fountain, small palm-sized fairies, and pixies are flying.

Since Nana has begun to walk there unsteadily when she sees the pixies, I exchange looks with Liza and pin her together from both sides.

The tree houses are built around the water fountain as the center. One of the houses can be as big as a 20-story building. Passages made from ivies and leaves are hung between the tree houses, connecting them.

I can see a super gigantic tree veiled between clouds behind those houses.

That is the world tree.

The bottom of the tree is properly of trees and shrubs. I'm glad, it's not really something like an orbital elevator.

The elves who are appearing from the tree houses are calling Mia's name while waving their hands. Mia waves her hand back while she faithfully calls each of their names. The corners of her eyes have become slightly moist.

Welcome home, Mia.

9-14. Mia's Secret

Satou's here. During the times when food allergy was a minor problem, looking for things that can be eaten seemed to be hard. Even longer ago, there was also time where people that were very picky with their food were stopped being treated like humans.

I wonder if food allergy exist in the other world...

◇

"Sweet melons~?"

"Lots are growing nodesu!"

"Pochi, Tama. They're fruits the elves have raised, so you can't take them without permissions okay."

Those are on the trees around Mia's houses that create the spiral staircase we're currently climbing. Pochi and Tama are in high spirits when they see the sweet melons and crimson oranges grown along the way.

"Nn."

Mia plucks one of the fruit, cuts it into two with a knife, and gives them to Pochi and Tama.

"When you're hungry, you can pluck and eat them as you like you know? You don't need to be reserved--"

I see, rather than being raised by someone, it might be more like ginkgo trees on the roadside.

Or so I've thought, not only on the trees along the roadside, but fruits and flowers are growing even inside the houses. I think the sunlight don't reach to the inside, how are they growing them.

We're guided to a big living room with very tall ceiling.

We leave Mia behind who's being jostled, and head toward the room with a table that looks like a tree stump guided by Mia's parents.

When Mia's father says, "Chairs", ivies rise from the ground to become chairs. This is quite fantasy-like.

When Mia's father snaps his fingers, some pixies bring several goblets and line them up on the table.

Mia's father snaps his fingers once again, and this time pitcher plant-like plants descend from above which then pour transparent liquid with sweet smell into the goblets.

Is it fine to drink this?

But, Pochi and Tama drink them without hesitation and raise voices of praises. Is that so, it's tasty huh.

We were captivated with the fantasy scenes that was unfolding in front of our eyes that we neglected to monitor one dangerous person.

We notice that after we've heard small voices of protests.

"'Let go of me.'"

"'Hey you, let go.'"

"'Halp, Laya, halp.'"

When I turn around, there are three pixies who have been caught by Nana begging for Mia's father help with faces that are about to cry. Nana is holding two of them on both her hands, while the last one is outrageously crammed on her breasts. Change with me.

Mia's father keeps staring at the pixie who's struggling on Nana's cleavage, not helping them. Since my eyes meet with Mia's father's somehow, we nod.

Ow.

Arisa beats my head from behind. The pixies seem to have been rescued by Lulu.

"Good grief, you oppai planet people."

"That's a misunderstanding."

"Nn, misunderstanding."

I avert my face from the condemning looks of Arisa and Lulu, and instead, drift my view to Mia who's being jostled. Elves are all slender after all huh. It seems there's no chubby elf. Either partially, or wholly.

◇

"'Geez, ya' gone and done it now.'"

"'That was bothersome.'"

"'Here, cozy.'"

For some reason, the pixies who have ran away from Nana are nesting on my head and shoulders. The one who's said peeved remark is pulling my hair while saying that. Since it's painful in itself, I put them on the table with my hands.

Pochi splits some baked sweets and feed it to the complaining pixies.

"'Ou! This is some good stuff.'"

"'It's true.'"

"'More, give me.'"

The crumbs from the baked sweets are spilling, but I guess I can just use life magic later.

The pixies from the town have gathered due to the praising voices of the pixies here.

"'Hey, give me?'"

"'Won't you, give me too?'"

"Au, au, wait nanodesu, there's, there's no more nodesu."

The pixies are talking in elf language so their words shouldn't connect, but somehow the conversations are established.

It's fun to look at panicking Pochi, but let's send her a lifeboat.

I take out a basket full of baked sweets through Item Box onto the table.

The pixies attack the baked sweets in high spirits.

...Uwah.

They're too vigorous that there are those who bury themselves on the basket showing only their legs, and there are also some who are falling from the table on the opposite side while carrying the sweets.

The elves who are coming with Mia seem to be interested with the baked sweets too, I've already lined up two basket of sweets on the table.

"Yum." "Umu." "Good." "Delicious."

They generally talk in short speech like Mia, but there are also some who talk long, although not as bad as Mia's mother.

"My, it's delicious. Really delicious. Hey, hey, are these made by Satou-san? It's not, is it?"

"It's true, this is delicious."

"Hey, although it's different from honey, the sweetness is wonderful isn't it."

Most of the elves are friendly, but not all of them it seems.

One elf boy points at me while glaring in front of me.

"Mutual love?"

Who with whom?

Mia clings on my neck from behind, and show it to the boy. "Of course!", she said, but I think that's groundless.

I understand that he has problems from his expression, but please tell that to the person in question.

Apparently, that boy likes Mia. Although I've been referring him as a boy, he looks like Mia's father. He's also 250 years old, so he's quite older than Mia.

"What's good about him?"

"Beautiful."

Ha? Beautiful?

The reply for the boy's question is incomprehensible. In fact, the elves around us are looking puzzled too.

"'Beautifull.'" "'Yup, it's beautiful.'" "'Isn't it.'"

Some pixies are agreeing with Mia.

The eyes color of Mia's mother who's tilting her neck in puzzlement change from blue to silver and then she looks at me.

"My, oh Mia! It's certainly beautiful, I've never seen this before. I wonder how many spirits are there, it's hard to see since there are too many of them, but it's a beautiful light."

"It's true."

"You're well liked by the spirits."

The people who call me beautiful have the [Spirit Seer] skill in common.

Apparently, spirits are gathering around me. Looks like I'm letting out an aura called Spirit Light that the spirits like, and it looks beautiful.

They tell me that it's rare for spirits to gather besides on place where the earth vein is gushing out.

The reason why Mia can find me wherever I am seems to be this mass of spirits that act as a landmark.

◇

There was another secret of Mia that had become clear.

It's about meat.

"My, oh Mia! You won't become an adult if you're picky with food you know? Now, don't avoid it, eat the meat. You'll eat it right?"

"Mwuu, unnecessary."

"Eat."

Mia is sandwiched between her parents as they tell her to eat meat.

It was our misunderstanding that elves couldn't eat meat. In truth, other elves eat meat dishes just fine.

They're not like Liza who regards meat as supreme, but among them, there's no one who only eats vegetables.

I understand from seeing Mia that elves are relatively hearty eaters, so I go with Lulu to help elf madams to prepare the meal. I let the madams to taste the whale karage and kabayaki from yesterday, and after I get the OK, the mass production begins.

There are some cookwares with quite bad taste like stoves with a person face design, but it seems they're basically some kinds of magic tools. All the cookwares here are organic-like.

The difference with humans magic tools are how they don't need to consume mana of the person using them. The stove lights up when I just breath on it, and the oven heats up when I just knock it. Water comes out of the fish mouth-shaped faucet when I just hold my hands before it.

I'll ask the elves about the mechanisms later.

I serve the mass produced whale karage, fried rice and skewers on the platter. Elves who have come to help, and simple Pinocchio-like living dolls carry the plates to the banquet hall.

While I soothe myself as I look at the competition between Liza who's guarding the [Mountain of Karaage] like an impregnable fortress against Pochi, Tama and the pixies, I go out to the terrace and gaze at the town scape. I listen to the song that the elves are playing while putting the cherry-like fruit that the pixies have given me in my mouth.

"Satou."

"What's wrong Mia. Is it fine for the guest of honor to leave her seat?"

"Nn."

Mia leads me by hand as we walk the town of the elves.

Everyone seem to have gone to the banquet, there are only living dolls, and carriages without the auto-motion horses around.

And then, the place where Mia leads me to is--

9-15. Secret of Boruenan

Satou's here. When I went to the Huis Ten Bosch in Sasebo, I was surprised with the overflowing exotic atmosphere of that theme park. I was slightly shocked when I happened to catch a sight of the women who had been wearing Holland national costumes in the daytime wearing t-shirts and jeans at the pub during the night.

◇

How far are we going?

"Just ahead."

While looking at the town scape that the elves have adapted naturally, I follow Mia from behind.

"Here."

Mia is beckoning from an open space that's encircled with multi-colored mushrooms. There are two layers of the circles.

The AR indicates that it's called [Fairy Ring].

"What is this?"

"Ring."

Is this a place for holding some kind of ceremony? Let's pray that it has nothing to do with something like marriage.

"Teleport (Relocate)."

With Mia's signal, the two mushrooms rings are flashing reciprocally. I don't know where we're teleporting to, but since it's Mia who's doing it, it shouldn't be anything bad.

As the rate of the blinking light rise, intense light burst out from the floor. When the reciprocal blinking ends, the teleport begins.

The next moment, we're on top of a hill that overlook a town with systematically built bungalows.

When I look up, there's transparent canopy supported by what seem to be tree branches. The size is such that it covers the entire town.

It's underground huh?

"The true town."

Mia parts her hand, and goes toward a place slightly away that looks like a tram platform. There's <<Floating Boards>> of nature magic floating at that station-like place. The boards are transparent, but they have color so it's probably different than the one from nature magic.

A bit later after we arrive at the platform, a young man who's riding the board arrives. His appearance looks like a boy, but since he has beard that doesn't suit him, he should be a young man. M, my past trauma-- It's fine even if it doesn't suit him isn't it.

"Welcome back, Mia. You've already brought him haven't you?   Heya, I'm Tsutoleiya. Please call me Tsuya. I had studied in humans country about 100 years ago."

That young man candidly speaks to me.

According to him, the place where we've been just now is something that's been built to look like a [Genuine] elf town play for visitors.

That said, the elves are not doing it out of ill-will, it's all for entertaining guests. I am told that the Saga hero from 400 years ago, who had grown tired of fighting and lived here for the rest of the hero's life, made it.

Since the young man's story is long, the sulking Mia pulls my sleeves, and so I promise the young man to meet again and leave that place.

Mia skillfully jumps over the place that looks like a platform. The board floats back to its former height after sinking a bit. I jump to the board beside her board as she's advised. The board receives series of number that seem to be house number she's announced, and it starts running. Even though I don't say anything to the board I'm riding, it follows after her afterward.

Every house is about 200 tsubo wide with walls that look like they're made from white resin-like material, and slates roofs. The walls are overran with ivies though so I can see the color only slightly. The houses are divided not with fences, but with hedges and flower beds. If I have to say, the flower beds seem to be more dominant.

<TLN: Tsubo= https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_units_of_measurement#Area >

However, there's no one here.

I wonder if everyone is participating the banquet at the town above?

The boards we're riding at 20 Km/H flies through the town as if gliding. The road is asphalt, or rather it looks like tennis court's ground, or rather it's made from pebbles that look like small light brown beads put together.

I asked Mia about it, but since she didn't seem like she had interest with it, she replied, "Don't know". Let's ask that seemingly well-informed young man if I meet him again.

And then, we're stopping slowly in front of a house. The boards gently descend to the ground, and disappear into it as if sucked.

◇

The house where Mia leads me to looks more like a modern building than a fantasy one.

What makes me think that is quickly apparent.

It's the windows.

Windows in this world are relatively small, all of them are holes made from woods for the purpose of ventilations or lighting.

However, Mia's house before me are adorned with big glass windows and glass doors with high degree of transparency. Back at the duchy capital, there were some mansions that used oak glass for windows, but there were none that used them as many as this, and most were fixed fittings. Since the ones here are fitted on windows frames that have rails, they probably can be slided for opening and closing like on modern constructions.

When Mia touch the front door, I can hear a sound like air escaping, and the automatic door opens. After I enter as leads by her, the automatic door closes behind. This is quite SF sthick. Might as well have multi-layered airlock doors, probably would have been more interesting.

The ceiling on the corridor is transparent, and the light of the sun from beyond the canopy shines here.

Yet, the light is gentle since it has penetrated two layers of glasses.

Mia leads me by hands as we walk through the corridor.

As expected, seems there's no magical structures on the corridor.

"Here."

It seems that this is Mia's room.

There are one bed and one desk. Dolls with the shape of penguin-like deformed birds are lined up in the fixed-fitting shelf beside the bed. The room is generally dyed in pink color. There's nothing like houseplants.

So she wanted to show me her room.

How do I say this, it looks like the room of a junior high school girl from modern time.

"Don't look."

Mia enters a clothing room that looks like a walk-in closet.

I won't peep even if you don't say it.

Since it's become quiet, I use [Telephone] magic to contact Arisa.

"Yesh, the common Arisa-chanspeaking~."

"Sorry, wrong number."

Since Arisa is clearly drunk judging from her words, I cancel the [Telephone] magic. This time I invoke [Telephone] toward Liza, but there's no reply. Looks like she's sleeping. It connects to Mia's mother in the end, so I tell her that I'm visiting her house.

That day I accompanied Mia on her fashion show until late at night. Genuine elf native dress complete with green tricorne, one-piece-like clothes, and three-quarter length pants with short skirt, there were plenty more variations than I had thought.

I put Mia, who had become sleepy after she was tired, on the bed and let her sleep, and then I also slept together beside her.

As for my excuse, it was because I was tired from the confrontation with the black dragon, and the all-night drinking bout yesterday.

I fell deep in sleep like mud without even dreaming.

◇

"Guilty, or not guilty!"

"Guilty~"

"Guilty, nano desu!"

"Master, guilty desu."

Before my eyes who has woken up, there are Arisa who's lifting the corners of her eyes, Pochi and Tama who are happily diving to the bed, and Lulu who looks like she's about to cry. Nana and Liza are here too, but the two keep silence. No, Nana steps forward and put a hand toward Arisa.

"Arisa. The lower official me will advocate for master."

Oh, a defense lawyer has appeared.

No wait, I'm innocent in the first place.

"What, does Nana approve affair?"

"Arisa, listen well."

"Go on and say it."

Arisa edges back slightly from Nana who presses on calmly.

I wonder why, I can't help but feel that Nana will say some unnecessary

things.

"Master and Mia are from different races. Descendants will not born even if they try to mate. Therefore, it is not affair."

Nana is making a proud expression that I haven't seen for awhile, but as expected, her advocacy is off-the-mark. And, didn't she imply that I've done the mistake with Mia?

"Mia!"

Uwa, Mia's father has come.

"Ara ara, you're getting along well."

"Nn, mutual love."

Like I said, there's no romance.

Mia's mother seems to have understood while enjoying the scene, but Mia's father is misunderstanding it.

Mia's father misunderstanding wasn't cleared until after Mia's mother assisted. No, rather than clearing the misunderstanding, I feel that it's left hanging after the machine gun talks of Mia's mother drowned it.

Mia's mother gets down to business after she has talked aplenty.

You should have cut in faster if you have business.

"Now then, Satou-san, we'd like to hear about what happen with Mia step by step, so would you be willing to meet with the elders council?"

I may be able to meet the rumored high elf.

Looking at the elves here, I can't expect dynamite body, but since normally I shouldn't have been able to meet them, I'm slightly looking forward to it.

9-16. High Elf

Satou's here. There's this phrase, 'clumsy beauty', but I think that's more favorable than a perfect beauty. Although, they only exist behind the TV or the net in my former world.

◇

The elder council hall that Mia's father has lead me to is located inside a block of the world tree, deep in the Boruenan forest.

We came over from the [Fairy Rings] on the underground shopping center-like place at the surface town. I don't really know since Mia's father is too silent, but probably the block can only be entered via teleportation.

Of course, I had used [All Map Exploration] when I entered this block, but it couldn't map the layer above certain stratum, and the lowermost layer, maybe because they were in different blocks. Or maybe, there is some kind of system that can resist [All Map Exploration].

What I can gather from the known map is that this block is about five kilometers deep underground. I don't remember the thickness of earth's crust, but isn't this quite deep? The roots of world tree expands to the outside of the block structures, and even outside the edges of the whole Boruenan forest. The place with Mia's house yesterday is about 10 kilometers away from the this world tree block. I've mistakenly thought that it was quite close because the world tree is too bizarrely big.

Going back to the topic, there are a lot of elves in this world tree block.

There are about ten times as many as the elves above. However, nearly everyone has [Sleeping] status. They're comparatively high leveled and older than the surface elves. Some of the younger elves are around one millennium old, but most of them are more than ten thousands years old. However, in contrast to their long life, there isn't any elf who is beyond level 50.

I'd like to hear just what kind of circumstances that the sleeping elves have, but I'm not asking Mia's father since he will likely retort back with, "How did you know?"

Now then, as for the long-awaited high elves, there are only eight of them. Moreover, seven of them are in [Sleeping] states like the other elves. The high elves are around level 50-70. Their longevities are wondrous even compared to the elves.

And, the only awake high elf is waiting in the elder council hall ahead.

I arrive at the destination while checking the world tree block like such.

The boards that I've been riding disappears as it's sucked into the ground. The door in front of me is a three meters wide octagonal wood door. The corridors I'm coming from so far are all made of resin, it seems only the ones here are different.

The door opens like an automatic door when Mia's father takes a step forward. It opens by splitting to the left and right, and then there is another thin door immediately inside, that then opens by splitting to the top and bottom.

There's a 20 meters long passage inside with another door structure like just now at the end. It's like an air lock.

"Satou."

Oops, I've been thinking the structure of the automatic door too much.

I quickly go toward Mia's father who has entered the room earlier and is calling me.

◇

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. We wish to express our gratitudes for your assistance."

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. We won't forget the favor of saving the baby from the wicked magician."

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. We want to repay you for bringing back the baby to us from the distant land."

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. You have--"

This here is an auditorium with an open space that looks like it can hold more than 1000 people inside.

There are around 20 dignitaries of the elder council who are sitting on the front row inside.

And one by one, they're saying thank you for having brought Mia back, but why are they using, "Satou of Shiga kingdom" at the beginning of the sentences. I wonder if that kind of phrase is a rule. They seem to know the fact that I understand elf language as they speak in elf language.

These elders look about as young as Mia's father.

However, their eyes are different.

How do I say this, their eyes look like aged turtles, calm, or rather stillness that are bordering on apathy. If you look closer, their eyes are steadily immobile as if they're about to doze off. As expected of people who have lived thousands of years. I'd like to get along with them and listen to their tales from ages past.

However, even though the black dragon Heiron is far older than these elder elves, I feel that he's much younger than them. I'm interested if this is due to the racial difference, or individual difference.

And then, as if waiting for when everyone has finished saying their thanks, the thick curtain on the interior of the room rises, and then people come out while riding on the only light board in the room.

The long-awaited high elf-san is on the center of that board, and four elves miko-san are standing on all four sides as if protecting the high elf.

These four miko-san aren't wearing western style miko outfits like Sera and the others in the duchy capital, but Japanese-styles clothes. And it's even the miko clothing with excessive ornaments that's usually used during Kagura dances. Miko has to wear white quilt silk garment with red hakama after all.

Unfortunately, I still can't see the high elf.

That's because bamboo blinds immediately float between the four standing miko elves-san. Yes, they're floating. There is no props, and the miko-san aren't holding them either. It's probably magic.

The light board that the high elf-san and the elves are riding passes through between the elders, and stops before me.

""""Be silent~""""

The scepters of miko-san rung matching to their voices.

No one was talking, but it would be boorish of me to retort that.

""""Holy tree-sama will honorably speak.""""

The high elf-san is called holy tree huh. Since her real name is Aialize, I wonder if holy tree is her nickname or an abbreviation of her position. From the AR, her title is [Pure Maiden], and her occupation is [World Tree: Ground Administrator].

The bamboo blinds that are hiding her smoothly open, and the high elf shows up.

Another little girl huh.

The one beyond the bamboo blinds is a little girl who's even younger than Arisa of around 5-8 years old. Her face looks a bit like Mia, but with her silver hair and red eyes, she's a bit different than other elves who have green hair and green eyes. Out of curiosity, I tried verifying her age, but I couldn't. This is the first time I've seen age with hundreds of millions units. I felt dizzy when I was halfway counting the digits.

However, her appearance is that of a little girl huh.

"Satou of Shiga kingdom. You've done well escorting Misanalia back to Boruenan forest, noja."

Hmm?

"Wacchi? Wa, thank you very much, noja."

<TLN: 'Wacchi' is cutesy form of 'washi', which means 'I', used mostly by elderly.>

I wonder why I feel that her way of speaking isn't natural.

She was speaking fluently halfway through it, but her words clogged when she was about to call herself, and she ended up speaking in monotone. When her word was fluent, her voice was calm and gentle, but when it was clogging, it became like some strange anime voice. It's like when a person who isn't a voice actress tries to mimic one.

The elders are steadfast like always even when they see such high elf. But, although I can't see the faces of the four miko-san since they're covering it, their shoulders are trembling.

"What's wrong, ka ya?"

The little girl tilts her head to one side.

I've noticed that illusions don't work on me ever since I saw through

Pochi's human form at Muno city back then.

I can see the figure of a woman in her 20s who's sitting, overlapping the standing little girl. Blue eyes and light blond hair, thin lips and nose that isn't too high, even though it's not at Lulu's degree, she's a beautiful woman without a doubt. It's hard to make out her body due to her white silk garment and miko shirt (chihaya), but her breasts look to be about C cup. I don't know her height since she's sitting, but I'm guessing it's around mine.

Nice, truly nice!

You have to meet such beauty in the other world or else it's not enough after all. Ah, I'm glad that I visit Boruenan forest.

"What do you wish for--rewards, noja?"

The little illusion girl pridefully says so full of confidence, but the real girl has her face a bit red.

It seems she's not doing this farce out of her own will. I'm slightly charmed at her timid troubled expression.

"Then, Satou of Shiga kingdom. I shall grant you a kiss as your reward, noja."

Oops, I didn't listen to the beginning and the end of the talk.

I see an illusion of the little girl spreading her arm and pushing her lips that become like an octopus' forward. The real form of the beauty seems to be embarrassed as she's closed her eyes.

I would have immediately declined if it was a kiss from a little girl, but there's no way I refuse if it's from such beauty.

Mia is also readily willing to kiss, so it must be like how Western people treat it like a greeting.

I step forward as if gliding through the ground, spontaneously put my hands on the beauty's cheeks, and lightly kiss her. I actually want to kiss the lips, but she's still the representative of elf hometown, so I restrain myself.

I've gotten used to the kiss on the forehead after I helped Mia, so I kiss the high elf on her forehead.

Since there's no reaction I drop my gaze, the high elf has fainted with red face that looks like a boiled octopus. She seemed to have been so stunned she fainted.

Perhaps, it was bad?

◇

"Lua, give me water please."

The beauty-san who's sleeping on a bed that's shining transparent light, the high elf Aialize-san rises while being half-asleep.

Lua-san who has been waiting for Aialize-san to wake up together with me gives her some water poured from the pitcher. The water cup looks like it's made of glass, but it feels like plastic, such mysterious material. The AR says that it's called Alua Goblet. Alua is probably the material's name.

"Uu, what Daisaku's said must be a mistake. He said that high elf appears as a silver haired girl who uses [Noja] end word."

"Aze-sama."

Lua-san is trying to tell her that I'm here, but since she's frantically talking to herself, she doesn't notice me at all.

Daisaku-san is the hero from 400 years ago who has created the town back I guess?

"I know already, you're telling me not to speak ill of the deceased right?"

"Aze-sama."

Aialize-san is pouting with inflated cheeks like Mia.

That's cute.

"Mou, isn't it alright just for a bit. He must be thinking that I'm a weird woman. Even though he's the benefactor who has saved Mia, I wonder if he thinks that elf hometown is the worst now."

"Aze-sama."

That can't be helped. It is weird after all.

"Even though I went to the surface town to tell Mia [Welcome back] yesterday, she wasn't there. That's right, that Arisa girl was also saying, [High elf has to be silver haired little girl, it's the basic.], or, [Master will definitely refuse if he's given a kiss from a little girl as a reward.], but it's totally different."

"Aze-sama."

I see, so Arisa took part in this too.

"Mou, this is why I can't let my guard down against Japanese people. They're treating people like toys since a long time ago."

"Aze-sama."

There should be several Japanese people from successive generations, but maybe she's only ever met people like Arisa? There should be normal one like me among them, what an unlucky person she is.

However, she knows that Arisa is a Japanese huh? She probably notices it from the purple hair. I had put on a blond hair wig on Arisa.

"Mou, Lua, what is it."

Lua-san points her finger with a little gesture at me.

I thought that it would be a problem to let a man enter her room, but since Lua-san didn't mind, I followed along. I don't really understand the hierarchy of this elf hometown. I guess it's more like democracy than monarchy. Or rather, it should be more like a big family.

Aialize-san turns her head mechanically like an unoiled tin doll.

Our eyes meet.

Aialize-san becomes flustered while going, 'au au'.

She's a clumsy person, but let's send her a life boat here. Feel like she'd think bad of me like Arisa otherwise.

"I've heard from Lua-san that you've been in fever since morning. I'm sorry that you had to overdo it for my sake."

"That's right Aialize-sama. Your fever still hasn't subsided, so please get some rest without overworking yourself today."

I quickly make eyes contact to Lua-san.

She's quickly ridden on my made-up story, [Her odd behaviors were because of her high fever that made her hazy.]

After Aialize-san had calmed down, I made a promise with Lua-san to visit them again, and decided to go back. According to Lua-san, seems that they have something to talk about. I feel that it's something troublesome, but it's fine just hearing it right.

When I returned to Mia's house, I was somehow told to [Seiza].

The leak doesn't seem to come from Mia's father. Behind Arisa and Mia, three of the miko are eating baked sweets while laughing happily. I'll slip in some extremely spicy cookies next time.

9-17. Daily Life of the Elves

Satou's here. I have often failed in game developments by only being able to imitate the outward appearance (of other game) without actually understanding the structure. I think you have to understand the structure if you want to develop and put it into practical use.

However, there are also some rare people who jump over the understanding and create new ideas. That's what you call genius huh~

◇

"""HEY BOY, there's a visitor for ya"""

Suddenly, several masks hanging on the wall were talking at the same time.

Tama seems to have been completely surprised as she puts down the gomoku stone, curls her body, and raises her tail. Pochi also almost fell from her chair, but she survived thanks to Liza who supported her from where she was sitting beside her.

These masks seem to be something like intercoms. It wasn't working yesterday, so there must be someone who activated them last night. It might be the mischievous leprechauns that Tama's talked about.

I thought that the masks hanging on the wall would project the visitor's figure like a monitor, but it seems there's no function like that.

When I stand up the masks stop talking.

"I'll go see the visitor."

Lulu goes downstairs in pitter-patter to meet the visitors.

We're currently staying in the tree house that we visited on the first day. We were invited to stay in Mia's house underground, but since I didn't want to intrude upon the reunion of parents and child, we stayed here instead.

It's already been five days since we arrive at the elves hometown.

There was no need for us to stay for long since we had finished the goal of escorting Mia back home, but since we were here already I wanted to tour the elves hometown, and they easily agreed to it when I asked. Rather, they reacted with, "What are you saying? Of course you will stay here for a while right?" Elves perceive time differently than humans more than I've thought, by [For a while] they seem to mean several years.

I've planned to stay for half a month at the longest, but I'm worried being rude if we leave too fast.

"Master, Nea-san has come bringing the dishes that she's talked yesterday."

Nea-san is a 500 years old mrs elf. Her hobby is cooking, and trying to bring back the dishes that the hero Daisaku's left behind seems to be her life work. As I'm told, the hero Daisaku couldn't cook so he only orally imparted the ambiances of the dishes. She said that she couldn't reproduce it well.

Today we're going to feast on Nea-style hamburg steaks.

"Grilled kneaded meat dish" is the only information she's learned from the words left behind by the hero.

Nea-san proudly lines up five dishes on the table.

Meatball like small balls, roasted meat pasta, noddles meat that are knitted in koban-size and grilled, something that looks like nothing but a lump of meat, and the last one looks like a hamburg steak from the outside, they're on the plates that are lined on the table.

"Beside this one, nothing look like a hamburg steak, but they're delicious without a doubt."

"Yup, that's true. Particularly this second type, the Nea-style pasta, and the third type, the knitted noddles, they're tasty."

They're not hamburg steak, but I've never seen such dishes on earth. I guess it's like the dishes in the shop of a creative chef.

The reason why the Nea-style hamburg steak isn't like the real one is because it's only made from meat. Since Nea-san said that it was, "100% beef", there seems to be some problem from what the hero Daisaku's conveyed.

It's easy for a hamburg steak to become dried out, if it's only composed of meat, but it seems she's done something about it after several hundreds years of trials and errors. How patient. If asked, it would seem that she had created many derivations. I'll ask her to teach me some next time.

After Arisa and me have sampled them, the hamburg steak critics, Pochi and Tama also eat them.

"Nyu~? The hamburg isn't right~"

"Hamburg is softer, and elastic, and like juwatt when you eat it nanodesu! You eat it like, munch, and then happiness nanodesu."

I take the fork away from Pochi's hands that are swinging around passionately in front of Nea-san. That's dangerous.

Liza is nodding every time she eats a mouthful. Since the corner of her eyes have slackened, it seems to suit her taste.

Nana also curiously puts some into her mouth. She quietly only comments, "Delicious", but it doesn't seem to be a compliment.

Right at then, Lulu carries in a grilled hamburg steak.

The hamburg steak is put on a plate like the one in a family restaurant-- A heated black iron plate put on top of a wooden plate type. I made them by Arisa's request when we were staying at the duchy capital.

Nea-san enjoys the aroma while seemingly being filled with emotion, and confirms the hamburg steak as if she's searing it into her memory. She should eat it soon.

"Itadakimasu."

She cuts one small piece with a knife and a fork, and puts it into her mouth.

Pochi and Tama are following that fork's movement while drooling. You two, haven't you just had breakfast two hours ago. I glance at Liza on the side, she's only slightly opening her mouth, there's no drool. Let's not talk about her gazes.

Er~rr, please don't cry while eating it.

Nea-san is eating while flooding tears. It might be inevitable since it's like a phantom dish from her point of view. Someone with skill like her should be able to reproduce it after she eats if once.

I carry Pochi and Tama under my arms and bring them to the kitchen to let Nea-san savors the taste calmly.

Let's make a Japanese-style hamburg steak, a stewed hamburg steak, and a tomato burger for the occasion. Of course I also haven't forgotten to make the shares for the hungry children.

◇

The visitors have increased when I return to the dining room.

"Wait Aze-sama, how long are you going to keep eating after saying that you'd only try a bite."

"But, it's delicious da mon."

"Da mon, not."

Lua-san, the miko, is scolding Aialize-san, the high elf, as she's eating beside Nea-san. This person really is like a child.

The afternoon on the day after our first meeting, Aialize-san came, led by Lua-san, to apologize for the prank. Since I honestly didn't mind about it at all, I accepted it frankly. I also apologized for Arisa.

It's fine and all with these two, but in fact, one of the elf elder actually also came as the representative to apologize the morning of that day. To be frank, I was troubled when he was apologizing so seriously, so I told him to not mind it in a light tone. By the way, he was the one who gave permission for me to tour the elf hometown.

"Welcome, Aialize-sama, Lua-san. Nea-san, please taste these hamburg steaks too."

After greeting the two, I present the dish to Nea-san.

I ask Liza and Lulu to help me bring the prepared dishes on the kitchen here.

I offer Aialize-san and Lua-san the dishes for the occasion. The pixies who have always been hanging around the kitchen, and the elves with free times are also helping to carry the dishes while coming here, no problem since I've made extra.

These pixies can only speak elf language, so the elves and me were going to act as interpreters, but Lua-san tactfully settled it with the translation rings that she took out out of nowhere to solve the problem. What a fantasy-like equipment. Even though it's a rare thing that isn't even among the loot from dragon's valley, Lua-san lets everyone to borrow the rings indefinitely. Apparently, there was an elf who zealously made translations rings a long time ago, so it's not something that unusual in Boruenan.

When the three are eating, some pixies who have enticed by the scents gather. And then, the elves begin to gather when they see those pixies, the pattern that I've gotten used to see for a few days is reproduced.

Apparently, the impact from, "The reproduction of the hero's will, hamburg", is really strong as more people have gathered than usual, and I'm made to replenish the dishes several times at the kitchen together with Lulu.

Lulu and me are looking at people who are enjoying the meal as if competing over it at the dining hall while we're eating fruits and presents on the small bowls that the elves who have come to eat have brought. I've used up a lot of meat I have in stock, but since there are still quite a lot even while excluding the whale meat, it's probably alright for the time being.

Besides, I've acquired a lot of cattle and goats from the elves. I keep the acquired cattle together with the horses in a giant hole beside the root of the arbor. I leave the care to the living dolls the elves have deployed.

Of course, Mia and her parents have also come. She wanted some tofu hamburg steak, so I put not only soybeans on it but also fat-less meat that made 30% of the steak. I couldn't taste the meat when I sampled it, so Mia ate it without problem too.

Let's tell Mia about it after I've increased the meat ratio a bit more.

◇

I'm exchanging hamburg steak recipes with Nea-san while drinking the green tea that Lulu's made. Nea-san usually talks with single words, but she becomes talkative when it's about cooking methods and ingredients. I've already given her the recipe itself that I've written on the paper earlier.

I can see Lua-san, the miko, pestering Aialize-san from the edge of my view.

Looks like they have some kind of business.

I entrust Lulu and Arisa to accompany Nea-san, and invite Lua-san and Aialize-san to another room.

"I'm really sorry, we've made you to attend us..."

I encourage them to sit while telling Lua-san to not mind about it.

Aialize-san seems to be shy of strangers as she's only fidgeting around without talking, so I'm mainly conversing with Lua-san. Then, the irritated Lua-san begins to press on Aialize-san.

"Go on, Aze-sama."

"Um, yes, that."

Aialize-san talks while facing Lua-san, not me, but Lua-san forcefully twists her head toward me. Err, I understand how you feel, but her neck will be hurt you know?

Aialize-san who crosses views with me and looks like she's on her wit's end speaks bombshell remarks at extreme pace.

"You're getting along well with the black dragon! Today you're not Kuro the hero are you!"

"Wait, Aze-sama."

Lua-san calms Aialize-san down in a hurry.

"Err, what are you talking about?"

"I'm sorry. Please allow me to talk about it."

I was playing dumb, but it seemed they had found out about me being the hero Kuro from the spirit light back then. People that let out spirit light seem to be abnormal even from Lua-san's memory, "There is no way there are two of them in the same time period." she smiles wryly.

It seems that Lua-san's familiar was watching the latter half of the rampage between the black dragon Heiron and me, and the party after that from afar. I surely felt a lot of frightened gazes at that time, it must have slipped among them.

Looks like they think I'm using an advanced nature magic spell, [Fake Patch], to make my name and title become different from that time.

"And now, as for the main subject--"

Normally, I expect them to demand, "Do this and that if you want us to not talk.", but somehow, I can't imagine the elves here to utter such words. Even if they wish something, they look like the type who will ask for help instead of bargaining for it.

"I will! Teach you!"

Aialize-san grasps her fists tightly and declares so as she stands up. I don't know what she's going to teach me, but I wait for her next words.

She seems to be embarrassed with my stare as she crouches down while turning red. She's the delicately troublesome type isn't she.

"So, that, like the way to suppress the spirit light! Or the way to prevent the spirits from gathering."

She continues her words as she hides herself behind Lua-san.

How do I say this, she looks like a timid teacher who's hiding behind her middle school student's back when she's doing that with the petite Lua-san like that.

Thus, I'm going to be taught by the extremely unreliable Aialize-sensei.

9-18. Ishibutai Training

Satou's here. There are a lot of manga set during the Heian period, thus, there are a lot of masterpieces. I read the complete set of, "It's a wonderful HEIANKYO", that my childhood friend had recommended.

What I thought during that time was if the sleeves of kariginu the characters are wearing wouldn't get caught on tree branches if they went to hunt with it? Such was my question. I wonder if people really used that clothes for hunting~

<TLN: Kariginu is a type of traditional Japanese clothes.>

◇

"Fooo~! Heian Romance kitaa!"

It looks like my clothes is the reason why Arisa shouts strangely.

I've been given clothes for training from Aialize-san, but I wonder if it's an influence from the hero Daisaku, or other Japanese people, the clothes is a kariginu--I guess it's easier to understand if I say that it's an onmyouji clothes.

The inside garment is a white unlined kimono, but the outer garment and the sashinuki hakama are green of different brightness each. Fortunately, there's no eboshi.

<TLN: Well, he's wearing traditional clothes, so you can google each of those terms if you're curious what they look like.>

"Master, you're wonderful."

"Master looks manly with the robe or armor, but the elf native dress also suits you well."

"They're good clothes with high magic defense."

Lulu seems to like it too. Let's make some junihitoe later.

Looks like Nana has specially used [Sense Magic] to check these clothes. Just like Nana's said, these clothes are made from Yuriha fiber that's also used to create Arisa's and Mia's robes. It seems that you can compose a defensive film magic circuit on the surface of the fabric by weaving the fiber with some special method. The function can deploy a defensive film that resembles the body surface of the black dragon. Monsters above certain levels are naturally equipped with the film, but with these clothes, looks like you can also use it by putting a little magic into the clothes.

"Pochi is also going to train nodesu!"

"Tama too~?"

I was thinking what was the rustling about, turned out the two had changed to the Shinsegumi costumes from the duchy capital back then. I was going to refuse the two since it seemed that the training this time wouldn't go well if there were a lot of people around, but apparently, the training of the two is slightly different.

"Shagnig's invited us nodesu."

"Treasure hunt~"

"Shagnig is this playful Leprechaun old man, he's invited them to the playground where the elves children play."

"It looks to be a facility arranged with safe mock traps, and living dolls that are made to look like monsters."

"Reporting myself to participate in the exercise."

Arisa complemented Pochi's and Tama's words while slurping her drool. Since Liza and Nana are also going to participate, I allow it. The playground for the children of those indulgent elves shouldn't be dangerous.

The one who designed that playground is an elf who was the teacher of the teacher of Shagnig, but the one who actually built it was his teacher, a Spriggan called Rileks. At the present time, seems he's gone to observe the Saga empire labyrinth in order to gain new ideas. The one who designed the playground has gone away for more than 100 years from the elves hometown, so I likely won't see him.

◇

Together with Lua-san who's come to pick me while wearing miko outfits, I arrive at a rocky area that overlooks some waterfall, around 30 kilometers away from the world tree. We moved by using the Dryad's [Teleport(Relocate). It's convenient enough even though it can only be done within Boruenan forest.

At the inner part of the rocky area, there's an ishibutai with a huge rock.

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ishibutai_Kofun >

Aialize-san is on the center of that ishibutai.

No well, it's fine that you're there.

What are those clothes.

White shirt and tight skirt, and there are glasses with triangular lenses as well. She's tied her hair into a bun on her back, and left only two bangs at the right and left on the front. That short wand probably acts as the instructor stick.

It's the so called stereotypical female teacher clothing.

Hero Daisaku.... Please be moderate with the culture hazard.

Well, I guess it's fine since it's a feast for my eyes.

"Satou-san, you're late."

You shouldn't do cosplay if you're going to blush anyway.

I'd like to keep staring at her, but then the story won't progress, so I work the [Poker Face] skill hard.

"I'm sorry for being late."

"Aze-sama, please don't play around and change into the priest outfits."

"Isn't it fine, Daisaku's even said that these clothes give +1 effect to the teaching skill."

"That is a joke of his."

Aialize-san is shocked towards what Lua-san's said about the [Teaching Skill +1] being a lie rather than her scolding. I wonder why, maybe she really did believe it.

I gaze at the superb view of the waterfall on top of the ishibutai until after Aialize-san has pulled herself together. It's quite a spectacle for multiple waterfalls to fall onto one pool despite not to the degree of Niagara. Water are also flowing down from the rocks that are floating along the steep cliff. I wonder if it works like the (Water Bottle) I have? It's quite a strange sight (fantasy).

Since I can hear a cough of someone clearing her throat, I turn around.

Aialize-san who has changed to miko clothes is there. It was hard to restrain myself from turning as the rustling sound were inviting.

"Then please drink this before we begin the training."

Aialize-san presents a folded paper with some red power inside.

I wonder what is this, it's more transparent even compared to the magic core powder.

I feel like I've seen it somewhere.

Right, it's similar to the ruby powder in the jewels workshop at duchy capital. The powder occasionally emit some light, it's probably some kind of magic medicine. The AR indicates that it's [<<Powder of Philosopher's Stone>>]

Philosopher's stone?!

"This is?"

"It's the powder of miracle stone. Although it can help pregnant women who drink it during the delivery, its main use is to augment magic effect."

Lua-san answered my question.

Seems that it's stimulated some strange rivalry from Aialize-san as she begins to talk smoothly.

"It's a valuable item as only one pebble can be harvested from the world tree in a year! That's why, you can't spill it."

I see, it's harvested from the world tree huh.

I wonder why do I feel that it's like a calculus.

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calculus_%28medicine%29 >

I take the red powder into my mouth, and flush it down the throat with the water that Lua-san's has passed to me.

There's no taste. The Magic Perception skill tells me the movements of the powder. Although little, mana gush out from the powder.

"Then, let's start with the warm-up. Mimic me as I move okay."

I mimic Aialize-san's movements while confirming it with space grasp. The exercise is quite full of body motion. Seems that these movements are for spreading the powder to my whole body. I understand that the powder is absorbed when it's reached my stomach, and carried to my whole body via the blood flow.

"Next, put your mana throughout your body."

I fill my body with mana as instructed. It's similar like when the self-healing kicks in. I'm careful as to not let the mana flow to the kariginu with yuriha fiber.

The powder in my blood absorb the mana as I fill my body with it.

"You're good."

"That's true, normally the mana would have leaked to the yuriha fiber clothes, and one wouldn't be able to circulate the mana well, but he did it smoothly."

I'm happy to be praised, but is it fine to continue as it is?

The adjustment is relatively hard, so I don't have any margin to speak.

After the powder in the bloodstream have absorbed certain amount of mana, it's releasing the mana this time. This feeling, I guess it's about the same with the holy light that the holy sword emit.

"Listen well, you have to seize the overflowing mana in your body, and hold it down. Then, spread it on the surface of your body as if you're making a thin film."

I see, it's the typical genius' way of teaching. However, I somehow understand.

By using the time when I seize Zen's shadow whips as a reference, I grasp it. Then, I spread that mana thin. Since I have some experience of making thin film version of the flexible armor, it's relatively easy.

>[Spirit Light Control Skill Acquired]

>[Mana Control Skill Acquired]

"Alright, it's a success."

"Eh?! Ah, it's true. I nearly cannot see the spirit light."

Lua-san confirmed as she turned her eyes silver to the spirit seer version. Unfortunately, since I can't see the leaked spirit light in the first place, I'll believe in Lua-san's words.

Moreover, I've also understood that the mana that have always been leaking from my body for a bit have mostly stopped leaking. Since the leak in this case can be stopped with the spy skill, the mana control skill might be unnecessary. Let's check the difference with mana operation skill when it's time for me to activate it.

"You're quite good, normally it would have taken several years."

"I think it's already not at such level. Heroes are really abnormal aren't they."

Lua-san is shocked, but I feel it's not quite right for me to console that, so I ignore her. I thanked the two for the assistances, fix my appearance, and turned around, but it seemed to be premature.

"Then, let's start the second round of the training."

"That's right, we've used the valuable miracle stone after all, so let's finish the next lesson while it's still effective."

"This time you have to thin out the mana film only on the eyes part, and then slightly open holes on it."

Don't say that so easily.

It's hard to operate by parts, um. Yup, that went well.

"Look at both my hands okay. ■■■■■■■■ ■■ <<Summon Water Element>>"

Water overflow from both Aialize-san's hands that she's thrust above. After a while, the water formed into a ball that floats lightly slightly above her hands.

I stare hard at it as instructed.

Concentrate.

I can't see anything beside water--no, there's a small blue light with indefinite form. It can't be seen when I stare hard, but on the contrary, I can see it when I'm not focusing.

>[Spirit Seer Skill Acquired]

It was unexpectedly easy to get. I wonder if it's due to the philosopher's stone.

"I see it."

""Eh?!""

Eh? Why are they so surprised.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, it's a bluish light with indefinite form right."

"That, that's right."

"That's amazing, there's only 1 among 100 elves who can obtain it."

One to a hundred doesn't seem to be that rare.

"Alright, then let's start the third round! Let's employ the spirits!"

Aialize-san whom in high tension declares so while raising her arms overhead.

It'd be a gentleman of me to use [Dry] to dry her clothes now, but just for a bit more, only a teeny bit more, I want to enjoy this scene.

Miko clothes wet from water is nice, isn't it.

9-19. Ishibutai Training (2)

Satou's here. ECO thing had spread on various things, but I guess the closest one to me was the solar power for home. We have magic in the other world, I wonder if that can be considered as ECO? Where does that mana come from in the first place anyway.

◇

"Here I go, ■ Wind."

First, Aialize-san shows an example.

Since I've activated the spirit seer skill, I can clearly see what Aialize-san's done.

With just one word she had chanted the spell that made the colorless spirits gather around her, which then turned into the green colored wind elemental spirits without a pause, and invoked the magic to create the [Wind] phenomenon.

The strength is only around (Air Hammer), but the chant is terribly short.

"See? The manifested magic is no different than normal magic, but the chanting is short and the required mana is very much less as the advantages."

"On the other hand, it's powerless at places without spirits."

Lua-san added the disadvantages that Aialize-san had forgotten to say.

It's unclear as to what she means by places without spirits, but it seems that there aren't many spirits in man-made places, and monsters' dwellings. I understand the latter. They probably become the fodders for monsters like the armor newts back then.

When I activated the spirit seer skill, I was treated to the view of precious metal colored light centered on gold color emitted from Aialize-san. Lua-san has faint flickering light of cold color type. From what can I see on the two, spirit light doesn't seem to have fixed color, it can change to a degree. I can also see it on the flying birds above the waterfall, but the light is quite faint, it's hard to make it up.

The light that leaks out from my body is of pale white.

When I try to release the restrained spirit light, light so intense, it makes you think your eyes have stopped functioning, dye the surrounding. The spirits around the waterfall have gathered with terrible speed. I can't see quite well since the spirits are obstructing the view, but the light emitted by me is primarily of warm color, it's crude rich color.

Mia has commented that it's [Beautiful], but aesthetically speaking, I think the light emitted by Aialize-san is far more beautiful.

Oops, I can't see the surrounding like this.

I converge the spirit light in a hurry, and make it stop leaking outside. The spirits who have lost their goal scatter unsteadily. The only spirits remaining are mostly the ones who are attracted to the spirit light emitted from Lua-san, and Aialize-san, the world is back to normal. They're slow compared to when they're gathering.

"You've already been able to control it at will haven't you. Your adaptability is amazing isn't it. Right, Aze-sama."

"Y, yeah."

Aialize-san seems to have been dazzled as she answers Lua-san half-heartedly while blinking repeatedly.

"I'm sorry Aialize-sama. I relaxed the control since I wanted to confirm something for a bit."

"I, it's your first time, so it can't be helped."

Huh? Aialize-san's shyness has been activated. Even though she was able to talk straight to me a while ago, she turned toward Lua-san again when she talked to me. It might have been too dazzling.

"R, rather than that! Try it."

"Yes, ◆ Wind."

Oh? Slight breeze blows even though I've failed the chanting. I wonder if the spirits are being considerate?

"Ara? Are you not good with chanting?"

"Yes, I can't do it well no matter what I do."

"Yet, didn't the wind blow just now?"

"The spirits might be being considerate."

I reply Lua-san with my hunch, but she denies it readily.

"That's not happening. With the exception of something like Dryad, spirits don't have ego, or rather, intelligence. Their only roles are to mechanically take mana from the earth veins, and deliver the mana to creatures that need it."

Hee.

Then, I won't get to meet something like a sexy Undine onee-san huh. That's unfortunate.

"Is that really so? They're saying something when a lot of them gather sometimes you know."

Oh, Aialize-san presents a dissenting opinion.

"Aze-sama is the only one who says something like that. The other high elves aren't saying that right?"

"Uu, that's true but. I really feel that they're saying something."

Aialize-san who have been denied by Lua-san puffs her cheeks and turn away. Her reaction is like Mia.

There's a high possibility that she's just imagining it, but it's not necessarily good to decide that it has to be a misunderstanding. Even during game development, when we deemed that it was, "Just your imagination," during the debugging process, most of it got found by the market instead.

"May I test it once?"

"Mou, even you Satou-san."

"Try it! You'll absolutely hear it!"

I test it after the two approve.

When the light dazzles, I endure the spirits' assaults, and wait for the wild dance of the spirits to end. After about 10 minutes, the spirits has surrounded me like a cocoon. When I look closer, they don't seem to be still, but they're circling around from a distance relaxedly.

Fumu, I don't hear anything though.

I guess it's just Aialize-san's imagination?

Right then, I receive some microscopic amount of mana from the spirits.

I wonder if this is the signal of intent? The moment I recognize it, I can hear little little commotion together with a sense as if something has clicked.

They were certainly trying to communicate something, but unfortunately I couldn't understand more. It feels like trying to listen to hustle and bustle 100 meters ahead. I didn't get any skill too, so there might be some kind of condition to hear the spirits' voices.

"They seem to be trying to say something, but I can't understand what is it."

"That's right! I want to hear it at least once."

"Satou-san, you're not kidding aren't you?"

I told the perplexed Lua-san that it was not a joke.

◇

Now then, unfortunately I couldn't employ the spirits at all.

I had expected it already, just like with magic, I couldn't chant the spirit employment well too.

Due to careless mistake of Aialize-san who tried to show an example, I had gotten soaked together with Lua-san, but I didn't have any complaint since I obtained spirit magic skill at that time. Aialize-san who was disheartened from Lua-san's scolding was adorable.

"That reminds me, how do the changing of spirit light strength work?"

"I wonder?"

"Wait, Aze-sama."

Lua-san makes a retort to Aialize-san who tilts her head while putting her finger on her cheek. Lua-san explained.

"In case with people, it's not because of the difference in mana pools, in truth, we don't know much about it. In case with the earth veins, the location with thick flow emits stronger light. The area around the source especially shines intensely."

"That's right. If I'm not mistaken, yes, there's a source on the basin of the waterfall here."

Eh?!

I involuntarily drop my line of sight after hearing Aialize-san's words. When I activate spirit seer skill, there's really light leaking from the waterfall basin.

The light isn't that strong even though the water isn't muddy.

"There are all sort of sources after all."

Lua-san came out with follow-up-like words as she seemingly saw my disappointed expression.

"Now that you mention it, what are sources?"

"I guess they're the holes where the earth veins gush out?"

"That's right, there are more than 100 of them on this continent, and among them, the scale of the one on the dragon valley is extraordinary. We don't quite know the total number of sources that are as small as this waterfall basin one."

The source of dragon valley huh, I'm positive that I've ruled over it. The cause of my spirit light might have been that unexpectedly. According to Lua-san, there are many things that are built on top of sources, like cities or labyrinths. The small sources become the dwellings of monsters or mythical beasts, or get to have some magician build a tower on it.

Fumu, judging from this story, the maze of Trazayuya should have been built on top of a source, but I didn't get to rule it like with the dragon valley. I wonder if there's a limit of being only able to rule one source?

I watched the world tree behind me with spirit seer since It caught my attention.

The body of the tree is shining dazzlingly. Moreover, when I strain my eyes, I can see concentric circles of light rings spreading like ripples around the tree branches.

"Isn't it beautiful?"

"Yes, very much so. Is that world tree a source too?"

"No, it's different--"

"Aze-sama."

"--, that's not from the earth veins, but from the void, err, I wasn't supposed to say it was I?"

"Well, I don't mind if it's Satou-san, but please don't spread it to the outside world okay."

I nod to Lua-san. Aialize-san who has confirmed that continues speaking.

"Do you know that there are ether flowing in the void?"

"I'm sorry, I'm ignorant."

"Ara, you can just study if you don't know. Ether is--"

Aialize-san proudly explained about ether, but when she was explaining the fifth element after the four primary, earth, water, fire and wind elements, she cut the complicated talk in one stroke, and so, in short, the intermediary substances in the outer space are massive amount of mana that have been blown.

<TLN: The author use 'mana' not the 'maryoku', or magic power here. I dunno if they're the same at this point.>

"--and then you see, the world tree use its foliages, or rather its root, or rather, terminals to suck mana from the flow of ether. And then, the released mana are sent deep into the ground which activate earth veins of the earth. The light of that spirit tree is the figures of the spirits who have gathered on the leak of the mana flow that's going from the sky to the earth."

I see~

It's a gigantic magic device I guess. However, Aialize-san. She's explaining very fluently, completely unlike before.

"If such thing was to be known to greedy people, there would be a lot of countries that would aim for the world tree starting from Boruenan, so please keep this a secret. "

It's the so-called solar power unit with large output after all. They can do something great if they can monopolize it. I promised the two that I would absolutely never reveal it. I said to them that I wouldn't mind to be binded with [Geass] or [Contract], but she smiled wryly while saying, "You don't have to go that far."

I was quite serious, but I wonder if the elves don't have much sense of crisis?

I confirm it to Lua-san.

"If the world is going to be destroyed because of the mismanagement of the world tree, divine punishments will fall from the gods, so I think the worst won't happen."

That reminds me, this is a world where gods exist huh.

But, well, I will be careful as to not reveal it to anyone. I carved so in my heart.

9-20. The Spriggan's Training Site

Satou's here. Relative to the number of people who play the nonobligatory tutorial parts of games, it's hard to make them you know.

In real world, they are training or OJT, but I wonder if it's effective~

◇

When we were tidying up after the training was over, a [Telephone] came up.

It's from Arisa.

"Umm, hello, is this the house of Pendragon-san?"

I can hear Arisa speaking with slightly higher voice, I desperately try to endure my exhaustion.

You think this is a landline of old?

"Heffo, hooissit?"

<TLN: Yes, it's just as incorrigible in the raw.>

"Ah, I'm sorry, I got the number wrong."

I felt slightly mischievous, so I pretended to be someone else. I thought that Arisa would immediately booed, but she plainly apologized and cut off the telephone.

I was just joking, but was Arisa the type who's not good with phone calls? While feeling slightly apologetic, I call Arisa back with [Telephone].

"Y, yes, this is Arisa Pendragon speaking!"

I want to retort, but I'll endure it. There's no doubt that something is happening, so I look there with [Clairvoyance].

"Arisa, it's Satou, did anything happen?"

"Ah, I'm glad, some old man I don't know received the telephone just now, I was surprised."

I saw Arisa who was flustered.

She doesn't seem to be injured, but it sure is awful.

"And so, we've screwed up for a bit, won't you come save us?"

"OK, I'll go immediately."

I reply Arisa with two words, and ask Aialize-san to get Dryad teleport us to the attraction where Arisa and the others are. The place seemed to be famous as we immediately departed when I told them the name of the attraction I had heard from Arisa.

◇

"This is the training place for the third fairy."

The black building that looks like a deformed bat seems to be the entrance. I enter to the red mouth that opens. It's really attraction-like.

This attraction has a lot of silly traps, and has become the playground for the elf children.

It seem to be play where children have to clear the eight attractions that are appropriate to their ages. Children who don't have very bad reflexes can clear them easily, but there are exceptions in everything--and one of them is Aialize-san. She wanted to follow me, but she stopped with the frantic look of Lua-san.

She looks to be the clumsy element, so let's make her wait.

Just in case, I ask Lua-san to call for other help if I'm too slow in returning.

When I went inside, there's a living doll with torn neck lying on the floor. Judging from the state of its neck, the cause is probably Liza's spear. She really shouldn't break the attractions.

I use [All Map Exploration] and check the internal structure of this place.

It's quite wide, about 6-stories building big.

Everyone seems to have been divided into three groups.

Liza, Lulu and Pochi are the closest to me. Arisa and Mia are in the middle. The farthest ones are Tama, Nana, and the tour guide this time, Shagnig-shi, the leprechaun.

Huh? Did Lulu and Mia come along too.

I make use of quick dressing skill to change, from the borrowed kariginu, into work clothes that are okay even if they get dirtied.

I set marker on the shortest route, and run with sky drive. Among the innumerable traps that I've found with trap discovery skill, I only cancel the ones that are unavoidable by using [Magic Hand] remotely.

Every trap seems to have been made with concern as to not injure.

Instead of poison gas, it spews strange irritant gas, there's knee-deep water in the bottom of the pit holes, the arrows shot from the trap have shock absorbed leather on its pointed end that even if you're hurt by it, it won't be serious.

When I avoid the traps, living dolls that are made to look like monsters attack from the back. There are colors painted on the place that seem to be its weakness, and it's made to stop if you hit that place with a wooden sword or your fist.

However, the layout is quite unpleasant.

Like having another trap right after you've avoided a trap, or getting attacked by the fake monsters just when you think that you've reached the safety zone, it reminds me of the consumers trap surprise.

I arrive at the room where Liza and the others are, in one minute. I had passed through some corridors and stairs, it seemed to be quite deep underground.

Liza has been caught in a web trap that has been lifted about 6 meters high to the ceiling while looking very unwilling.

There's a wall modeled after a monster's face right beside Liza. And then, Pochi has been eaten to half of her body on the monster's gaping mouth. I see her feet hanging full of discontent. Of course Pochi is unhurt since it's an attraction.

However, how did she even get stuck being eaten like that. No, when I look closer, there's a protrusion that seem usable as a scaffold near Pochi. The trap is probably made to eat someone who's climbing to save their friend.

And also, where is Lulu?

I turn my head, and she seems to have been caught on a wire trap with both her leg and an arm lifted, and cannot move nearby the place where the floor has disappeared near the door on the other end of the room. All the wires only go to the height of her back. It's probably made as to prevent blood from going up to the victim's head.

However, Lulu's legs seems to have stepped on the trap as both are lifted to different directions. Her posture looks embarrassing for a maiden. I have to secretly fix her rolled up skirt with [Magic Hand] while being unseen before I call them out.

"I've come to help."

"Ah, master!"

"I'm very sorry, master."

"Master, Pochi is over here~ heelp~"

I quickly rush to Lulu, and cut the hemp ropes with a dagger.

Next, I go up beside Pochi with sky drive, and press the release button right next to the trap to save her. I quickly catch her on my arms since she was going to slide and fall.

"Thank you nanodesu. Mia's said that there's a button to save Liza on the other side of this wall nodesu."

I see.

I use [Magic Hand] to press the button since it's clearly there. I hear some rattling nearby, and then the rope that lifts Liza lowers. It's quite particular about the detail as it's lowering slowly to prevent serious injuries.

"Master, please save Arisa and Mia. The two have fallen into this hole."

Lulu points to a caved in floor that has created a deep hole. Looks like Arisa and Mia are over there.

"I understand."

"Those two must be alright aren't they."

Lulu joins her hands together and asks as if praying.

"Yeah, they're alright of course. Arisa was the one who had called me here after all."

When I confirm on the map, consecutive cave-ins don't seem like it'll happen, so I evacuate the three to take a refuge in a relatively structurally-safe place. Liza, and Pochi wanted to come along, but since they had just shown their shameful sights, they meekly withdrew.

I intended to go back quickly, but I took out a bag with some canteens and baked sweets from the Item Box and gave it to Lulu.

I jump into the collapsed place while waving to the three.

I check the collapse while regulating my speed with sky drive.

Apparently, somethings are advancing through the underground, and have created crevices on many floors around this area. That somethings are the level 20 worm monsters which seem to be the cause. According to the map, they have made a nest underground 2-3 kilometers ahead. I'll take care of them later.

◇

At the end of the descent, the two are there being wrapped by feelers from a living doll posing as a plant monster.

"Thank you for waiting."

"Fast. What kind of cheat did you use this time."

"Satou."

I think Arisa misunderstands the meaning of cheat sometimes.

"The Dryad helped me come here."

"Wa, by Dryad, do you mean that green little girl? Don't tell me, she robbed your lips again~~."

"That didn't happen."

She's energetic even though she's being wrapped.

I looked for the release device, but I couldn't reach it since it had been buried by the collapsed floor stones. Since it can't be helped, I cut the feeler and release them. I might be destroying the attractions, but it's already half-destroyed anyway.

"Thank you."

I release Arisa who's nearby. She should have just cut the feelers with space magic and escaped. When I told her so while freeing Mia, surging wave of protests came from Arisa.

"The power of space magic is great you know. I would cut my own body if I used it to cut feelers that were so close. A maiden won't be able to become a bride if she's hurt before it right--no, I can get some injuries here, and force him to make me her bride can't I?!"

The latter part of Arisa's scheme was said in whisper, but I could clearly hear it with straining ears skill. I warn her, "Be moderate with your scheme okay."

"Thanks."

Mia hugs me when I've finished saving her, so I put her down. I pick up a long wand that has been dropped on the ground and pass it to Mia. Mia probably couldn't escape with magic because she didn't have the wand. Feel like I've heard that she's said her aim is off without a wand.

Now then, it seems there's no exit here.

"How about the other three?"

"Liza is caught on the trap above this room right, they're operating separately to release her."

"Nn."

I carry the two back to the above room for the time being. Since they're light, I carry them together at once.

"Don't carry me on your shoulder~"

"Objecting luggage."

Their maidens' hearts would be hurt if I treat them like luggage I guess?

Well, forgive me.

When I get back to the upper room, I see Tama waving on the opposite room from the mouth of the monster that had caught Pochi. I can see Nana and Shagnig-shi behind her.

Apparently, Tama and the others were going ahead to save Liza and the others who had been caught by traps, but the floor where Arisa and Mia were standing collapsed right after they entered the next room. Tama and Shagnig tried to go back in a hurry, but the door seemed to have been warped, and they couldn't go back. Since they couldn't help it, they advanced through the maze to the room where the button to release Liza was, that is the other side of the monster mouth that had caught Pochi and rejoined.

Arisa seemed to have contacted me first thing after thinking the possibility of other members getting injured from another collapsing accidents. GJ, Arisa.

"I am truly ashamed. Letting such dangerous situation to happen during my tour."

Shagnig-shi gets down on his knees to apologize, but the unexpected accidents aren't really his responsibility. He doesn't seem to be a monster parent too. Since he had checked the place many times three days ago, the worms probably made the holes around 1-2 days ago.

Today's exploration has ended since the facility is going to be reinspected.

Tonight's prey are... seven Metal Worms.

9-21. Pests Extermination

Satou's here. There are many cases where the gathered experts can't come up with a solution, yet a single word casually said by an amateur becomes the impetus to solve the problem.

Turning the problem into a catastrophe from the single word of the higher-ups also happen a lot though.

◇

"Yes? Pests extermination expert is it?"

I stopped my hands which were constructing a living doll, and parroted the word of the elder elf-san who had visited the workshop.

Here is the workshop of the living dolls crafter, Sotorineya-san. The living dolls that are on the attraction the other day, and most of the ones in the town are his works.

Before he started teaching me, he warned that even if I learned it, I wouldn't be able to reproduce it outside since the raw material doesn't exist there. As I understand, they use philosopher's stone, like the one from before, as the core which acts as the power reactor, and that can't be produced outside of Boruenan forest.

Nevertheless, the other structures beside that one look usable so this endeavor won't be useless. I want to know it so bad, particularly the structure of the information IO, and the AI logic control.

Putting that aside, it's about the elder-san.

"I've heard from Shagnig-san. You seems to have wonderfully exterminated the five and seven poisonous insects that had bred at the training site. We're expecting much from that skill, please lend us your wisdom."

Ah, that huh.

There were some cave-in incidents at the training ground where Arisa and the others were playing yesterday, it was probably about the investigation that I did together with Shagnig-san at the remnant of the site. Looks like the elders have known about how I exterminated the poisonous insects that had bred to become so many at that time.

By equipping Insect Slayer title, and using [Bug Wiper] magic at full power, it was a simple work. I tried unequipping the title at my second try, but it wasn't any different. I can't decide if the title doesn't have any additional effect, or if it's because it was too overkill in the first place.

"If you're fine with me, I will gladly give some counseling."

Or rather, I'll even go and exterminate the pests.

I've been taught many things like the way to conceal the spirit light by Aialize-san, and many knowledges and recipes from the other elves after all.

The elder calms me who has stood up enthusiastically.

Since they don't seem to be in a hurry, they will send someone to pick me at the place where I'm staying tomorrow morning.

That day, the living doll that I had finished constructing couldn't even stand up.

Looks like it's a long road ahead.

◇

"Now, Satou of Shiga kingdom! I've come to pick you."

The one who has come here is Aialize-san.

What are you doing high elf-sama.

"Please call me Satou. Then, shall we go."

"Yes."

Aialize-san whose face has reddened holds out her hands slanting from below.

Does this mean that we should join our hands?

We might be going with space magic.

I grasp her hand while thinking such thing.

Arisa leans her body from the balcony and shouts, "Guilty!" Pochi and Tama have also joined saying, "Guilty", but I wonder if they know the meaning~?

Although it might be called space magic, we entered to a block of the world tree with the Dryad's [Relocate] like before.

It might be boorish of me, but there wasn't any need to join hands right?

◇

The sky is filled with stars.

Rather, this is the first time I see stars that aren't twinkling with naked eyes.

The place where the Dryad has taken us is the observatory room at the center of the city part on the zenith block of the wold tree.

If the AR and the map are right, then we're about 300 kilometers high above the ground. We haven't reached the orbit of geostationary satellites, but this should have exceeded the stratosphere quite a bit. I guess it's in the slightly lower part of the low earth orbit?

Even though we're this high, the gravity is still at 1G, I wonder if it's due to magic?

No, before that, such long tree shouldn't have been able to hold its own weight. I timidly try to ask that matter to elder-san but--

"How is the tree not broken apart and destroyed."

"It's the gods protection."

Don't think that you can deceive me by using gods, protections and such.

Apologize to physic teachers!

I wanted to shout, "Ugaa" like Arisa, but I forcefully held it down with my will. Since Poker Face-san is doing its best, the elder should not know it.

"I'm sorry, the elder is ignorant in the technical sort of things."

A researcher-like woman elf, Jia-san who's waiting beside us explains it to me.

I'm told that the countless branches of the world tree drive themselves into the adjacent sub-space (Isa Plane) like anchors which help distribute the world tree's weight and support it. I've abstained from understanding what the [Adjacent Sub-space] is, but it seems the weight of each branches isn't much by itself, so they're not disintegrating.

There's still something that bugs me, but I'll just regard it as some mysterious tree (Fantasy).

Let's cut to the chase.

"Please look at the branch ahead."

I look at the gigantic branch that extends on the empty air that Jia-san has pointed. The branch diverges innumerably in the middle of the way, and the last bunch look as thin as threads. It extends through as far as eyes can see, but Jia-san points out even further than that.

Aialize-san who looks bored beside me is looking through a telescope on her hands, is that some kind of magic? I can't help but feel that's not it. I'm interested in what kind of thing that Daisaku-shi has influenced it with, but let's not touch it now.

I can't see anything with normal sight, so I use [Distant View], [Looking Afar], [Night-Vision], [Light-Intensity Adjustment], and [Mana Perception] together to look.

Jellyfish?

"Is it about the jellyfish things that wrap their legs on the branch that looks like a thread?"

Jia-san who's presenting a telescope to me stiffens, but she answers by just nodding her head.

However, why is it jellyfish in space. It should have been whales--no, Tuna. Yep, tuna fit the space well.

I expel the stupid thought in my head.

I've forgotten since I was drunk with the space-station like spectacles. It's a bit late, but I execute [All Map Exploration].

The branch only looks like a shining branch that extends up to one kilometer long from where I am, but I know from the map that it extends like a superfine thread for about 100 kilometers long.

This thread-like branch is probably scooping up the mana from the ether.

From what I've gathered with the map, these jellyfish are called [Evil Fish], they are around level 20-40 averaging at 30, they're just small fry monsters. However, there are 10.000 of them. They seem to have special racial ability called [Absorb]. When I look closer, their category is not monster but [Mysterious Creature]. The heck is that?

◇

"Those jellyfish are eating the mana that the world tree has gathered along the way. That's already troubling by itself, but they even plant their eggs in the world tree and breed."

I see, the pests extermination is about that jellyfish after all.

It's easy if I can just destroy every jellyfish around the tree.

"T, that is--"

Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to be that easy.

"--There are multiple reasons why we can't exterminate them."

The first one, the world tree defence mechanisms will burn you into a charred remain if you exterminate the jellyfish.

Hah? What the heck? I think so, and I ask again.

Apparently, the jellyfish have infected the world tree with their poison and make the world tree thinks that they're parts of it. The elves seemed to have tried to detoxify the world tree with magic, and made it sleep while they exterminated the jellyfish, but the scale of the world tree was too big, it was a failure.

The second reason, when the number of jellyfish have decreased below a certain point, they will multiply themselves explosively.

Nice for aquaculture! So I think, but it's not that easy.

When the jellyfish explosively multiply, they seem to consume the neighboring world tree's branches in large quantity. Furthermore, it will trigger the chain reaction from the nearby jellyfish and they will also proliferate, so if we can't exterminate them all at once, they will increase instead.

The third reason, there is a manaless zone around the jellyfish.

I don't understand the meaning so I inquire more, it seems that you can't use magic near the jellyfish.

Looks like this is why the jellyfish investigation doesn't progress. The elves call it the void, but it's practically the outer space, so they shouldn't be able to enter it without magic.

They also can't use the magic-made artificial life (living dolls) to attack the jellyfish since the defence mechanisms of the world tree turned the dolls into charred remains.

"It's quite terrible isn't it."

"It's really terrible you know~"

Jia-san wails like it's from the bottom of her heart to my 'it's other people's problem'-like thought. The dark circles under her eyes are deep.

Now then, I've thought of several ways to deal with them, but let's confirm them with Jia-san.

9-22. Pests Extermination (2)

Satou's here. Curry is great. You can make curry as long as the vegetables you put with the sauce made from curry powder are falling apart while you cook them. Even if the potatoes melt into powder-like thing, the curry is still curry nanodesu.

◇

"I want to confirm if you have investigated some things, is it fine?"

"Yes, we're fine with any opinion, so please."

Jia-san is glancing with eyes full of hope from below.

Ah, it's hard to say vague things in such atmosphere.

"Has anyone tried gathering them on one place and then shoot them with magic with great power from afar?"

"Yes, the Biroanan clan on the different continent did so, however, during the engagement the jellyfish kept propagating, while the world tree was counterattacking, so when every one of them had been defeated, half of the world tree's branches and the majority of the elves' life were lost."

Looks like there are world trees on another continents. Seems that Biroanan clan is a clan that's skillful with fire magic and quick to start a fight despite being elves. This might be a prejudice, but they don't really seem like elves~

"That clan is a bit different from others..."

"Jia, you shouldn't talk bad of other clan."

"I'm sorry, elder."

Aialize-san is nodding, "yep, yep", while folding her arms beside the elder.

That reminds me, she was here.

"What happened to that Biroanan clan and the world tree afterward?"

"They've defeated all of the jellyfish (Evil Jelly), but the mana that are sent to the earth from the world tree have decreased so much, nearly 30% of the continent become deserts or wastelands."

The damage is quite serious.

If we consider the indirect damage, isn't it worse than even the demon lord.

No one knows the detail about the long-distance attack that has been used by Biroanan clan, so the elder is going to inquire them.

"Then, the second point. Have you researched ways to capture the evil fish or such? It might be worth it to search for their elemental weakness, repulsing materials, or attracting materials (Pheromone)."

"Yes, both the Beriunan and Burainan clans should have researched them. The evil jelly elemental weaknesses are fire and heat. On the contrary, they seem to resist ice and darkness. I've never heard something like attracting material."

"Umu, I'll go ask about it from both clans."

"Yes, please."

The elder fluently makes a promise without putting an air to Jia-san who answers my question. Aialize-san is only nodding, 'yep, yep', beside the elder. Is that alright, high-elf.

"The third and the last, the world tree is going to counterattack if we harm the evil fish externally right, but do you know just how far it can be injured before the counterattack comes?"

"We've checked this with analysis skill, and it seems the world tree will counterattack if the evil fish health is decreased by 30%."

Then, I wonder if it's possible to debuff or neutralize it?

If it's possible to use long-range attack magic, shouldn't it also be possible to use long-range status magic?

"Have you tried putting the evil fish to sleep, then pull them away from the world tree, and massacre them?"

"It should also be in the reports from both Beriunan and Burainan clans--ah, there is. It's possible to make them sleep, but it seems that the evil fish are monitoring each other, and once one of them is pulled at a certain distance away, the other evil fish will hinder it."

Jia-san turns the page of the paper file. It's surprising to see such low-tech things while we're in such a futuristic room.

Fumu, isn't fine if we just put them all to sleep?

I ask Jia-san so, but--

"That's impossible."

--it's rejected immediately. It says that once you've put the hundredth one to sleep, the first one will wake up. Moreover, they have high resistances against sleep and paralyze, it's hard to put them to sleep. The elves seem to have tried letting them absorb the mana from the sleeping potion, and it didn't show any noticeable effect.

They've tried to use water and wind magic, but magic can't penetrate the mana absorption zone around the evil fish if it's not at least intermediate level magic or above. Although, in case of the users whose magic penetrated the zone, even their elementary magic showed some effect on the evil fish, so their mana absorption zone probably isn't perfect.

For now, I ask elder-san to find out the details for "Hindering the evil fish."

The problem is their number and the distance.

◇

There are two cards in my hands that I can use to defeat the jellyfish before they can explosively propagate; [Meteor Shower], and [Laser]. I do have other techniques with high power, but these are the only two that can defeat 10.000 enemies on vast area in one shot.

First, [Meteor Shower] is out of question. The world tree is probably going to get destroyed along.

That means it's [Laser], but even if I shoot it as pulse laser, it has trajectory of line no matter what, so it'll end up felling many world tree's branches. If I do it carelessly, I could even damage outsiders even if it's not of the elves.

I also think about massacring them by myself by using sky drive and ground shrink, but the range is too vast, it'll take a long time to defeat them by hands. I'm envious with the shounen manga protagonist who can move at light speed. It'll be a cinch if I have teleport magic.

Looks like my own power isn't enough.

I feel regretful to say that I'm of no use after I brace myself.

Elder-san, and Jia-san say, "No need to apologize", and, "I'm quite thankful for the attracting material idea", but I can't help but feel that I've overlooked something.

She's patting my shoulder as if comforting me, but you haven't done anything right? High elf-sama?

◇

Now then, rather than satirizing Aialize-san, I should come up with something instead.

"What are you groaning about?"

"Ah~ there's a bit."

The day seemed to have got dark while I was brooding over without any good idea. Looks like everyone has come back from the training ground.

When I reply half-heartedly to Arisa's question while turning my eyes, not only Arisa, everyone is looking at me with worried looks.

No, Tama is doing things at her own pace, she's curling up like a ball on my lap.

Nana is like the usual too. She's playing with the pixies that she's caught by using cookies.

"Ah, sorry to make you worry. I need something to consult--"

I consult them about the jellyfish while leaving out the details.

"Fuhn, exterminating pests at an orchard huh. Can't you do it straightforwardly?"

"They've tried it already, it's no good."

"They'll be driven away if you make some noise~?"

"When you 'washa washa' they will run away nodesu."

Tama forms her hands to look like cat's paws, and spreads her arms wide.

Pochi looks as if she's scared of Tama's hands, she's gesturing like she's running away in fluster. They're probably trying to show how bugs run away?

It seems doable if I can use [Fear] from mind magic, but there's no one that can make the scroll. I have [Bell of Fear] among the magic tools in my hand, I guess I should try its effect in some remote place. Ah, tools that make use of sound wave are useless in space huh.

"Magic."

"Ah, the insect repellent magic that was used before right. Master, if you use that magic, won't it be simple to exterminate the pests?"

Those are Mia and Lulu. It's the story about when there were a lot of small flying insects at the camping ground making them unable to sleep.

There's barely any elves that can use life magic, so it might be unknown to them unexpectedly. There are many derivatives of [Bug Wiper] magic, maybe I should go and get them in the duchy capital. If it's effective, I'll consider it lucky.

"You open an insect cage, and then put a delicious meat inside nodesu."

"Using traps is a good idea. However, I suggest that the bait to be something sweet."

Nana revises Pochi's suggestion.

Traps are a good idea, but it'll be difficult to prepare traps for 10.000 jelly.

"I think using smoke to smoke them out is a good idea, but I don't think master will be troubled if that can settle it. How about unleashing birds and small animals that eat those insects yet don't harm the plants?"

Liza's suggestion is quite good, but unfortunately, I can't think of anything that can be the natural enemy of space jellyfish. The [Great Monstrous Fish (Tovkezeera)] from the other day seem like they will eat the jellyfish happily though.

"How about asking a puppeteer that become an insecteer, and have the insects leave the plant on their own to be exterminated?"

Arisa seems to be tired from the training today as she answers with some random idea.

"Ah, and also, this hit me from when Pochi talked about it earlier, but if you can't separate the bugs apart from each other, can't you just put them in the insect cages, and then take the cages away while they're like that~?"

When you consider just how many insect cages will be needed.... Oh?

Perhaps, this idea might be good?

Step 1: Put some to sleep and into the cage, then leave them alone.

Step 2: When we have caught them all, pull the cages away all at once from the world tree.

Step 3: Annihilation.

Looks good.

Step 1 looks like it'll need outrageous amount of works, but we can somehow do something to strengthen the cages. I don't have to worry about materials if I just use magic anyway, I'll look for something that's good against the [Absorption] racial ability of the jellyfish.

I can see the light somehow.

Let's consult various things with Jia-san tomorrow.

I go to Lulu who's gone head to prepare for dinner. The elves are going to eat together with us, so many married elf women have gathered in the spacious kitchen.

I've decreased the fat and increased the meat on the hamburg steak today.

I've made different kind of hamburg steak with the soup for Pochi and the others, but beside that, Mia eats the hamburg steak with meat while saying, "It's more delicious than usual."

Fufufu, the next one will not be tofu hamburg with meat inside, but hamburg steak with tofu.

"Today is also peerless and wonderful nanodesu."

"Three consecutive hamburg steak~?"

"Delicious."

It's popular with the beastkin girls too.

"It's no good to always have the same menu, so I guess I'll make something different tomorrow."

"I, it's not not good nodesu!"

"Nn."

"The sauce and the garnish are different, so it doesn't feel like the same menu you know?"

"Everyday is hamburg steak."

As expected, I don't want it to be everyday.

"I want to eat omelet rice or curry!"

A request comes from Aialize-san who has slipped into the dining table before I knew it. Lua-san wipes the sauce on her cheek. Beside Mia and her family, the elves who come to the banquet is alternating everyday, but Aialiaze-san has the perfect attendance.

Nea-san told me that Daisaku-shi had always wanted to eat either of the dishes, but they couldn't reproduce it until the end. There's no tomato in the elf village huh. Let's share some and have Nea-san stock it.

Curry huh, I haven't eaten it in a long time. Arisa has also began singing a strange song, "Harahara, hara perape nyon, karakara karu da mon". That seems to be the song of curry.

<TLN: I guess, "Tummytummy, tummy hungryry nyon, emptyempty light damon." Apparently, it's Minami-ke's reference.>

Fortunately, I've acquired the recipe, so I'll just need to ask Nea-san if she has the required spices.

It's beef stew tomorrow. I'll see if Mia can detect the little bit of meat texture and fat on her share tomorrow.

I also need to prepare for the jellyfish extermination, tomorrow will be busy.

9-23. Pests Extermination (3)

Satou's here. Curry's garnishes change all the time, but the soy-sauce pickled Japanese leeks, and red pickled gingers are the standard. Depending on the local specialties or the restaurants, it seems that there are curries that use roasted cucumbers, sauerkraut, and even pickles.

To have so many variations like this, it really is a menu loved by Japanese after all.

◇

"Aze-sama, please be very careful."

"I'm fine, it's not even my first time."

While Lua-san is looking so worried, Aialize-san is full of confidence.

Actually, we're going to start the experiment of locking up the jellyfish with cages.

As expected, I didn't think it was fine for the top of the clan to tag along even if it was just for the formality, but I yielded when they said, "Optimum."

Apparently, the world tree regards high elves as one of its parts. Aialize-san told me that, unlike the case with the jellyfish, the high elves have always been like that from the beginning. I was curios with what she's said, but I was uncertain whether it was fine for an outsider to ask that, so I decided not to.

From Aialize-san's story, she can make the world tree think that several people she's brought together are its parts, but since this is an experiment that involve the use of magic, it's better to have few baggages, so I'm the only one who's going with her to observe the experiment. I'm not complaining since I want to go, but is it fine for Lua-san not to come?

She blushed when I asked her the reason for making me accompany her, so I thought that there was a chance for me, but she told me that a hero who could battle the black dragon would be fine even if the jellyfish went amok. Please stop with the misleading gestures.

"Sa, err, you have finished your preparation right?　Let's go then."

She was going to call my name, but she couldn't do it in the end. Since it's cute, I'll stop such boorish behavior like holding my hand out.

I grasp the hand of the slightly sulky Aialize-san that she has presented. She jumps out to the space while getting panicked for some reason. I also followed her using sky drive at the speed that won't break our joined hands.

Oh, I thought that it was dome made from some kind of glass, but it's some mucus-like membrane instead. I wonder if it's the sap of the world tree?　It's about 2 meters thick.

Outside of the membrane is the vacuum--

Umm, Aialize-san?　It's painful though?

I cannot breath normally. My face and hair have started to frost. I don't think that I'm going to die so I check my status, my stamina and health have just been decreased by little, and the self-healing seems to be working as they're immediately healed.

I was certain that Aialize-san would use some kind of wind magic. I invoke [Canopy] to create a comfortable space. There's not enough air, so I take out the balloon from my storage, and replenish a little bit of air into the [Canopy]. I'll add oxygen from the balloon if the air become polluted.

Fuh, I breathe a sigh of relief.

It was good that I fill the remaining balloons with air. Even though I made them with the intention of playing with Pochi and Tama, I had forgotten.

>[Spacewalk Skill Acquired]

>[Survival Skill Acquired]

I've got myself some strange skills. I'd have loved ether operation skill instead.

Sky drive is usable in the space, so I've decided that the spacewalk skill is a dead skill. Survival skill seems to be quite convenient, so I allocate it maximum points, and activated it.

"'What's the matter?'"

"'I wasn't able to breathe.'"

"'U~mm, I didn't tell you? You can't breathe in the void sky so, be careful okay.'"

You're late, Aialize-san.

"'And also, you shouldn't use too many magic. There aren't many spirits in the void sky, and the mana is thin so it's hard to recover magic power here.'"

<TLN: So, mana is different from maryoku (magic power) after all, sigh.>

She told me to go to the nearest world tree branch if I need to recover my magic power no matter what. The mana that have been collected by the world tree from the ether seem to be overflowing on its branch. And also, I'm warned to not touch the world tree's branches in the void sky since it might burn me as they're hot. Shouldn't the outer space be cold?

Come to think of it, we're talking normally. It's probably [Telephone] magic, but Aialize-san doesn't have space magic skill, so how is she able to use it?

"'Aialize-sama can use space magic huh.'"

"'I, I've learned this a long time ago, the skill has been lost with time, but I can still use the simpler one even now. If I'm in a place with a lot of spirits, I can also use the difficult ones.'"

I'm intrigued with the "The skill has been lost with time" line that she's said, but since we've gotten closer to the jellyfish, the chatter is over. I'll ask about it while I treat her with omelet rice tonight.

◇

It's huge.

The jellyfish in front of me is the average one at level 30, but it's bigger than even Heiron, the black dragon. It's about three times as big if the feelers are included.

"'First, I'll try with cages from space magic okay.'"

Although Aialize-san said space magic, she's actually chanting spirit magic. It's said that there is no spirit in the void sky, but it seems she has properly brought them along from the observation area earlier. It's the kind of shrewdness that doesn't seem like her at all, but it's most likely the result of many failures in the past. Those situations float on my eyes.

When the magic is finished, six boards appear around a jellyfish, the next moment, a cage with six boards appears.

The feelers that are too long to get inside the cage are cleanly cut and wriggle in the void sky. They're gradually moving away in the air, it's probably going to fall after the gravity pulls it.

I collect the feelers that have been caught on the world tree branches with [Magic Hand] to one place. And then I put them into the storage. The parts that have been cut don't seem to be living beings.

The jellyfish that has been caught is struggling in the cage, but the others jellyfish aren't reacting. The world tree is also silent of course.

Next, we move to near different jellyfish and put two of them into nature magic and light magic cages each.

Either magic can catch the jellyfish without any problem just like with the space magic. Fire, shadow, darkness, and gravity magic also have some capturing magic, but they seem to also deal damage, so we don't use them this time.

We tried to use Earth, Water, and Wind magic just in case, but since there are no [Water], [Air], and [Ground] in the void sky, these magic need more magic power than usual. In addition, its compositions seem to have weakened, as the jellyfish quickly absorbed the cages made from these three elements.

This jellyfish is very weak individually.

In fact, three of the jellyfish that had escaped the cages couldn't come close when I caught them with my [Magic Hand]. They're absorbing the [Magic Hand] but it takes quite some time to break it.

It's troublesome to manage them all the time so Aialize-san makes them sleep with wind magic. We confirmed that they wouldn't pursuit us if we took some distances away before they awoke.

While we were doing all that, the [Nature], and [Light] magic cages were destroyed.

The former took about two hours, while the latter continued on until about three hours. The first [Space] magic cages that has been made is still in good health even after five hours have elapsed now.

◇

However, you're good high elf-sama.

I'm sorry for thinking that you were just a piece of junk elf in my mind. I didn't think that she could use such varied magic like these.

We had some free time while we wait for the [Nature], and [Light] magic cages broke, so I did various experiments after I asked for the permission from Aialize-san.

First, the [Bug Wiper]. Unfortunately, it has no effect. They're not bugs after all. I tried getting close to the jellyfish and used magic, but I could use it without any problem. Aialize-san looked lightly surprised, so it was probably not normal. I feel that the MP consumption has increased for a tiny bit when I use magic.

I was panicking when the [Dry] magic almost damaged the jellyfish for more than 30% of its health, but I avoided the problem as I canceled the magic halfway.

Next, I'll try elementary level attack magic. First, I try to fire [Remote Arrow], and [Short Stun]. I thought that they would disappear when they got close to the jellyfish, but they didn't, unlike the time with the wild boar king. The remote arrow normally damaged it, and the short stun made a gaping hole on it rather than fainting it. They're fragile just like how they look, I need to be more careful.

I'm intrigued with the [Magic-made artificial living beings] talk from the other day, so I ask Aialize-san to give a performance of it.

"U~n, I can't afford the magic power, so just do with a simple one okay."

Contrary to her half-hearted words, she's chanting the magic with quite proud-looking face.

Wait, Aialize-san? Your MP is decreasing greatly you know?

"....■■ Magic Beast King Creation (Create Behemoth)"

A magic circle is formed in the void sky, and a creature that seem to be a mix of an elephant and a hippo appears from it. It's only half as big as the jellyfish, but it looks extremely strong on the outside. Its level is 50, its body is about as big an average destroyer.

However, this Behemoth-kun does not have wings.

It fell, pulled by the gravity, and it seemed to have been annihilated after leaving a red light far beyond.

"....■■ Magic Light Ball Creation (Create Wisp)"

Aialize-san made another artificial life in order to avoid my glance. It can fly this time. The wisp that has appeared is only about 10 centimeters long in diameter, and it's floating about while emitting faint white light.

The wisp is moving toward the jellyfish.

After the wisp gets to a certain range, it loses its outline and disappears. I see the base end of the jellyfish feelers absorbing the remaining light.

I continue on with physical attacks experiment.

The fairy sword cuts the feelers without any resistance, its body is fragile after all. The Ant Javelin that I've filled with magic power and thrown at the jellyfish is unexpectedly caught by its feelers skillfully and got eaten. It looks to be practically easy to poison them.

The last one is [Bell of Fear] magic tools.

This magic tool isn't one that's made in present days, so I don't know the (menu) explanation. I can guess from the flow of the words I can read, but I'm not confident I can use it well. I was able to somehow identify the Command Word, so I thought that I should just try it.

"'Be afraid of me.'"

Oouu.

The jellyfish around 3 kilometers range of effect are attacking with electricity and feelers like they've gone mad. I carry Aialize-san with princess hug, and escape outside the electricity attacks.

As we have arranged beforehand, Aialize-san is going to put the jellyfish to sleep with wind magic--or at least that was plan. She's only saying, 'Au au' while blushing and not using magic. That reminds me, I've forgotten that she's someone who can't deal with close physical contact.

After leaving Aialize-san floating in a safety zone, I hurry back to where the jellyfish are.

I thought that the world tree was going to attack, but it seems to be okay as the jellyfish healths are still alright. I cut the feelers of the jellyfish that are tangling the world tree with the fairy sword, and leave only the body parts.

Next I put the three bodies-only jellyfish in physical cages that I've taken out off the storage. A bulky clay cage made with earth magic, a bronze cage, and the last is a transparent ice cage. Even though I've made them with various big sizes, the largest one is still barely enough.

I've used magic during their creations, but there's no trace of magic on them left now.

The bronze cage is smaller than the other two, so it's impossible to shove the jellyfish into it. They're too big to not even fit the 4LDK size. It can't be helped, I put another in the second ice cage I've made.

I thought that the jellyfish will immediately break through the ice cage, but there doesn't seem to be any problem.

Aialize-san and me go back to the observatory while sweeping the jellyfish feelers that have caught the world tree.

I leave Jia-san and the others to observe the time needed for the space magic cage, the ice magic cage, and the earth cage to break. If either of the physical cage can hold the jellyfish for a day, even the elves alone can probably deal with the pests.

As an apology and to soothe high elf-sama, I made the most delicious omelet rice. The fluffy egg wraps the chicken race that's filled with the fat from the fried chicken skin, put together with crispy chicken skin, paprikas, and green peas-like beans.

When Arisa made a request for me to draw a heart with the ketchup on her omelet rice, everyone asked me the same. Pochi's and Tama's shares are drawn with simple pictures of them. Mia and Aialize-san look very envious when they see those illustrations, but please bear with it. Eat them before it cool down.

There is a reason why I've not made curry.

I've acquired 80% of the spices from the duchy capital, and gathered the remaining 20% from Boruenan forest.

But, there is no soy-sauce pickle.

To not have soy-sauce pickle even though there are leeks!

Like this, it lacks the finishing touch. To obtain the last piece, I came back to the duchy capital under the cover of the night.

9-24. The Search at the Duchy Capital

Satou's here. I sometimes see wonderful urban legends where the character in tales or stories wakes up beside an unfamiliar opposite sex who's sleeping nearby, but it's never happened upon me in reality. However, it's a common spectacle in the other world....

◇

I feel my face is wrapped in soft sensations, it feels wasteful to wake up now.

Ah, bliss. However, this sensation isn't Nana's, and Lulu's aren't these big. Don't tell me, has Aialize-san intruded?

In case of the last one, it'll be bad if I don't wake up soon, so I escape from dozing off.

Huh? I don't know this room.

Half of my view is a soft body wrapped in unbleached cotton, and the other half is reflecting unfamiliar furnitures in a narrow room. I can smell cheap alcohol mixed among the faint smell of sweat.

Right, I remember now.

"Onee-chan! It's morning."

"Wake up quick. I'm hungry~"

"Starving nano~"

I lightly wave my hand to the little children who have intruded the room.

Oops, I've made the wrong choice. I should have clung to the ceiling and activated hiding skills when the door opened.

"Wa~ Futsuna-ane has brought along a young man~"

"Mom, onee is being loose!"

"Onii-chan, are you going to make Futsuna your bride?"

The children is making noise like a beehive that's been poked.

I'm a bit worried with some of the remarks, so I check my clothes and my body just in case. Yup, it's safe. We've only slept together. Since I've been journeying together with Arisa, it feels strange to have the check become the norm.

Last night, I slipped into the duchy capital in the dead of the night, but it was so late no inn was open. I have a lot of acquaintances in the duchy capital, but it would be bad manner to suddenly visit them in the middle of the night, so, as it can't be helped, yes reluctantly so, I was walking to search for a bed at the night town, but--

Even though it was supposed to be a fun nightlife, I unexpectedly got involved in a little quarrel.

It's just an ordinary quarrel in a night town. A spell-user woman on her late 20s with slightly big breasts was being extorted by a criminal group called [Grey Bat] for her stall. That was it. They were going to sexually assault her since she didn't want to pay the fee, so I intervened as there was no way I could leave it alone. That spell-user woman was Futsuna-san.

I led the criminal group toward the patrolling guard ahead, and when they got close, I quickly handled them with [Magic Hand]. It seems that the members of the criminal group who tried to attack the guards were put into the jail. There were some who tried to escape, but since I caught their feet with [Magic Hand], every one of them seemed to have been captured.

I kept a tense distance while I was leading the criminal group, so Futsuna-san fainted immediately after the guards helped. It couldn't be helped, so I carried her to her house at the housing complex, but I encountered the prostitutes women who seem to be her acquaintances. They seemed to have just finished their works and come home.

And then, after they humorously made fun about Futsuna-san, I told them that I saved her from [Grey Bat] extortion, and Futsuna-san told them that those guys were all arrested by the guards, then the prostitutes onee-san raised cheers of joy. They seemed to be a group of good-for-nothing who leeched on the streetwalkers.

They were originally led by a decent man, but he was seriously injured by the demon rampage at the downtown that occurred before I got to the duchy capital, so his influence decreased and the [Grey Bat] started to do as they please.

Anyway, the party to celebrate the annihilation of [Grey Bat] begun, and it became an all-night drinking bout. I couldn't get drunk, so the prostitutes onee-san who got worked up made me drink cheap liquor in large quantity while glued to me. It was absurd to even compare the liquor to the one that I drank with the black dragon, but it was tasty for some reason. It was truly a fun feast.

I'm worried with the women's finances since we drank quite a lot of liquor. It would be boorish of me if I give them money for the liquor expenses, I guess I'll put some Shiga liquor in a suitable barrel and give it to them later.

I slip out of Futsuna-san whose soft body holds my head, and get up off the bed.

My feet has stepped on some kind of soft things. Since I can hear, "Ahn", soft voice, I look down. The prostitutes onee-san who drank together with me are buried under the empty bottles of the liquor.

I apologize to Futsuna-san's mother for the drinking bout last night. I secretly used [<<Secret Field>>] magic so it should have been quiet, but I should apologize with a few words here. She forgives me while saying that it's just like usual, and also, "If you're fine with middle-aged woman who's late at getting married, please get along well with her." while laughing. U~n, she (Futsuna) can't be called a beauty, but she looks plainly cute with her make-up-less face and shoulder-length red hair, there should be some men who fall for her inside their minds.

After having the seaweed and grain soup that Futsuna-san's mother had made, I left the housing complex I had spent the night in.

◇

Now then, first I need to go to viscount Shimen's scroll workshop.

I changed my clothes in an alley, picked a horse-drawn carriage cab on its pool near the great wall, and went to the scroll workshop.

"Chevalier-sama! You've returned faster than I thought."

"Yes, I have some unreasonable things I need Natalina-san do."

I cut to the chase with Natalina-san in the drawing room of the workshop.

I came here to request them to make new magic scrolls for exterminating jellyfish and crafting things at the elf hometown. There are eight elementary magic, and four intermediate ones. In addition, I earnestly ask them to take out various [Dodge Monsters] type of nature magic of the storeroom. There is [Dodge Marine Mammal] among them, so I'm expecting it to be effective against the jellyfish.

"U~n, the two space magic among this twelve scrolls are not possible. There's no one that can use space magic this advanced. Formerly, there was someone who could, but that person had been invited to become a teacher at the royal capital academy."

Hoo, it's not like there isn't anyone huh. However, I wonder if it's alright for her to leak the scroll-making technology.

"Is it not possible to ask for that person's help?"

"That girl won't cooperate unless it interests her. She should be neglecting her teaching duty even now, she's said that she's going to make a holy sword that surpasses Gjallarhorn in her sleep."

Natalina-san is sighing grandly in appalled tone.

Fumu, a holy swords creator huh. Then I wonder if I can use the dragon powder as an exchange?

"Can I get the cooperation of that researcher if I offer this material as an exchange?"

I put a vial on the table while talking.

"This is?"

"It's dragon powder."

"Do you understand the implication?"

That reminds me, the fact that dragon powder is a material for making a holy sword is a highly classified information in Shiga kingdom. Work hard [Poker Face] skill.

"Unfortunately, I don't know the detail. A long time ago, I was told by an acquaintance that, 'If you get a hold of dragon powder, bring it to the royal capital.' When I ask for the reason, he only said that it had something to do with 'Holy swords.'"

The deception skill shiningly assists after a long absence. Common stories flash in my mind one after another.

"Tell you what, Chevalier-sama. Don't talk to such thoughtless person okay. Some dangerous people of the kingdom might set their eyes on you if you're careless."

Natalina-san is warning me so while she opens the dragon powder vial and checks the inside. This dragon powder is made from the scale fragments of Heiron the black dragon. The scale is big in itself, but the volume increases greatly when it's made into powder, I've made 120 vials from fragments that seem to form one piece (of scale). One vial should be about 10 gold coins worth if I'm not mistaken, so it's quite a fortune.

The property of dragon powder differs for the outer circumference, the surface, and the inside of the scale. The dragon powder that I've taken out is made from the fiber of the interior of the scale that makes the most quantity. Of course I didn't forget to change my name to Nanashi when I was making the dragon powder.

"The maid over there! Call gramp Jang here. Tell him, 'Come, if you want the chance to analyze high grade dragon powder'!"

The overly excited Natalina-san told the maid who had come to add tea to my cup to do an errand, and the maid got out of the room.

"Chevalier-sama! Where did you get this! No, that's not it. That's not it. Do you only have one of this? Do you have the fiber part from before it's turned into powder?"

She's too excited, her words are collapsing.

I've gathered many broken scales, and sorted the damaged scales to be on its own, there are three of them. However, what is she going to use them?

"The fiber part is it?"

"Yeah, I've read about a man who created advanced magic scroll from a book at the royal library, that man seems to use a writing brush made from dragon's whiskers."

Whiskers huh~? Heiron the black dragon has whiskers, but I don't think that thick whisker can be used as a writing brush.

Natalina-san also knew about that.

I'm told that she and her friends went to hunt dragon's whisker at the labyrinth city 150 years ago. What a rash person. The whisker they sought seem to be from lower dragon's, but even so, it was still too thick to be used as a writing brush. I asked if they defeated the lower dragon, but she replied with a bitter smile saying that driving it away was the best they could do. Nevertheless, they still acquired a lot of scales, and it was profitable enough that the party members at that time who also worked in a magic workshop called [Ivy Mansion] could set up a base at the labyrinth city.

Back to the story, from that experience, she's been thinking that the material for the writing brush might be the fiber from the whisker after all. She shouted toward the ceiling that she was not making scrolls back then, so she ignored it. Calm down.

In fact, the elf who was the leader at that time made a high-powered living doll from the fiber taken from the scales. I want to meet that elf, I feel that we will get along well.

Looks like the chance for me to take out the dragon whisker, or rather, the dragon fiber from the storage has been lost.

"W, where is it Natalina! The best dragon powder is thissssss!

At the speed that didn't match his obese body, Jang-shi, the workshop head took the dragon powder on the table and stared at it. He's probably checking it with his [Item Check] skill.

"Ooh! Ooooh! It's a high-grade no mistake. It's dragon powder made from the scale of a genuine dragon, an old dragon nonetheless, it's not from something like a lower dragon. Isn't this the phantom item that appeared only once at Seryuu city 40 years ago! Unununu, I don't know the creator. There's no mistake that this is made by a very skilled alchemist! Natalina!"

I thought that he was a more composed person, but he's quite an interesting one. He's fit to be Natalina-san's superior.

"Chevalier-sama, w, would you be so kind as to concede this?! You would wouldn't you!?"

Jang-shi bloodshot eyes are scary. Ah, please don't hurl your saliva.

If it's like this, I'll ask something a bit unreasonable.

"If you comply with the unreasonable request that I've told Natalina-san earlier, I will present it."

"What?! Are you sure? No, you're sure right? Do as you wish with this old woman. Yes, in exchange for this flat chest--gwowah"

Natalina-san who can't put up with the sexual harassment remarks body-blows Jang-shi. He's fainted, but Natalina-san probably held back, if she seriously hit him, there would be a wind tunnel on Jang-shi's stomach.

"In other words, if we can complete the scrolls from earlier with the shortest time right."

"Yes."

Natalina-san is laughing while having a carnivorous smile like she's before a prey.

Thanks to the effect of [Poker Face] I didn't get swallowed by her smile, and succeeded with the negotiation. Natalina-san was trying to get another vial of the dragon powder for the researcher at the royal capital.

However, I won't hesitate to make a dragon writing brush if it can really be used to make advanced level magic scrolls. I'll ask the elves if there is anyone who can make it at the elf hometown.

◇

After I've finished the business at the scroll workshop and greeted Hayuna-san and the others, I return to deal with my original purpose. I tried to search for pickles like I did with the short horns during the map search last night, but I couldn't find it. The name must be different.

I went to visit the duke castle head chef as the my remaining hope.

9-25. The Search at the Duchy Capital (2)

Satou's here. I hadn't think about it when I was in the former world, but I didn't think just how the things I usually ate were made or from what ingredients they were. It feels very real after I come to another world.

◇

"Hello, it has been a while."

"Ou, if it isn't young master Satou. Long time no see."

"It's been a long time, chevalier Pendragon-sama."

The head chef-san who welcomes me while smiling is bad with polite speech like usual. He looks fit to be someone who's wearing an armor and wielding a great sword on a battlefield, but he's one of the five people in Shiga kingdom that can make the delicate imperial dishes. Another one of them is that head chef's support, the slender young man chef.

The maid-san who's guided me to this room is waiting close to the wall with face full of expectation, today I'm not here to cook though.

As souvenirs, I take out the dragon spring liquor and brownie wine from my bag. The brownie wine isn't something that rare in the market, so I probably won't be find out. On the other hand, the dragon spring liquor is completely unknown in the market, so even if it's analyzed, they should think that it's made in a minor sake brewery.

"Are the wine and the other one both Shiga liquors?"

"I'm sorry chevalier-sama, please don't mind him."

"No, it's alright. I found some unusual liquors during my journey, so I thought that I should bring some to everyone."

Actually, in exchange for tempura jelly recipes, they taught me various things like the way to decorate vegetables, or make shaped candies. The character bento for Pochi and the others are some of the result.

I get down to business after we're done with the pleasantry.

"Red pickles huh? I don't know no soy sauced pickles, but pickled peach and salted lulu should be red, they are."

"Let's see, pickled carrots and fruits that are related to gabo are also red, but they're more like orange if I have to say."

Unfortunately, neither of them are aware of soy sauced pickles.

They're mentioning various red pickles, but I've never come across Japanese radish in the duchy capital in the first place. Due to that, I'm out of radish stock since I've been using them for the Japanese-style hamburg steak. I've also made grated radish too many times for the grilled fish dishes, so I guess it's not strange for me to run out of stock huh?

"If you know the ingredient, why don't ye' make some yerself?"

"I understand that it uses Japanese radish, and lotus root, but there's some flavoring that I'm not sure."

I think it uses salt and vinegar, but I don't remember what creates that red color at all. It's not from coloring agent right?

"There's no one who cultivate radish round here 'fter all."

"There's a legend from long ago that says orcs will come if you plant radish, though it's just a superstition. It should be cultivated around the territories of earl Kuhanou, and earl Seryuu."

It's hopeless if there's no radish.

I thanked the two, and decided to go back. The maid who was waiting near the wall looked really disappointed, but I secretly gave her one bag of baked sweets while saying, "It's a secret okay." I've been giving them to the pixies and the elves everyday, so I don't have many in hands.

◇

It'll be too conspicuous to go to the territories of earl Kuhano or Seryuu if it's not in the night, so I've decided to pay my acquaintances some visits.

I came to the airship workshop before I got out of the duke castle, and presented some brownie wine to the workshop head. This was not because I skimped the dragon spring liquor of course. Even though his red face looks like someone that can hold his liquor, he's not good with strong liquor, so I didn't give him that one. The brownie has only 10-30% alcohol degree on top of being sweet and easy to drink.

While being careful as to not make it unnatural, I ask about the way to control the aerodynamic engine, but it seems the engines that are in the duchy capital all only use fins that have identical output. He grumbled that because of that, sometimes new aerodynamic engines aren't made even after there are monstrous fish that have been subjugated. Even the second-hand aerodynamic engine that's been serviced from the other day is being keep as a spare for the engine in operation today.

"Is Satou-dono familiar with a country called Talbia."

What's with that beer-loving-like country name.

"It's a country southwest of the Parion holy country that's located past the desert of death on the western part of the kingdom, they make small airships called floating pot that a person can ride."

The workshop head moves his pen on a paper, and draws simple structure of the thing.

It looks like a hanged caterpillar falling from sea of acid. How do I say this, if we leave out the landing legs, it looks like a sake jug. There are small fins on the bottom of that pot, those fins rotate along with the pedestal, and equalize buoyancy it seems.

Shiga Kingdom seemed to have tried to imitate them, but it ended up just like it did for me in the other day; it couldn't even fly, and did serious damage instead.

It seems they had investigated that the thing might be convenient for scoutings, but concluded that the birdkin were better for it.

The workshop head isn't thinking about the floating pot, but whether the mechanism of the pot can be applied to the big airship.

"Oh right, has Satou-dono heard the thing about the prince from before?"

The workshop head-san who knew about my quarrel with the third prince told me about various news concerning him casually. The third prince seems to have retired from the holy knight with illness as an excuse, he has also lost his right to the throne, and got confined in the imperial villa at the back country that's under direct control of the royal family.

Honestly, I had forgotten the things about the prince, but I thanked the workshop head-san's kindness nonetheless.

◇

Seems like Orion-kun wouldn't like it if I visited him, so I splendidly ignored him. I'll just send him a letter of apology for not showing my face later.

First, I stopped by the mansion of the previous earl Walgock whom I'm indebted with while bringing some brownie wine and gold crafted music box that I had made together with the elves. It's a normal spring type music box, not a magic tool.

I leave without taking too much time, and head toward marquis Lloyd's mansion this time.

I've received a report from the messenger, whom I've sent earlier, that an appointment has been securely made. Since he's a busy person, I didn't know if I could meet him or not, but since it was not good to postpone the particulars about the arsonist noble from the other day, it was good that I could meet him sooner than later.

I received a passionate welcome at the mansion of earl Lloyd. To have maids lined up to welcome me in rows ahead the open door, what galge is this? was what I wanted to hear. However, please spare me from being hugged by marquis Lloyd who had waited ahead.

"I don't know how I could ever thank you sir Pendragon."

From marquis Lloyd's story, baronet Poton has voluntarily retired from being the governor of Puta town with the pretext of being ill, and another noble from the marquis' faction has replaced his position.

Seems that the current earl Bobi and marquis Lloyd worked together to deal with the remnants of the Wings of Liberty. Unfortunately, the young noble men committed suicide by taking poison starting from the son of baronet Poton after they had been arrested.

They sure work fast, it's not even been two weeks since then.

"The duke himself has sent a written letter asking for information concerning this marquis Dasles person to Makiwa kingdom, but..."

Since he was being evasive, I waited until he talked. He hesitated to say, "It was an accident without a doubt", that the ship which the arsonist noble had ridden was attacked by large herd of monsters and sunk.

Moreover, the monsters ate not only the problematic arsonist noble and his party, but even all the soldiers who had accompanied them.

I see. I should dismiss the "It was an accident" part. If I am to digest it normally, it must be that marquis Lloyd and the current earl Bobi have conspired to get rid of them. Although, I won't mind even if I have to keep silent, since the arsonist noble brought it to himself. Therefore, I only answered with, "It can't be helped since it's an accident."

I added a smile to appeal that I believed him, but marquis Lloyd's face was pale. Why? He seems to be a busy person after all, he might be tired since his worries pile up.

Marquis Lloyd proposed to give several mines and businesses to me as an apology for this incident. That's really too much, and I won't be able to handle them even if I accept, so I gently decline it.

And then, he also recommends me to become the next viceroy of Mitotogena city which is a trade port located on the great river whose viceroy is going to be replaced next year, but I decline it of course. Something like being a viceroy seems so troublesome, please give that to people who love their social positions.

Afterwards, he tries to give things like jewelries, and maidens--they're little girls with one digit age as expected--to me, but since none fancy me, I continue to decline, and in the end, he asks if I want to become an adopted son of his faction viscounts who don't have a successor.

It appear that he was trying to give me something so that I would not speak, so I asked that if possible, I would like to borrow his treasured magic books if he had one.

I felt slightly bad when I looked at marquis Lloyd's face who looked really relieved. I don't particularly need a gift or an apology, but I'd accept it if he's glad with it.

There are a lot of people among marquis Lloyd's clan who excel at earth magic, so their archive is full of earth magic books.

It would be bad if I took the treasured books by mistake, so I picked severals with the suggestion of the old man butler's recommendation. Since the butler also has earth magic skill, it's probably the most suitable. He's picked about 10 books, and I borrow the five most interesting ones among them. I'll borrow the remaining five books when I come back to return this set. Since there was a map with the placements of the neighboring countries hanged on the archive wall, I took a photograph of it without permission.

Being here too long wasn't good, so I chose the right timing to leave after I had borrowed the books.

I only realized that I could have treated the tired marquis Lloyd with his favorite tempura for dinner after I had gotten out of his mansion.

◇

I was thinking of meeting with Sera, but she was currently training in Tenion temple.

I didn't want to be a nuisance, so I didn't approach Tenion temple, and went to the downtown. I looked for soy sauced pickles among the jeering of the stalls, but I couldn't find it.

When I went to a certain shop that was said to sell red pickles, it turned out to be red turnip pickles. It seems nice to go with rice, but it's not it.

"Masita?"

"Masita, no?"

I was called so from below, I looked down.

Oh, the brother and sister sea lion children who got along well with Nana huh. They look around restlessly while sniffing with their noses. It's cute that they can't say 'master' properly.

"Where is Nana?"

"Nana not here?"

They shake their bodies around me while looking for Nana.

However, I don't think you'd find Nana even if you roll up my trousers' cuffs.

Nana seems to be quite attached to these two. I promised the two to bring Nana along when I come here next time, and give two bags of baked sweets that were reserved for Nana to the two. I see the two children off while they're saying thank you by nodding their heads.

"Young master, won't you buy some pickles?"

"Oo, aunty. You also have a stall open huh."

The one who's called me out is the mother of Futsuna, the spell-user, whose place I've stayed on last night. She's selling pickles made from cucumbers and gourds soaked with soy sauce and mirin. They're quite delicious, or rather, aren't these taste of soy sauced pickles? It's a bit too sour, but it should have tasted like this.

It seems that the one who's taught this recipe to Futsuna's mother is one of the prostitutes onee-san who has participated in the drinking bout last night.

She was selling normal pickles up until then, but her sales improved when she started to sell these Kuhanou pickles. She told me that her profit didn't increase much since the soy sauce and the mirin are expensive, but there weren't any customers who came even while we were talking, so there probably are some regular customers.

Evening of that day, I earnestly implored the prostitute onee-san who has taught Kuhano pickle's recipe to Futsuna's mother. I thought it was going to be a difficult negotiation, but she immediately replied that she would teach me. She taught me an arrangement of her hometown's recipes since she was born in Kuhanou territory. Seems that It was originally a recipe for pickle of circle radish that is specialty product of Kuhanou territory. Since she murmured, "I want to eat Kuhanou-style pickle.", I would buy her some radish while I'm buying for me.

I gave her several gold coins as a thank for teaching me the recipes which made her lose her work time. Her pride seemed to have been incited by that, and I got to be flooded by the baptism of her techniques until late at night.

I left the housing complex after I had confirmed that the kiss marks have gone with [Self-Healing].

Now then, let's fly to the radish producing area--earl Kuhanou territory during the night!

9-26. Nostalgic Place

Satou's here. Rodeo machine was popular as a way to speed up diet at one time, but do people's households still use it now? My house bought one, but it became a frame to hang laundry before even a month had passed.

◇

I leave the duchy capital under the cover of the night darkness.

After I had gained high enough altitude with Sky Drive, I accelerated in one go with [Air Cannon]. I continuously spread Flexible Shields to act as wings. In order to get lifting power, I stack several Flexible Shields to make it look like wings. The shape might be far from being optimum, but maybe thanks to me using [Air Control], MP consumption is lower than when I only use Sky Drive, and it's harder to lose my speed.

After approximately one hour, I've arrived at the grapevine mountain range near the Phantom Firefly Cavern of Oak.

It's probably faster if I go through the cavern, but I'd like to gather some oak ores for glass-making, and carbonated water during the trip over the mountain range.

The oak ore mine of the duchy itself is located two kilometers to the west of the Phantom Firefly Cavern. According to the map, around 20 kilometers to the east in the mountain, there is a place for mining oak ores. There's also a place where I can get silica a bit deeper from it, so I'll go there.

I quickly create holes by using earth magic, and harvest the raw materials to the storage. There are terribly lots of underground insects on my feet. It was good that I noticed it halfway through, and took refuge to the air. If it was Arisa who hated insects, she'd be faint with bubbles on her mouth.

Contrasting to the name of the mountain range, grapevine, far from having grapes, there is barely any fruit on this mountain. I wonder if it was the center of grapes production during the era of the orcs?

There are phantom beasts called [Sky Deer (Amagica)] on this mountain. I ignored it since I was on the ship back then, but since I wanted to meet it once, I went to it.

This sky deer has a racial ability that's similar to Sky Drive.

Yes, those deers run in the sky.

However, it seems they ran faster on the ground as the herd with 10 deers were running on the mountain when I found it. To be running in the middle of the night like this, I wonder if my mining activity have surprised them?

The male sky deers have more imposing horns than a moose, but they look like normal deers beside that. The leader-like sky deer is about three meters tall, but other than that, it looks like the other sky deers.

I wonder if they'd fly~?

I was thinking like that while floating in the sky several hundreds meters away from the sky deer herd, but I quickly moved my body in accordance to crisis perception skill that suddenly kicked in.

The leader sky deer lunged with great speed right at that time.

Flames are blowing on the hoofs of the sky deer. If we look at its legs that aren't burned, we might think think that it wasn't hot.

That sky deer charges at me many times, but since I have the ground shrink as my trump card, I continue to avoid it for certain. Apparently, leader-kun was acting as a decoy as the sky deers that were on the ground had escaped.

After splendidly evading the sky deer for several times, I sneaked behind it by using ground shrink, and landed on its back. It was involuntary since I felt slightly mischievous.

The sky deer is jumping up and down in rage in the sky as if it's gone mad.

I had ridden on a rodeo game once, so thanks to that, or not, I managed this without much hardships. No, it might be because my horse-riding is at MAX.

Nevertheless, it seems that the sky deer always moves its head up whenever it hits the ground, maybe it's its instinct. It should do a somersault since it can fly anyway. The deer seems to think that I won't get off if it's just rampaging around, it decides to plunge into the tree groves. I wouldn't let it got hurt because of my little prank, so I put

Flexible Shields in front of the sky deer to prevent it from getting hurt. When we got close to the ground, I used [Magic Hands] to pin the sky deer down.

When the sky deer had became quiet, I gave it some water to calm it down. Come to think of it, I have the [Tamer] title, should have set it.

＞[Taming Skill Acquired]
＞[Animal Training Skill Acquired]

＞Title [Sky Deer Rider] Acquired

Now then, since I've unexpectedly bullied the sky deer, I will exterminate some monsters that look threatening to them as an apology. Beside the leader, it's probably dangerous for the herd to go against [War Mantis], and [Spider Bear].

Let's put the flexible sword that I've just acquired at the scroll workshop yesterday to use. It's a magic that use flexible shield not to defend, but to attack. I can make up to 16 blades, and extend as far as [Magic Hand] does.

I approach the war mantises and spider bears that I've marked on the map from the sky, and quickly mow them down with flexible swords from the air. I catch the defeated monsters with [Magic Hand], and put them into the storage.

There are still few war mantises left, but there's no problem even if I don't annihilate them.

I rise along the surface of the mountain range, change to level flight when I reach high altitude, and leave behind the duchy territory.

◇

When I've come at the sky of the slightly nostalgic baron Muno territory, I'll look at the state of Muno city's development, and confirm how many houses have been built on the reclaimed land of Totona and the others along the way. As expected, people look like dots at this altitude without the farseeing skill.

I was intending to just pass through it, but since the number of thief on baron Muno territory hadn't decreased much, I hunted them until dawn.

I'm in Nanashi silver mask mode this time. It's the phantom figure who has defeated the demon of Muno city.

I approach the thieves hideout from the air, and incapacitate them with [Remote Stun] from outside. I carry the the unconscious thieves with [Magic Hand] by floating them, and transport the arrested thieves in bundles to the front of Muno city.

By using earth magic, I make some stone pillars in front of Muno city, and tie the thieves with ivies. Conveniently, the guards of Muno city seem to have low morale, as they're sleeping on duty. How hopeless.

I did such roundup works repeatedly until the sky was turning white.

The safety of the highway will be quite better with this, but it looks like a new urban legend will be born. It's a good medicine for the guards who sleep like a log.

While hiding myself, I peek at Totona and the others at the reclaimed land, I'm glad that their food situation is better than I've thought. It seems Nina-san has distributed the foodstuffs from the duchy capital back then.

◇

As the result of the side trip, I got to the Kuhanou earldom as the day dawned. I fly at the course where I won't meet people on low altitude, make a landing near Nouki town, and walk toward there on foot. I get a lift on a wagon I've encountered on the crossroad, and enter the town. When I entered the town, I used the commoner ID that I had made in Seryuu city.

I help the old man who have let me ride with him to unload his wagon as a thank.

"Huh? Is this a round radish?"

"No, this is long round radish. There won't be round radishes before the winter come."

Now that you mention it, it's slightly elliptic. Since it was just right, I bought a bagful of long round radishes.

There was a shop nearby which sold lotus roots, so I also bought a bagful of the roots there. The lotus root is unexpectedly cheaper than the radish. It seems to be cheap since the lotus root are not cultivated, and instead picked in the wild.

I asked around the people on the stalls, but none were selling Kuhanou pickles. Ever since the public order of baron Muno territory has worsened, merchants who come from the duchy territory to sell Mirin disappear, so they can't make it even if they want to.

Damn you demons, it's your guys' fault huh.

They said that the general store which had bought flavorings and pickles from long ago might still have some stock left, so I decided to look there.

It's a bit annoying to carry the groceries I've bought, so I ask the old man's permission to put it behind his stall.

"Hello."

"Ye~s, welcom~e."

Huh? Wasn't this store supposed to have an old woman attending?

The one who's keeping the store is a before-20 years old woman without make-up.

"I'd like to have some Kuhanou pickles, do you have some?"

"Ah, Kuhanou pickles is it, we've ran out of stock, but please wait a bit."

Regrettable, out of stock huh.

The onee-san clerk is calling out, "Obaa-chan", toward the store's back.

"What is it, your voice is loud."

"This customer wants to have some Kuhanou pickles."

"The store is out of stock."

"Aren't there some that Obaa-chan has pickled last month."

"Those ones used the relatively expensive mirin, so we can't sell it at the store's price."

For an instant, I thought that the two were doing a little play to raise the price, but it seems that the aunty honestly didn't want to sell it.

I said that I had visited here with some great effort, so I would buy it even if it was expensive. Although she said expensive, one potful of around 500 grams heavy was two silver coins. I tried to sample it before buying it, and even though it tasted somewhat different, it was soy-sauced pickles without a doubt. I'd buy it even if it was two gold coins.

Mission Complete.

◇

Now, then since it's going to take five days at the fastest to make the additional scrolls, I decide to go back to the elf hometown at once. I got close to the duchy capital along the way, so I put one small pot of around 100 grams of Kuhanou pickles to a small bowl and gave it to the prostitute onee-san who gave me the information.

I arrived at the house inside Boruenan tree when it was very late at night.

With the help of the recipe memo, I compounded the curry powder. It was easily completed than I thought. However, I'm not confident if yellow curry will be accepted, so I begin to experiment some arrangement if I can make curry with different color.

It keeps not becoming the color of curry I want, so I make some home-made soy-sauced pickles and put it in the item box as a change of pace.

When I've successfully made the color of curry powder I want, I mass produce them enough for the ingredients I have in hand, and put it in the storage. Curry has many uses in itself, so it's not going to be a problem even if I make a lot.

Since my body smelled like curry, I used deodorant magic, and went to bed. I can probably sleep for about three hours from now. I fell asleep while feeling pleasantly fatigued.

9-27. Pests Extermination (4)

Satou's here. During the time when games were sold in ROM cartridges and CDs, master up (game development deadline) = development is over. Nowadays, there are works to be done for version upgrade, so there is no finish line, it's hard. It's the most troubling when a work comes for something that I've forgotten.

◇

I'm pulled from my sleep by the sensation of hair tickling my noses.

This must be Mia.

Let me sleep for a bit more.

I catch Mia while fumbling and hug her to stop her prank.

Huh~?

It's different. It's not Mia. Someone who moans "Au au" must be high elf-sama. Mia can't put out this soft feeling.

I'll likely be judged guilty like this, but my reasoning can't be restored enough to release these hands. Dozing off while enjoying the wonderful sensations and the cute voices, I return to the blissful sleep once again.

◇

"Wake up~!"

"Mwu."

"Master, it's morning. Umm, please wake up."

I wake up from the slightly deep sleep by the sensations of getting my hair and cheek pulled.

"I've conjectured that his fatigue is high. To rest please."

"It's certainly very rare for master to wake up late, he must be quite tired."

Liza and Nana are voicing their worries. It's alright, I'm only sleepy, give me another five minutes. No, please let me sleep for just another 10 minutes.

"Tired~?"

"Should I call Zena nodesu?"

What are you calling Zena-san for?

"Mwu, Aaze."

"That's right, erofu. How long are you going to enjoy it, get awayy~"

"Uu, I mean, I mean, I can't move ndamon. It can't be helped. I mean, I can't move ndamon."

For some reason, Mia and Arisa are angry to Aialize-san. Did she empty another can of sweets in secret again?

Come to think of it, Aialize-san's voice sure is close.

I slightly open my eyes, and there's the reddened face of Aialize-san before me. Wait, isn't it too close?

"Good morning."

"G, good morning."

What kind of situation is this.

There's Aialize-san on top of my body that's sleeping on bed. I can see Arisa and Mia on my view, so it's probably not in the middle of an attack.

"How long are you going to hug, get separated already~"

"Satou."

Arisa and Mia grab my hands and move it. Huh? Did I capture Aialize-san when I was half-asleep?

"Please excuse me for this."

"N, no, you were half-asleep after all, it, it can't be helped!"

Even after she's escaped from my restraint, Aialize-san can't quite get up, so I help her sit on the bed.

Arisa and Mia are holding guilty festival until after I get up. Please give some leniency since I was half-asleep.

◇

"And so, have you accomplished your objective at the duchy capital?"

"Yeah, perfectly."

I've acquired the soy-sauced pickles, and perfected the adjustment of curry powder!

For some reason, Arisa's gazes are cold.

I'd likely get told, "Seiza", if I tell her the detail about the soy-sauced pickles, so I show her a glimpse of the scrolls I've obtained from the scroll workshop.

I did contact you several times with [Telephone] magic from duchy capital didn't I. The range for this magic seems to depend on the skill level as [Telephone] from Arisa didn't reach me since it was too far.

Looks like the breakfast is pseudo-french breads.

On top of having no vanilla essence, the bread was hard so it felt lacking. I wanted to eat breads since we always eat rice lately.

"Do you like soft bread more?"

"Why don't you ask Kua? You haven't asked the way to make natural yeast?"

Oh, soft bread seems to exist.

That reminds me, we've always eaten my dishes, so we haven't tasted the local cuisines of elf hometown. I'll ask Mia's mother to teach me and Lulu some recipes next times.

◇

Lua-san who has come here after the breakfast is going to tell the result of observation on the observatory. Since they don't want to publicize the matter about jellyfish, I lead her to the parlor instead of the living room. Lua-san isn't the only who tags along, Aialize-san whose face is still burning also follows.

"--and so, the ice cage lasted for half a day, and the stone cage lasted for two days, before the jellyfish escaped from them. The cages from the space magic of Aialize-sama are going strong even now for both the intermediate and advanced ones."

Fumu, space magic barrier is powerful after all. I checked the number of elves that can use space magic cages to Lua-san, but it seems that only Aialize-san and one of the elder can use it among those who are awake. There are only about 100 people who can do that even if we count the ones sleeping.

"However, the sleeping ones won't want to be counted among it."

"Why is that? Since it's the world tree's crisis, they shouldn't complain even if we wake them up right?"

"They are people who have chosen to sleep in order not to forget their memories."

I can't quite comprehend Lua-san's word. Lua-san seems to have guessed it as she begins to talk about the detail a bit more.

It seems that elves encode old information every 1000 years.

In my vocabulary, it's probably like changing [Episodic Memory] into [Declarative Memory]. Simply put, after a millennium has passed, [Memory] is irreversibly changed into [That short word called 'Memory'] it seems.

Of course the [Semantic Memory] seems to also be consolidated, but since there's no elf who does research to the point that it'll become a problem, this is omitted.

Thus, the elves who don't want to lose their memories no matter what are put to a long sleep. The place where those elves sleep look more like a cemetery than beds. It's caskets rather than cradles huh.

Of course there are also way to make the memory remain by force with magic, but the memory becomes disorderly and can't maintain its integrity, the elf who does so becomes emotionally unstable, and so there is no one who undergoes it without approval from the elders assembly.

It's difficult to live long huh.

"The seven high elves will be fine even if they wake up though. Those kids are sleeping because they『Got tired』."

The high elves can entrust their memories to the world tree, so their memory won't be deteriorated. However, they won't be able to remember if they are not connected to the world tree, so it's not like it's all-mighty.

"Even though I've never directly met them in person, there seem to be high elves who hate every race beside elf, and some radical ones, so please think the way without waking them up if possible."

"I~guess, like Iflueze will absolutely say,『Huhh? Pests you say? Just burn those things. Kuhahaha, it's a festival!』, and then proceeds to continuously fire『DEL Inferno』to make big fires."

I see, it doesn't seem to be the specialty of Biroanan clan.

Lua-san seems to pretend that Aialize-san's insider story doesn't exist, as she coughs to clear her throat, and returns to the topic.

The results about the matter that I asked the elder to inquire back then seemed to have come.

"First, they had tried investigating substances that the jellyfish hate, but they couldn't discover it. They can't find attracting substance beside mana. The jellyfish seemed to be attracted to magic tools that had been filled with MP and artificial life-forms like wisp, as they tried to reach it with their feelers when those closed in. However, to peel them off the world tree means that we need MP that exceeds the world tree, so it's realistically impossible. Those are their replies."

They can't find the way to make the jellyfish readily go huh, unfortunate.

I'll carefully read the written reports regarding the jellyfish. There might something that we have overlooked after all.

"About Satou-san's plan to use cages for the jellyfish, the clans that are interested with it are not only Beriunan clan and Burainan clan which are clans that like to do research, but also Zuwakanan clan, they're going to help during the experiment and the investigation."

It seems that although it was a plan that anyone could come up, there wasn't anyone that had tried it.

Unexpectedly, someone who thought of it might not said it out loud.

This is the first time I've heard Zuwakanan clan, but they seem to be a clan that live on the same continent as Biroanan clan. I see, this must not fail huh.

"Um, and the others are."

Lua-san reports other matters while turning the report paper.

About getting obstructed by other jellyfish when a jellyfish was separated for a certain distance away, it seems that the jellyfish around the area attacked with lightning together. At that moment, the jellyfish that was being pulled away would roll up its feelers and made an electric barrier to protect itself from the lightning attack.

When the jellyfish released strong electric attack, they seemed to rob the required MP from the world tree branches, and several branches that were caught by the jellyfish seemed to wither because of it.

I'm concerned with the relapse prevention after the jellyfish have been exterminated, but Biroanan clan have already thought about it. It seems that they're having artificial life-forms made by the high-elves to go on patrols outside the world tree.

"Artificial life-form like Behemoth is it?"

"Ufufu, that's not it. Behemoth shouldn't be able to fly, Biroanan should be using <<Create Ifrit>>, and the summoned Ifrit should be using <<Create Papillon>> to summon flame butterflies."

Ah, not Behemoth, but wisp huh. Beside Lua-san, Aialize-san has reddened up to her ears, and she's slightly trembling due to embarrassment.

Since it's cute, I'll leave her as she is.

"However, isn't the duration short?"

If I'm not mistaken, the mana on the void sky is scarce they said.

"Yes, if they can replenish the initially needed MP that's large, it can be maintained for ten days, it's going on patrols to attract the jellyfish. Of course, when battle begin, it'll quickly dry the caster's MP, so they use the ship when it's the time to exterminate the jellyfish."

I see, it's more like a bait than a light trap huh.

It seems that the discovered jellyfish are to be exterminated by the ship that departs from the observatory. They seem to call it Light Ships.

"Every world tree has eight light ships each, but Boruenan only has four left. The goblin demon lord was rampaging a little over 100.000 years ago. Heroes didn't exist yet at that time, so three light ships were destroyed before the demon lord could be defeated."

Huh? What about one other ship?

"That was given to the hero as a reward for exterminating the demon lord. I think it's still at the Saga empire even now since it's been passed on every generation."

There are four other ships that are the same type as Jules Verne huh.

"E, even if you look at me with those eyes, you can't."

Aialize-san has given a warning ahead of time.

"I, I'm resolute you know!"

Ah, it's about that huh.

I think Lua-san who's giggling knows what I have in mind, but let's not correct Aialize-san's misunderstanding here.

However, if this world tree has less ships than the other world trees, I think it'd be better if they think about the forces to hold the line of defense against the jellyfish, post-extermination.

9-28. Curry Festival

Satou's here. Do you like curry?　I think that the genuine specialty-made curry and pouch curry are both delicious in their own ways. However it was painful when my clothes smelled of curry after the lunch break that resulted in the women employees looking coldly at me.

◇

Now then, let's begin the preparation for the curry festival tonight.

I asked Lua-san in the morning to reserve one of the squares.

Large pots are lined up on the ground.

The large pot is big enough to fit a man inside, and it has eight feet on the bottom. They're not for walking of course, but for creating about 10 centimeters gap when the pot is put on the ground.

During our stay at the duchy capital, I made a lot of these pots in the underground labyrinth, they were made to be heated with the [Flame Field] magic.

"You two, please help me peel the vegetables."

"Yes."

"Understood."

"Liza, teach Nana how to do chamfering."

"Yes, please leave it to me."

I entrust Liza and Nana to peel the vegetables. I take out the chicken meat that I've left pickling since before the duchy capital out of the Item Box and pass it to Lulu.

I'd like to use chicken cutlets as the topping, but I guess the chicken meat isn't quite enough is it?

"Mia, is there anyone I can ask some chicken meat from?"

"Nn, Hiya."

Her word is few, but Hiya-shi is most likely a hunter. After Mia beat her thin breasts doing "Leave it to me" gesture, she ran accompanied by Pochi and Tama on her flanks.

Are you guys going to catch Roc bird?

The shortage of personnel for the vegetable peeling is immediately supplemented.

The researcher of hero's dishes, Nea-san leads some adult woman elves who like to cook to help. I entrust several people that Nea-san's brought, and Lulu to do the work that would take some time to finish.

Nea-san and me are going to fry the onions.

Fry it carefully.

Slowly and carefully.

Slowly and carefully.

Nea-san is cooking while frequently looking here.

It's complete when the onions have turned yellowish-brown.

I have Lulu to change place with me and mass produce it together with Nea-san. It's written in the memo that this onions give slight sweet taste to the curry, so it's quite important. I make the onions that are big enough, and some carrots to be shaped like stars and crescent moons, I just need to arrange them afterward.

I feel lonesome stares looking here from the shade of a tree. It's Arisa and Aialize-san.

This is troubling.

Letting Arisa to cook is seriously a flag for failure. In case of Aialize-san, I can't help but imagine her tripping the pot and gets splattered by the inside of the pot.

I beckon them, here here.

Arisa and Aialize-san points their finger toward themselves while having "Me?" faces.

When I nod to that, they smile like in full bloom, and rush here hurriedly.

When I think of this time, it hurts my heart.

"Ehehehe~"

"I-is there anything I can do?"

I say, "Yes", and pass baskets with candies from the duchy capital inside to them. I push thin stick candies to the mouth of the two who have received the baskets with blank faces.

Arisa seems to have noticed my intention as she crush the candy in her mouth while looking reluctant. Aialize-san doesn't seem to quite understand, she's eating the candy with slightly red face. Her expression is a bit erotic.

"Please distribute the candies to the pixies so they don't disturb us."

Ah, please don't put that "I've been betrayed!" face. With the basket hung on her arm, Arisa pulls the teary eyed Aialize-san to the square and gathers the pixies. I'm sorry Arisa. I'm leaving it to you to babysit the pixies and Aialize-san.

◇

The flame that's dancing wildly is heating the pots. When it has boiled, I relax the flame and remove the lye.

This work is really quite troublesome. I pass some ladles to Nana and Liza who were looking at it so interestedly. The two methodically scoop out the lye. Only the serious Liza and the hobbyist Nana can do such troublesome work so steadily. I'll reward the two later.

Halfway through it, some elf men who look like they're in military seemed to be attracted by Liza's serious expression, they began to take part removing the lye. You guys, why does the atmosphere becomes as if you're doing a serious match.... Since it feels like I've lost if I retort them, I leave them alone.

Now then, once the lye have been removed, and the vegetables have been cooked, I just need put the curry powder next.

I'll leave the state of the vegetables' to Nea-san.

I'm going to prepare the garnishes at once.

I prepare many fried food as the topping together with Lulu. Whale karages and cutlets, fried prawns, wild boar cutlets, and fried white fish meat. Halfway through, I appoint Lulu as the teacher to guide the elf women the way to help.

Now then, I'll prepare the deep-fried paprikas, and pumpkins for Mia.

I only preliminary arrange these, the frying is for later.

I fry the sweet potatoes that I've thinly sliced before. I put it in a small basket, and bring it to the place where Arisa is playing Sugoroku with the pixies.

"Arisa, I've come to bring more snack."

"Uwah! It's potato chips! Is it alright? It's alright for me to eat it right?!"

"Share it with everyone."

Potato chips was among the item that I forbade during the diet back then, so I rarely ever cooked it. I've also told Lulu not to make it, so it might have already been one month I guess. I have some carbonated water that I got during the oak ores gathering, I'll try to make soda if I have some chance later.

"Okay! Popo, Lili, line up the pixies in a line! I'll distribute the wonderful snack from the hero's country you know."

"Aye aye sir, ain't it!"

"Oh you, Arisa, you're exaggerating."

"But, it smells nice~"

Potato chips seem to be popular with the pixies too. I can hear relatively angry voice of Arisa from behind. Work hard, Arisa.

I prepare sweet drink for people who are bad with bitter ones while hearing such voice from behind me. I'm just putting some Ugi sugar into cooled cow milk. The drink outward appearance become like green tea because I put this sugar which has green tea color. After the pseudo green tea latte fill three large bottles, I cool it with magic. I need to operate the magic delicately since it must not freeze over, but it's not that difficult.

◇

I put curry powder into the pot little by little, and stir it while the powder is melting, but it's not getting thick. Was the original recipe wrong? I put some wheat flour in order to easily thicken it. This time I feel that the body is lacking. It finally feels right after I've thrown some butter.

Next, I need to lower the flame, and wait for the flavor to sip into the vegetables. I'll fry the topping one by one in the meantime.

"Prey~"

"A big catch nanodesu!"

"Praise me."

Tama, Pochi, and Mia are running while being full of mud, so I stop them before they enter the square. Five elf men with nihilistic faces are following the three from behind. Although I said men, their outward appearances are that of junior high school students, so they look like nothing but some cheeky boys. Arisa would have drooled over them.

"Thank you for your hard work."

I use life magic to clean the people who have come back from hunting.

Pochi and Mia smelled strange since they were caught by some plant-type monster, so I use deodorant magic on them. It seemed to be quite hard.

There is no time to pickle the chicken meat I've obtained, so I'm going to use it for the topping instead. There are pheasants, and ducks, they look really delicious. I'd like to make the duck into kamonabe with dashi or udon, but I'll just put it on top of steamed salad this time.

The elf men who have come back from the hunt camp on a temp table at the square for the banquet, and begin to have liquor and appetizers ahead. Pochi and Tama are cunningly eating the grilled chicken at the place where the elf men are. Don't overeat okay?

"Nn."

Mia carries the potato chips basket near Arisa, and holds it out to me. Of course the inside is empty. Come to think of it, Mia and Arisa are often fighting over potato chips huh.

"It's dinner soon, so no. I promise that I'll make it as snacks tomorrow."

"Promise."

I join my little finger to Mia's little finger and do yubikiri. Aialize-san who's surrounded by the pixies seem to find yubikiri unusual as she's staring at it. Let's magnificently ignore it here.

◇

I distribute the completed curry rices. It feels like distribution center with all these people and camps.

I use the slightly long thin rice from Gururian city. It feels like rice from the specialty shop that I had eaten at before, so I'm imitating it.

"Huh? It's not yellow."

"Yes, it's too much for beginner so I changed the color. Don't worry, I've made our share to be yellow."

There are four kinds of red yellowish greeen bitter orange curry this time.

First, green curry with spinach-like vegetables. I made this one for people who like vegetables like Mia. It has normal spiciness.

Next is the red curry with quite a bit of pepper. I made it for people like the nihilistic men and Lua-san who likes something curious. Nea-san and Lulu who tasted it end up in tears, so its spiciness seems to be uncommon. I put a lot of wolf meat I have in stock.

The yellow one is keema curry. Of course I've arranged it in Japanese-style. I put the pickled chicken meat in this. It's quite hot, although not at the red curry degree. Its yellow color is close to the primary color one, so people who associate it with curry probably won't associate it with something disgusting.

The last one is orange curry. It's actually a normal curry. This color is made by coloring agent. Needless to say, the harmless one. They're something that I originally made to distinguish potion, arranged a bit. I've put cow meat that I got from the elves-san for this one. I've made two kind of flavors, the normal spicy one and the sweet one.

Maybe because there's no prejudice against it, the orange beef curry is popular among the women. I make it so people can freely choose the fried topping that I've mass produced.

As for the small palates, there are fresh salads, boiled cabbages, mashed potatoes, vegetables sticks, leeks, and *etc*. The soy-sauced pickles are limited so it's exclusive for my table. I'm currently making more myself, I'll share some when it's finished.

When everyone has spread through the place, the meal begins with [Itadakimasu] sign.

Ah, curry after a long time.

"Huh? The color of master's curry is strange nanodesu."

"The color is originally like this you know."

"The stars are hidden~?"

The stars-shaped carrots, and round-cut onions inside the curry seem to be popular. Now Pochi and Tama would probably eat it without avoiding it.

"It's hot, but delicious."

"Declaring that the curry here is cute."

Liza, you're free to put the topping and all. I think it's fine even if you pile the whale karage to the point that the curry can't be seen. She's chosen the keema curry. The chicken meat seem to be the decisive factor.

Nana is greatly delighted by the extremely hot red curry, and the rabbit-shaped cut of the apple-like fruit.

"Uu, it's delicious, but I can't eat it since it's too spicy."

"Aaze, do your best."

I've been admiring Aialize-san who's eating while drinking water with her mouth opening and closing with teary eyes, but I should help her soon.

"Aialize-sama, please try this."

"It's not spicy! I can eat this one."

"That's good to hear."

I changed her curry with the sweet one. The staff is going to enjoy her curry later. There are also other people who seem to be bad with spicy curry, so I inform them about the sweet curry.

"If your mouth is still tingling, please use the drink here. It will subside the hotness a bit."

"T, thank you. ...Tasty. It's sweet and delicious."

Since she still looked painful, I presented Aialize-san with the pseudo green tea latte I had made earlier. The way she's drinking it gulp by gulp by using both her hands is cute.

It's not like I'm charmed by that image, but the [Guilty] calls somehow come from Arisa, and Mia. I forgot to distribute it to everyone. I had planned to give it to everyone in the first place, but it seemed to be bad of me to give it to Aialize-san first. Why.

I put the remaining bottle of the pseudo green tea latte on the elves table since it's bad for us to monopolize it.

"Ah, bliss. It's as delicious as Coconi curry."

"Arisa, hamburg curry nano desu!"

"Karauma~"

<TLN: Corruption of Kare=curry, Uma=yummy I guess?>

Nea-san seemed to have grilled the leftover meat into hamburg steak. That person really likes hamburg steak huh.

I look at the curry feast while nibbling the soy-sauced pickles.

I'm glad that it suits their tastes.

However, Mia. You don't know.

There are beefs in the curry you're eating. It's turned into fiber since I've simmered it in different pot, so she probably won't notice it. It shouldn't have the texture of meat either.

While having such strange narration in my head, I fondly look at Mia who's doing all her might to put the curry into her mouth.

The curry, and the topping that have been prepared for 500 people are all consumed. There are many derivate dishes that have been born this time, like Liza's [Whale Cutlets among Curry].

There weren't any women who refuse the fruit jelly dessert even after they had eaten that much. No matter how they say that it's going to another stomach, it's bad for their healths, so I'll give them some digestive medicines later.

The curry festival is over like this.

The elves who couldn't participate seemed to voice their dissatisfactions, so it had been decided that we were going to have curry festival for a while. I didn't want to have curry everyday, so I gave the curry recipe to Nea-san who was fully motivated and pushed it to her.

I wanted to help Nea-san who had been dyed with the spices fragrances, but at that time, I was busy with another matter, so I couldn't spare some hand.

9-29. The Extermination Preparation

Satou's here. I've heard a saying that says, "Diluted poison becomes medicine", but that shouldn't be the case for everything. Conversely, the "Too much medicine become poison" is mostly true. If anything, it's "Too much is as bad as too little."

◇

"Hello, Satou-san."

"Ah, Lua-san, you've come just at the right time."

I pass the five big jars containing the [Sleeping Drug] for the jellyfish to Lua-san. Since she has the same [Magic Bag <<Holding Bag>>] like I do, there's no problem even if I give her heavy luggage.

For the past 10 days here, I've been giving 3-5 types of sleeping drugs for Lua-san to test on the experiments. As of now, the one that exhibits the highest effect is the one made from the world tree sap.

"I certainly got it. Even though I know that you've probably known the results of the experiments by the [Telephone] from Aze-sama, here is the written report from Jia."

I thank Lua-san and take the bundle of papers off her.

The poison with weak effect seems to only make the jellyfish sleep for 10 minutes, but conversely, the one that's too effective makes it like they've stopped living, let alone coma, it's difficult.

Since it could likely kill people, I borrow an uninhabited workshop outside of the town and compound the drug there. It seems to be the place where Rek-shi, a spriggan, has previously used.

There seems to be a small Source nearby this mansion, so there is no need for me to supply magic power to the magic tools here to operate them, it's quite convenient in a lot of way.

It's really too convenient, I'd like to keep staying in it, but if I am too late, a [Telephone] from Arisa comes, so I can't exactly do that. Recently, Pochi and Tama participate on the telephone to make me feel guilty, it's become quite crowded. I questioned her since it shouldn't have been possible with normal Telephone, but she replied, "I worked hard to improved it" proudly.

Now then, I've passed the sleeping drugs for today, so let's do another work.

I'm currently doing four works including the making of sleeping drugs.

The first work is the making of sleeping drugs like earlier for the jellyfish matter.

Since we're lacking people who can use space magic to make cages for the jellyfish, we're going to employ ice cages, and sleeping drugs together, and is now currently testing whether it's viable to complement the lack of practitioners. We've found some sleeping drugs that are highly effective, and there are even some jellyfish that are still sleeping even now. If it's effective for 10 days, the jellyfish cages operation is going to be greenlighted at once it seems.

The second one, I'm trying to figure out how to prevent recurrence of the jellyfish.

I'm thinking about autonomous interception satellites for this. As an image, it's like a man-made base defense satellite. Since it seems to be possible to maintain Cube in the void sky due to the mana, I think this one should be usable at the high altitude. The biggest problem is maintaining the magic power. I've envisioned that it will have laser turret, and a head that operates it, making it looks like a floating golem.

The problematic thing is the power reactor after all. I'd like to use the philosopher's stone like the living dolls since I want build a system that doesn't require external operation from people as much as possible. Actually, I have borrowed three power reactors from Sotoriya-san, but since she's emphasized "Don't break it okay", I can't experiment with it recklessly, it's hard.

Making nuclear reactor seems to be possible since we have magic, but since I don't have any document regarding it, I don't even know where to start. I'll leave this as a problem for the future.

The third one is working with the aerodynamic engine.

I combine my knowledge as a programmer, and the controller unit of the living doll that I've gotten from Sotoriya-san's living doll blueprint.

I try various things like balancing the output of the rotation I've heard at the duchy capital the other day. There are a crane, and a big fixation nearby this mansion, so this kind of work progresses very smoothly.

I've perfectly completed making the control unit, but the work involving the aerodynamic engine isn't going well since I have no way of knowing the speed. Looks like it'll be a while before I can complete it.

As you might have probably guessed from the [Aero] part of the aerodynamic engine name, this engine can't operate in place without atmosphere. I've hit a standstill before I can even start to work on building the replica of the light ship. I'd like to know how the light ship work, but since it's god-made, there doesn't seem to be any document that's detailing it. As for the maintenances, it seems that the docks where the light ships are residing do it automatically.

The aerodynamic engine that the hero is using (on his ship) seems to have been added later. I guess it can't be helped since they have to rely on Saga empire's technology, and magicians if anything break since they can't service it at the world tree.

The fourth is expanding our equipment.

Once we leave the elf forest, the next destination is the labyrinth city. Leaving me aside, I want to perfect the girls' equipment. It'll be troubling if the equipment are too eye-catching, so I make two types, ones for showing off, and another that are plain for everyday use.

Presently, I've completed three staffs, and the prototype of non-lethal magic sword.

Arisa's staff is luxuriously made from a branch of a thousand years old tree at Boruenan forest. I've focused on MP consumption reduction and increased magic accuracy as the main effects since we're going to have series of battles at the labyrinth. A great man once said, "It's meaningless if it doesn't hit" after all.

I've accidentally made an identical staff for Mia when I was making one for Arisa, but let's make it a present for having journeyed with us when we are leaving Boruenan. I acted as thought she was going to go with us. I think little children should be with their parents after all.

The third one is a staff made from the world tree's branch. The staff's material had somehow mixed in during the time when I was gathering the jellyfish feelers back then. Its performance itself is impeccable, but it looks like it's made of mineral, or rather emerald, so it inevitably looks conspicuous. The color and luster are quite beautiful that I involuntarily, and impulsively added a rose decoration on its tip, and carved tangled reliefs on the main part.

Rather than becoming a treasure, it has become a thing that will be stowed away instead.

It's not good to overdo it isn't it.

I'm reflecting on it.

Now then, about the prototype magic swords, I've modded the [Shell] that Pochi and the others use. In contrast with the [Shell] that is hard and blunt, this prototype is specializing in non-lethal attack, thus it's soft. When you invoke the [Soft Shell] on this sword, a cylindrical magic field that's about as hard as foam will be generated. The recent swords can generate [Shell], but even so, their attack still can reach if they hit too hard.

I'm expecting that this [Soft Shell] sword will have stun and knockback additional effects like black jack.

Right now, I'm thinking of applying this [Soft Shell] structure for making a non-lethal shotgun for Lulu.

I also want to start working on strengthening their defensive equipment, but it's not going too well. With the defensive equipment I've made during our duchy capital stay, it should be able to handle monsters that are on later half of level 20s, but I want to increase the margin a bit more. It might be good if I recycle the explosive-proof roof of the airship that are made of the whale leather to make new armors. I'll ask Lua-san to introduce me to an expert of armor-making next time.

◇

"Young master, miss Lulu has brought you a lunch."

"T, thank you Giril."

Giril, the house fairy (Brownie) who's taking care of this mansion, normally acts like a butler toward the guestss. He seemed to have lived in the labyrinth city long ago, so I listened to various stories about it from him during the rest times.

Apparently, he has a great-grandchild living in that labyrinth city, I'd like to meet it when I've arrived at the labyrinth city. I hear that it's a young brownie of around 60 years old. That's young huh.

He's walking as if gliding, bringing the lunchbox that Lulu's passed. Since he's only about half as tall as humans, it looks as if he's carrying an extra-large size lunch box. There are sandwiches and hamburgers that can be eaten with one hand inside. They seem to be made of white breads that Ms. Kua has shared. I'm honestly happy since I've been missing normal bread.

The danger of the [Sleeping Drug] is present even here, so it's off-limits to Lulu.

I open the cover and confirm the inside.

It's a sandwich with a lot of vegetables. It's been made with attention to detail as it can be eaten with one bite.

I'm reviewing the problem earlier while putting the meal into my mouth.

"U~n, although it's possible if it's just scouting, without the philosopher's stone, it's impossible to have enough magic power to attack."

I involuntarily blurted to myself since I couldn't deal with the current situation.

I guess it's really impossible to have something like autonomous interception system~

If for example, the magic power from the philosopher's stone is 100A, then the golem needs 30A to maintain its altitude, and about 45A for the passive and active scouting.

From it, it's hard to regard whether maintaining altitude is low cost, or the scouting is too costly.

And, laser is the only one that can attack several hundreds kilometers away without getting dampened by the space. Laser needs little magic power compared to other attack magic, but nevertheless, it needs 1000A.

The cost seems to be stupid high, but this much output is needed to defeat a jellyfish. It needs another 50A magic power if the laser is used as aiming sight.

I've become able to make battery-like things with the help of the elf technology, but for outputting 1A, I need to make it two liter big PET bottle size. Even if I make it at the degree where it can shoot one laser, it'll be many times bigger than I planned. The material for this battery seems made from the world tree sap, so it can be made no matter how many.

If I connect a cable to the battery, it's likely that the jellyfish would extend its feeler to absorb the magic power from it. It's wonderful that I don't have to make superfluous magic circuit to prevent counter-current since it already has a mechanism to do that from the beginning.

I completed one prototype of the autonomous interception golem [Scarecrow] until the sun set that day.

I've only implemented the function to maintain its altitude on this prototype. I think everything is a steady accumulation of experiments.

◇

I wave my hand to Giril that's on the entrance of the mansion, and head back to the tree house.

Ahead of the main gate of this mansion, there is a Fairy Ring that connects to the underground town and the town above tree. Therefore, it's really easy to move around.

"'elcome~""Nano desu!"

It seemed that Pochi and the others had just finished their training, the two who were sprawling on the ground jumped up.

"Welcome back, master."

"Master, delighted that you've returned safely."

Nana and Liza who were tidying up the wooden swords and the mock spears, stopped their work and went to greet me. Nana is sweating a lot, though Liza isn't so much.

These fours are being taught by the elf martial artists.

Everyone is clearing the Attraction too fast that Shagnig the leprechaun can't keep up with the service and maintenance, so they're going to rest for 4-5 days every time they clear it. Thus, the beastkin girls who are free are training under the elf martial artist who are also free to kill time.

Pochi is being taught swordsmanship by Ms. Poltomea. She's the same type of Pochi who puts all her might in single blow. On the seat during the banquet, she's said that it's fun to find the critical timing to do the single blow while enduring the opponent's attacks with her shield. It's fun to drink with this person since she brings various liquors from the elf hometown, and talks about her vast knowledges of those liquors. Her only flaw is her habit to start undressing when she's drunk.

Shishitouya-shi is instructing Tama the way of two swords. He's a user of Daisho Katana. He said that they're given to him by the king of Shiga kingdom several hundreds years ago. Both don't have inscriptions, but they're on the same level as the Torate I have.

Liza is taught by Gulgapoya-shi for the spiral spear, and Yuseku-shi for handling short spear. Yuseku-shi is not an elf, but a spriggan. Both of them are experts who are able to use magic edge.

Especially Yuseki-shi, even though I've never been taught directly, he's my teacher in my mind. Once, he was showing the next level of magic edge on the short spear as the final goal of Liza's training. It seems to be a skill called Magic Edge Cannon (Mana Blast). Since I wasn't able to see his magic power flow until he fired the Mana Blast, I still can't successfully do this technique even now.

I tried to ask him to teach me once, but he said tp me, "Steal it", with a terribly delightful face. I will learn it before I go out of the elf hometown to live up to his expectation.

And finally, Nana also has two teachers. The magic swordsman Ms Gimasarua, and the dwarf shield-user, Keriul-shi. Keriul-shi seems to be the uncle of Zajir-shi of the dwarf hometown, he's been living as a guest in the elf hometown since three years ago.

These teachers seem to eat dinner at the square that's been doing curry festival like before without getting tired of it. Even though it's been 10 days since that festival, looks like they're still continuing it even now. Nowadays, the curry is of normal color without any colorations.

I pray that Nea-san won't be dyed yellow.

9-30. Pests Extermination Operation

Satou's here. It's said that lights are usually followed by shadows. Even though it looks fine at a glance, out that some things have been overlooked. I think one should do a review during their free time.

◇

"Ah, Satou-san! It's about the Scarecrow Mk.7 that you've entrusted to us, it's broken through the jellyfish's detection, and succeeded until it gave the [Currently Watching] signal."

Lua-san reports so to me who have just come back from the duchy capital.

I was involved with a small disturbance in Puta town so I was slightly late returning back. It's not because I was playing at the store of a beautiful onee-san, nope.

I tested the Scarecrows up to the third revision myself, but Lua-san suggested that it would probably better to leave it to Jia-san who would be the one using it in the future, so the plan changed. Above all, the experiment had always relied most on Jia-san's magic, so there was no substantial change even if it was left to her.

The shape of the Scarecrow Mk.7 is like a beach ball that's stacked with swimming rings. The swim rings part is the magic power storage vessels (battery), and the beach ball is the main body. The main body is inserted with a philoshoper's stone as its core that acts as the power reactor, the surplus magic power from the stone is then deposited into the battery. The accumulated magic power is going to be used to transmit signal when it finds an enemy, and for changing its course.

The jellyfish detection seems to be enough by having the scarecrows and the alarms that have been put on top of the above town by Jia-san and the others to work in conjunction. The elves who are good at long-range attack magic are going to be the ones who will annihilate the enemies.

I receive the file that contains the detailed result, and head toward the tree house together.

"Master, welcome back nanodesu!"

Over there, Pochi is literally flying.

"'elcome~ look look~?"

Tama is also doing somersaults like she's dancing.

The two are wearing fairies clothes like the ones from fairy tales. With wings like the pixies', they fly around. Since I can feel magic power flowing on the wings, they're probably magic tools, or elf flight magic that are put on them. Pochi's wings are transparent like a dragonfly's, and Tama's wings are like the yellow butterfly's.

The two fly to beside me, take poses, and emit [Praise me] auras, so I dutifully praise them.

"You two are really cute. You look just like faeries."

"Ehehe~"

"I'm happy nodesu!"

Since Pochi emits [Praise me more] aura, I praise her more until I'm writhing. Of course, for Tama too.

The two who are satisfied fly before me, and hold out their hands, inviting me to fly together.

I guess I might as well treat myself to some sky stroll.

I rise with Sky Drive while taking the two hands. Since Lua-san has refused before I go up, the three of us are dancing in the sky.

"Who put you on these cute clothes?"

"Arisa~"

"Arisa made it nodesu."

Arisa is the one who made it huh, they're certainly different from the elves' native dress. I'll make some short staffs, one with a star decoration on its tip for Pochi, and one with a crescent moon decoration for Tama next time. But Tama likes cute things, maybe I should make her staff heart-shaped instead?

"Aze put her magic on us nodesu."

"Aze is great~"

"Eh~, have you properly thanked her?"

"Aye!"

"Yes, nanodesu!"

I'll make a pudding a la mode for Aialize-san as a thank for entertaining these two. She looked really envious when I made one for Mia back then, she must be going to be happy.

"Your very own cute fairy, Arisa-chan, appear!"

"Appear."

While saying some half-asleep things, Arisa and Mia fly out of the tree house.

Unlike Pochi and Tama, these two are wearing see-through celestial robes-like clothes that are erotic cute. Although it'll be a different story if it's Nana or Aialize-san, I don't feel the H with these two. Of course their important places are hidden since they're properly wearing underwear.

"How is it? Doesn't it feel like you're losing to your passion tonight?"

"It doesn't."

We've been taking bath together everyday, what are you saying now for just seeing you half-naked. Since it's bad for the children, I poke Arisa's forehead to keep her silent.

With Arisa and Mia joined in, we dance in the sky for a short while. The elves seem to be captivated by it, a lone tune plays, then another, and then, the fun music performance begins. Even though everyone is doing it impromptu, it's mixing really well together.

I lift aproned Lulu and Nana who were looking enviously from the balcony with [Magic Hand], and let them participate in the sky dance. I ask Liza who's hiding behind a pillar with my eyes whether she wants to participate, but she slightly puts her hands in front of her face while shaking her head, so I overlook it out of mercy. Come to think of it, Liza is bad with the sky isn't she.

I catch a glimpse of the exhausted Aialize-san leaning her body on a giant chick cushion in the living room of the tree house. It must be because she's lost to Mia and the others' [Request] to put flight magic on several people, even though she's been continuously using magic to capture the jellyfish everyday. Rather than pudding, I'll bring her some energy drink during my visit to her.

◇

"Aze-sama, it's terrible. Beriunan clan seems to have carried out the plan."

"Fugo!"

Hey now, high elf-sama, I think you shouldn't let out such sound since you're maiden. While Lua-san is wiping the bits of pudding that Aialize-san was eating until just now, Aialize-san asks the elf-san who's intruded again. What's this person's name again? Oh right, she's Roa-san, Jia-san's big sister if I'm not mistaken.

"And the result?!"

"It seems to be a success. There is no vacancy. There's only one injured person who touched the world tree because he was flustered and suffered a burn."

Good, it's a success.

However, according to the plan, this Boruenan village should have been the first to perform the extermination plan so we can follow-up if there's anything wrong with the plan. Did some arrangement change?

"thev becom the intial scrifce, so isnt good."

Arisa is talking some unknown words while chewing the garnish peach from the pudding a la mode. Good grief, so ill-mannered.

"Arisa, don't talk when you still have something in your mouth."

Liza gives her a warning faster than me, but--

"You have to properly savor the taste, don't talk. Otherwise, it's a sacrilege against the delicious meal."

--the point of the warning seems to differ a bit.

Per Liza's warning, Arisa talks after she's chewed her food.

"They've become the initial sacrifice, so isn't it good. With this, don't that mean the secret operation will be safely done?"

I have talked the matter about the jellyfish up to the things allowed by Aialize-san to Arisa and Nana. Of course, since I wasn't allowed to talk about the role of the world tree and the impact if the plan failed, I didn't talk to them about it.

Although, since Arisa has learned various theories about ether from the elf elder-san together with me, and read a lot of books that she's got from the elves as thanks for the food, I feel that she's found out about it on her own.

"There is no change to our plan."

"I understand. As planned let everyone beside the observer to take some rests for today, and tomorrow."

Right when Aialize-san's stopped her words that sounds like it's come from a different person, Roa-san runs toward the Fairy Ring with overflowing vigor just like when she entered the room. What an energetic person.

◇

500-strong elves have gathered in the observatory area. Everyone is a veteran whose level is more than 30. They had been continuously working to put the jellyfish to sleep and capture them in ice cages for ten days, alternating in three turns.

They will be divided into three groups; one group is taking the jellyfish outside the world tree with the four light ships, another group is dragging the jellyfish with spirit magic with Aialize-san as the chief, and the last group is riding a golem that looks like a tank with many legs to launch the jellyfish beyond the void sky using wind magic and nature magic.

I'm on the bench since if the elves can't exterminate the pests on their own, it will be troubling if they're suffering from jellyfish problem again in several hundreds years.

Of course, I'm standing by in the command room where Jia-san is, for if anything happens.

"Now, Boruenan children! The jellyfish cage operation has started! Let's do it carefully and happily!"

Aialize-san declares the start of the operation to the elves in the void sky by using [Mass Telephone]. It seems the instruction from the control tower is performed through communication magic tools. The elves working in the void sky are carrying communication devices that are as small as a mobile phone. It seems to be many times more advanced than even the com tool I've obtained from the hero Hayato.

With movements so slow it might irritate you, they begin moving the ice cages with the jellyfish inside to outside of the world tree little by little.

It seems that they didn't cut the jellyfish's feelers when they captured them in the ice cages, the feelers tangle with the world tree when the cages are lifted, breaking several branches.

I can see twinkling lights like they're from fragment of glasses, or rather, torn frost from where I am.

What a waste.

Having mentality of the poor, I couldn't overlook the world tree branches that were falling from the gravity. When I come to, I have already used sky drive and ground shrink to gather the ones that can be saved into my storage.

However, in the end, this slightly shameful behavior ends up saving many elves' life.

The quiet void sky becomes noisy slightly after this.

9-31. Pests Extermination Operation (2)

Satou's here. I once saw an old movie where the characters became small and went on an adventure inside human body during an old movie festival. I thought that it was absurd, but I could feel the diversity of people's imagination to come up with something that I couldn't think of.

◇

It's dangerous if I don't control the speed when I'm moving in the void sky using sky drive. Even though there's gravity, the air resistance is near zero, so it's possible to move at several times the speed of sound even without acceleration from magic. It's dangerous not to think about braking when I start to accelerate. I'd like to have the advanced magic, [<<Inertia Control>>], and [<<Inertia Cancel>>]

When my movement using Sky Drive exceeded the speed of sound, I obtained a skill, and two titles.

>[Flash Drive Skill Acquired]

>Title [Fast One] Acquired
>Title [Conqueror of the Heavens] Acquired

The Flash Drive skill I've acquired this time is a combination of Sky Drive and Ground Shrink as a set. I realized that after I had activated the skill. Since I can move like I'm flowing unlike when I use the two skills as a set, this might be more convenient. With Sky Drive and Ground Shrink, I can only move linearly no matter what. Against an opponent of the Wild Boar

King class, there's danger of being read ahead, so I think this is good. Yes, it's not a waste of skill points.

While varnishing it on my own mind, I use the Flash Drive at once to collect the broken world tree branches that are falling.

The removal of the jellyfish seems to be going smoothly.

It'll be nice if there's nothing happen--oops--if Arisa was here, she'd say.

『That's a flag you know?』

At the same time as when that hallucination hits my ears, my crisis perception give me some slight warnings. There are two places it reacts to. I accelerate toward the nearest place.

『All hands, abandon your post! Everyone, evacuate to the observatory deck.』

I can hear Aialize-san using [Mass Telephone] to send emergency signal to the elves who are executing the plan. If I'm not mistaken, it's the maximum priority evacuation order for when fatal failure occurs.

The elves abandon each cage that they're handling and move toward the observatory. The light ship comes to the slow tank, and picks only the crews.

The jellyfish that have been in [Sleeping] condition up until just now are starting to slowly but surely change to [Frenzy] condition.

There are two places that experience the change. Both are the places where my crisis perception reacted a while ago.

『I repeat, all hands, abandon your post!　Everyone, evacuate to the observatory deck.』

Aialize-san's thought trembles.

It's probably because of the place I'm going where the elves aren't evacuating. Troubling thing. [Protect your life] order should be required shouldn't it.

『Kiya, Doa!　Leave the golem tank and hurry withdraw.』

Ah, those two huh. They're Sotorineya-san's teachers who cherish the golem tank that's on the brink of becoming a scrap like it's their own child. I've also consulted them various things during the making of the scarecrows.

I know that they cherish that junk tank, but to not follow the evacuation order like this.

『Sa, no, sir Pendragon!　You have to escape too. Don't overestimate your own strength!　Even dragons would be burned by the attack of the world tree!』

When I was shelving myself, a precise named order from Aialize-san came. She shouldn't have forced herself to use my house name. Calling me by my name would have been fine. Or rather, please call my name.

There are spherical lightnings on the several hundreds meters area around the round golem where Kiya and Doa are riding.

Wonder if this'll work.

"You big ginseng tree! Is it branch, or is it root, make it clear!"

I slap my thought to the nearest branch by using [Telephone].

It would appear that this provocation is working.

Purple lightning extends out of the spherical lightning, and goes to me like a living thing.

Of course it's not because of the provocation. Since I've heard from Aialize-san that the world tree uses lightning to attack, I put use of the new magic, [Lightning Rod], and ward the lightning.

It's quite high-performance even though it's just an intermediate magic.

The giant dark gray pillar that the [Lightning Rod] has produced splendidly stop the extra-large lightning that looks as if it can make you return to the past 10 times.

I check the exterior of the stranded golem tank. It seems that three among six of its leg on one side can't move. I quickly go down beside it with the Flash Drive, remove the broken parts of the world tree branches that obstruct it, and put the power tubes that got torn apart into the storage.

After finishing the repair that takes as long as making an instant ramen, the world tree prepares its second attack.

There are seven thunderbolts coming this time.

When I evade it as my magic couldn't, the largish branch behind me is carbonized, and breaks. That's bad, if I carelessly evade, the world tree will become the victim.

Protecting the world tree from the attack of the world tree feels somehow unproductive.

◇

I've understood the cause of the jellyfish's frenzies.

There are around 30 jellyfish larvae in the branch several hundreds meter ahead. They look like oval balloons. They're as big as human torso, and brightly emit pale green light.

The jellyfish inside the cages are flickering to match the waves of the lights that emit from the larvae. Come think of it, it's said that, "They plant the eggs into the world tree" isn't it.

I reuse the net that the thieves used to catch the knights back then, and capture the jellyfish larvae with it. I use the net since [Magic Hands] are busy picking the broken parts. I throw the larvae that have been captured on the net to the void sky.

The self-defense lightning generated by the world tree mercilessly turns the jellyfish larvae into cinders. Of course, the world tree was aiming for me who was on a straight line from the larvae.

The jellyfish have changed from [Frenzy] to [Rage].

So that abnormal status also exist huh.

『The two have escaped, please come back fast!　If you don't, I'll go there!』

My ears hurt from the evacuation orders that Aialize-san has entreated since awhile ago.

I'm sorry for her, but let me do as I please here. The ice cages seem like they'll break if I leave the jellyfish alone now. It'll be fine if they get back to their normal conditions, but I have a hunch that they would start rampaging.

『I beg you, please come backk.』

I'm sorry, Aialize-san.

I invoke the [Kaleidoscope] and [Survey Laser] magic I've obtained from the duchy capital scroll workshop together.

The Kaleidoscope magic is named by Arisa. This magic generates several mirrors that changes the convergence rate of light and reflect it. I can arbitrary control these mirrors after they've been created just like remote arrows.

This Survey Laser is the result of my experiment to create laser pointers. Of course it has no power to kill even if I shoot it with all my might. It's an ECO design that doesn't deplete magic power even if it's radiated for a long time.

The Survey Lasers that are harmless according to my AR are reflected by the Kaleidoscope, and diffused while leaving trails in the void sky.

The ice cages seem to have come to their limits early. The sleeping drugs seem to be still effective as the movements of the jellyfish are dull, they extend their feelers toward me like crawling in the void sky.

『Mou, stupid Satou.... I'll tell Mia and Arisa.』

Aialize-san's crying voice sure is also cute.

While thinking how to follow-up her, my consciousness is concentrated toward the Survey Lasers.

Alright, I've affixed the last line.

I clear off the Survey Laser, and fire [Laser]. Of course, I'm not converging the 120 lasers like I was doing against the great monstrous fish. That's going to be overkill. Before that, the excessive power of the converged laser would probably break the kaleidoscope anyway.

The 120 lasers become 10.000 when they pass through Kaleidoscope.

Countless light penetrate the void sky, shooting through only the jellyfish and pass through the gaps between the world tree branches, disappearing.

The miscalculation is regarding the ice cages. The locations where the laser penetrate it evaporate, and strange accelerations are happening. I can't let the ice cages be destroyed by the lasers. If that happens, hot steam will violate the world tree branches.

I go around the void sky with Flash Drive, and collect the ice cages into my storage. Some largish branches were broken when the ice cages crashed, but please overlook this much damage.

In the first place, it would have been simple if the request was for me to do the extermination. Yet, the request was for [The way for the elves to exterminate them], so the scale became large. Based on this failure, we should add about the removal of the eggs in the extermination manual.

The telephone from Aialize-san had stopped before I knew it, so I decided to prioritize the clean-up.

While I continue to use the lightning rods to ward the world tree lightning attacks like usual, I capture the jellyfish larvae on the other place. I felt that the larvae can be used against the jellyfish, but since it seemed so heinous, I passed on it. I gave a silent prayer to the larvae that had been roasted by the lightning, and moved to do the next work.

◇

I have completely destroyed about 70 points where the jellyfish colonies have laid their eggs. Of course I used the map search to discover their locations. Even though there wasn't even one when I last visited the void sky 10 days ago, just when did they lay their eggs. I should have searched again before the operation began.

Since there were some eggs that had slipped into a branch, I used [Magic Hand] to pick them out after confirming its location with [Through Eye] magic. Please forgive me for breaking the barks during that time. I didn't think [Saps GET] at all, nope. The sap that I got during that time became an item called [Contaminated Sap].

The world tree is made to think that the jellyfish is a part of it probably due to the poison produced by the jellyfish eggs. Since there were eggs that were deep inside, I decided to break the branches and went inside to destroy it. When I slipped into the branches, the world tree ceased its lightning attacks. The lightning is probably exclusive for external enemies.

The inside of the world tree branches is filled with earthen pipes-like things for water. The mana thickens as I get closer to the trunk. I cut my way through it while avoiding battles as much as possible against the self-defense antibody that acts typical of white blood cells, and devoted myself to destroy the jellyfish eggs.

◇

"Satou's reaction has disappeared."

"That's terrible huh."

I greet so to Aialize-san who's sunk down on the floor, looking at the ceiling.

"Mou, what are you so carefree about! He's saved the world tree you know!? Why are you speaking like that!"

Her angry face is beautiful too.

I tell Aialize-san who's unusually full of anger, "I'm home."

Her blank expression is quite nice too.

Since I had gone quite deep into the trunk, it was troublesome to go back the normal way, so I came back with [Return] magic that I had just made at the duchy capital. Looks like that was the reason her tracking lost track of me. Since I felt like I was being watched, I think that it was a magic similar to [Clairvoyance].

"Welcome home."

Aialize-san mutters, overcame with surprise.

"Welcome home."

Why, are you saying it twice?

"Welcome home, Satou."

I hug back Aialize-san who's clung on my neck. Arisa would have said, "Guilty", if she saw this.

"I'm home, Aze."

I replied so while lovingly stroked the hair of the sobbing high elf-sama.

9-32. Victory Celebration Party

Satou's here. I had only ever seen the parade of triumphal return when an Olympic athlete from my town came back bringing a gold medal. The player I saw at that time looked slightly embarrassed yet very proud.

◇

"Umm, you two, isn't it about time."

Lua-san reservedly calls us. Aialize-san seems to notice that we're in public after she hears her. I've noticed that since awhile ago, but since it was such a wonderful scene, I enjoyed it until it was stopped.

"I-it's not, it's not like that!"

Aialize-san pulls away from me in panic, and begins to make an excuse to Lua-san and the surrounding elves. I mix in with the surrounding elves, and enjoy the panicking Aialize-san.

"It's not huh."

"It's, it's not, but, that's not it."

I reply her slightly lonely, and Aialize-san starts to explains in fluster. While I'm admiring her "au au"-ing with her eyes going round and round, I tell Jia-san and the others the reason for the jellyfish rampage and the way to cope with it.

"Then, those eggs are the cause that makes the world tree mis-recognize the jellyfish as its part aren't they."

"I have no proof, but the probability of that is high."

I inform them that the failure this time was caused by the larvae which hatched from the eggs and turned the jellyfish from [Sleeping] to [Frenzy] condition, and when the larvae were massacred, the jellyfish became [Raged].

Furthermore, I pass the jellyfish egg that I've put in a bottle to Jia-san. I secured some since I thought that it would be needed for research.

It seems that the PR elder-san will replace the job of Aialize-san, who's fainted, to tell the other clans about this.

The elves who are here had agreed to tell the same story, that "The hero Nanashi beat the jellyfish." Actually, the silver masked Nanashi version was included in the plan, they easily acknowledged that heroes were eccentric. It's convenient, but now I'm curious just what did Daisaku-shi wear.

Unfortunately, the jellyfish remains don't have any magic core. My work of collecting the jellyfish remains along with the cages was in vain. It might be natural since they are not monsters but [Mysterious Creatures]. The EXP that I've got from the jellyfish are fewer than from monsters. I obtained less EXP from 10.000 jellyfish than what I got from seven whales.

◇

We, who have returned to the ground, join the party that the elves who are house-sitting are preparing. Since the place where the curry festival was held wouldn't be able to fit it, they had opened the meadow block in the underground town for it.

I've changed to ceremonial clothes, and participate in the triumphal return parade with the elves.

I'm outfitted with a holy armor that looks hero-like per the request of Lua-san.

Rather than hero-like, this holy armor seems to be an equipment left behind by Daisaku-shi. Even thought it was obviously too big, it changed to become a perfect fit when I wore it. I questioned for nearly one hour about the mechanism for it, but since Lua-san who passed the equipments to me didn't know, I put it off for later.

A lot of pixies are sprinkling flower while looking cheerful from above us who are parading.

I go with Aialize-san and the other on a temporary stage that's been set on the center of the venue while basked in cheers. Aialize-san and her four attendants are wearing miko attires like when I meet them for the first time.

"Children of Boruenan! We have safely exterminated the pests which have polluted the world tree for long--"

Aialize-san reports the result with clear voice to the people who have gathered on the venue. Even though she seems weak with this kind of thing, I wonder if she's fine since they're like her family?

"--He is the hero of human, Nanashi! Please give him applause!"

My introduction was over while I was admiring her face from the side. Slightly late, I wave my hand toward the elves.

Before long, Aialize-san's speech is finished, and the stage is handed over to the bands to start the party. There are people dancing on the center of the venue, and people assaulting the food stalls on the circumferences, everyone is doing what they like each.

I use quickdress to change back to the usual Satou from hero Nanashi. I returned the hero's attires to Lua-san.

I pick a fruit water goblet from the beverages served by the living doll, and wet my mouth a little. While carrying the goblet on one hand, I passed through the crowd toward Pochi and the others.

I got in touch with Arisa using [Telephone] when I had returned to the ground. It seems they're putting some stalls, Lulu with a crepes stall, and Liza with a grilled frog meat corner. The frog meat that Liza is exhibiting are from frogs the size of piglets. They're common amphibians, not monsters. The beastkin and Nana went on a hunt with miss Poltomea leading them yesterday.

Heavy drinkers are crowding Liza's stall, while Lulu's stall is crowded with the pixies and women who like sweets. The elves are happily chatting and playing music while waiting. They are patient, or rather, they're very tolerant against [Waiting].

"Master, here~"

"Master nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama who have found me come out between the legs of the elves and come to pick me. The two are wearing frilly maid uniforms. I join hands with the two and go to the stall while navigating through the elves.

Looks like Mia has come to help, she's wearing mini skirt maid uniforms, matching with Arisa. Nana and the older group are wearing long skirt maid uniforms. I think it's better if it's reversed. Apparently, my taste and Arisa's differ for this one.

"Welcome back~ I won't do such inelegant thing like asking if you didn't overdo it, but you're not hurt anywhere right?"

"I'm back, I don't have any injury."

Arisa is worried about me while taking a pose to show off her cute clothes. It would have been good if she finished there, but since she muttered, "I'll be sure to inspect for any scars during the bathing tonight", it was spoiled.

Lulu and Nana are making the crepes. Arisa and Mia are taking orders and handing out the crepes in front of the stall. The gluttonous pixies seem to be trying to snatch some of the crepes, but Nana catches them and forcibly put them on her cleavage when they get close, so they're not getting it. How enviable. I want to snatch crepes too.

Lulu said, "It's special" to me, and made a small crepes on the edge of the iron plate for me. I feel bad for the elves who are waiting their turns, but since I'm slightly hungry, I thankfully accept it.

There's a tatami-wide wire net spread on Liza's stall for grilling the frog meat with the charcoal that miss Poltomea has supplied from somewhere. Good smell like from grilled chicken meat adrift. Liza uses a pair of long tongs to give the finished one to the customers while watching the heat level. How do I say this, her expression is too serious.

"Yo, Satou. Don't you have some dragon spring liquor from the other day?"

"I do, here you go."

Miss Poltomea's language is rough despite her cute western doll-like face. I stopped by the black dragon, Heiron's place, when I was going to the get the scrolls on the duchy capital, so I acquired some dragon spring liquor. I received it after I shared some of the Brownie Wine barrels I had a lot with the black dragon.

"Oh, nice smell. I'd like to get along with dragons just fer' this liquor."

"Poa, do it moderately okay."

Miss Poltomea's said some strange thing, maybe she wants to drink other liquor for a bit. Her elf friend who has started to pour the dragon spring liquor to an extra-large goblet holds her back. He's also a drinker, so half of his warning must be for her not to decrease his share of liquor.

"Savor the taste a bit more Poa. It's a blasphemy to wash down the meat with the liquor."

"I'm savoring it properly okay, Liza is fussy."

I distribute some human liquor and the dragon spring liquor to several tables that have the drinking bout started while listening to such magistrate-like exhibit from behind. This isn't because of miss Poltomea's words, but I'm slightly expecting the start with the black dragon with liquor as the impetus.

When I've returned from distributing the liquor, the frog meat have all been used up, so I take out 50 kilograms of whale meat. I cut some moderately big slice of meat, and put it on the meat place beside Liza.

"Liza~ another three servings of frog grills~?"

"Liza, another additional orders nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi who have taken some orders announce it to Liza. When they're announcing the orders, their mouths are opening and closing, demanding for some grilled meat from Liza.

Liza seemed to be aware of it too, she had prepared two small slices of meat on small plates when she saw Pochi and Tama came back from the crowds. She catch the meat with the tongs and throw it into the mouths of the two.

"Freshly grilled~"

"Hot, hot, nanodesu!"

Liza smiles fondly seeing the two like that. At the same time, her hands quickly put some meat onto the plates like they're different creatures, and hand over the next portion of the orders to Pochi and Tama. There are more meat on the plates than the ordered, they must be for Pochi and Tama to secretly eat. Pochi and Tama who have received the plates ran happily to the customers.

I present the grilled meat that I've received earlier to the mouth of Liza who's busy for her to eat. Liza eats the grilled meat from the skewers like she's pecking while looking slightly embarrassed.

Lulu and the others who have ran out of fresh cream close their stall, and come to help Liza.

There's the figure of Aialize-san who has secured the last crepes behind the stall. The pixies are flying while protesting above her head, saying "Aze, one bite.", "Aze, monopolizing is unfair.", but she's not listening to those voices, and nibbles on her crepes bite by bite while covering it with both her hands. She's like Mia who likes fresh cream. The figure of Aialize-san who's smeared in fresh cream appeared in an instant in my mind, but I erase that out. Calm down Satou.

I catch Arisa and Mia who have ran from behind Aialize-san. Lulu and Nana have gone to take lunch boxes that they have ordered from the wives network ahead of time.

"Kya."

I turn my head toward the short scream behind me, looks like Aialize-san's crepes has fallen to the ground. I think there is no need to have that despaired look on your face.

"Uu, it was the last one."

"A~a, I don't~ kno~w."

"It was the punishment for monopolizing~"

"Aze, regrettable."

She's on the verge of crying from the merciless words of the pixies. I was moved by her state, and inadvertently spoiled her.

"I will make some for you again tomorrow, so please don't be too down."

"Is it true? Will you promise me?"

"Yes."

I gently nod to the high elf-sama who looks up while tilting her head.

She presented her left hand's pinky to me, and I was going to present mine, but our fingers never joined.

Arisa and Mia take my hands from both side, and drag me to the table where Lulu and the other have spread the catering food.

Aialize-san looks at her little finger lonely while tilting her head. I won't break my promise to make you crepes even without that look on your face you know.

◇

Ten days later, Arisa and the others have finished clearing the last Attraction, and we're going to leave the elf hometown.

9-33. Parting with Boruenan Forest

Satou's here. The day when I survived on Calorie Bars from the work's pressure is a distant memories. Making a meal with good nutritional balance is difficult isn't it.

◇

"Satou, taste strange?"

Mia eats the hamburg steak with a puzzled look.

"It's delicious~you know?" "You're being rude to hamburg-sensei nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi are covering for the hamburg steak. Their use of forks, and tongues to wipe the sauce might be the result of Lulu's and Liza's educations.

Mia's hamburg steak today is just plain tofu hamburg. Lulu and I are also eating one, but I don't think there's anything wrong with it, it's quite satisfactory.

"Does it not suit your taste? Try to eat the one on this plate."

I take out the hamburg steak on the plate I've made for second helpings left on the warming magic tool, and exchange it with Mia's. I've made the plate color different to easily identify them.

"Nn, delicious."

Mia slices one small bit and puts it on her mouth, then she nods satisfyingly and begins to nibble on it. The tofu hamburg that Mia's left behind is shared and eaten by Pochi and Tama. They push vegetable garnish beside the potatoes to Mia.

I guess I should announce it soon.

I wait for Mia to finish her hamburg steak before telling her the truth.

"Mia, I have something I need to tell you."

"Nn."

I talk to Mia with serious face, but for some reason, she's closed her eyes and pushed out her lips. I think she's been too poisoned by Arisa. I put the preface, "It's about the hamburg steak" to dispel her misunderstanding and continue the talk. She looks really dissatisfied for some reason.

"Mia, the hamburg steak that you just ate earlier had meat in it."

Rather, more than half of it was red meat with the fat taken out.

As I thought, she looks like Pochi when she ate the fish hamburg back then, as though she's been betrayed exaggeratedly.

"Guilty."

"Un, I'm sorry. Furthermore, the first hamburg steak that Mia ate didn't contain meat."

"Mwuu."

Mia looks like she's conflicted about something, let's do the last push.

"Mia, which hamburg steak you're going to pick for the second helping?"

"Mumwu, this."

Mia points at the hamburg steak with meat inside.

Looks like she still can't eat normal meat-only hamburg steak, but I'd like to think that her aversion has been decreased for a bit.

While looking like she relaly doesn't like it, she pushed back the hamburg steak full of meat soup that Pochi had presented.

I guess it's impossible to be so sudden huh.

◇

The Scarecrows are taking off into the void sky from the light ship that's hanging on the observatory.

The Scarecrows that have been rolled-out now are only half of the intended number. Since Beriunan and Burainan clans, whom we have sent the Scarecrow blueprint, have improved it, the later half of the Scarecrows are going to have improved enemy search ability. I entrust Sotorineya-san and her workshop to create the remaining Scarecrows.

During these 10 days, the jellyfish have been successfully eliminated from five wold trees.

Beriunan, the clan which had done the jellyfish extermination first, did so in order to be ahead of their rival, Burainan clan. Sure enough, the jellyfish eggs seemed to have remained in the world tree of Beriunan clan. They could prevent the second damage due to our information that were conveyed later, they expressed their gratitude for that.

It seems that there were also eggs that remained in the world tree of Biroanan clan which was destroyed by fire before.

As thanks for the achievement this time, the clans of Bareonan, Zantanan, and Dawosanan have decided to bestow one light ship to Boreanan clan. The elder asked me if I want one, but since it seemed too much for me, I declined after thoroughly hesitating. Let's come and borrow it if I ever need it.

"Hey, Satou. Are you leaving the forest after Arisa and the others finish the Spriggan's training ground today?"

"Yes, that's the plan."

In a rare occasion, Lua-san isn't here today.

Aialize-san, who's sitting on the chair beside me, asked while putting her face on her knee that she's grasped, I answered her clearly.

"Won't you go with me, Aze."

I invite her to the journey with slightly trembling voice. Even though there's 100% chance of defeat, I cannot pull back here. I see Aialize-san's face brightly gleaming for an instant, I'd like to think it's not my imagination.

"I'm sorry."

Aialize-san muttered so, and buried her face on her knees, so I couldn't see her expression.

◇

I perform the last check on the airship in order to deceive my broken heart. This ship looks exactly like the light ship. It seems that there was a movement to create their own light ship among the elves 300 hundreds years ago, the frame that was made at that time was given to me. There are a large quantity of frames stored in the storage block inside the world tree.

It's a small 30 meters class ship, but the loading capacity is abnormally big. Which isn't surprising as the quarter and the cargo areas are expanded with space magic. It seems that the philosopher's stone is used to maintain these expansions.

It's also been equipped with eight double inversion disks type aerodynamic engines. Four cylinders are loaded as propellers. They're simple devices that only compress air and blow it behind. All the installed machineries are optimized for low noise.

As expected, it doesn't have the function to hide in dimensions.

In order for it to not be conspicuous at night, it's been coated it with jet black coating, unlike the hero's Jules Verne. To increase its stealthiness, the radio wave absorption, no, the magic power absorption coating has been used. I'm slightly interested as to why they past elves need to develop this technology.

It has one power reactor for power, like the living doll. Of course it's not only for starting the aerodynamic engine. It can finally fly after I put 30 batteries that are made from crystallized world tree saps, charged with magic power to their most.

It goes without saying, the power that actually moves the ship is me. The power engine is reserved for illumination inside the ship, searching for enemies, and emergency landing if anything happens to me.

I was going to name the ship, False Light Ship Mk.I, but since the people on the surrounding objected it, the ship is still nameless.

There are two more vehicles.

A wooden sailing boat with a lower powered aerodynamic engine, and a small box-shaped carriage with a self-propulsion engine. Either one looks like a normal sailing boat, and a box-shaped carriage. The sailing boat has feet equipped for landing on land. It's also been made to not sink the ship when it fails on the water.

I've decided to leave the two old horses that I've bought in Seryuu city, and the hornless beast at Boruenan forest. The hornless beast is pregnant, congratulation. I'm surprised that the unicorns work fast.

◇

"Then, Mia, get along well with your parents okay."

"Nn, Satou."

Mia unwraps the hair that hides her forehead with both hear hands, and presses me to kiss there. Kissing the forehead as a farewell for her is alright, I guess.

I lightly kiss it like it's touching or not.

Everyone must be going to make me kiss them later.

"My, you've done it Mia. Quite the schemer."

"Mumu, agreed."

She triumphantly shows a victory sign toward her parents behind.

"Going together."

Yes?

"Going together."

After repeating it twice, Mia talks in long sentences that she rarely ever does.

"Satou of Shiga Kingdom, I am happy that you've accepted the engagement ceremony. Misanalia Borueanan vows that she will become one of your wing until death do us apart."

Did I perhaps, have been had?

"My, how wonderful. Satou-san, please make Mia happy okay."
"Protect her."

Looks like I've been had. According to Mia's mother, from the elves' perspective, kissing forehead means proposing for marriage, and if the receiver kisses the other's forehead, it means that the proposal is accepted. That explains why she's always said [Fiance].

I tried to tell Mia's parents that I didn't know such custom, but since they were Mia's accomplices, they plugged their ears, and went, no no.

Huh? Does that mean that I had proposed to Aialize-san during our first meeting? I might understand why she reacted until she became emotionally unstable.

Aialize-san who's come to see us off behind Mia's parent is pouting like it's not amusing. If you show me that face, I'll visit often until we reach the labyrinth city you know?

◇

The Dryad that Mia's father has called opens the Alf Road that connects to near the hidden village of the mermaids on the southern tip of Boruenan forest.

It's a bit hot there.

I can see the sailing boat that has been put in the inlet beforehand.

"Now, then, this is a farewell. I'll drop by again later."

"Come back anytime. Boruenan family will always welcome you everytime."

I take the opportunity to shake hand with Aialize-san during the confusion, but there's no 'guilty' reactions for just this occasion.

With the elders permission, I have left the carved plank as a landmark for [Return] magic in the tree house of Boruenan forest. I'm not sure if the distance is reachable, but if it's not, I can just use Flash Drive and acceleration magic to fly here.

"There's something strange nanodesu."

"Strange smell~?"

It's probably the first time they've smelled the seashore. Pochi and Tama are pinning their noses. Arisa teaches the two that it's the smell of salt. Looks like the temperature is high around there, let's swim in the sea once.

I carry everyone and the horses with [Magic Hand] to the sailing boat.

When I was going to carry Mia, I confirmed with her again if she wanted to remain with her parents, but she said [I'm going] and forced me to hug her. I carry Mia with Sky Drive to the deck of the sailing boat.

Everyone whom I have put to the deck with [Magic Hand] earlier are all booing, looks like the follow-up later will be difficult.

While waving our hands to the people who see us off, I open the folded sail with [Magic Hand]. I invoke [Air Control] to blow wind on the boat's sail, and the boat is departing.

The side trip is over.

We're going to advance along the west coast, disembark at the trade city, Tartumina, southwest of the royal capital, and head toward the labyrinth city.

Intermissions 1 : The Misfortune of Puta Town [First Part]

[<Author's Note: It's not Satou's POV this time, but the newbie magic hunter boy, Kon.>

"Kena! I've found the trace. This animal trail must be the one goblins use."

"Alright, good job Gadi. I'll treat you to a lot of ale when we come back."

"Tsk, you stingy. Get me better liquor will ya."

Gadi picks up a branch and stabs it on some fallen leaves, but I don't see where the trace is at all.

"Hey, Gadi. Where's the trace."

"You have knotholes for eyes? It's a goblin dung there see?"

Gadi poked me, but she also properly told me. I didn't need to have my head grabbed and pointed to the trace though...

Close, it's too close!

The dung will stick to my face!

It's hidden well behind the fallen leaves. How is she even able to find this hard to find location.

Crap, Kena doesn't look amused.

"Stop playing around, let's go quickly."

"Alright."

"Uy~"

"Okay, wait for me."

I hurriedly pick up the luggage that have been thrown on the ground, and shoulder them. There are strings for hanging luggage on my right artificial arm, so my left arm is free. Having one of my hand usable while walking on a slope like this is really useful. I'm not losing my balance and rolling down the slope like before.

◇

"Lower your head more."

"Ouch, tell me before you hit me."

Pomi who's hiding with me hits me on my head. Pomi is quick to use her hands.

We're currently preparing a surprise attack on the goblins that we've finally found. Looks like they're making a stronghold inside a cave in the mountain. The two goblins that are guarding the entrance are chewing some kind of raw meat.

Kena who's moving from the other side has given a signal.

Pomi and Gadi use short bows to attack the two goblins outside the cave. The arrow released by Pomi pierced the goblin's mouth, killing it in one blow. However, Gadi's arrow was slightly off the course, and hit its arm without defeating it. Pomi shoots another arrow in a hurry, but it's slightly too late.

"Gugyorau, guru, geroraa"

Damn, the surprise attack's failed.

Pomi's arrow hit the goblin slightly after it shouted. It's a single strike to the temple. Pomi's bow skill is amazing like always.

The goblin's shout has stopped, but the inside of the cave has become noisy.

Kena and Bahana cut the bushes, and give the signal to attack in front of the cave, we also break out of the bushes to assault.

Goblins that are rushing out of the cave fall victim to Kena's and Bahana's short spears. Both of them kill the goblins in one blow. The other goblins are attacking the two, but they use the chance when the goblins are startled from their friends' deaths and kick them to open some distance.

I also deal wth the goblin's attack while hiding myself behind the shield attached on my artificial arm. My weapon isn't as long as the two's, so if I don't block it each time, it'll be a simultaneous killing.

I cut the goblin's thigh that I can see from the gap on the small shield with the keepsake sword which has broken tip. Usually, it only gives a small wound, then I finish the opponent after they've been weakened, but it's a bit different this time.

Slash.

While seemingly hearing such sound, my sword easily cut to the middle of the goblin's thigh. What? With this sharpness.

"Kon! Don't stop moving!"

The goblin that's fallen from Gadi's kick jumps from the ground toward me. Moreover, it's attacking from the side where I've just swung my sword. The correct answer should be to push the goblin in front of me and use the recoil to escape behind, but it's impossible.

This powerless me is barely able to retain my physical strength.

If I had power like Kena and the others, I could kick well, but if I raise my foot now, the shield will be pushed and the goblin will pin me down.

In the end, the goblin fangs pierced my side while I was thinking round and round. I screamed by reflex. I remembered the acute pain when I was bitten before.

The pain doesn't come no matter how long I wait. The goblin that has bitten my side opens its mouth big trying to chew my body.

"Kon, elbow it with your arm with the sword!"

I strike the goblin's head in accordance to Kena's advice before I can think. The goblin that's surprisingly easy to shake off is then killed by Pomi who has rushed over with her short sword.

"Thanks, Pomi."

"It's fine already, just concentrate."

"Okay!"

I slash the goblin that's clawing my shield, and finish it off. I usually need to slash for more than 10 times before I can defeat one, but now I've defeated it in just three slashes.

"Alright, Gadi, watch for other goblins coming out of the cave. Bahana and me will hunt the goblins that are coming to the entrance of the cave. Pomi and Kon are to cut the smoking green wood--oops, Kon, you've been bitten by the goblin right, heal it first."

Huh? Come to think of it, it doesn't hurt.

The mantle I've got from noble-sama has been dirtied by the white drool of the goblin, but there's no hole on it. There also isn't even trace of goblin's fangs on the white armor which has protected my side.

"I'm gonna bandage you, take off your armor."

"About that, I'm not hurt, Pomi."

"Huuh? That can't be right? That goblin bit with all its might didn't it!"

Pomi rolls up the mantle violently. She consented after she checked that there was no blood flowing from my side. The line of sights from the other tree gather from that exchange.

"Hey, Kena. This kon boy really isn't hurt."

"I thought that it was just a normal wolf leather mantle, but there's something smoothly stitched between the leather. Seems that this protected him from the goblin's fangs."

"Hey, stop stretching the mantle."

It'll be expensive to ask someone to fix this.

◇

I'm gathering the branches that Pomi has cut with a hatchet into a bundle the size of my arm. There's a lot of fallen insects due to Pomi recklessly cutting the branches. I'd welcome it if they're the round caterpillars, but rhinoceros beetles have shell that's hard to remove, and not really delicious, I don't like it.

When we've finished gathering the green woods, we go back to where Kena and the others are.

Kena cuts the thin smoking stick that she's bough from the alchemist in just the right length, and stab it on the gathered green woods. Finally, she soaks it with a little bit of oil, and ignite it with a tinderbox.

Yellow smoke begins to appear together with the fire.

Ueeh, it stinks.

Additionally, my eyes are drizzling.

Pomi who has received the bundle from Kena, throws it into the cave.

Five goblins appear one after another from the cave, chased by the smoke.

I desperately swing my sword to the goblins that have come out.

"Kena, the smoke is coming out over there."

"Tsk, there's another exit huh. Gadi, go with Bahana to the other exit."

"Eeh~, my share will decrease."

"We're going to equally share this batch, so stop complaining and go."

"Aye yo~"

Gadi quickly rushed to the place where the smoke comes out, and Bahana went after her after a long delay.

◇

We hunted total 21 goblins from that cave. I only defeated three goblins. I don't have any injury unlike before, but my sword didn't quite reach the target, so it took time to beat them. I want to become skillful like Kena and the others fast.

Huh?

"What's wrong, Kon."

"Un, something is glittering on the mountain over there."

"Where?"

Gadi sharply noticed me who had stopped moving involuntarily from the light on the mountain. There's no more light from the place I point my finger at.

"It really glittered."

"Ah, you did well to find it. That's probably a reflection of the sunlight from a speartip."

"Is it other magic hunters? We had told the boss that we were going to attack on this mountain, and there shouldn't have been anyone that came here for 2-3 days."

"Maybe some people are chasing goblins from the opposite side of the mountain?"

It'll be bad if we scramble for monsters from other magic hunter group. If it's Gouts group, they will surround us and take the magic cores that we have gotten just now.

"The one beyond that mountain is the twin mountain. There is no magic hunter who will recklessly go the mountain where the Hydra appears. If there were people with such backbones, they would have gone to the labyrinth city to become explorers long ago.

If I'm not mistaken, hydra is a legendary monster that appears in old tale, or against heroes and the knights.

However, that means, who was there?

◇

"Who is it?"

Kena points her spear tip to a bushes.

"It's me, me. Don't shoot the arrow."

A big rabbitkin man with one eye, along with five beastmen from various races.

"What, it's just Orudo huh. Aren't you guys going to the mountain on the north?"

"Yeah, that was the objective, but...."

Kena presses Orudo who's hesitating to say it. Kena is arrogant like always.

"Katabane said that there was a strange group on the twin mountain, so he surveyed it, but apparently, that strange group is heading to Puta town. These guys have families there, so we decide to go back at once."

Hee, beastmen think of their families after all.

"Oy, you sure 'bout it?"

"Yeah, there's no mistake."

"Oy oy, stop them."

Katabane, who is a flightless birdkin with feathers only on one of his side, points at the glittering place from earlier, and utters something to his companions.

"You guys, I'm talking with Kena here. Save the racket for later."

"Boss. It's not about that. Katabane said that there was a hydra among that group."

"Haa? Is that group running from a hydra or something?"

"Kena, that's not it. No one can get away from a hydra in the mountain."

Err, please talk more clearly.

I look around for someone that can teach me about it. My eyes meet Pomi's. Unfortunately, Pomi doesn't seem to know about it too.

"In other words, that huh. Some people who keep a hydra like some pet are heading toward Puta town."

"Seems to be it."

"Eeh! That's terrible."

I finally understand Orudo's talk. Even though I'm just surprised for a bit, Gadi hits my head. Fufuhn, it doesn't hurt thanks to the helmet from noble-sama. As if she's heard that words in my mind, Gadi pinch my mouth on both side from behind and pull it.

luaires.

Intermission 2 : The Misfortune of Puta Town [Latter Part]

"What's happened, Kena. You've got yourselves quite a bit more members huh."

"These guys are just extras. Rather than that, I have something to report."

We've arrived at the town, and Kena tells the abnormal situation in the mountains to the gatekeeper.

I stealthily tried to enter the town during this chance, but another gatekeeper easily caught, and pinned me down on the ground. I can't slip out even though he's just putting his foot on my back.

This is the first time I'm entering the town in half a month, please be kinder.

I reluctantly pay the tax to enter to town with the pretty stripped stones that I've found on the mountain's streamlet. These stones can only be found in the mountain so it's worth some cash. Even so, a small bagful of it is only worth two copper coins, so Gadi and the others made fun of me.

"If you're going to pay in kind anyway, go get some animals instead."

"I've said it before right. I can't catch animals without a bow and traps."

"Can't you just sling some stones like Katabane?"

"That's harder than it looks you know. I tried to practice it before, but I couldn't hit the target no matter what."

"Fuh~n, it looks so easy though."

"It really is."

While sweeping the dust off my breastplate, I'm talking some nonsense with the young gatekeeper.

"Gadi, I'm gonna go to the governor's place, so I'll leave communicating with the boss to you."

"Alright."

Kena and Orudo are going together with the old gatekeeper to the governor's mansion. The young gatekeeper is shutting the main gate as instructed by the old gatekeeper. I'm also helping him for some reason.

"Let me get in free next time."

"You fool, this is a duty. Duty. You don't want the town to be overran by monsters right?"

"Of course I don't."

I feel like I've been coaxed somehow.

The other magic hunters haven't been here for a long time. They must be enjoying the Buri town for half a month.

◇

"Yo, what are you doing shutting the gate in broad daylight like this."

When I was sinking down on the ground while leaning my back on the gate after I closed it, I could hear the voice of a carefree old man.

I look up and see a middle-aged old man saying something to the young gatekeeper.

Beside him, there's a handsome man who's wearing glasses and knight-like clothes with a long pole that looks like it's for laundry, and another one is a past-20s years old aunty who's wearing a robe with a staff.

The middle-aged old man is carrying a great sword on his back.

Maybe they're explorers?

"Actually, a hydra has appeared in the mountains--"

"Ho, a hydra you said?! That sure is delicious."

"Wait, you, hadn't you got stomach pain for one week back then. You haven't learned anything have you."

"Kyura is here this time, it's fine it's fine."

"I don't wanna. The fool who's still going to eat it despite knowing that it's poisonous should just suffer."

What are these people saying?

Are they going to eat Hydra? Eh? They said it's poisonous?

"That boy over there. This guy tends to badly forget his level. A hydra is an opponent for a group of armed forces, don't think that you can fight it even by mistake."

I nod to the handsome man.

"Excuse me. Fumu, this is quite wonderful."

"Hmm? Let see. Isn't this just normal wolves materials--oy, this shell is."

"Yeah, I think it's either from a Soldier Beetle, or an Assault Beetle, but I've never seen one that's so splendidly made like this. Moreover, it uses a whole beetle for the breastplate part, very luxurious."

"Hey, Yasaku, and also Tan, leave it at that. The boy is confused."

I'm happy that they're praising my breastplate, but please don't draw closer.

"Was it made in this town?"

"Yup, that's right."

"Then, can you introduce us to that armor craftsman?"

"I'm sorry, that's impossible."

"Is it an eccentric craftsman? I'll give you some reward if you introduce us."

By reward does he mean money? U~n. I want to introduce them, but it's impossible.

"I'm sorry, that person is not in this town anymore."

"I see, that's unfortunate. There's barely any merchant who deals with monster materials in the duchy capital. We're looking for someone that can repair our armors which have been damaged during the martial art tournament."

Eh~, is that rare. Armors made from monster materials are light and durable, so I thought that it was common in the duchy capital. The noble who gave me this armor also said that it was cheap.

◇

Several days later, the hydra appeared. There are two of them.

Around the hydras, there are around 100 beastmen who are wearing strange cloth masks that are drawn with strange patterns. That crowd was divided, and some men wearing white and riding lizard horses (Raptors) appeared. These two seem to be humans.

"...■■■ Monster Check."

Oh, it's magic. The handsome man seems to use magic to investigate the hydras that have shown up their bodies in the forest.

"Their levels are 29 and 28. They're slightly stronger than the ones in the labyrinth. I tried to check on those white masked people too, but I couldn't see it. Those masks seem to be magic tools that inhibit appraisal."

"Which one do you think is the monster tamer?"

"It's probably the short person who's hiding on the back of those hydras."

I've slipped among the explorers, crowding in the watchtower on top of the gate. I'm acting as the liaison--as the reserve, between this people and the guard."

『Foolish people, we're going to release you from the tyranny of Shiga Kingdom! We are the Wings of Liberty. The one that will lead you to the true liberty!』

I can hear the loud voice of the masked person. I don't know what's he talking about since he's using some difficult words. Maybe he's saying they're surrendering?

"Yasaku-dono, the governor has permitted us to attack. The archers unit will begin the attack with yours as the signal."

"Ou, leave it to me."

Yasaku is chanting something and then, a black hole appears in front of my eyes. What's this?

Ooh, he took out a bow with some sinister engravings and stacks of arrows from it.

"What's wrong boy. Is this your first time seeing Item Box? Then, touch it once. People who are carrying explorer's gene and have touched the item box are going to obtain their own (item box) someday."

I timidly push my hand into the Item Box, and pull it back. There's no sensation, but I fear that the black hole will eat my hand.

"Yasaku, if you don't shoot soon, I'll do the first hit okay?"

"Baro, leave that to the explorer party leader. <<Disturb>> Blue Magic Bow."

The bow and arrow are glowing red as if answering Yasaku. It's called blue magic even though it's red?

The red arrow kills the monster tamer near the hydra.

"Fufuhn, that's what happen when your magic defense got cut."

"Really, that bow is really suited to be magician killer."

Following it, the archers of Puta town defense force release their arrows all at once. The opponents seem to defend against the arrows by hiding behind trees. The arrows also hit the hydra, but it looks like its skin repelled it. Ah, it's mad. It's coming here.

"Hey, isn't it better if the hydra runs amok in the enemy forces?"

"What a coincidence, I'm also of the same opinion."

"Hey you two, please don't talk so carefree, do something about it. It's coming over here."

I involuntarily complained to the two who are being carefree. I thought that I was going to be hit since it was cheeky, but the two laughed it off.

When the hydra is on the halfway point between the city gate and the forest, it suddenly opens its mouth and spits a fireball. I reflexively hide behind the rampart. I can feel the hot air above me, it burns a house upon impact.

Uwah, that house has just been completed last month.

The sociable handsome friend of Yasaku, and the robe aunty have finished their chanting.

"...■■■■ Javelin."

"...■■■ <<Lightning Storm>>"

Many light spears and loud lightning storm that hurt my ears violate the hydras. The hydras are screaming like they're going mad, how pitiful.

『Curse you, Duke! Have you heard our plan and sent some skilled people for it!』

The white masked person on the enemy's side is shouting something.

Half of the enemies charge ahead with the signal from the white masked people. Looks like they're monkeykin judging from the way they run.

"Hey, are we the duke's subordinates?"

"That's a nice misunderstanding."

"We're here by chance after all. Isn't it cute, by chance?"

I wonder why are they this carefree? Are all explorers like these?

The lightning magic seems to make the hydra skin becomes brittle as the defense force's arrows can pierce it normally now. It's going to be defeated soon.

The masked monkeykins are being shot to death one after another before they can reach the wall.

When I look closer, it seems several of them are hiding behind their companions.

『Demon lord-sama! We will offer you once again here! Our liberty with your majesty!』

"What? They're demon lord worshipers huh?"

"Looks like it. How troubling."

"I hate those kind of fanatics. Can I burn them all?"

"Wait, Sheriona. We won't know their background if we don't catch that leader."

"How annoying."

"Hey, this is bad."

The body of the beastman who have arrived on the wall are swelling and warping. I pull Yasaku's sleeves beside me to tell him.

"Geh, the heck is that?"

The people around Yasaku have begun chanting. Yasaku also puts away the bow, and take out a big shield.

The monkeykin that had became three times bigger reached the top of the wall by just jumping lightly. It's not a monkeykin isn't it? I mean, it has a mouth with a lot of fangs on its stomach.

Ah, my body has frozen, I can't move. The fang comes close to my face. Breath that smells like from a beast drifts to me.

"Yasaku the explorer, coming!"

From the side, Yasaku thrusts himself with his shield, and drops the mouth stomach monkey (monster) to the ground below together with him.

However, both are sturdy. Even though they had fallen from this height, they took some distance away like nothing happened.

"…■■■ Physical Reinforcement Over (Hard Boost)"

"…■■■■■ Lightning Bolt"

Lightning bolt hits the mouth stomach monkey along with blinding light and deafening sound. Handsome-san nimbly moves to the blind spot of the mouth stomach monkey and cuts it. Both are too fast, my eyes can't follow it.

"…■■■■ Divine Wall"

Light wall appears around Yasaku and the others.

"It's fine now. It's alright even if it's hit with a big magic."

The aunty magician who has already chanting since a while ago, lightly nods.

"...■■■ Thunder Storm"

"Uwaa, Barou, are you going to turn us to cinders too."

"Yasaku, you're too slow to get away."

Lightning storm that's far more amazing than the one used against the hydra awhile ago blows violently. Yasaku and Tan are saying something below, but I can't hear it.

"I'm taking this chance, Whirlwind Blade."

The great sword glows red and carve many wounds on the mouth stomach monkey.

"You're too soft. Sharp Edge."

From the opposite side of Yasaku, Tan continuously stabs with a light long sword.

It seems that they're going to defeat it soon. Explorers are amazing after all. They're unparalleled compared to me or Kena, or even Orudo-- there are people this strong huh.

My out-of-place excitement is erased by several screams that are raised from the sides of the rampart.

There, several mouth stomach monkeys are routing the guards and the magic hunters.

『Be awed! Our trump card!　Taste the overwhelming violence that even we cannot control!　This is exactly demons!　Ah, your majesty demon lord!　The world of demons will begin once again on this land.』

"Demon?! This is bad."

"Really bad isn't it. Yasaku, Tan, let's escape quickly."

"Right, monsters are one thing, but demons are bad."

"Why? Aren't you just about to defeat them."

Yasaku and his friends are going to escape as soon as they heard about the demons. Even though they're the only people that can fight it head-on.

"Demons, you see, are clever. A weak magician and priest can only do this much."

The aunty magician takes out another staff that's different from what's she's been using until now, and sticks it out toward the mouth stomach monkey. Firebolt comes out of it, exploding the mouth stomach monkey. The mouth stomach monkey that have fallen to the ground doesn't seem to be damaged at all.

"We can handle one of them, but only hero can do something with this many."

"Look out."

Gueh.

A mouth stomach monkey that has jumped over the wall and descended, tramples me. The pain from the gatekeeper trampling me can't be compared to this weight. I muster my consciousness that's almost gone, and stabs between the fangs of the stomach mouth monkey with an arrow I've grasped. The mouth stomach monkey looks like it doesn't feel anything even thought I've stabbed it many time.

The magicians and the aunty seem like they're trying to save me, but it seems they can't use magic because I'm in the way.

I wonder what is that.

I saw the shadow of a floating person when I was forced to face up. Purple hair?

『<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais』

Several swords are sprinkling down from that figure. It's beautiful.

That sword arbitrarily moves like a creature and slashes the mouth stomach monkey (demon) that has trampled me. The mouth stomach monkey is cut right in half with just one slash.

When I crawled out of the mouth stomach monkey, the battles inside and outside the rampart were over.

"It's the swords of heaven."

"It's the Ancestor King Yamato-sama."

"Yamato-sama, hooray!"

"Glory to the Ancestor King Yamato-sama!"

Everyone unanimously calls Yamato-sama name.

I don't know whether the person flying in the sky is really Yamato-sama. However, I was able to shout "Thank you" with all my might, before that person flew away.

I thought that Gadi and Bahana had died, but it seems they've gotten off with just bone fractures. Kena and Pomi seem to get off with just scratches.

I've only gotten bruised. Yasaki and the others call it a miracle. Maybe it's thank to the armor I've gotten from noble-sama. I'll thank him once again the next time we meet.

SS 1 : Muno City Anecdote

"Ni, Nina-sama, there are a group of carriages carrying a letter from chevalier Pendragon-sama on the castle gate, what should we do."

"『A group』 of carriages?　Where is that letter?"

"Here it is."

The sealing wax on the letter is certainly that of Satou-dono.

I tell Yuyurina to make the carriages wait on the courtyard, and tear off the sealing wax.

What? Inventory list huh?

Large quantity of foods, which makes me doubt my eyes, are written there.

I move my feet to the terrace and look down, I understand that this list, at least quantity-wise, isn't a lie, looking at the parked carriages.

"Good grief, thanks to this the people won't starve, but just how much do those cost. It'll be troublesome to calculate the total sum of our debt."

I pass the list to Misona, the civil official who has come in place of Yuyurina, for her to check if it matches the commodities on the carriages. This girl is inflexible as she's very suited only with this kind of work.

◇

I couldn't believe the story about that man I had heard from the merchants.

He exterminated the demon that had attacked Gugurian city? It's not like I don't believe it since it was a lower demon, but I have never heard anyone defeating it without any victim. Karina-sama seems to have also fought with him, that girl is really. We know that he's quite excellent, so just get him quickly won't she.

More than that, the personal connections that he's built in the duchy capital is quite frightening. It seems he's bought the smoked food this time for cheap from earl Houen, but just how did he obtain the favor of that hard to please earl.

Even for Orion-sama, if he keeps being unsteady, Satou-dono will likely reverse their master and servant relationship. Thankfully, Satou-dono doesn't have ambition to rise in dominion.

With these many food, I guess we can distribute them to the villages for a bit. Let's give meal for the slave labors who are working on the town and cultivating new land for their payments instead, I guess I'll have Misona and Yuyurina work hard to hammer out the details.

◇

However, it seems that I've misread that man.

After that day, three more carriage groups of the same scales arrived.

That was already quite enough in itself, but I was shocked with the content of the letter that Karina-sama had brought from Satou-dono.

It was written that several workshops had accepted to send exchange students to Muno city. Even though it usually needs extraordinary hardships to make them agree to it since they don't want to spread their technologies.

Good grief, even though he's declined the [Special Liaison Chief] position, he's actually doing it--no, he's done something far bigger than I've expected.

While savoring the pastry called [Muno Roll] that Gelt the head-chef has brought, I'm racking my brain as to how are we going to reward these achievements.

We have neither money nor treasures. We've already given him peerage. It should be appropriate to make him into a chevalier from a honorary chevalier, but that man didn't have interest to it. Raising his peerage more than this would need a recommendation from his majesty the king. And, there's also women huh.

Even baron-sama has a second wife after all.

That man probably won't refuse if he can marry a young girl.

Shall I make that village girl called Totona to be an adopted daughter of Baron-sama.

It's painful that there's a possibility for that jest to happen.

"Good grief, I should think hard in the more proper direction about this."

I can't help but grumble like that while hearing yells that come from sir Zotor and Karina-sama's fight outside.

If only I was 20 years younger.

I take a deep breath while thinking such foolish thing.

It's insufferable to have my worries increase as the management of the territory improves you know.

Intermission 3 : At Baron Muno Territory

◇Baron Castle - The Baron's Private Room◇

"Baron-sama, sir Zotor, and Hauto-dono have come."

"Okay, let them in."

"Excuse me."

The two people who have been invited into the baron room are bewildered. That's because, even though he's a sociable master, he seems to have no interest in military, and gives directives to them via consul Nina.

In addition to that, there are two swords on the work desk of the Baron. Zotor can feel unknown power from those swords that are covered in simple sheaths.

"Sir Zotor, will you pull that sword."

"Yes."

Zotor replies with short acceptance word, and pulls the sword. Hauto that's been summoned together with him waits behind him without saying a word. Even though the baron is the father of his lover, their public standings are like heaven and earth, so it's an extremely natural thing to do. Nevertheless, he can't hide the gleaming interest on his eyes.

"T, this is, is this a magic sword?"

Zotor commented like so on the sword he held on his hand. That is because it feels similar to the magic sword that his acquaintance's noble superior flaunts once. That superior's sword was made of mithril. Just like with this sword, they're not made of iron alloy.

He erases his hesitation, and seeps his magic power into it. It's something that's meaningless with the iron sword he normally uses, but it's an essential act with the old sword made from monster's parts that he once had.

"Amazing...."

From his standpoint, the magic power is flowing unbelievably smooth in the magic sword.

While it's like that, he does practice swings several time with the sword, and then puts it back on the desk. He pulls the second sword the same way. They seem to be the same model as they're made uniformly. This is also something that's impossible for his common sense. Normal magic swords are something that have loose performances among each of them.

"They're wonderful swords. This is probably worth more than 100 gold coins--are you going to sell them to the official merchant?"

He asks while feeling a bit reluctant. With the current economic condition of the baron territory, these kind of swords cannot be given to his forces. Zotor is thinking that the baron probably has summoned him to inquire the price of these swords.

"Do you like it?"

"Yes, the opportunity to wield swords as good as these are very rare, whence, I am extremely grateful for being given the chance."

"Is that so. It's splendid if you like it. Accept them, those swords are yours."

That unexpected words causes bewilderment to surface rather than delight. However, just when the baron stops speaking, that bewilderment is eliminated, and delight resurfaces.

"D, don't tell me, such excellent swords are going to be lent to us?"

"No."

He's headed back to discouragement with the quick reply of the baron.

"Those swords are given to you. Divert your gratitudes to chevalier Pendragon. He's asked us to give these swords to you two."

Chevalier Pendragon--he's one of the only three nobles in this baron territory. There is no shortage of anecdote surrounding him. If the baron says that they're gifts from him, then it's probably really true. Zotor receives the sword with both his hand. He dedicates his gratitude to the baron, and his retainer.

◇Baron Castle - Courtyard◇

"Beautiful..."

"Hohou, is newbie-chan going for Hauto-san?"

"Kya, Erina-san! Since when have you arrived."

"Just a little while a~go. And, are you aiming for Hauto-san? Doing some social upheaval?"

There are the figures of the captain and the vice-captain of the territory army swinging the magic swords they've just received ahead of the girls. There is no light on the magic sword that the vice-captain is swinging, unlike with the captain's. There's the baron daughter, Soruna with her maid attendants on the shade of a tree further ahead.

"What I'm looking is the sword that Zotor-sama is swinging. I've never seen such beautiful sword before."

Erina's eyes keeps pushing on like she's saying that she's only having an excuse.

"Like I said, it's not like that. It's impossible to have an illicit relationship with someone who's being looked with such loving gaze like that. Moreover, I have someone else I love."

"Ah~, come to think of it, you've said it before. Was it the young merchant who generously gave you an expensive magic potion when you were dying from running into a carriage?"

"Ehehe~, I don't know his name, nor his face though."

The face of someone whom Erina knows well floats in her mind, but the girl prudently keeps that to herself since she doesn't want to add anymore rival than now.

◇The Pioneer Village◇

"Eh? Apprentice is it?"

"Yes, won't you become an apprentice maid at the baron castle?"

There are two maids, and a girl in a room of one of the only two house that the Pendragon village has.

This is a pioneer village that doesn't even have monster-warding barrier pillars. It'll be no wonder if someday monsters attack, erasing this village from the map. The people that reside here are elderly that have been abandoned by their hometown, and ran-away children who are formerly serfs.

Just how does this much reclaimed field exist inside the forest, no one, including the people that live here, knows. It seems the village name is taken from the person who has helped them.

"But, I've never done anything beside farmworks."

"You don't have to worry 'bout that y'know? It's something that even me who's a former soldier can do."

"Meda, you stop talking."

Meda draws her head back from Pina's roar. Pina puts some power on her voice since she can't let her first job as the team leader ruined by her subordinate's foolish words.

"If Totona-ane doesn't want to, then I will do it! I want to be useful to Satou-sama and Arisa-chan!"

"Wait Rorona, where did that come from."

"Satou-sama gave us warm meals. He also left food so we didn't starve. Even the fields here must be something that Satou-sama had prepared."

The little girl emphasizes it with all the might on her small body. She's clearly too young to become a maid. However, Pina seems to have judged that there's no problem with it.

"Fine then. Let's heed your spirit. Rorona, we will employ you as an apprentice maid. Totona, what are you going to do?"

"Uu, please take care of me."

Totona who can't let her little sister go alone to an unfamiliar place reports that she's agreed to become an apprentice maid.

◇Muno City - In front of the Gate◇

"What is this?"

"That's, when we open the gate in the morning, it's become like this."

There are more than 100 men who look like thieves tied on several stone pillars before the eyes of Zotor who has come to the gate as he's called for. There is a writing on the stone pillar that politely says they've been captured since they're thieves.

"Hmm? Aren't you Gouhan?"

"Eh? Zotor-sama? Didn't you escape?"

"That one is Orto huh?"

"Zotor sire!"

There are some familiar faces among the thieves. They're former knights and soldiers of the territory army who had left the army due to the clash with the consul at the time. There are also former craftsmen and priests. Zotor has decided to ask the opinion of consul Nina in expectation of securing human resources for the lacking baron territory. After confirming their Reward and Punishment with the Yamato stone, the shortage of human resources in the baron territory has improved for a tiny bit.

◇Baron Castle - The Consul Office◇

"Nina-sama, it's terrible."

"What is it, Yuyurina?"

"That's, um, it's about Chevalier-sama again..."

"Him again! What has he done now!"

Yuyurina who's bearing the crest of the government service--despite her childish body, she's the second brain after Nina in the castle--rushes into consul Nina's office while her braid is swinging.

"We've received written letters asking for us to intermediate marriage proposals from nobles in the duchy capital."

The truth is the letters have originally come for the baron, but since he's troubled as to how to handle them, he pushes it to consul Nina by way of Yuyurina. The reason why the baron didn't directly give it to consul Nina can be easily guessed.

"He went together with Karina-sama right, when did he gain that kind of philanderer reputation."

Consul Nina's expression looks disgusted, but that's understandable. For her, for the sake of the baron territory's stability, it's her wish for lady Karina, the baron daughter, and him to be tied together. That plan doesn't seem to have any hope for success since, even though lady Karina doesn't seem to be wholly to it, she's putting her effort on the wrong way, on top of the aforementioned man having only interest in little girls. Although, the story that the chevalier likes little girls is consul Nina's assumption, however, the person that can deny that is not present here.

Yuyurina opens a box with beautiful ornaments among the ones that are pilled up on top of the desk. There is a picture of the other party drawn, surrounded by the golden picture frame that seems to be made by a master craftsman. The drawings are all of young maidens. When they scan at other letters, the other parties are all of 12-14 years old girls. They're a bit too young for marriage, but it's normal for noble engagements to be that way.

The problem is the other parties pedigrees.

"Earl's daughter? Just what and how did such marriage proposal come to be?!"

Normally, the one that proposes to a honorary noble is the daughter of a wealthy merchant, or of an influential townspeople, or of the same honorary noble, that's the normal. Starting with the proposal from someone that greatly surpasses the honorary chevalier himself, proposals from the daughter of higher-ranked nobles, and baronet turn up. There is no proposals that come from the daughters of high-ranking nobles that are higher than earl particularly.

Moreover, letters of marriage proposals for the chevalier arrive one after another after this day.

Eventually, there are three daughters of earls, around 30 daughters of nobles that are higher than baronet, and more than 100 daughters of chevalier, honorary noble, and wealthy merchants.

And then, the extreme one--

"Marquis' daughter?!"

Furthermore, there's even the handwriting of the marquis that says he doesn't mind if the person himself declines. It's not normal for a marriage proposal in itself, but it's really not like that marquis with his high pride. The marquis that she knows should be someone who is more high-handed. It's as if he has his weakness grasped.

"Good grief, even if we want to refuse or forward the marriage proposals, the talk can't continue if we can't contact the person himself. As for the letters of excuse that Yuyurina has written, let's offset it from our debt to that man."

She was probably not serious, but the sourness on her stomach seemed like it subsided when she muttered so.

The letters that have arrived afterwards are not about marriage proposals, but applications for learning etiquette through apprenticeship. It's not rare for noble daughters to become lady attendants for their training, but it's unthinkable for noble daughters of the duchy capital to come to such backwater noble place like this.

"They intend to bury the moat from outside huh. Quite the tactic."

Moreover, there is also a request to have a joint development for making orchards in the suburb of Muno city that's hard to refuse. Apparently it seems to be an unique fruit that's immune to harmful insects and animals, and has become popular in the duchy capital. It looks somewhat suspicious, but since the other party will cover the specialists and seedlings costs for it, it's a bit wasteful to decline it.

"Kuh, Karina-sama. You have a lot of powerful rivals."

Consul Nina unintentionally muttered so. However, even she couldn't imagine that the next head miko who's also the former grand daughter of the duke had fallen in love with the chevalier in question.

The story about how consul Nina snaps from the yells of lady Karina's battle training, and goes to thoroughly lectures her is for a bit later.

SS 2 : The Baron's Treasure

"Mou, father. Are you looking at that autograph paper again?"

"Oh, Soruna."

Lady Soruna looks slightly amazed at his father Baron who's gazing at the autograph paper in his private room alone like usual.

This autograph paper is something that his retainer has sent from Duke Oyugock capital. It's drawn with big characters which they've never seen before.

"Look at this powerful handwriting. Doesn't it look like it's shouldering the world. And also, these ancient characters that are overflowing with dynamism! Unfortunately, it's too hard too read, but it must be words with a significant meaning."

Her smile that overflows from seeing her father nodding by himself while looking very satisfied only comes out once during the first time it's happened.

Soruna, the daughter, didn't think that he would gaze upon it every night for one month straight that continues even now.

That is the autograph of the savior of the world, the hero of Saga empire, Masaki. She doesn't know just what kind of method chevalier Pendragon did to obtain this.

The autograph paper is written with ancient characters that no one can read, that is.

『To Baron Muno-san

YES! Lolita, NO! Touch

Hero Hayato Masaki』

It's probably fortunate for them to be unable to read the ancient language.

Intermission 4 : Sera's Misfortune

"I'm home."

"Ara, Sera-sama. Have you finished your business with Duke-sama?"

"Yes, I was only confirming the attendant's schedule."

A female temple staff greeted me when I was at the side entrance to the temple staff room. The woman always serves as the guard during food distributions.

I was just at the duchy castle, as the esteemed grandfather had called me. The kingdom conference next spring will be attended by grandfather and Tisrad-oniisama, not father. It's been decided that I'm going to be his medic for when his physical condition deteriorates.

Even though the royal capital is quite far, it's only going to take a few days to go there with the airship.

Moreover, Satou-san should be attending the kingdom conference. I look forward to meet him after a long time.

That voices in my mind shouldn't have been heard, but.

"Right right, Sera-sama. I saw sir Pendragon just a while ago."

"Eh?! W, where is he?"

I raised my voice involuntarily from her remark, which made eyes to gather here. If it's the head miko-sama, she would have forgiven me, but chief miko-sama and the head priest are going to scold me for it.

I put my hands on my mouth, and confirm to her in low voice.

Since he was going to the north in a carriage, he must have been going to viscount Shimen's mansion. I decided to ask the waiting coachman who had escorted me to take me to the viscount's mansion.

"Please wait, I think the he's going to visit here...."

I heard such voice from behind, but since I'm not going to have any work until afternoon today, there shouldn't be any particular problem.

◇

I apologized for my sudden visit and requested for a meeting with viscount Shimen Hosaris, but it wasn't possible since he was readying to go to the royal capital. He's busy like usual.

Since I can't go back just like that, I'm going to visit the annex where Toruma-ojisama resides. He's said that it's okay for me to visit anytime, and I've asked the maid to pre-announce my visit, so it shouldn't be inconvenient for his family.

"Heya, Sera. It's rare for you to visit us."

"Excuse me for the long silence. Toruma-ojisama."

Oh? I wonder why, his face is looking sad that doesn't suit the cheerful toruma-oji.

"Sera, won't you call me Toruma-niichan like you did in the old days?"

"Ara, Ojisama. Isn't it rude to call a married man, who has already had a baby, Onii-chan. What's wrong? Toruma-ojisama."

"Kukuku, Se, Sera-sama, please excuse him for that."

My talk partner has changed to his wife, Hayuna-sama, from Toruma-sama who's begun to look like he's crying while clinging to oba-sama.

<TLN: Ojisama= uncle, oba-sama=aunt.>

I'd like to ask about Satou-san quick, but it's rude for me to start asking during the talk, I need some kind of topic, topic.... That's right! There's that talk choice!

"I've heard from grandfather just now that ojisama will be granted baronet title during the spring conference. Congratulations!"

"Thank you. It's a honorary baronet, so Mayuna won't be able to succeed me though."

That reminds me, where is Mayuna-chan I wonder? I've not heard crying voice since a while ago.

"Ah, Mayuna is sleeping. Thanks to the toy that sir Pendragon had brought, she was in good mood from the beginning when she was awake until she slept after getting tired from laughing. She's not being handful, it's nice."

Yes, I've been waiting for that name to come up.

"Has sir Pendragon come here? I believe he's not going to go back to the duchy capital for a while..."

"He said that he came here alone from a trade port for a business at the scroll workshop."

"Satou-san had gone to the duke castle. Apparently, he was looking for red pickles, so he was going to ask the chef-san at the castle about it."

Chefs at the castle! Then, we've passed with each other haven't we.

I was able to quickly leave since Hayuna-sama was smoothly leading the talk for it. As expected of Toruma-ojisama for trying to stop it dead at its track.

◇

"I, if it isn't, Sera-sama. What would be your business in this place where lower-class people work?"

A lot of people are working busily in the castle's kitchen that I've visited for the first time. The maid who had guided me called the person in charge of this kitchen, but Satou-san doesn't seem to be here.

"Ah, Chevalier-sama should be going ta' the downtown after he heard about the pickles there."

This time it's the downtown! Mou, Satou-san is mean.

In the end, I wasn't able to meet Satou-san even though I went to the downtown. I couldn't concentrate during the practice that day, and got scolded many times by the head miko-sama.

◇

"Sera, you see."

"Sera, masita was here."

"Hey! You guys, call Sera-sama with Miko-sama or Sera-sama."

Little sea lion children started talking to me when I was chatting with the wives after the food distribution was over. The official of goddess Forina who was there scolded the children for not using honorifics to call me. I think there's no need to scold over such minor things toward such little children.

"What is masita?"

I bend my knee, and match my line of sight with the children's. I'm imitating Satou-san. It seems that it's easier to talk with the children if I do this. I feel that the distance between me and the children at the orphanage on consolation visit has decreased after I started doing this.

"Umm, ummm."

"Masita is, Nana's masita."

The Nana that I knows is Satou-san's attendant. Come to thinke of it, didn't Nana-san call Satou-san with master? Moreover, I remember that Nana-san often carried these children on her arms.

"Have you perhaps seen Satou-san?"

"Satou?"

"What I saw was Nana's masita."

It's not hitting the point well, but I'm going to follow the children for the chance. The official of goddess Forina didn't look too happy, but I made the official permitted it by having some guards follow me.

The children lead me by hand to the street that's left with very few people after the morning market is over.

"Sera, masita, was here."

"Hey, masita is?"

The children point to an elderly woman who's tidying up goods that look like pickles.

"Miko-sama, what are these children doing?"

I apologize to the perplexed oba-san, and ask about Satou-san.

"A 15 years old refreshing-looking black haired calm man, wearing refined looking robe who is also a young noble? Is he miko-sama's lover?"

"I, it's not like that! Satou-san is my friend."

"Right isn't it, you do have to value your friend."

I can't stand the encouraging very tepid gaze from the oba-san.

"Oba-chan, feed me something, I overslept too much and couldn't join the food distribution."

"You've worked every night right, buy something yourself."

"I don't even have one copper coin since I send them all as remittance for my hometown. The Kuhanou pickles I got from Sac-chan aren't satisfying to munch after all~"

A woman on her late 20s, with a slightly vulgar clothes, cut herself between Oba-san and my talk. I wonder if men are attracted to these kind of voluptuous person?

"U, umm."

"There are many young men with black hair. Oh right, the nii-san that had saved Futsuna the other day was also a black hair."

"Hmm? The one Sac-chan's talked about? Sac-chan said that he had some great techniques even though he was young. Thanks to that, she had lack of sleep."

"What are you saying in front of Miko-sama. Here, I'll give you an onigiri, bear with that."

"Yay, I love you oba-chan."

I excuse myself since I'm in the middle of a work.

"Masita, not here?"

"Satou-san doesn't seem to be here."

"Ara? The one that Miko-sama looking is called Satou? Sac-chan said that he left the duchy capital with the very first ship in the morning."

N, no way... that's cruel, Satou-san. Won't it hurt you to show up for a bit. I thanked the woman who had informed me, and went back totteringly to the temple.

But, I wonder what kind of relationship they have?

◇

It's 10 days afterward when I meet Satou-san.

『Today, light hill, your chevalier.』

I was given such letter during food distribution. I couldn't see the other party's face, but is this really from Satou-san?

Light hill is a hill at the edge of the downtown with beautiful reflection of the stars on the great river, it's famous for being a place for trysts between lovers.

I can't go to such place as a miko myself.... But, it's fine if I go just to meet him right?

◇

"A star seems to have fallen into the great river."

The priest has asked the guards to go with me.

However, the one that waits in the hill is not Satou-san.

"Fuhn? As expected of the princess of the archduke to bring along guards during her secret date~"

When the boy with white hair pulls out his sword, the guards quickly make a wall in front of me. The grandfather's private soldiers that have guarded me from a distant protect me. Due to my kidnapping incident during the attack on the duchy capital back then, they've been protecting me from this kind of ruffians constantly.

"Ahaha, with such few number of small fries, you can't stop me you know~?"

"I've been in the imperial guard since my youth days. You brat won't be able to match me."

Silver flashes glitters, I can hear the sound of swords clashing.

Very slightly after that, the guards have all fallen to the ground. The dumbfounded guards are going to run away while taking me, but the white-haired boy cuts them in a blink of an eye.

"I need to take you a hostage to lure out someone. I will pluck off your feet and hands if you resist, so be obedient okay~?"

He slowly comes to me while shouldering his bloodstained sword. He moves like a weasel who's torturing prey.

"What are you doing on someone's garden?"

Satou-san?

I wonder why, I mistook him for Satou-san for an instant even though that person's voice and height were different. That person who's wearing black clothes is about three fists taller than Satou-san, and his voice is different above all.

He's holding a beautiful sword that scatters blue light in the middle of the night, while overwhelming the white haired boy.

Is that sword a holy sword?

But, his physique is too different than hero-sama. Is he Nanashi-sama who has saved the duchy capital from crisis together with hero-sama?

After some exchange of blows, the white haired boy took some distances away. He's probably going to run. I thought that but--

"O Long Horn, feed on my hatred for the violent power!"

He was going to push the long horn that he had taken from his bosom to his own forehead, but a person with purple hair confiscated that away. Where did this purple haired person come out from?

"Give it back."

The white hair attacks the purple hair, but the purple hair evades the attack casually, and he knocks the white hair down with his fist like he's scolding a little child. The people who have guarded me aren't weak soldiers. To easily overpower the one who has slaughtered those guards like this, he must not be an ordinary person.

"What's wrong Nanashi. Weren't you going to just look from the back?"

『This guy took out something dangerous. I had to disempower him before he could use it.』

This purple haired person seems to be called Nanashi. Why does he has such stuffy voice I wonder? Nanashi-sama produced a rope out of nowhere which moved by itself to capture the boy.

With a wave of Nanashi-sama's hand, the wounds on the dying soldiers disappear.

Is that chantless magic?

『Well then, Miko Sera. I will excuse myself. Please send my regard to head miko-sama. The duchy capital sentries are coming here soon, but please don't approach that white hair."

So he said, and the two disappear like they've been swallowed by the darkness. Thanks to this miraculous encounter, it seems my life is saved.

The uninjured soldiers who have been healed by Nanashi-sama, gets up and captures the white haired boy. I pray for the soldiers who have died protecting me while looking at that scene with a sidelong glance.

However, I wonder why does Nanashi-sama know my name?

SS 3 : Lulu's Pests Extermination

<Author's Note: This is an SS with Liza's POV, not Satou.>

"Ufufu, you're bad you know? Since you've put your hands on other people's thing..."

What should I do, Lulu seems strange.

"Now, be obediently exterminated."

When I look at Lulu who's holding a kitchen knife on her hand while having a dark smile, I feel a slight cold on my back.

"Ara ara, are you scared? Pulling your hands and feet back like that. Are you trying to hide it by doing that?"

I'm at a loss as to whether call Lulu who's speaking like she's driving it into the corner, but since she'll be still speaking when master come soon, let's stop her now.

"Now, resign yourself--"

"Lulu."

When I called her, Lulu very quickly turned her body around. Looking at the kitchen knife being hold in both hands like she's going to thrust it sure is scary.

"D, did you see?"

"No, I didn't. Rather than that, master is coming, so you should end your little drama, and quickly finish catching the vegetable bugs."

"P, please Liza-san, about this, to master--"

Lulu who's drawing near in a panic looks cute, but since she's still holding the kitchen knife, I lightly take it off. Since it's dangerous.

I promise the nondisclosure, "I swear that I did not seen anything" to Lulu. As a thank for keeping it a secret, Lulu is going to give me the thick slice of the steak today. I did not have such intention, but the meat has no sin. I will gladly accept it.

"What's wrong Liza? You look happy about something."

"No, it is nothing."

This is a secret between girls after all, so I'm keeping it a secret from master.

SS 4 : Doctor Pochi

"It's terrible nanodesu! It's terrible if it keeps being left alone nanodesu."

"Terrible~?"

Pochi who's wearing a female doctor fashion is accompanied by Arisa and Tama who are wearing mini skirt nurse uniforms. Mia is on an outing with Aialize.

Playing doctor huh, it's really like Arisa. At first Arisa was going to be the doctor, but since it seemed like she would sexually harass me if she took the stethoscope, it had been changed to Pochi.

"Eh~ that's troubling."

"Yes, it's troubling nodesu."

Pochi folds her arms and takes an exaggerated 'it's troubling' pose.

The flow of the conversation is like the dog policeman nursery rhyme. Arisa makes fun of her shouting, "Woofwoof woowoo~f", but it seems Pochi and and also Tama have gotten used to her eccentric behavior as they completely ignore her. Arisa, how pitiful.

Let's play along with it for a bit.

"What's the terrible thing?"

"It's the Fuji sickness nanodesu! They're having shortage of Arisanium and Tamarin nodesu."

Just what are Arisanium and Tamarin? Is it something like musukonium?

<TLN: lit. Son-nium, seems to be Nyaruko reference.>

I see so there is no lack of Pochinium huh. I see.

Then!

"Then, let's charge it quickly."

I say so, then carry both Arisa and Tama on my hand, and rub their cheeks. Since Arisa's face has collapsed, I continue to only rub Tama's face.

Pochi spreads her arms with a face full of expectation, but I leave her be.

Huh? Like so she looks puzzled.

"Master, Pochi also wants to be rubbed nodesu."

"However, the ones that are lacking are only Arisanium and Tamarin right."

I shake my head, "Unfortunately", to Pochi. She's flailing her short arms, and wander her eyes around seeking for help. Nana just waves her head to the side, Liza remains silent. Lulu is only laughing lightly.

I feel sorry for her if I keep leaving her alone, so let's put out some help.

"Don't tell me that Pochinium is also lacking?"

"Yes nanodesu! It's really lacking nodesu!"

Pochi is diving from the chair, so I receive her. Arisa, who's been hit by Pochi's knee, faints while holding her back of head in agony. A~ah. Since Arisa hasn't done anything wrong this time, I heal her with magic healing.

It has been decided that Lulunium, Lizanium, and Nananium are also lacking, so I charge them with the skinship. It seems that I'm biased with charge amount of Nananium, so the alliance of power has submitted their objection.

The check is a bit too harsh me think.

SS 5 : Fishing

"What are you making nodesu?"

"Insect~?"

Pochi and Tama peek from my sides while I'm making a tool.

"This is called a fly."

"Hairy caterpillar~?"

"It's not an insect nodesu?"

"It's an artificial bait that pretends to be an insect to catch fish."

They probably don't really understand, but Pochi and Tama fold their arms while nodding, "I see~", "Nanodesu."

Since it's right when I've just completed it, I take the two along to a watering hole nearby.

Watering holes in this world have a lot of fish, and it's not limited to this Boruenan forest. Only the ones in baron Muno territory don't have the fish.

It's one thing with the rod guides, but making the reel is too troublesome, so there's only one set of fishing tackle. I wave the fly on the end of the rod and powerfully cast it to the intended place.

It seems that there are a lot of fish brimming with curiosity, the fly is bitten the moment it lands on the water.

"Iregui~?"

"Am, amaziingnodesu! It's already been bitten nodesu. Fly is an expert nanodesu."

<TLN: Iregui: fish biting at every cast.>

Tama is happy nonchalantly, in contrast with Pochi who's too excited, she's flailing her arms around while fumbling her words.

This time I adjust the fishing line length to be at normal length, and try to land the fly on the water. After leaving it for a bit, another fish with the same big mouth that look like the trout earlier bites. Still, to catch 50 cms fish like this so easily, there's a limit to iregui too.

After making Pochi and Tama wait for only three minutes, I give them two impromptu fishing rods with artificial baits.

"Now, try it."

"Full speed ahead~?"

"I'll do my best nodesu!"

While having meager happenings like Pochi getting her fishing rod caught on a needle tree, or Tama getting dragged into the pond by the too-big-of-a fish that she's fished, we end up catching more than 100 fish until the evening. Some fish that can't fit the fish-tank have ran away, yet it's still overflowing with fish.

"Fish festival~?"

"Are having fish today nanodesu?"

"We need to have the mud removed from the fish. I'm sorry but, today we're having whale meat like usual."

It's delicious indeed, but it gets a bit tiring after all.

"There is no problem nodesu! I like whale meat as much as Theodore nanodesu!"

"Karaage~? Cutlets?"

We keep having fried food, and we've just had steak yesterday. I'd like to have some vegetables, so I guess another kind of dish will be nice.

"Right then, since it's not really a good match as hamburg steak, why don't we have sukiyaki?"

"Hamburg-sensei is almighty nanodesu!"

"Sukiyaki suki~"

<TLN: I love sukiyaki.>

"Of course, I love the great god sukiyaki too nanodesu."

Thus, the next dinner will be with sukiyaki.

I made the fish from today into boiled fish several days later. Pochi almost cried since there were many small bones, but since Lulu patiently lectured her the way to take the small bones away, she ate it all without leaving anything behind.

Now then, what should we do tomorrow?

10-1. Sea Travel

Satou's here. Unlike with whales, I feel that there are many people who will frown when they hear about eating dolphins. Since I myself feel sick if I hear someone's eating cat and dog, it must be because of different food cultures.

◇

"Ya' guys! Captain Arisa-sama is departing yarr'~"

"Yessire~?"

"Aye aye~"

"Nn."

Arisa and the others are playing with pirates cosplay on the bow. Arisa is wearing a captain-like elongated hat and a coat with long hem, with a shirt and trousers below. She's got a rapier on her waist.

That's some slightly retro pirate huh. I thought that she was going to cosplay the pirate king, but it seems to be different.

Pochi and Tama are wearing pirate underling-like clothes, that are shirts with stripped patterns, and cropped trousers. The two are equipped with eyepatches that I've made yesterday. Making normal eyepatches wouldn't be interesting, so I made it in the shapes of a small deformed dog and cat.

Mia is wearing sailor-like clothes, or more like a white sailor uniform, and white trousers.

"Master, the tea is ready."

"Thank you, Lulu."

I get down the area with steering wheel that's on a bit higher plane, and sit on one of the simple tables that have been lined up on the deck. After Lulu told Arisa that it was the snack time, they stopped their pirates play and rushed here.

"Huh? The sunlight here is gentle."

"Fufuhn, I've put up the [<<Sunlight Protection>>] that can cut UV from the sunlight since it'll be bad if Lulu and the others get sunburns."

It's one of the thing I've ordered from the scroll workshop in the duchy capital.

Natalina-san was confused since she didn't seem to understand the purpose of the magic.

"There's no wind~?"

"It's true nanodesu. Even though the wind blows on top, it's mysterious nanodesu."

"It's magic."

"Naruru~"

<TLN: From 'naruhodo'.>

"I see, nanodesu."

I use the normal Air control magic for the wind, calming the wind here while sending it to the sail at the same time.

When I didn't use it, Lulu's and Nana's skirts got rolled up by the wind. Particularly for Lulu, since she was wearing a one piece, up to her navel could be seen. Of course, officially, I didn't see it.

Our ship is currently sailing in the bay.

There is hardly any monster in the bay.

"Dolphin! A dolphin just jumped now!"

Arisa has quickly found a dolphin that's swimming side-by-side with the ship. Please don't talk when you have something in your mouth. I create a tray sized <<Flexible Shield>> and prevent the crumbs from falling.

Arisa rushes to the rear deck behind me. The young troupe aren't the only ones lured there, Lulu and Nana also follow.

What about Liza? I look for her, it seems that she's just taken a harpoon attached with rope from the storehouse below. Apparently for Liza, it's like fishing a prey.

"It's somersaulting nodesu!"

"Prey~?"

"What are you saying, it's unthinkable to eat dolphin~ that's something to adore you know."

I think I shouldn't tell Arisa that I've eaten dolphins in a lodging at

Wakayama prefecture before. Well, they're certainly cute, so I guess adoring them is fine too.

I thought that Nana was going to react the most, but she didn't seem to have much interest. Lulu is saying, "That's really a big fish", but that's an expression for when you're talking about cuisine.

"However, it looks delicious."

Liza is trying to hide the harpoon behind her, but she can't.

Everyone beside Arisa seems eager to eat the dolphin, but let's overlook it for Arisa's sake.

Even though I don't think that the dolphin feels the danger for itself, it's separating from the ship after a bit while.

◇

After the afternoon snack time is over, the ship safely gets out of the bay to the open sea.

"Uwah, it's shaking."

"It's shaking more than the airship."

"Nn."

Arisa, Lulu, and Mia seem uncomfortable with the ship shaking. It shouldn't feel like it's shaking so much for a ship this big, but I guess it can't be helped that it's shaking more than when it's on the river.

"It's alright, it's just water below us. You can just swim if you fall."

Liza remonstrates calmly. It's quite different than when she's riding the airship.

"Nn, I can swim."

"Impossible, I can only swim for 10 meters by dog-paddling."

"I've never swum before since I was raised in mountains. Ara? Arisa shouldn't have never swum before too right?"

I see, Arisa and Lulu can't swim huh. I'll teach them how to swim when we stop by on the shore next time. I guess they need swimsuits before that huh.

"Nyahahahaha~"

"Tama, it's shaking too much, it's terrible nanodesu! Master, I'm falling nodesu~"

I can hear excited voices of Tama on Pochi who have climbed on the watchtower on the main mast before we got out of the bay. Pochi's voice seem somewhat like a scream, but since it subtly sounds like she's having fun, it's probably alright. If she really falls, I'll catch her with [Magic Hand] so it's fine.

I'm enjoying everyone's reaction like that, but then a monster appears on the radar.

Since it'll be dangerous if we meet enemies like this, let's make the ship levitate.

I touch the board on the center of the steering rudder. I charge it with magic power to activate the aerodynamic engine. The ship comes out of the sea's surface and continues to rise until the altitude where the wave crest don't touch it.

"Ara? The shaking stops? Geh?!"

Arisa becomes speechless when she peers below from the ship's deck.

Huh?
Didn't I say that this sailing ship could fly?

Everyone beside Arisa is calm, and has no question about the flying ship. We were flying in an airship when we went to Boruenan forest after all. If one doesn't understand the theory, they probably would think that a sailing ship can fly just like an airship.

"Don't tell me, this ship is also an airship?"
"That's right. It doesn't have enough power to fly high though."

At most, it can only fly 100 meters above the ground. It also doesn't have propellers, so it can only go to the direction the wind blows.

Arisa is muttering, "Gununu", and, "Cheater". How cruel, I've made this by applying things that various people have taught me.

After confirming that the shaking has stopped, Pochi smoothly descends with the rope hanging on the main mast. It seemed Tama had found something, she also descended after Pochi.

"A big shadow is coming closer~"

"Shadow nanodesu?"

The thing that Tama has found is the Long-Neck Dragon that's chasing this ship. It has 'dragon' in its name, but it's not of the dragon race but monsters.

<TLN: 首長竜 can also means plesiosaur.>

◇

A long neck breaks out of the water surface.

"Uwaah, it's Nessie! It's a real nessie isn't it. I wonder if it'll bark with 'Pyui'?"

Arisa's tension is strange.

I understand her feeling since it's a famous UMA. But, I wonder where did I hear that it barked [Pyui]?

<TLN: maybe Doraemon reference.>

"You grilled eel! I recommend that you prostate yourself before my stomach!"

"HUROOOOUNN!"

Grilled eel she said. The Horn Snake from before was certainly delicious though.

The Long Neck snapped from Nana's provocation, and roared. Behind me, Arisa says, "That's not Pyukichi" while tearing a handkerchief. I understand that you're having a little drama, but Liza and Lulu will scold you later you know.

"Shoot!"

Lulu, Pochi, and Tama pulled the triggers on the shotguns following my command. There's the fact that the target is big, the magic power buckshots that spread in 30 meters round shape hit the Long-Neck Dragon.

"...■■ Water Hold"

Mia's capture magic is invoked a bit later after the three, and the water ropes begins to coil around and bind the Long-Neck Dragon. The rope can't quite bind it, probably because its high level.

"...■■■■■■ <<Dimension Cutter>>"

The space magic blade that Arisa's fired makes a deep wound on the Long-Neck Dragon's trunk.

Despite the wound, the giant tusk of the Long-Neck Dragon still approaches the big shield that Nana has set up.

Nana shoots arrows of nature magic that pierce through the Long-Neck Dragon's eyes. The Long-Neck Dragon that has its vision robbed keeps charging to Nana, but Nana evades it quickly.

I'd hate it if the ship breaks from the Long-Neck Dragon's attack, so I use <<Flexible Shield>> to protect the deck.

Liza who has amassed magic power into her spear drives it through the Long-Neck Dragon whose movements have stopped after being hindered by the Flexible Shield. Right then, Pochi and Tama assist with shotguns shots from the deck.

Arisa pierces the Long-Neck Dragon which has stopped moving with Dimension Cutter, and Mia uses Water Burst on that wound to make it explodes. Toward that torn long neck, Liza and Nana attack with magic edged spear and sharp edge invoked magic sword respectively, and it's finally defeated.

Since the Long-Neck Dragon is as big as the ship, its dismantling is done by using [Magic Hand] and [Flexible Sword] from a distance.

The Long-Neck Dragon is quite lightly delicious, although not as good as the Horn Snake. There should be some dishes using fins inside the cooking books that I've bought in the duchy capital, let's challenge myself to make it next time.

10-2. The Two Earldoms

Satou's here. There's a saying, too many boatmen makes the ship climbs the mountain. It's a saying that's on my mind whenever I attend a meeting without anyone in control, but in the other world, ships climbing mountains seems to be a normal scenery.

<TLN: It's an idiom which has similar meaning with 'Too many cooks spoil the broth'.>

◇

Our sailing ship is flying quite far on the open sea so we're not meeting other ships. Our altitude is only a bit higher than the wave crest, so the ship should look like it's sailing normally seen from afar.

That said, the ship is moving three times than an average ship, so the discerning people should notice that this ship isn't normal.

We're fully enjoying the sea travel while sometimes ignoring pirates, exploring undersea ruins, and swimming on the shores.

Since I had carefully chosen the course while looking out for ships around the area, the journey has become relatively roundabout. Halfway through, I realized that I could use illusion magic to make a reflection of the sea, but since we still had to not get too close to other ships all the same, I didn't do the idea.

We've journeyed about 1200 kilometers to the south west on the beginning of the third day. The ship is currently cruising on water surface with normal speed. It's for entering the port in the bay of the Ukeu Earldom ahead. Lulu and the others seem like they're getting seasick, but please endure it for a little bit.

◇

There are seven galley ships that are as big as our ship, and three boats anchored in the port of Ukeu Earldom. It seems the port facilities are lacking as only four of them are in the port, while the remaining six are anchored on the sea slightly away from the port.

I also lower the anchor on our ship on the sea slightly away.

Since there's no need to drop by the port, we've decided to lower the small boat and go on a sightseeing tour in the port town. After everyone has boarded the small boat, I use [Magic Hand] to put down the boat on the sea surface. Of course I did it from the location where it couldn't be seen from the port to not make us stand out.

I leave the ship's guard to the parrot-shaped scarecrows type 8. They can't fly even though they're shaped like parrots. They can only monitor or send alert about intruders, and also doing a bit of wire manipulation. This wire manipulation can move dolls that looks like sailors, and activate trap. The dolls don't have battle capability, but since they look like people working from afar, it's quite enough for crime prevention.

I entrust Liza and Nana to row the small boat. Even though it's called small boat, it's big enough to carry eight adults.

"What kind of port town is it here?"

"It's the port of Ukeu Earldom, but we can take a shortcut to the port of Kirik Earldom if we cross that mountain. We don't have to make trip around the peninsula that extends 500 kilometers far from the port here if we use that shortcut, so it's a big time saver."

"Won't it only take two days for a 1000 kilometers round-trip?"

"Arisa, you should not think that the speed of master's magic ship is normal."

"You're right. It'll take more than a half month for a normal ship."

Liza advices Arisa. It seems to be a subject which other member has no interest in, they're playing around by dipping their hands in the sea surface. Tama desperately stretches her body from my lap while attempting to touch the water surface with her hand. She should just get down from my lap if it's so hard to take the posture.

"How long will it take to cross the mountain?"

"It's about 20 kilometers long, and there seem to be a rest area every 4-5 kilometers, so there seem to be a lot of people who get off their ships from here."

I think it'll be good if they just use magic to briskly make a canal here. They might have no budget to employ magicians though. Since it looks like it could become an important point for marine transportation between the royal capital and the duchy capital, I think there should be people who'd like to invest on it.

◇

Since an official-like man on the port gestures for us when we've gotten close to the wharf, I lead the boat to the place where it should be docked.

"Hey, merchant-san. Never seen you before, this your first time in Ukehaba port?"

"Yes, it's my first time here."

I take the ID plate from my chest and show it to the man while lending my hand to Lulu who's getting down from the ship.

"Please excuse me, Chevalier-sama. The stagecoach heading to the port of Kirik Earldom has left the port, and the next service will be for tomorrow morning. The only inn that's suitable for noble-sama is the Lighthouse Light Inn, shall I arrange someone to take you there?"

"Ah, thanks. We're going back to the ship when the night comes, so there's no need for the inn. How much is the anchoring fee for the small boat."

"It's free for one ship. If you need guards, one can be dispatched for one copper coin a day."

The official is talking smoothly as it seems that there are a lot of nobles who have gone ashore here going to the royal capital. I decline the inn recommendation, and hire two guards. However, one copper coin a day, isn't that too cheap?

There are a lot of beastkin working on the port facilities. The raccoonkin, and the apekin are particularly the majority. There are the small ratkins too, but they're not working for loading-unloading things, but odd jobs and other jobs that don't require power.

"Isn't it Chevalier Pendragon over there?"

I turn my head toward the voice that calls me, it's the head of the noble family whom I've visited several times in the duchy capital. His name is baron Eguon if I'm not mistaken. He's someone who commands the route for getting spices on the archipelago that's located on the straight line ahead the peninsula. It's thanks to him that I could procure the needed cumin and turmeric for the curry.

"Excuse me for the long silence. Baron Eguon."

"What a coincidence for us to meet here. Thanks to you, the sales of spices have had rapid increase. I've come here myself to reinforce the trade you know."

Come to think of it, Earl Houen said to me that there was an unprecedented cooking boom in the duchy capital.

Apparently, there will be a cooking tournament sponsored by Earl Houen in three months time. I wonder if that was the reason why I was randomly challenged to cooking contests when I was visiting the scroll workshop in the duchy capital. Since I had heard the thing about the tournament earlier, I made the empty promises that I would accept the fight if they won the cooking tournament.

"If you were just one day faster, you would have met Viscount Rendo, how regrettable."

The Viscount Rendo whom he's talking about is someone who's dealing jewelries in the duchy capital. I had visited his engraving workshop and gem polishing workshop several times. Viscount Rendo seems to be currently in a trip for his customers that are spread from the duchy capital to the labyrinth city. It seems that Baron Eguon has come to this port with a ship, he's heading toward the port of Kirik Earldom with the stagecoach from earlier.

Since it's just right, I ask the earl about earl Ukeu's and earl Kirik's personalities, and their territories information while being careful as not to get in his busy schedule.

It seems that Earl Ukeu is, politely speaking a honest person, and frankly speaking a bumpkin. His territory army is relatively strong, it seems there are only several galley ships for the marine force. They can't guarantee the safety of marine transportation then? But, pirates are like thieves that can appear anywhere in the first place. Therefore, it seems that the marine force of the territory army is reserved for the time monsters attacking the port, not for securing sea route.

Earl Kirik is a dandy and cheerful during trading, but on the other hand, he's frivolous, and skimps on money. His territory army seem to be weak, but it seems it has come to rival Earl Ukeu's force by enhancing the army's equipment and the number of personnel. His marine force seem to be slightly better than Earl Ukeu's.

Looks like the two earl's houses have bad relationship with each other. Moreover, it's not only limited to the top positions, the territories people are also competing with each other, and strifes tend to break one way or another.

Even recently, they're having an argument for the one that should bear the expense of maintaining the bridge that connects the highway between the ports of the two earldoms in the borders of the territories over the valley. And this time, it seems they're having a dispute as to whose workers should be the one that work on it, baron Eguon tells me so with a tired expression.

◇

There's an inner gate outside of the port facilities, and beyond that is the residential area. The population is about 8000 people, and 40% of them are demi-humans. There are a lot of slaves, and most of them are for manual labors like unloading things on the port.

Probably due to the subtropic climate, a lot of the townspeople are wearing clothes with high exposures. Lots of young women are wearing wonderful clothes such as vests for wrapping their breasts, and mini skirts below. Most men are also only wearing shorts and thin shirts or naked for their upper half. For some reason, the women are busy working, while the men are taking nap and having drinking bout on the trees' shades. It's a strange scene, but that's probably just how it is in this land.

"It's like a southern country here~ let's might as well eat some local specialties!"

"Meat~"

"Meat is nice nodesu!"

"It's said that the fish are delicious in a port town like this."

"Fruits."

Liza has unusually chosen fish. We enter the large restaurant that's just nearby. Just like with the other surrounding houses, it's made from assembled thin logs, big banana-like leaves seem to be stacked on top to create the roof. It has no wall unlike other houses, so the openness feels nice.

After we've taken some open seats, a waitress onee-san with nice body comes to take the order. She's a beautiful southern country-style woman with black hair.

I'm told that a fish dish with an unfamiliar name, that is Gebo, is the specialty here, so I order that. Since it seems to be quite a big fish, I order only one serving. I've seen people making dried fish along the way here, so I also order grilled fish, and grilled dried fish for the next one.

I asked whether they have meat here, but since they only had water rat's meat, I ordered the grilled water rat meat only for the interested parties. I've expected the three beastkin girls to do so, but Lulu is also going for the challenge. I know that she's doing it for research purpose, but if she's going to be teary eyed, I think she shouldn't push herself.

There seemed to be abundance of fruits, so I asked the waitress to combine the fruits on a platter.

Gebo is a longtooh grouper-like big white fish boiled in a dashi that's made of the fish as the base. The dish is already delicious to eat as it is, but the waitress recommends us to eat it together with a pilaf-like rice on a rice bowl by piling the white meat on top of it and pour the broth on the top.

"The smell is a bit harsh, but it's a taste you can get used to isn't it."

"Yup, and the smell will disappear if you just put this Japanese pepper-like thing."

"Oh, you're right."

This Gebo is a hit. I can generally guess the recipe, so let's stock some fish later on. Since they seem to live on the seashore, we might even be able to catch them ourselves. I've seen the fish sauce being sold in jars earlier, I have to remember buying it when we get back.

"Oily~"

"It's splitter-splatter inside my mouth nanodesu."

"You two eat it without complaining. Lulu, don't force yourself and eat the fruits there to wash off the taste. I will eat your leftovers."

"I'm sorry, Liza-san."

Apparently, the water rat is a miss. It's the first time I've seen Pochi and Tama not liking meat. Price-wise, the grilled water rat is relatively expensive, about as much as the mountain of fruits that Mia is grappling.

"Is it delicious Mia."

"Nn, tasty."

In front of Mia, there's a literal mountain of varied fruits piled up. The fruits that look familiar to me are pineapples, coconuts, bananas, kiwis, and mangos. There are also several kind of citrus family fruits. There's no apple or pear. Although there are some differences like the kiwi having red flesh inside, they're similar with the fruits in my former world. Particularly the banana and the pineapple, both the tastes and the textures are the same. The mango is a false-mango. Although it looks and taste similar, it has rubbery-like texture. Arisa who's nabbing small pieces of the fruits from the side is having an impression, "This and that are acceptable" after munching them for a bit.

◇

After thoroughly enjoying the southern country-like town, we returned to the ship with various souvenirs. Fortunately, the scarecrows didn't seem to have any turn to shine.

When the day has darkened, I produce night fog. It's [Fog] magic. Unlike when it's used by Mia, the whole port becomes shrouded in thick fog. I circulate the fog to the mountain by using [Air Control] magic, after three hours, the fog has reached the port of Kirik Earldom on the opposite side.

I slip the ship under the cover of the fog, and cross the mountain by relying on the map.

Halfway through the mountain, the bridge on the border of the earldoms has fallen, while viscount Rendo and his retainers are dying on the bottom of the ravine. I've made sure the fog doesn't get to this area, but the bridge probably fell since the maintenance kept getting postponed. They're unlucky people.

The [Magic Hand] can't reach it from the fog, so I make our ship float still in the mid-air, and rescue them as Nanashi with black mask clothing.

Unfortunately, the horses and the coachman have died, but the Viscount and other guests are still alive, so I stealthily use [Magic Hand] to move them to Earl Ukeu's side. Furthermore, I've used [Aqua Heal] for them while hiding my figure, so they probably will survive. I put some food and water below the shade nearby just in case.

The inside seems to be in an uproar, but if they're energetic enough to make a fuss, they're probably going to be alright even if I leave them.

I go back to my ship, and finish crossing the mountain without meeting with anymore trouble this time. I keep the ship flying inside the fog, and anchor it on a small bay located on the outskirts of Kirik Earldom.

10-3 To the Labyrinth City

Satou's here. When I hear beach, I'm reminded of beach huts. For playing on the sea, the whole roasted squids and corns, the garnish-less curry, and the stale ramen are indispensable after all. In order to make that a reality, first I have to search the corns.

◇

Two days after we set off Kirik Earldom, we arrive on the sea near Taltumina the trade city. If I entered the port just like this, I'd have to anchor the ship there, so we disembarked on a beach with no life sign on the evening, and decided to advance with the horse-drawn carriage.

The horses are also happy with the ground that they haven't seen for a long time.

There's no human habitation around this area, probably due to the many monsters here, but there's a desolate highway beyond the nearby mountain, so I'll go to the trade city via it, and continue to the labyrinth city from the main highway after that.

"Master, night marching is dangerous. I wish for practicum on the sandy beach."

"Fireworks~?"

"Fireworks are nice nodesu! Swoosh is nice too, but crackles are good nodesu!"

"Nn."

The practicum that Nana is referring to is about fireworks.

It's going to attract monsters, but I guess I can just exterminate them if they get close.

I hand over short wands to everyone, and put it with the requested [<<Fireworks Illusion>>] on.

"Kururu~n."

"Beautiful."

Tama and Mia are running around the sandy beach with normal gushing fireworks on both their hands.

"Watch this properly!"

"Okay."

Arisa and Lulu are playing letter-writing on the darkness of the night by using the fireworks. It seems the letters are formed from the afterimages. I thought that she was going to write『I love you』, or『LOVE』, but, please stop writing messages that's way over it like『When is the yobai?』. Please learn from what Lulu's written:『Love you so much』.

"I wish for a chick."

Nana?

"I wish for a chick nanodesu."

She said it twice. Do you like chicks so much? I couldn't imagine the shape of the fireworks, so I tried to create a chick shape on the sparks that were scattering ahead of the short wand. The firework was not something that existed in the preset patterns, so the preparation took some time, but I tried my best to meet the expectation of the excited eyes on the expressionless face of Nana.

"It's a wonderful chick. Master, it disappears when I touch it."

"Because they're illusions."

Suddenly touching like that, what a troubling girl. If it wasn't a light magic type, she'd have gotten a burn. I put the same magic on the short wand once again, and warned her not to touch it.

I'm enjoying plain sparklers together with Liza.

"This is nice."

"Yeah, it is."

Before I knew it, Arisa and the others have gathered and set off sparklers.

Some boorish monsters were trying to intrude from the sea and the forest, but I repulsed them with [Remote Stun] before they went into the range of Tama's crisis perception. If this was a game, they would probably attack precisely, but it seemed that the monsters' perception ability weren't high, after hitting them with remote stun bullets several times, they had either got scared, or alerted as they went back to the sea and forest.

The next morning, we lost to the beautiful sandy beach, and enjoyed ourselves swimming in the ocean. We're not journeying in a hurry, but as it is now, it's likely that we'll camp here for several days, so I finish it by the noon, and return back to the journey.

◇

"What's this carriage. There's no shaking, it's eerie."

Complains come up even without the shaking huh. How troubling.

This carriage isn't like the wagon that we've used before, but instead a small box-shaped carriage like the one we've ridden inside towns. Not only that it has self-propulsion function on the cart section, but there's also a slim aerodynamic engine loaded below the passenger section. It has low output power, so it can only fly several meters above the ground for a short time at most. However, it can float 10 centimeters above the ground to absorb the shaking without any problem. I've properly grounded the cart section, so it should look like a normal carriage from outside.

The coachman's box and the passenger section are completely separated, so the member of the passenger's seats and the coachman's seats alternate every two hours. Right now Tama is the coachman with Lulu in the coachman's seat. Nana and Liza are riding horses fully armed, running side-by-side with the carriage.

As expected of the desolate highway, we met monsters several time, but since they were just small fries, they were easily eliminated by Liza's spear thrusts, and Nana's nature magic arrows from afar. I was surprised to see Nana who had become able to simultaneously fire five magic arrows at once before I knew it.

We could see Taltumina the trade city on the evening of that day. This city is in direct control of the king, just like the labyrinth city.

Just like the duchy capital, neighborhoods overflow on the outskirts of this city.

Outside the city's rampart, I see a long line and line of people and carriages that have been waiting for their turn to enter the city until the evening before the gate close.

Despite getting involved with annoying things like dueling with another noble since I couldn't cut into the line, we were somehow able to enter the city before the gate closed.

Good grief, please stop the childish-like thing.

◇

Since inns that are too high class refuse to let anyone beside humans stay there, I ask the gatekeeper to refer for a high-grade inn that allow demi-humans to stay.

The inn certainly has refined interior, and the room is also spacious, but I don't like the superficial attitude of the clerk. We'll stay here today, but it's going to be at different inn next time.

"Really, who does he think he is saying things like 'sleep on the floor since the fallen hair of the beastkin will dirty the bed'!"

"It's terrible."

"I express dissatisfaction."

"Mwu."

Arisa and the others seem offended, yet Pochi and Tama themselves are--

"The floor is also fluffy~?"

"Arisa, you're going to get hungry if you're mad desuyo?"

--they don't even seem to care.

Liza is quite satisfied just for the fact that the inn doesn't make them stay in the barn like slaves.

When I complained it to the inn manager, he normally scolded that clerk, so it doesn't seem to be the policy of this inn. Since Tama and Pochi replied, "Do as you see fit~", "I forgive nodesu." when the clerk apologized, I won't hold a grudge.

◇

I had a slight expectation since the port is the international trading port of Shiga Kingdom, but there were only cheap things from foreign countries, and the goods themselves weren't any different from the port of the dukedom.

The sole result are the fact that equipments made from monster's parts are exported outside the kingdom. It's not too popular in the kingdom, but it seems that they're sold for high prices outside the kingdom.

Seems that there are stagecoaches which depart to the labyrinth city and the royal capital from this trade city at fixed interval. They depart once every three days, but since about five carriages depart at the same time in one go, it's relatively safe in the way. Looks like there are a lot of peddlers who depart by matching their schedule with those stagecoaches.

Since the stagecoach will depart in two days time, the gatekeeper recommends me to stay for another day before departing, but since it'll be annoying to deal with troubles if we're with other people, we keep going.

After we've crossed three mountains, barrier pillars begin to stand out more. It's probably the kingdom's grain-producing region around here. This is the first time in this world I see fields extending as far as eyes can see. Since the climate is warm, they've already begun the planting it seems.

After passing through several towns, we came across Kelton, the intersection city that connects the duchy capital, the labyrinth city and the royal capital. There wasn't any place or event worth mentioning in this city, but it was selling clothes, and cloth that were in fashion in the royal capital, and the soft white bread. Unlike the royal and duchy capitals, there wasn't plentiful enough water to cultivate rice, so their staple food seemed to be wheat, or rather bread.

Since there are villages that have windmills for milling the wheats, the scenery is pretty idyllic. If there were tulips growing, it would feel like we were lost in Holland.

After we've passed through a city called Furusau that's between Kelton and the labyrinth city, the number of villages start to decrease, and the wastelands gradually begin to stand out.

Although the villages that we sometimes came across have windmills and barrier pillars, the soils were obviously barren compared to the villages before.

And then, after we crossed the last mountain before the labyrinth city, it could finally be seen. Of course I'm the only one that can see it from this distance. Even though the area beyond the mountain is big enough to fit a (Japan) prefecture, there isn't any village until the labyrinth city. Looks like there are several rest areas that looks like bus stops built on the highway, one every few kilometers. I stopped by one of those rest area once, but it was just a simple building to keep out of rain and wind with an almost dried-up water well nearby.

"Sand~?"

"The wind is gritty nodesu."

From the area after the mountain, the wind has yellow sand-like small sands mixed in. Since there's a vast desert beyond the mountain range that's beyond the labyrinth city, it's probably blowing from there.

For the sake of Lulu's beauty, I use [Air Control] to prevent the sand wind coming near the area around the carriage and the horses. Of course, I make Liza and Nana to move near the carriage.

Although it's a wasteland, it's not like there isn't any plant growing. Not only weeds, there are also short bushes growing sparsely. There's also an unusual one among them. It looks like a cactus, but I wonder if it's really a cactus? According to the AR, it's called labyrinth cactus, so it seems to really be a cactus.

When we've come closer to the labyrinth city, I can see several holy stone monuments like the ones I've seen near the Seryuu city labyrinth, built on regular interval. Countless number of them are built perpendicular to the highway. I see from the map that the holy stone monuments are built until the mountain range before the desert in semicircle shape. It's written in the traveler's journal that the labyrinth is restricted and unable to extend to the kingdom thanks these holy stone monuments.

I can see a jet black mountain beyond the labyrinth city. According to the traveler's journal, there seem to be a labyrinth below that mountain.

On both sides of the city's gate, there are stone golems in the shape of Nio (the two guardian deva kings) with grim face standing. Either of them is a level 40 strong golem. They look like marble golems from outside, although it's probably not because they're matching it with the marble gate.

"Giants~?"

"Huge nodesu!"

"Announcing that those are stone golems."

Pochi and Tama who have put their head out of the window are surprised to see the golems. Come to think of it, these two didn't see the golems in the duchy capital huh. They've only ever seen Living Dolls and the Many-legged Tank Golem in the elves hometown, so this is probably the first they've seen these normal golems.

"It looks quite strong. I'm not confident I could injure it even with the magic spear. As expected, once you've broken its stance with magic--"

I ignore Liza who has naturally begun to think of the way to defeat it.

"It was far~"

"We've finally arrived haven't we."

Arisa and Lulu who are in the coachman's seat are having moving impressions.

"Now let's go, our fights begin from here on!"

Please stop it with the aborted END-like proclamation.

10-4. Explorer Guild

Satou's here. I wonder why are memberships have so much pressure on the wallet. I remember that I was able to narrowly get by when I've become a working adult, but there were a lot of time when my wallet ran out of money during my student days.

◇

"It's a big silver coin nanodesu."

"Medal~?"

"Yup, I've got it from Giril."

"Nn, Medallion of Attestation."

Giril said the same thing too if I'm not mistaken. He gave this to me when I got to borrow his mansion that's on the labyrinth city.

"Giril, mean~"

"Yes nanodesu. He didn't let us enter his home nodesu!"

"He wasn't being mean. I was making some dangerous drug in that mansion, so I asked him not to let Pochi and Tama in for your own safety."

It was about when I was making the sleeping drug for the jellyfish back then. That reminds me, I've forgotten to made up to Pochi and Tama since various things happened then.

Arisa is banging the coachman's box ceiling.

Be moderate with your excitement okay?

"Kya."

"Hey, it's a bit serious."

The carriage makes a sudden stop as Lulu screams shortly. The front gate ahead has become noisy.

I peek outside from the carriage's window, the golems on the gate have moved several steps ahead their original locations and kneel down with one knee taking retainer positions. Oh, it's a fantasy-like scene.

『Master, we have awaited for your return.』

『Master, we congratulate your safe return.』

The voices are echoing on the surrounding. Voices were coming out of the medal.

"Don't tell me, this is the reason?"

"Nn."

Mia takes the medallion from me and holds it overhead toward the golem.

『I am acting for the master. I am happy for thou greetings. However, thou duties are important, thus swiftly come back to it.』

『Acknowledged.』

『Acknowledged.』

Mia spoke to the medallion, replies came from the golems, and they went back to their original pedestals.

"You've done well to know that."

"Nn. Aze taught me."

If possible, please tell me so before the golems moved. Giril didn't tell anything beside that it was the key to the mansion, so he probably intended this to be a surprise. He's an old man that's playful in some strange point.

◇

"Did you see? The gatekeeper golems kneeled before me!"

<TLN: She's using "warawa" to refer herself.>

"Ohii-sama, raising your voice that high is unbecoming of a lady."

I heard such conversation from the white luxurious carriage that had stopped in front of us. According to the AR, she's a princess of Norooku Kingdom. She's of the same age as Lulu. She's not beautiful, but she's a cute girl with light brown hair. She's wearing expensive-looking silk clothes. Looking at the map that I've photographed from the Marquis Lloyd's mansion back then, Norooku kingdom seems to be further north of Eluett Marquisate that's directly north from here. It's acting as the buffer zone to the Saga Empire.

Since I don't want to get involved with them, we quickly line up on the queue to enter the city.

The soldiers wearing red hard leather armors in front of the gate are checking the IDs of people who are entering the city. Looks like they're checking the cargo of merchants, but it's relatively lax. There is no tax or custom to enter unlike with other cities. Hence the queue is short, and we should be able to enter the city without using the noble privilege.

"Welcome to the labyrinth city, Selbira, Noble-sama. Excuse me, but please show me your ID."

I show the humble soldier my ID plate.

However, how did he know that I was a noble.

"Please excuse me, Chevalier-sama. Is this your first visit to Selbira?"

"Yes, it is."

I inadvertently used polite speech toward the courteous gatekeeper. Nina-san would have scolded me not to use polite speech toward subordinates if she heard it.

In summary, the gatekeeper told me that there is no prohibition for items that can be taken into Selbira, but there are various items that cannot be taken out of the city. Especially taking out magic cores without authorization is a serious crime, he warned me. In addition, it seems that carrying out monster meat and poison taken from monster's poison gland is forbidden too.

"And also, even though this isn't a prohibited matter, the stalls around the west gate only sell food made from monster meat, so it's better for you not to eat them even if they smell good."

We enter the city with such advice as the last one.

Just like the other cities, there is a 100 meters wide open space right after the gate. But, the one thing different is that's there is no main street that goes through the city. According to the traveler's journal, this city is build with monsters invasion in mind, and the streets of this city are configured like a maze in order to prevent the invading monsters reach the downtown. Due to that, there are a lot of people who get lost, even the ones who have lived here for a long time.

I change place with Arisa in order to guide Lulu.

"Lulu, I'm going to change with Arisa, so please stop the carriage."

"Yes."

"What's wrong? Do you want to sightsee from the special seat?"

I receive Arisa who presents both her hands, and put her down to the ground. She doesn't sexually harass me like usual today. Apparently, she's too excited to do that.

"Hey, first let's go to the guild and register as adventurers!"

Shouldn't we get an inn first?

Moreover, it's explorer, not adventurer.

"And then, and then! First we're going to register as F-class adventurers!   And then, an unpleasant key adventurer will pick a quarrel with you, 『This isn't a job for women and children y'know?』, then you easily beat him up!"

I don't think there's a reckless guy who will pick a quarrel with a noble.

Moreover, F she said. It's not like alphabet is not known, but honestly, it's a minor letter set, so I don't think they're using it.

"Then!   After attracting attentions, the newbie who has entered the labyrinth produces an unbelievable results, and the receptionist onee-san gets drawn to him."

What would you do if she does.

"Then, a rare or peculiar species is found among the result, and you get called to the guildmaster room and specially ranked up to C or B rank in one go~"

The youth troupe is clapping their hands undivided toward Arisa who's rattling on with rough breathing while staring at the air. Lulu is having small claps soundlessly with a warm smile.

"Master, if we're going to the guild, should I ask the gatekeeper the way?"

I tell Liza who has gotten off the horse that it's alright.

Even without asking, the three-story white stone building in front of us is the Explorer Guild.

It can't be helped, if we're going to the inn like this, the excited Arisa will attack me. It's still morning anyway, I decide to go to the Explorer Guild ahead.

◇

I tell Lulu to bring the carriage to the parking lot behind the Explorer Guild.

A guild worker who seems to be the horse caretaker guides the carriage to an free space.

"I'm going first~"

"Wait~"

"Nanodesu!"

"Sly."

Lured by Arisa who couldn't keep calm, Pochi, Tama and Mia ran like, ta-ta-ta, toward the front door. I leave the horses that have been dismounted to the little child-like girl, and tell Liza and Nana to go ahead.

Looks like the coachmen of other carriages are staying.

"I'm sorry, we've come here to register those girls. Can I leave the carriage to you for a while?"

"Yes, Shire. Sire."

The little girl casts her eyes down while turning red as she seems embarrassed. I pat her head lightly, and asks, "Please take care of it okay." I'll give her some tips later.

I go together with Lulu to the front door of the Explorer Guild.

The inside is nice and cold, wonder if they're using cooling magic.

The floor is using marble, and it feels like a lobby of some kind of a big company.

There's a meeting booth-like place on the right side after the entrance, guild staff-like people and merchant-like people are negotiating there.

In the interior, there are bank-like counters, and only two among the eight counters that have receptionists. The receptionists are only a career woman-like woman on her twenties, and a handsome man who's over thirties.

Somehow, Arisa and the others are talking with the woman. Did she not like a man over thirties even though he's handsome. Since there's no other customer, the male staff is looking at Arisa and the others with a warm smile.

"Quickly, quickly!"

"Master~"

"Here nanodesu!"

"Here."

I go to the counter where the noisy little girls are calling. The staff onee-san is smiling wryly.

"Nice to meet you Chevalier-sama. Please allow me to be the one responsible today. My name is Kena. You're going to register for this occasion right, but is it going to be the normal registration? Or is it going to be the special registration?"

Now then? I've never heard such thing from Sir Zotor and the explorers whom I've gotten along in the duchy capital though?

"What's the difference?"

"For special registration, the explorer ID you're going to get is the golden plate one from the beginning. Of course, the charge will be different than the normal registration, but it's a magic tool that sends signal of its specific location at fixed intervals. When you're entering the labyrinth, you have to write down the planned return time of your exploration, and if you haven't returned after the grace period, the rescue team will rush to the place where that signal is sent."

Something like specifying location, no thank you.

Moreover, rather than rescuing, I feel that it's for collecting mementos of the dead.

"Since I'm not planning to go that deep, the normal registration please."

"Yes, I understand. Then, please write everyone's name here."

I was going to take my ID from my chest, but is it unnecessary?

"You don't need the ID?"

"Yes, it's fine with the name only for your first registration. Although few, there are some explorers who register with alias or house name."

Fumu, looks like the management is loose. Even though they're letting people in to the place that's like a national mine that produces resources, is it fine without control?

After we have told her our names, she hands over wooden plates with strings attached. The wood plates are drawn with 3 digits, 2 digits, and 4 digits numbers. Of course they're not arabic numeral, but numeral that Shiga Kingdom uses. As for our plates, the first five digits on our plates are the same, and the last four digits are in serial. Apparently, the first three digits, and the two digits are for years and months respectively.

"These wood plates are going to be your IDs for the time being. Wood plates are mark of apprentice explorers, after you've brought back five magic cores from the labyrinth, we're going to give you the true explorer plate of Bronze."

There are five IDs: Wood, Bronze, Red Iron, Mithril, and Gold. It seems that the Red Iron plate is given to main explorers who can collect several magic cores monthly, and the Mithril plate is only for first-class explorers who have defeated the Floor Master. Looks like Gold plate is only for wealthy people like nobles or someone who has paid great amount of money.

"Hey, can we enter the labyrinth once we get this?"

"Yes, it's alright."

The female receptionist answers with a smile to Arisa's question, and gives a warning to Arisa and the others.

"However, do it after you've straightened your equipments okay?"

"Ye~s!"

"A~ye"

"Yes, nanodesu!"

"Nn."

Continuing after the excited voice of Arisa, the excited voices of the youth troupe resound in the guild.

Now then, shall we enter the labyrinth.

10-5. To the Labyrinth

Sato's here. In a game, due to item limits, it was often the case that I had to tearfully throw away the items I acquired during a quest. I miss having to worry about which to keep and throw.

◇

"Ooh! Why didn't you peek at me changing."

Not peeking at someone's changing is quite the natural thing to do, yet she's calling it bad.

Arisa and the others who have finished changing go down to the lobby in the first floor. There is no bar-room in the first floor of this inn. It's a high-class inn as even this lobby need separate payment to be used. They serve tea that's as good as the one Lulu makes.

This inn is located behind the Explorer Guild.

I actually wanted to go to the mansion that Giril had referred, but since I didn't know if we could immediately stay there, we got ourselves an inn to keep the horses first.

By the way, about the magic tooled carriage, I switched its appearance to look exactly like a normal carriage when the stable boy had left the place. The dirtiness are slightly different, but since I've made use of Evidence Destruction skill, it's probably going to be alright.

"Now then, shall we go."

"Master, it is presumptuous of me, but you should wear some armor."

"Reporting that equipments are important."

"I'll be standing by today. I have Nana and Liza to protect me."

This robe is made of Yuriha fiber, and I've used the whale leather to make the mantle and the boots, so most attacks shouldn't be able to get through it.

Just in case, I pick up the fairy sword that's leaned on the sofa while I'm wearing the thin gloves.

Since it seems that there is a carriage that goes from the front gate to the west gate every two hours, we take that to go there. Originally we should've waited for another hour before it departs, but since the passengers have reached the quota that is eight, it's going to depart just like that. It's quite flexible huh.

"Ehehehe~ this is my first real labyrinth. It must be different than the Spriggan's trials."

"It's completely different~?"

"It's not a playground like that nodesu! It's a true battlefield that makes your blood boils nanodesu!"

"You two, you would get hurt in the labyrinth if you're like that. Focus your minds."

"Roger~" "Nanodesu!"

Liza reproves Pochi and Tama who are acting like seniors to Arisa. Mia seems to be tense, she has little to say. Nana is operating normally, so she's probably fine.

"Chevalier-sama, I'm sorry, but would you be willing to allow one more person ride in?"

"Yes, feel free to."

Although it's called a carriage, this one only has seats without a roof, there are four two-seater seats lined up. If someone is as small as Mia, three of them can occupy one seat easily. When we were about to embark, the female staff asked so. Since having another one wouldn't be a problem if Tama sat on my lap, I agreed to it.

"I'm sorry for forcing in. My name is Gina, I'm a daughter of Chevalier Daryl.

"Nice to meet you, I'm Chevalier Pendragon."

It's a girl around 16 years old who's equipped with a dark brown hard leather armor, a round shield and a flail. She's about as tall as me. I don't know the precise size since it's pressed by the armor, but it looks like it can rival Nana's. She has shoulder-length red hair, reddish brown eyes, and she's slightly tanned. I wonder if she's from a knight family, she's level 6 despite her age, and she also has Shield and One-handed Staff skills.

The flail has two iron balls connected with chains to its one meter long iron pole. Those iron balls probably improves the centrifugal force. I've seen it a lot in games, but this is the first time I do in this world.

◇

Gina seems to hate, or rather, be afraid of demi-humans, she doesn't seem like she wants to sit beside Liza and the others, so she's sitting between Lulu and Arisa. Isn't it cramped?

"Gina-sama, are you an explorer perchance?"

"Umu, I've become one just now. There are people from my town that are also explorers, so I'm going to look for them near the west gate and then go tackle the labyrinth together."

Arisa talks to her in polite tone. Lady Gina speaks like a knight, I don't know if it's by nature or if she's acting it.

I feel slightly odd with Arisa's tone, but since she's also acting like that with the hero, I leave it alone.

After leaving the quarter where the riches live, we've come to the wonderful street that seems to be the pleasure quarter. The calm atmosphere of the city up until now changes completely, engendering vulgar atmosphere. Although the beautiful women from the multi-story buildings aren't particularly waving their hands, I wonder what's with this excited feeling. I feel like I've understood Arisa a bit for looking forward to the labyrinth. Of course I don't say it out loud.

After leaving the pleasure quarter, we come a narrow aisle filled with small shops that are full of clamor. Armed men and women who seem to be explorers are having negotiations on those shops.

"Uwah, everyone is wearing gaudy armor aren't they~"

"Gaudy gaudy~"

"They're like Tori-san nanodesu."

"Kabuki?"

Hero Daisaku, what did you teach to the elves hometown. Moreover, Arisa, your true self is showing.

Nevertheless, those armors are probably made from monster parts, but I wonder just what kind of meaning do those pointless looking ornaments have? I guess it's for menacing things?

Still, equipments of explorers sure are peculiar. The equipment of the explorers who have participated in the duchy capital match are normal in comparison to these. Looks like even explorers know TPO.

<TLN: Time Place Occasion.>

There are as many young people as there are people with mysterious equipments. There is someone who's wearing sewn wood block as armor, or people who have stone axes, or black stone spears. The equipments of the magic hunters in Puta town were more normal.

◇

We get off the carriage in front of the Explorer Guild of the west gate.

The Explorer Guild here is full of people. I guess the Explorer Guild that's right before the labyrinth is more convenient for them.

"Yo', the newbie explorer noble-sama over there. How 'bout it, do you need the labyrinth map? It's three silver coins."

The market price is one big copper coin. Even ripping-off has a limit too. Lady Gina beside me is astonished, "Is it that expensive."

The map shop man seemed to think that I, who didn't falter even after hearing silver coins, to be an easy target, he tried to promote it further. Let's ignore it, and haggle it down first.

"I'll buy it for one big copper coin."

"Oy oy, ain't that too much of a beating?"

"I don't particularly need it if it's more than that."

"Wait, I'll give you for one big copper coin especially this time. We're selling the most accurate labyrinth map 'round here. If this map is useful, please buy from us again by all means."

I exchange one big copper coin for the map. 'First area' is written messily on the edge of the map that's drawn with it. The map is full of strange lines and symbols, I don't know how to read it.

"How do you read this?"

"That's another big copper co--"

"This much, include it in the fee earlier."

The small man was going to snatch more money, but I covered his words, and coerced the service. Looks like they're various trial-and-errors for depicting the three-dimensional map in a plane paper.

"What is this symbol?"

"That's a sign monument."

Summarizing the small man long-winded explanation, sign monuments are something that the olden days explorers have set up in the areas that have been completely explored, they're built on a fixed interval in the labyrinth. Three information, [Area Number], [Distance from Entrance], and [Serial Number] are carved on these monuments.

It has one more important function. It glows red when monsters are approaching, and blue when it's people. It's to prevent friendly fires between explorers in the dark labyrinth.

"However, young master. Even if it's glowing blue, don't let yer' guard down eh?"

"Why?"

"There are these thieves called Lost Thieves who aim for the explorers who have hunted monsters."

I see, there are those kind of guys in MMOs with PK too.

"What should we do if we're attacked by those guys?"

"That's, difficult to say."

If the other party attack first, you're free to either kill them, or sell them off as crime slaves, but it seems that it's hard to tell them apart if they pretend to be some friendly common explorers. Thus, if you meet other explorers, you have to be cautious and keep some distance away from each other, unless you're acquainted with them.

However, putting aside Arisa and me, I think it's hard to know if the other party has a criminal record or not. It seems that it can be judged with the Yamato stone at the entrance of the labyrinth. In case you catch them before they kill someone, there are staffs who have Mind Reading and Authenticate skills standing by who will judge for it it seems.

Since Arisa and the others have become impatient, let's put off the information gathering for now.

I got more information that I had thought, so I secretly gripped him with one big copper coin.

◇

Since lady Gina said that she was going to look for her acquaintances, she went to the Explorer Guild building, and we parted way.

The west gate seems to be normally shut, unlike the eastern gate.

When you show your wood ID to the gatekeeper, they open the gate for a bit. Being the gatekeeper here seems to be quite difficult.

When we get close to the west gate, children who are wearing short clothes approach.

Are they beggars, or orphans?

When I check on it, their occupations are [Baggage Carriers]. There are a lot of girls for some reason.

"Noble-sama, please employ me."

"Employ me, I'm alright with two pennies a day."

"I'm fine with one penny a day!"

"Hey, don't interrupt me."

"I don't need money if you give me food. I'll do anything!"

Uwah, if hero Hayato heard this, he would shout "No touch, Satou!" Liza gently push away the little girl who was trying to grab my clothes with the blunt tip of her spear.

The children inched back slightly from Liza's glare, but they keep promoting on.

Every child is level 1-2. I can't take them into the labyrinth since it's dangerous.

Pochi and Tama look like they want to say something as they seem to sympathize with the children who have growling stomaches. It can't be helped.

I take the children to the shop that's selling grilled skewers nearby, and buy one for each one of them. The skewer seems to be made of monster meat from what the eastern guild people have told me, but since other explorers are normally buying and eating them, it should be alright. Even though the skewer is quite big, they're only one copper coin each, cheap.

"Uwah, it's a labyrinth frog skewer."

"It's a feast."

"Delicious. I'll work hard noble-sama."

"Un, I haven't had feast like this for a long time."

Just what do you guys usually eat.

I've also bought some for Pochi and the others since they look like the want it.

We leave the little girls there, and go to the labyrinth. For some reason the little girls were going to come with us, but I left them since I couldn't let them.

"Little girls are looking here like they want to join the party."

Noisy.

Arisa says something like a system message from some game, but I ignore her.

The little girls were looking so reluctant toward us who had gone through the west gate that was closing, but I steeled my heart and did not go back.

10-6. Passage of Death

Satou's here. When I was playing a console-RPG-like tabletop RPG, there were a lot of quests without completion deadline time. I felt that it was odd as everyone would then just take those quests since they had nothing to lose.

◇

"Ooh! It really feels like the genuine entrance to a labyrinth isn't it."

"Nn."

There's a downward stair beyond the opened gate, and after descending five meters below, we come to a semi-underground passage that's five meters high and ten meters wide.

Looks like Pochi and Tama have remembered Seryuu's city labyrinth, they've encamped themselves on both my sides in silence.

Since the passage has skylight windows on the ceiling, it's sufficiently bright. It's not bright enough to read a book, but it's also not so dark you can't walk without a torch.

The other side of the skylight windows is probably the above ground, I can sometimes see soldiers who seem to be on patrol there.

I don't know whether the passage's way is meandering, or how long until it reaches the entrance of the labyrinth ahead. It seems to be called

[Passage of Death] here, and the labyrinth is still a bit more beyond.

Since I'm free, I check various things on the MAP.

The labyrinth city Selbira has 110.000 people in total. Among them Shiga Kingdom army that's called Labyrinth Area Army is 10.000 people. The army is in the giant fortress to the southwest. The average soldier's level is 8, higher than other territory army. It's slightly higher than retainer knights, so they're probably elites. Since I have a letter from Nina-san to the general of this army, I have to see to it after we're done with the labyrinth exploring.

The army that's in charge of the labyrinth city defense is not this kingdom army, but the army of the present viceroy of Selbira, Marquis Ashinen. I've had some slight trouble with this person in the trade city, so I don't really want to get involved with him. It should be a while before he returns here from the trade city, so my duty should be fulfilled if I just give the house some greeting and passable gift before he comes back. I'll be excusing myself from troublesome things.

Now then, the search continues.

There are unexpectedly few explorers, no more than 5000 people. According to the traveler's journal there are 1000 young people who come here to become explorers every year, so I think this number is too few considering that. Fundamentally, they reside in the western area.

There are about 1000 people who are working as baggage carriers like the little girls earlier. Most of those people are working outside the labyrinth city. Are they working in some kind of public construction since they failed to find job in the labyrinth?

There are 50 people in the labyrinth entrance ahead, I wonder what are they doing?

◇

Four explorers are coming from ahead. Their level are low at 7-9. No, considering levels of knights are around 10, they might be mid-level explorers or prospective newbies. Looks like one of them is heavily injured.

"It smells of blood nanodesu."

"Someone's coming~?"

Pochi and Tama quickly notice the appearance of the explorers from the meandering path ahead.

"Nana, protect Arisa and Lulu."

"Understood."

Is Mia fine. I thought so, but Liza has already moved in front of Mia.

"I am Jeje of『Red Ice』! We have an injured person! Please leave the dispute for later."

A young man who seems to be the leader shouts so while waving his hand. I thought that it was a chuuni nickname, but it seems to be their party name.

I can't see the face of the injured person, but the person's armor is split widely, and blood seeps out of the shirt that's been used to wrap the wound.

"Uuh, that's a really terrible wound..."

"Master."

"Nn, Satou?"

Arisa and Lulu become very pale when they look at the injured person. Mia asks with her eyes if it's fine for her to use magic, but I signal not with my hand.

"I'm Satou, a beginner explorer. Please use this medicine if it's fine with you."

So I say, and hold out two diluted magic potions from the shoulder bag. This should be enough for recovery judging from their levels.

"I'm sorry, but we don't have anything. I'll pay you back when the leader who's selling the magic cores catches up. It's shameless of me, but can I have the medicine beforehand?"

"Yes, go ahead."

Since I originally intended to give them for free, I quickly replied and presented the magic potions to Jeje.

"Huh? Don't tell me that these are magic potions?"

"Yes, that's right. Rather than that, drink it to that person fast."

"Yeah, I'm indebted."

One bottle recovers nearly 60% of the health. I can't see the wound since it's wrapped in cloth, but it should be closed now.

"Then, we'll take our leave."

"P, please wait. We still haven't paid the cost."

"I've got those from someone, so please don't worry about it. We'll meet again if fate allows."

We can't keep loitering here all day, so we part with them. I heard warning from behind, "There's an abnormal outbreak of ants in area 1-4 of the labyrinth, don't get close to it." so I waved my hand to express my thanks. That's just right, let's head there today.

Mia and Lulu are trembling, maybe they're anxious after seeing someone's injured. Arisa's tension has also fallen, but it doesn't seem as bad as these two.

"You two, should we stop today?"

"I, I'm fine."

"I'm fine."

The two force themselves to be stouthearted and walk forward with clenched fists.

If their conditions aren't restored when we get to the labyrinth entrance, let's go back.

◇

There's a big around-five meter tall door at the end of the passage. That's probably the labyrinth gate. A deep red devil's face is embossed on the jet black door.

There's a 10 meter long 5 meter wide counter beside the gate. There are several people who seem to be guild staffs behind the counter, and also four high-leveled magicians who seem to be their escorts.

At one part of the counter, the leader of『Red Ice』and a middle-aged man who seems to be a guild staff are apparently arguing about the price of magic cores.

On the opposite side of that counter, children are sitting down, occupying 30 meters space.

They're human children of around 10-14 years old, the ratio of male and female is approximately the same. There is no slave. Everyone's levels are 1-3. They're wearing short clothes, and sandals knitted from weeds. There are also children who only wears trousers and without sandals. They're all not explorers, but baggage carriers. None has weapons or armors.

"Children~?"

"There are a lot of children nanodesu."

"Mwu?"

Pochi, Tama, and Mia tilt their head together while looking puzzled. I don't think they've arranged it beforehand, but they're doing it splendidly uniformly, inviting a smile from me. Arisa is saying, "I was late." while looking vexed, but let's pretend that I didn't see it here.

Now then, those children lock-on to me with their eyes without even a sound or sign. It's a bit, scary.

"I wonder what are they doing?"

"Their eyes are scary."

Arisa also wonders. Lulu feels that it's spooky, I totally agree.

I was worried that Nana would abduct them since they were all children, but--

"Denying that I'm fine as long as it's a child."

--so she says. She might have her own criteria too.

"Master, the staff is calling."

I didn't notice that the staff was calling me until Liza brought it to my attention.

"What is it?"

"Excuse me, but are you a beginner explorer?"

"Yes, please take care of us from now on. I'm Satou."

"Ara, how thoughtful of you. I think you've already heard it when you are registering, but we will buy the magic cores you get from the labyrinth here. And also, we will be buying monster parts from the notices that are hung on the wall over there, but since some of those applications posters aren't always present, there is no guarantee that they will remain when you've gotten out of the labyrinth so please take care."

I've only noticed it after the staff explains it smoothly to me, but there's certainly a big board that looks like a bulletin board standing, and it's stickied with a lot of posters. Most of the clients seem to be craftmen or stall merchants. There is no request from the guild. There is a blank space on the bottom half of the poster, it's written with symbols that seem to be date and name.

Anyone who aims for the request probably fills the space.

Beside the posters, there are children with slightly better clothes. According to the staffs, there are no small numbers of explorers who can't read, so the children of merchants who can read and write stay here to read aloud or write for them and earn some small incomes.

"I recommend the applications for labyrinth frog meat and shells of insect monsters since they're always present. There are some persons who mistake the labyrinth frog with wart poison frog and carry the meat back with them, so please be careful."

The staff tells me some recommended requests. Since behind me, Liza is nodding while muttering, "That's delicious." she probably knows the difference. She probably remembers about the barbecue party in the labyrinth of Seryuu city.

Right, might as well ask about it.

"By the way, what are those children?"

"Ah, they're children who work as baggage carriers. They're waiting to be employed by explorer parties from there. The children waiting outside change with them every two hours, and they're prohibited to promote themselves."

She added that it's because the echoes on the wall were noisy.

Still, for carrying baggage, isn't it better to employ adults or beastkin rather than those children?

When I was going to ask about it, the labyrinth gate opened, and a 10-person explorer party came out. It's a party with mostly warriors averaging at level 20. The three beastkin among them seem to be baggage carriers.

"Yo, Vena. Sorry for interrupting you, is the request for Grey Spider meat still there?"

"I'm really sorry. The『Owl's Beard』has brought it this morning, so I think there won't be any request at this time."

"Ceh, those guys again huh. Can't be helped, Vena, I'll grill this meat. Oy, you brats, I'll give some to you guys. You can say, "Dozon-sama is cool", or "Thank you Dozon-sama" all you want while you're eating them."

After the bear-like bearded explorer declares so to the children, shouts of joy that split my ears are raised.

Pochi and Tama were also lining up as they seemed eager to eat it, but they came back immediately when I called them. I'd feel sorry to snatch the feast of those undernourished children after all.

We show the gate staff our wood plates one by one, and tread upon the labyrinth. The guild staffs looked surprised toward Pochi and Tama who opened the solid labyrinth door.

Well now? What is it I wonder?

10-7. Labyrinth Exploration

Satou's here. The labyrinth from the classic masterpiece, the one that has been made into its own game genre, seems to impress people. Although, in the other world, it has stronger implication as an American dream than a romance.

◇

"Uwah, this time it's stairs huh..."

"Arisa, maybe it's good for you to start weight training or jogging to build up your physical strength."

"Uy~"

I lightly push the back of Arisa who looks like she's about to cry, and advance on the stair.

There's a broad stair beyond the labyrinth entrance. It's not a normal or spiral stair, but a meandering one. The stair probably has been installed on this place with its broad winding slanted path and high ceiling.

There are crenels along the stairway rails on fixed intervals for shooting arrows below.

They're most likely used to cope with monsters invasions. There is a barbette on the center of every stair step, enshrining artillery wrapped in a cloth. Two soldiers are standing by on each barbette.

They seem to be free as they're playing a board game similar to Shogi.

It's probably better than drinking liquor or dozing off. The soldiers aren't human but beastkin such as wolfkin who look strong.

Since I'm free while we're descending the stair, I try to use All Map Exploration for a bit.

Wide.

Even compared to the withered labyrinth of the duchy capital, it's unbelievably wide.

Even only three areas of this labyrinth can completely swallow the entirety of Seryuu city's demon labyrinth.

The search only ranges to [Labyrinth of Selbira: Upper Stratum], yet it's likely that there are hundreds of areas. Just like the demon labyrinth and the duchy capital labyrinth, the labyrinth has lower stratum that extends underground, there must be at least twice the areas more.

In one area, there are roughly 100 corridors and rooms connected three dimensionally. There are also an area where there is only one room, or one that contains 1000 small rooms only among those areas.

And then, despite such vastness, there are 30 areas which have explorers within. Most of them are in the first area and the seven areas that adjoin it. In the underground, there are around 2000 explorers, 500 soldiers, 300 baggage carriers, and 400 lost thieves. There are also several dozens other people beside those.

Arisa and Lulu have become tired along the way on the stair, so Liza and I carry them. Lulu who's burying her embarrassed face on my back is ticklish. Leaving Lulu aside, I think it's better for Arisa to train her physical strength.

◇

There are many people in the first room of the first area. This room is bright since there are lighting from magic tools-like things that have sprouted on the wall. As for its size, I wonder if it's easier to understand if I say that it's about the size of three standard gymnasiums connected?

All of the soldiers beside the ones on the stairs are here in this room. About 90% of the soldiers are doing practice swings commanded by senior-like person on one section that's on lower elevation. It's not just soldiers as there are also magic soldiers like Zena-san among them, but there are few of them compared to Seryuu city.

However, the [Red Ice] people earlier should have reported about the monsters outbreak, yet they're so carefree. Maybe something like monsters outbreak is just a daily happening huh.

There are also stallholders beside them. I'm amazed that they're doing business in this place.

Most of them are food stalls, grinders, equipment repairmen, or general stores, but there are also some interesting ones.

"The noble-sama over there, would you like to touch someone who bears the『Item Box』gen before you level up? One touch is one silver coin, but if you're lucky the『Item Box』may dwell in your slaves or subordinates you know?"

That seems interesting, but every one of us has already touched Arisa who has [Item Box] herself, so it's meaningless.

"Noble-sama do you carry enough food and water? It's one copper coin a meal. How about it?"

"Noble-sama, do you have the map? We're selling the first area map for one silver coin."

They promoted it as such, but I declined since I wasn't interested. I was slightly interested with the take-away food, but since its ingredients were unknown, I passed on it.

In this room, there are three big corridors that are five meters wide each. There aren't just big corridors, small ones also exist. There are more than 10 of them, but none connects to other area. There are armed staffs of explorer guild before the door that leads to the interior of the main big corridor. There's a spiral stair that leads underground in that interior, and it continues to outside of the map search range. Let's invade it alone next time.

We're walking to the big door that leads to the [Area 1-4] that Jeje of the [Red Ice] earlier has mentioned. The soldiers who had made military encampment by piling sandbags in front of that door also warned us not to get close to area 1-4 since there was a rumor about ants outbreak there.

"It's alright. We're only going to see things today, we're going back after going around the first area."

"Ah, that's fine then."

I tell so to the soldier who's giving us warning, and go through the door that Liza and the others have opened.

◇

When we're advancing through the big corridor, leaving the big door behind, Liza verifies our formation.

"Master, what should we do about the formation?"

"When we're moving, the center is Lulu with Mia and Arisa on her sides, the advance guards are Nana and Tama, the rear guards are Liza and Pochi."

With this formation, we'll be fine even if we get attacked from the front and the rear.

Moreover, they should be able to fight without me, and it might be better if I don't act too overprotective and let them grow up.

"Mia, use『Bubble Searcher』magic, and confirm the frontward okay."

"Nn."

Mia replies Arisa's request in short, and invokes a magic. It seems that they always use this magic first and foremost in the Spriggan training grounds to search for enemies.

This magic produces around 30 bubbles that float in the air. They're brittle as they will break if you just touch it, but you can feel the things around it like feelers. The detection range is only about 30 centimeters from the bubbles, but the bubbles can be separated several hundreds meters away from the user. Moreover, the effect lasts for about 2 hours if the bubble doesn't break, so it's quite useful for exploring labyrinths.

However, its weakness is that the magic will be canceled if the user uses other magic.

"Should I use lighting magic? I don't have light magic skill, but I can do at least that much you know?"

"No, there's no problem even though it's dim, so it's alright."

There are dim lighting equipments on one side of the corridor that illuminate only from knee-high to the ground. That's probably the Sign Monument. Just like what I've heard, its color changes from white to blue when we're approaching.

Moreover, Pochi and Tama can detect monsters and traps, while Mia's search bubbles can detect things that approach from outside their ranges. There are small passageways and cavities and shelters indistinguishable with the former piled with spiderwebs and dust on the corridor's wall that appear at fixed intervals.

"There's something~?"

"I hear sounds of battle from beyond the path nodesu."

"Nn, a battle."

Pochi and Tama noticed the battle ahead, and slightly later, Mia's bubbles seemed to have caught on the battle between six demi-goblins and five explorers 300 meters ahead.

There are air holes on the ceiling of the labyrinth corridors that constantly emit low-pitched noise, as the consequent, it's difficult to sense presences from faraway sounds. In fact, even Pochi and Tama seemed to be slower than usual to notice it.

The explorers and the goblins seem to be in a small corridor branched from the big corridor we are in. They're not too far away from the big corridor. They seem to have noticed us approaching, one of the explorer raises his voice to warn us.

"These goblins are ours. You go over there."

"Acknowledged."

I don't want to distract them too much, so I answer shortly.

It seems to be quite the melee battle as the explorers are hurt equally, even though they're only up against level 1-2 goblins. These explorers are around level 3, so they're probably newbies. Like I've thought, they're all warriors. Explorers that have magic skills are only around 5% of the whole, so they're probably scarce.

There are hardly any monsters in this first area we're in, maybe because there are too many explorers.

There are some corridors where monsters are moving within, but it seems they're not connected to where the explorers are, so we never meet it. After observing it for a while, battles begin in a faraway corridor that's connected with that corridor by the tunnel.

I see, so monsters POP up with this mechanism.

◇

"Enemy coming."

"Insects, three~?"

Yep, correct.

Fly-type monsters came out of the small tunnels around the ceiling. There are three of them. Every one of them is level 3.

"You insects! So I declare."

Responding to Nana's provocation, the flies made nose dive attacks.

Even though this was a commemorative first battle, it's over before Arisa took off the cloth wrapped on her wand. It was settled with Pochi's and Tama's stone throwing, and Liza's spear attack.

"Uu~, the enemies are too weak~"

I comfort the vexed Arisa by slightly roughly patting her head. I praise Pochi and Tama who are wagging their tails, and Liza who looks like it's obvious yet also slightly triumphant.

After one hour, we're getting close to the big junction that connects to [Area 1-4]. We've gathered nine magic cores while passing through several rooms and junctions to here. Since one person should need five magic cores to raise their rank, it will be for two people's shares one more.

We've only encountered fly-type monsters like the ones from the beginning. We also came across normal rats, insects and bats that weren't monsters, but since they wouldn't give much EXP, we left them alone.

A lot of monsters are reflected on the radar at last.

Around 300 ant-type monsters, and 12 people from three explorer parties and baggage carriers are coming to where we are.

10-8. Labyrinth Exploration (2)

Satou's here. I think that positioning is important whether it's in RPGs, War Simulations, or FPS. You really can't make light of terrain effect you know.

◇

"Satou, enemies, a lot."

Please stop talking that way like you hate me.

Slightly after Mia, Tama who's in foremost position seems to have caught on the footsteps' sounds of the explorers.

"People coming~?"

Pochi steps forward from behind, and puts her ears on the ground beside Tama.

"This sounds must be from insects nanodesu."

Covering Pochi's words, Arisa who looks grave asks me the exact number of the enemies.

"How many are coming?"

"Are you asking about the enemies or the people?"

I felt like doing something slightly mean. She replied quickly, "Enemies", so I honestly told her that it's 300.

"Th, three?"

"Master, advising to withdraw."

"Master, I also agree with Nana."

"Nn."

I holds the trembling Lulu on my arms. Everyone has judged correctly and carefully. Muscle brains who would want to fight enemies that are 40 times their number wouldn't be going to the labyrinth after all.

"It's alright~?"

"It's alright nanodesu. It'll be easy if we're with master nanodesu!"

They're here, the muscle brain girls.

Pochi and Tama have taken their curious signature poses. I ask the two while patting their heads.

"What would you do if you're not with me?"

"Of course, run away nodesu."

"Helter-skelter, quick~?"

Oh? They're not muscle brain, but trusting me.

"Yup, that's good. You shouldn't fight enemies three times your number or more even if they're lower ranked than you."

"What should we do when you can't avoid fighting them?"

"What do you think you should do?"

I return Arisa's question with a question.

"Right, I guess make use of geographical advantage?"

"Correct, you should take the position where the enemies can't make use of their number."

"It's the basic when I was solo hunting in net games after all~"

I see, that kind of knowledge huh.

I had only ever fought against small fry that could be killed in one blow when I was solo-ing in the MMOs I played, but various things seem to be different depending on the games.

◇

Now then, although we don't have any obligation to save the unknown explorers, but it's some monsters after much pain. Let's make them into experience points for everyone.

"There are people who are running from the monsters this time, so let's fight to save them."

I propose to go to battle while using an appropriate reason. Everyone immediately replied with their consents.

"Of course, when you're not with me, you should run away at full speed and give maximum priority to your own life okay?"

Just in case, I gave them the warning.

We retreat to the path behind for a bit, and encamp ourselves on the ramp with piled-up debris where it's easy to fight many enemies. Here the rear guards should be able to send magic and long-ranged attack from behind by flying it over the head of the vanguards who are fighting.

The problems are that we can only see 50 meters ahead since the corridor is curved, and we can't lay traps on the passage since there are explorers who are running away toward here.

As an insurance, I invoke [Remote Arrows] and hide them in the shadow of the ceiling. Of course I've properly restrained myself and only created no more than 30.

◇

A party that consist of rabbitkins and ratkins are running from beyond the corridor like literal startled hares. Behind them are party of male humans, and the last in line are a party of female humans, and baggage carriers children, although they still can't be seen.

"Run!"

"Oy you guys, group of monsters are coming y'know."

"If you don't want to get eaten, don't be confused and just run!"

The demi-humans party give unanimous warnings to run while they're passing us on the side. The three of them are level 7-10 warriors.

Next, only three people of the male humans party are explorers, the two men with good physique who follow them are baggage carriers. Those two seem to be slaves.

"Oy, you slaves, if you drop the jar of ant nectar, I'll cut you bastard's limbs and feed them to the ants."

The slaves don't answer to the merciless men and keep running after the men in silence. The explorer man who's rebuking them is level 13, the highest among this group. The two slaves are only level 4.

"Besso. Those『Beautiful Wing』have fallen behind."

"Fuhn, it's too bad with Jenna, but we won't be in the red if we have a jar."

"You're right, let's run while they're getting eaten."

They only glanced to us, and passed by from the side.

The party of female explorers are coming way later after those two groups. Among the four, two are explorers, while the remaining two are baggage carriers. One of the carriers seems to be injured on her leg, and the other one is leading her by hand to somehow pull her.

"You people over there! Run! There's an outbreak of labyrinth ants."

Although the way of talk is like a man, she's a woman. She's in her early 20s, and although she's not a beauty, her face has a certain charm to it. She has a short wooden spear with bronze tip and a wooden shield, she wears an armor that's cotton clothes sewn with woods. I wonder if that armor is popular in the labyrinth city?

"Do you guys have a smoke ball or a flash ball? You'd get caught up."

The other one is a 20 years old beauty-san. Her breasts are slightly bigger than Lulu's, she's a calm looking person with black hair that's bundled on the back. Her name is Jenna-san.

Unfortunately, we don't have the item that she's asking. The fireworks magic can probably act in their place, but it's faster to just use firebolt to burn the ants rather than using that.

The two looked behind beside us and held their breaths toward the baggage carriers behind.

"Iruna-san, help! The ants! The ants!"
"Onee-chan, I'm fine already, onee-chan should escape alone."

The labyrinth ants that are as big as a human are chasing the two who are displaying sisterly love from behind.

I signal to Pochi and Tama.

"Ey."

"Yah."

The stones that the two have thrown get a clean hit on the ant that's going to bite the carrier sisters. The ant who has lost its balance tumbles to the ground and entangles its legs with the other ants. About 30 ants also tumble to the ground in series, and the rush stops. The remaining 270 ants haven't arrived yet.

Of course the serial tumbles are not coincidence. I secretly use [Magic Hand] on the labyrinth ants' legs to tumble them over.

I nod to Liza who's looking at me.

"Nana, provoke them. Rear guards, begin the shooting."

Arisa, Mia, and Lulu; the rear guard prepare the usual Soft Shotguns on the safety zone that is on the top of the ramp.

"You worker ants! I'm telling you to overwork yourselves to death!"

Nana's provocation is working, the ants hostilities turn here--that's fine and all, but please stop with the overwork to death part since it hurts my heart.

After the provocation, the three shot the labyrinth ants with the soft shotguns. Since they're originally weapons for suppressing humans, it give almost no damage.

"Pochi, Tama, let's go."

"Assent~?"

"Acknowledged nanodesu!"

Liza assaults while leaving the usual red afterglows from her magic spear. It's overwhelming that she tramples an ant with each of her blow.

Tama puts magic power into her two short magic swords, and defeats the labyrinth ants in flutters like she's dancing. Against small fries like these, the dual-wielding Tama is the fastest in decimating them.

Pochi has also gotten used to putting magic power into a magic sword, she moves linearly while accurately aims her short magic sword to the gaps on the labyrinth ant's shell, defeating them.

Nana deals with the ants that have gathered from her provocation by using shield bash with her magic sword and great shield. Her strength has been increased by physical reinforcement, she's moving with the goal to push the ants back rather than to defeat them. She's probably learned this way of fighting in the Spriggan trial grounds.

Since the labyrinth ants are only around level 4-6, it seems to be unsatisfactory.

"Amazing, they're easily defeating those hard labyrinth ants."

"The magic earlier might have weakened the ants' defenses."

The two female explorers lend their shoulders to the carrier sisters and carry them here. At first Liza was going to help them, but it looks like she's judged that assistance is unnecessary.

Looks like they see the shotgun attacks earlier as magic. Of course the shotguns don't have defense down effect or anything like that.

"We're saved, noble-sama."

The charming-san who seems to be the female explorers party leader talks to me. We're in the middle of battle, but since there's enough room for it, it's fine. Moreover, I want to ask something. For some reason, everyone who has met me sees through me as a noble in one glance. I want to know the reason.

"Don't mind it. Rather, can I ask something."

"O, of course, I will absolutely reward you when we get back to the town."

"No, you don't have to do that, how do you know that I'm a noble?"

The female explorers look slightly awkward, but then, the charming-san who's called Iruna answers my question. The beauty-san is treating the baggage carrier little sister who has hurt her leg. The baggage on the big sister carrier's back seems to be heavy as she's kneeling on the ground while trying to adjust her breathing and isn't looking around her.

"Because, you're wearing such high-class robe in a labyrinth like this."

I see, so it's the problem with clothes. However, I think it's normal for a magician to wear robe.

"Moreover, you're hanging such expensive looking sword on your waist."

Even though I've properly arranged Nana's and the others' magic swords with plain scabbards, I forgot my own sword.

"Moreover."

There's still more huh.

"Only nobles-sama bring those, maid-san in their dresses, into the labyrinth."

Ah, I've overlooked it since those are their usual attires.

Lulu is wearing maid uniform, and Arisa is cosplaying [Combat Maid] uniform which I've made after getting carried away. Those were equipment that I presented them when they were doing the Spriggan trials.

Their defense powers are higher than even the metal armors that knights wear you know?

While we're having such out of place conversation, Liza and the others are resolutely exterminating the enemies. The rear guard troupe are free after the first attack since they're completely safe.

10-9. Labyrinth Exploration (3)

Satou's here. I've done some explorations in dungeon-exploring game without preparation before, but in real life, the problem with food and water is real and loom over you. Though in the other world, the problem of drinking water can be solved with magic.

◇

There are only 10 Labyrinth Ants (Maze Ants) now from the 32 ants before. Halfway through, some ants that Nana had failed to handle almost surrounded Pochi and Tama, but Arisa and Mia supported with magic from the rear and managed to avoid further problem.

"Tama! I'll make a wall on the left, so attack from the right. Right is the direction with the fork!"

"Aye~"

Arisa's magic, [Isolation Wall (Deracinator)] is particularly effective. Looks like the more advanced version of this magic, [Maze (Labyrinth)] can create isolation walls that form a maze which arbitrary lock enemies within. It seems the magic power consumption for that is quite large, but she's said to me that she'd like to try it when the trailing ants have caught up.

The female explorers party whom we have saved earlier are still around. After those girls understood that assistance is unnecessary, they begun to intently watch the vanguard's battle. Judging from the words of admirations that occasionally leak out of them, they're probably fascinated.

Although the main body of the ants swarm won't be arriving in another 10 minutes, a group of ants are closing in to here from the monster-only passages that connect to this corridor. It's a group with little over 20 ants.

"Rustlerustle~?"

"There are sounds coming from the other side of the wall nodesu!"

Looks like Tama and Pochi have detected the crawling ants in the wall while they're fighting. They've done well to do that while having such intense battle.

"Satou, sign monument."

I look at the place where Mia points from atop of the ramp, the light is flashing red and blue like it's going violet. I wonder if it's reacting to the enemies who are coming from the other side of the passage?

"Noble-sama, that's the sign of the gushing holes creation. Monsters will come out of those holes."

The leader of the female explorer party warned me so.

It's not from the main battlefield of Liza and the others, but around the sign monument behind us. The passage wall that look like stone wall in a glance is thinning out like mucous membrane, turning into small passages.

Now then, I guess I should take care of this one. I draw out the fairy sword and cut the ants that gush out of the wall in half with a single stroke of the sword. I took care as not to cut the magic cores in half.

A small passage has also been created behind the female explorers, and an ant is crawling out of it. I warn them about it since they don't seem to notice it.

"You there, behind you."

"Eh? There's a gushing hole here too! Jenna, let's do it."

"Yes. You two, please get away."

The carrier sisters follow Jenna's words and withdraw to the back.

About this female explorers party, [Beautiful Wings], Iruna the leader is level 8, and Jenna the beauty-san is level 6. The crawling ant is level 5, so they should be able to easily win.

Or so I thought, but they're having a hard fight.

They thrust their short spears while blocking the ant's attacks with their shields, but the ant's outer shell repels the attacks, and they don't seem to give it real damage. They should have aimed for the gaps on the shell like Pochi and Tama do.

Since the ant was showing a sign of attacking with acid toward the beauty-san, I picked up an ant's claw from the remain below my feet, and threw it to the ant's neck to disturb it.

I took out a tongs from the bag, used it to pick up magic cores, putting it into a small bag.

Liza and the others' fights seem to be over soon too. When I looked back at the female explorers after finishing collecting magic cores, they were still in the middle of attacking and defending against the ant, so even though it might be meddlesome of me, I cut the neck of the hissing ant, ending the battle. This much should be normal for a level 30 magic sword user.

I reply the girls' thanks by lightly waving my hand, and then head toward Liza and the others who have finished their battle.

"Master, should I commence the materials collecting?"

"Just the magic cores is alright. The ant's shell is soft after all, so there is no use for that."

"Master, the shell should be usable for making armors or weapons. I believe that the claw should be better suited for daggers or sickles rather than spears since it's slightly curved."

It seems that in Liza's hometown, materials from ant monsters are highly valued for making tools.

Although it's weak enough to be broken by normal iron swords, it seems that there aren't enough material for making equipments since the people here even use wood chips for armors, I guess it might be good if we bring the ant materials to the above ground?

"Meat~?"

"We won't have meat festival nodesu?"

"Let's not. Ant's meat is bitter and it's not delicious. There are some cases where children get food poisoning when they eat it too."

Food poisoning is scary.

I feel sorry for Pochi and Tama who look disappointed, but I'll treat them to some meals that I've stored in the Storage later, so please put up with baked sweets and water for now.

◇

"Noble-sama, here it is."

"Isn't that from the one you two have defeated? If it's for reward, your words from earlier are already enough."

Iruna the female explorer presented a magic core that seemed to have been taken from the ant, but I pushed her hand back.

"Rather than that, you should escape soon. My companion's magic has caught wind of a swarm of maze ants coming here. They will get here in less than a quarter of half an hour."

"Noble-sama won't run?"

"We'll escape after we've appropriately kept them."

I implicitly said that it would be better for us if you escape. The female explorers finally sluggishly got up and begun to escape. I catch sight of the ant nectar jar that the older sister carrier carries on her back. The ants might be chasing after that unexpectedly.

Now then, more than that, let's prepare for the next battle.

I gather everyone and replenish their magic power with [Magic Power Transfer (Transfer)]. It's quicker than using magic recovery potion, and above all, it's free.

While I'm at it, I use [Soft Wash], and [Dry] to cleanly wash off the ant's blood.

"Then, I'll set up the『Maze(Labyrinth)』from here to the corner over there okay."

"Can you make wall that won't let them pass but let our attack pass?"

"Nn~ I do have『Isolation Cage <<Deracinator Jail>>』, but the enemies' attacks will also pass through it, so it's not suitable for enemies that use long-range attack you know?"

"No problem, first, everyone will attack with Soft Shotgun, and Mia will use『Water Screen』to block the enemies' acid attacks."

"Okay."

"Nn."

After the briefing is over, Arisa uses [<<Deracinator Jail>>] to create a lattice. Since it's radiating dim light, I can see the shape of the lattice. Stabs and shots can pass through it, but slashing attacks will probably be stopped by the lattice.

I set up [<<Flexible Shield>>] just in case. It's an insurance for when some acid attacks that pass through the lattice can't be defended by Mia.

"They've come nodesu."

"Everyone take your position~?"

Everyone is readying their shotguns behind the impromptu defensive wall that's been created by piling up the ants' remains with cloth on top.

The large swarm of ants show up from the corner and rush here while resounding their hard legs' footsteps. It's quite intense even though we have the magic lattice. Mia and Lulu have leaned to me on both sides, looks like they're scared. I pat their heads to sweep their worries away.

"Wait a bit more."

The ants vanguard crash into the isolation cage, scattering their bodily fluids. Looks like the vanguard ants can't stand the weight of their friends behind, their health have been greatly reduced. There are black insects squiggling in front of the lattice, it's become a sorry sight.

After waiting for around five minutes, all the ants have gathered in this corridor.

"Shoot!"

"Roger~" "Nanodesu!"

By my command, the seven gun muzzles incessantly rain down countless buckshots. I secretly adjust everyone's muzzle with [Magic Hands] to make it hit as many enemies as possible.

"Nana, Pochi, Tama, put down the gun. Prepare for close combat."

The shootings are finished, and Arisa invokes [Maze(Labyrinth)].

Afterwards, the monster extermination process is as simple as the vanguard defeating ants and then Arisa lets out some other ants. Nana and Pochi sometimes got caught with the ant's attack, but their armor and mantle kept them from taking damage.

The vanguard aren't the only ones busy, the rear guard is also busy. Looks like managing the maze is hard for Arisa. Too many enemies have gathered on one section of the maze, so she's adjusting the maze's path. Mia is working hard to follow up with [Bind Mist] when there are too many enemies, and [Blind Mist] to decrease the enemies' accuracies.

I'm free since I'm only watching everyone, so I use [Magic Hands] to gather the defeated ants alongside the wall.

Since Lulu doesn't have anything to do after shooting the shotgun in the first attack, she's begun to retrieve the magic cores of the ants I've gathered. She's not only wearing mittens, but also an apron and a hood so her hair and clothes won't get dirty while working. I told her to be careful about the acid gland on the ant's mouth so she wouldn't get burned.

After they've defeated around half of the enemies, the vanguards look very tired so it's better if they take a short break I guess?

"Arisa, I want to let the vanguards rest. Do you have enough magic power to maintain the maze?"

"Okay, it'll be dangerous if they become lightheaded after all. I can reduce magic power consumption if I only need to maintain the maze state, so it's alright if I just drink some MP recovery potion later."

"Alright, then let's take a break after they've defeated the enemies they're currently fighting."

"Ho~i."

Pochi and Tama vigorously said, "Not yet~" and "I can do it nodesu!", but they were visibly staggering, so I made them drink water and sandwiches with salted ham and a lot of mayonnaise.

Since everyone is young, they have become like different people just after taking a break and napping shortly for 30 minutes after the meal. Arisa has recovered her magic power after a bottle of MP recovery potion and [Magic Power Transfer], so the second round begins.

It seems that the ants who didn't come here were rioting all over the first area of the labyrinth, but the female explorers party from before had safely got out of the labyrinth.

After the ants have been completely exterminated, Pochi and Tama fall down from depleting their stamina, but since their faces look like they've fully accomplished something, I consider it a good thing.

Since Liza and Nana were also totally exhausted, I decided to rest on the temporary camp at the higher ground where Arisa and the others were positioned. Everyone seems to be really tired as they sleep like a log, I keep the night watch with Lulu.

Nevertheless, everyone has leveled up in one day.

Labyrinths are quite efficient after all.

Author's note: Mia and Lulu have leveled up by one, while everyone else by two levels.

10-10. Labyrinth Exploration (4)

Satou's here. When I'm engrossed with something, I often forget the time. Like when an MMO got a new version, I stockpiled two days worth of food and engrossed myself with the game.

◇

"Nana! Endure it for a while. Pochi, Tama, use Magic Edge! Let's settle it in one go."

"You ivy! Are you a plant or an animal, be clear about it, so I complain!"

"Magic Edge~" "Go~ nanodesu!"

With Nana's provocation, the Thorn Foot rushes by crawling with its octopus-like ivies toward Nana, and entangles her body. She quickly cuts the ivies with her nature magic Sharp Edge-strengthened magic sword, so the ivies don't have any chance to twine around her. Geez, I'd have liked if it was a bit more erotic.

While my mind is in another place, Pochi and Tama cuts the main ivy that's connected to a giant thorn with their magic edged magic swords.

Arisa pierced the bump part of the Thorn Foot's head with her [<<Dimension Cutter>>], severing half of the bump.

Lulu who's beside her fires a big caliber magic bullet from her magic gun, completely blowing away the half-torn bump of the Thorn Foot.

There, Mia demonstrates the effect of [<<Water Shredder>>], shredding the monster's rind by making use of the body fluids that flow on its surface.

Lastly, Liza drives her magic edged Spiral Spear Attack on the legs-like ivies of the Thorn Foot, finishing it off.

"Big victory~?" "Nanodesu!"

I clean everyone who's raising cheers of victory with life magic and heal them in one go with [Aqua Heal]. I leave it to Mia to heal injuries during battles, but it's my job to heal injuries after the battle is over.

They were fighting against a level 30 Thorn Foot this time, but they were able to reliably beat it.

This is the area 1-4-9-17 that's overflowing with plant-type monsters. The name seems to be like this since the place you end up in can differ even if you're in the same area depending on the course you've passed through. Since it's long, let's just call it area 17. In here, plant roots that are hanging on every room emit light so it's bright. I tried cutting those plant roots before since I was curious, there were light fiber-like things in its cross-section. The natural light fiber roots and stalks must have brought the light from outside.

Due to that reason, there are a lot of plant-type monsters in this area. Various enemies have attacked us, like the walking ivy monster like before, a big tree monster which fires durian-sized acorns from its cannon-like part, a walking corn monster that rapidly fires its thumb-sized kernels like a machine-gun, or carnivorous plants that send out their slime-like mucus feelers to predate upon us. Any one of them is around level 20-30.

One interesting monster is called [Walking Bamboo (Ugi)], they look exactly like a bamboo. You can extract green-tea colored sugar by processing the fiber of this monster's main body. Furthermore, its leaves are raw material for potion stabilizer. The ivy of this Walking Bamboo (Ugi) and the Thorn Foot that we've just hunted now are material for making intermediate potion. Since the ivy would start to contain toxic after it's left to decompose for a few days, I compounded it by following the instruction on the documents of the elf alchemist.

I can see demi-goblins and herbivore monsters sometimes, but since low-leveled monsters are just a hindrance, I exterminate them with Remote Arrows.

There is no one in this area besides us, partly because area 9 is infested with small insect monsters and slime monsters that especially use poison, disease and paralyze inducing attacks, on top of the area being a traps heaven. It seems that even for the past explorers, hardly any have come to this area, there are only around 20% of the sign monument compared to the other areas.

◇

"Alrighttt! I did it! I've leveled up to 27 from just now!"

"Nyahaha~?"

"Did it nodesu!"

"Self-conceit is prohibited. This is the result of master being here."

"Affirmative. It is thanks to master."

"Of course I feel thankful. Other enemies don't come when we're hunting one, and convenient enemies quickly come right after the break, it's a program that will even freak out an efficiency freak."

I take no notice to Arisa's subtly impolite praise.

We walked slightly further in since the enemies were too weak in area 1-4 where we fight the ant in the beginning as it wouldn't have become a training for everyone. Thanks to the suitably strong enemies in this area 17, it has become an efficient level up training. I'm concerned with Arisa who was lacking in stamina, but according to the person herself, it was because she had raised her stat to be oriented toward being a magician. During the (stat) adjustment on level up, she had raised (her other stats) to be at standard level so she had somehow resolved it. I'm quite envious that she can arbitrary allocate her stat points.

Since this place (the labyrinth) has night and day cycle, and the ground looks like bare soil, it doesn't feel like underground. Moreover, there are water sources, and the air don't get muddied even if we cook since there are air vents high on the ceiling. It's probably the best place for camping and hunting.

Since I could easily split groups of monsters by using earth magic to control the bare soil, it was easy to make only one monster could fought everyone at a time. The reason why Arisa didn't use her space magic to split monsters was because it seemed hard for her to use space attack magic while fighting against higher-leveled enemies.

"Come to think of it, a few days have passed already, is it alright for us not to return to the city yet?"

"We have a lot of water and food, so it's fine isn't it?"

Four days have already passed. We've only raised 2-3 levels each day, but since we've leveled more than 10 levels since our entry, the result is quite good.

The big one is particularly Lulu who has gained life magic and nature magic skills, and Mia who has acquired Spirit magic skill.

Arisa has also acquired fire magic skill when she's gotten her space magic skill to level 8. Apparently, the required point to level up to level 9 and more was too large, it almost made her heart broke she got something else. She picked fire magic that's good in battle since she could use advanced level magic the way she is now.

According to Arisa, body reinforcement magic of fire magic creates the energy by burning fat in your body, so it's good for diet. She boasted that it was something that the elves had taught her.

As far as my analysis goes, it uses nothing but magic power so the body fat things must be the elves' joke. I failed to mention it to her since she looked too happy, but I have to tell Arisa before she begin overeating.

◇

Since we had already annihilated all the enemies in this hall, we went toward the log house that we had been using for the last four days in order for having dinner.

The log house that was made from plant-type monster materials originally only had a living room, but it was added with more rooms and got improved little by little every day. Right now it has become like a villa which has a living room, a dining room, a kitchen, a bathroom, and a workshop.

We're growing tomatoes and medicinal plants on the patch of soil in front of the villa. Let's plant all sort of plants like flowers, soy beans and potatoes the next time we come here.

This hall is located in a place where there are watering hole and air holes, gushing holes can't be formed here. There are three passages on this hall, but I've put up doors with magic keys on each end of the passages, and left threefold traps there. Since even Tama has given up canceling the traps halfway through it, it's probably enough for preventing crime. I've made it to be able to be unsealed with authentication magic tools and passwords since it would be troublesome to go in-and-out otherwise. I've included simple version of barrier pillars on the doors in order to prevent bodiless-type monsters intrude.

"I'm home."

We enter the log house while unanimously saying so. This log house is installed with scarecrow series surveillance mechanism that will send alarm [Signal] when they discover an intruder. There are abundance of mana in the labyrinth, so I made use of the jellyfish's feelers to gather mana for the magic power needed to power the surveillance and alarm mechanisms.

I think the doors and the traps from earlier are enough, but just in case.

"The hot water have been boiled."

"Yeah, I'm going."

Since Arisa has called, I put the blueprints of the bronze Living Armor for guarding this villa on top of the sheet, and head to the bathroom.

Recently, Arisa who has learned the fire magic does the heating. At first the bathroom was partially destroyed by fire since she made a mistake during the heating adjustment, but she's become able to reliably do it now.

"Everyone is already waiting, undress quick quick~"

Since it was troublesome to make the changing room, undressing is done in the living room. Everyone will get caught up in Arisa's bad influence if I'm too tardy, so I use quickdress to change into waist coiled with towel style and enter the bathroom.

Everyone who's in one-piece yukata like Arisa's wearing is waiting in front of the bathtub that's made of cypress-like wood. I don't think that I must be the first one to enter, but since Liza and Nana were insisting, "The first bath is for master.", me entering first has become the custom.

After Liza and Nana pour hot water from both of my sides, I set foot into the bathtub. I slowly lean my back on the bathtub's edge, and relax my mind and body with the hot water that feels just right.

There are a lot of spirits in the watering hole here. I don't know whether it's because they're the prey of the monsters, or simply because it's the gushing point of an earth vein. Just by submerging in the hot water, I feel that my body feels light like it's being massaged, the spirits might be massaging me unexpectedly.

While I warm my body, I'm washing the back and hair of the youth troupe besides Arisa. I also washed Lulu and Arisa before, but Lulu had become so red it looked like she was going to faint, and Arisa was too excited she got a nosebleed and fainted, so they get left out.

Since Mia who has won the janken for the first player is already waiting with a shampoo hat, I quickly bubble her hair with the shampoo soap. This shampoo soap is something from the recipe I've learned from the elf hometown alchemist, Tsuya-shi. It's not as good as the shampoo from my former world, but it produces more bubbles than a normal soap and it's tender for scalps. I made the shampoo hat for Pochi, but for some reason, Mia and Nana also have become to like it.

After washing the hair of the little girls in turn, I warm up my chilly body in the hot water and count to 100 with Pochi and the others, and then we get out of the bath. I tried not to be captivated by Nana who had her yukata become slightly transparent from the hot water, but it was quite hard.

◇

"I'm thinking of going back to the above ground tomorrow morning."

"Eh~, let's get back after we've leveled up to 30."

"I'd very much like to, but I've only paid the inn for five days, so if we don't go back tomorrow, our carriage and horses would be sold off you know."

I persuade Arisa, the only person who's complaining, by telling her the reason to go back. Putting aside the carriage, I feel sorry if the horses get sold off. The horses are our companions who have accompanied us in the long journey after all.

"Moreover, we can instantly go back here if we leave the carved seal board right?"

That words seemed to be the decisive factor, succeeded persuading Arisa.

Before we go back, I choose the booty we're going to take above ground.

Among the magic cores, I decided to put the large quantity of deep red magic cores acquired from area 17 inside the Magic Bag <<Holding Bag>>, and left it in the log house. I've already used large amount of the small whitish magic cores from the ants and small fries for making diluted magic potions, but there are still more than 100 of it remaining. I put only these magic cores into a small bag and bring them along.

Since everyone will look at us dubiously instead if we don't bring any monster material, I've decided to bring 10 of the ant's breast shells, carapaces and claws each that are in acceptable conditions, and also some labyrinth frog meat. Every one of them had been in the purchase list of the guild.

I remembered something and decided to bring some yellow lizard meat that weren't in the purchase list. They were strange lizards that looked like an iguana with feelers, but they were delicious with chicken-like taste and little fatness.

◇

With [Return] magic, we return to the hidden room in area 1-4 that we've found. Of course I had made sure that there were no monsters or explorers in the room beforehand with [Clairvoyance] magic. Making sure of the situation ahead for teleporting is simpler with this magic, so I use it often recently.

Since I discovered around 30 lost thieves that were approaching like they were enclosing us when we were in a junction of the first area, I dealt with them with three consecutive [Remote Stuns] before they were even in our field of visions. They probably won't die, but since I hit them with 2-5 shoots each, they're probably going to be fainting in agony for a while.

Since I took some detours by using some small passages along the way, we safely got out of the labyrinth without even encountering the fainted lost thieves.

We were meet with a surprise outside of the labyrinth, but the surprising vector seemed to be slightly different than what Arisa had expected.

<AUTHOR'S NOTE>

They seem to be living comfortably in the labyrinth.

The following skills changes are tentative. I might delete them when I make character glossary for chapter 10 later.

●Main Characters Levels and Skills Changes

Arisa...Level 27
Skills:
[Never Give Up]
[Over Boost]
[Self Status]
[Status Check]
[Hide Skill]
[Item Box]
[Space Magic (Lv8)]
[Fire Magic (Lv1)]

Liza....Level 27

Skills:

[Spear]

[Thrusting]

[Heavy Blow]

[Magic Edge]

[Magic Edge Cannon] (new)

[Spiral Spear Attack] (new)

[Flickering Movement] (new)

[Dismantling]

[Cooking]

Tama....Level 27

Skills:

[Short Sword]

[Throwing]

[Two-Swords Style] (new)

[Magic Edge] (new)

[Enemy Search]

[Unlocking] (new)

[Trap Cancel] (new)

[Trap Discovery] (new)

[Horseback Riding]

[Dismantling]

[Gathering]

Pochi....Level 27

Skills:

[Short Sword]

[Heavy Blow]

[Helm Splitter] (new)

[Magic Edge] (new)

[Shooting]

[Throwing]

[Enemy Search]

[Dismantling]

[Flickering Movement] (new)

Lulu....Level 26

Skills:

[Shooting]

[Sniping]

[Self-Protection] (new)

[Life Magic] (new)

[Nature Magic] (new)

[Chanting]

[Marshalling]

[Etiquette]

[Cooking]

[Compounding]

[Service] (new)

Mia....Level 20

Skills:

[Short Sword]

[Bow]

[Water Magic]

[Spirit Seer]

[Horseback Riding]

[Spirit Magic] (new)

[Self-Protection] (new)

Nana....Level 27

Skills:

[One-handed Sword]

[Shield]

[Parrying]

[Provocation]

[Horseback Riding]

[Nature Magic]

[Abduction] (new)

[Capture] (new)

Nature magic:

[Magic Arrow]

[Short Stun]

[Shield]

[Light Boost]

[Signal]

[Sonar]

[Fence]

[<<Floating Board>>]

[Sense Magic]

[Sharp Edge]

[Shelter]

[Protector] (new)

[Fake Patch] (new)

[Magic Shelter] (new)

[(Blank)] (new)

[(Blank)] (new)

[(Blank)] (new)

Name: Satou Pendragon

Race: Human

Level: 34

Affiliation: Shiga Kingdom Barondom of Muno

Occupation: Apprentice Explorer

Rank: Chevalier

Title: Magician of Dining Table

Skill:

[One-Handed Sword] (new)

[Life Magic] (new)

[Nature Magic]

[Evasion]

[Alchemy]

[Blacksmith]

[Woodwork]

[Cooking]

[Arithmetic]

[Estimation]

[Society]

[Heraldry]

Rewards and Punishments:

[Muno Barondom Medal of Blue Gleam]

[Muno Barondom Army Medal of First-class]

[Oyugock Dukedom Medal of Blue Flame]

◆

[Muno City People Medal of Honor]

[Gururian City People Medal of Honor]

[Puta Town People Medal of Honor]

※ Satou's stat is from the exchange column for public status. His original status is concealed.

10-11. The Value of Safe Return

Satou's here. In my primary school days during my visit to my grandfather's house, I took part searching a mountain where a neighbor middle school kid was believed to be spirited away. I can still remember the serious faces of the adults back then even now. That middle school kid seemed to have been playing in the city, and they scolded the kid harshly afterward.

◇

"Should we head back immediately after we have renewed the inn booking?"

"We can't nanodesu!"

"Ara? Didn't you say『I belong to the battlefields』?"

"Walking the horses~" "Nanodesu!"

"Eh~, they're just horses, we can just ask the inn caretaker to do that."

"No good no good~?"

"Arisa doesn't understand nodesu."

"Nn."

I take no notice to the little girls' conversation as my mind is occupied with the thing that's happening on the first hall just ahead the passage.

There are nearly 200 knights in full equipments like they're going on a march. I wonder if they're on a mission to save an important person? Since there are people like a foreign country prince and the youngster an earl house inside the labyrinth, their target might be among them.

Arisa who was running out of breath when she was descending this stair has become able to calmly climb it while conversing. Level ups are great after all.

We enter into the labyrinth gate that Pochi and Tama have opened, going outside of the labyrinth.

There, I see the face of someone whom I didn't expect to find here.

"Viscount Shimen! It has been a while."

"Ooh! Chevalier Pendragon, so you're safe!"

I can guess the current situation while being surprised by the calm older brother of Toruma who's suddenly hugged me. I affirmed that after hearing Toruma-brother's story.

It started from the rumor about some half-destroyed explorers who acquired ant nectar that he heard in a noble-only saloon when Toruma-brother was visiting the labyrinth city to get a hold of rare magic cores the day before yesterday.

When he asked about the detail, he heard that the explorers were saved by a black haired young noble who had an excellent mithril sword and brought along little beastkin girls, and a magic spear-user lizardkin girl, he seemed to have associated them to be about me.

Then, he asked the Explorer Guild about it just in case, and the fact that we had become explorers, went to the labyrinth and had not come back yet came to the light.

At first he requested the Explorer Guild rescue unit to be deployed, but since they persisted that they couldn't dispatch it before the scheduled date of our return had passed, it wasn't going well. Good going Explorer Guild. If they had dispatched yesterday, it would have made many things complicated.

Therefore, he directly talked to the General of Labyrinth Army, borrowed some elites to form a rescue unit, and asked some explorers to become the guide. The viscount himself wouldn't be going into the labyrinth of course, but he purposely came here since he's acquainted with the captain of the unit.

"I'm very sorry for making you worry."

"No, judging from your conditions, I've jumped to the wrong conclusion myself. I'm sorry for making this commotion."

"I already said right, against a magic warrior who can repulse a lower demon, even if the first four area monsters ganged up on him, they wouldn't even nick him."

The knight captain who's wearing a full body armor entered the conversation by saying so. This person seems to be a honorary viscount. Toruma-brother has come to an agreement to deliver some barrels of wine and five sheep to the soldier barrack. I will apologize to the General together with Toruma-brother tomorrow. He told me that I didn't have to go, but as an adult myself, I couldn't exactly say, "Oh is that so.".

The knights seem to be going to eliminate the lost thieves since they've made preparations and all. It's just right since the ones I've knocked down should be still there.

Toruma-brother seemed to be busy, he left a subordinate to deal with the trivial after promising about the tomorrow matter.

The subordinate-san is a 40 years old man with good physique. I wish it was a beautiful female secretary instead.

◇

After parting with Toruma-brother, we go to the purchasing counter of the guild staffs before the labyrinth gate.

"Congratulations on your safe return."

"Thank you."

Congratulations?

I feel that there's something wrong with that, but since it seems like she's blessing me, I thank her.

"How was the result?"

"We've got magic cores, labyrinth ant's materials, and labyrinth frog's meat."

I take them out of the satchel. I purposely did it like this to leave an impression that we are in the possession of a magic bag <<Holding Bag>>. It's better than having them suspiciously think that we have Item Box.

I take out more than 100 magic cores, 10 of ant's breast shell, carapaces, and claws each, and 100 kilograms of labyrinth frog meat.

"T, that's a lot of magic cores."

Just as Arisa's expected, the face of the guild female receptionist is cramping. It seems to be within common sense as it's not enough to create a commotion.

I think it's actually unexceptional considering our levels, but maybe it's unprecedented for first-time explorers since the guild have onlye information about their names. I'm really glad that I've left the magic cores we've acquired from stronger monsters on the campground.

"Are these all Chevalier Pendragon-sama?"

"No, although I don't know if they have purchase request, I have the meat of strange yellow lizard."

I already knew that it had no purchase request, but since the meat is delicious, I've brought it to treat the children who are standing by here. There are only 20 kilograms of the meat, but it should be enough to treat them.

"Strange yellow lizard? Is it that legendary ingredients?!"

"Oy, Huey. Appraise this meat. It seems to be of the yellow strange lizard."

"Is that true. You've done well to defeat such fast running lizard."

Come to think of it, it was trying to run away from Tama's surprise attack, so I caught it with [Magic Hand]. I had thought that its price was too high, so it was a rare ingredient huh. I ask about the prices of the other things while they're appraising it.

The labyrinth frog meat is worth four copper coins a kilogram, so 100 kilograms are four gold coins.

The ant's breast shell is two silver coins, and the carapace is one silver coin. I think the carapace can be used for many things, is there a few demand for it? The ant's claw is quite cheap, 10 of them are one silver coin. It's two copper coins a piece.

"It's the strange yellow lizard without a doubt. It's 10 gold coins if you sell it to the guild. You can possibly sell it higher if you bring it to the city, but in that case, the tax for carrying out will be one gold coin."

I don't particularly need to pay the tax since it can be deducted from the materials and magic cores I'm selling it. Since the market price is 20 gold coins, it's more profitable to sell it in the city even if I have to pay the tax.

As for the magic cores, each one of the 103 magic cores of the labyrinth ants is one copper coin, the strange yellow lizard's core is one silver coin, and the labyrinth frog's core is two silver coins.

The staff-san teaches me how to break down the price of the magic cores.

"These lots of small magic cores are White 9 and Vermilion 1 so they're of the lowest grade. Please note that it's the lowest priced core since there is little use of this low-ranked magic core."

I asked her to teach me the detail of magic core grades.

It seems that the deeper the red color of the magic core is, the better.

There are four colors classifications which are White, Vermilion, Red and Crimson, [White 9 Vermilion 1] to [Vermilion 10] are the low grade, [Vermilion 9 Red 1] to [Red 10] are the intermediate grade, [Red 9 Crimson 1] to [Crimson 10] are the high grade, and above it is the highest grade, [Blood Crimson].

Since the level 30 frog is [White 7 Vermilion 3], while the level 15 lizard is [White 2 Vermilion 8], it doesn't seem that being higher leveled means that the magic core will be better. By the way, the whales' cores are Deep Crimson. I don't have any intention of selling it, but I'm slightly interested just how much is that giant magic core worth.

Since the price of the magic cores doesn't depend on quantity but its grade and weight, the staff-san politely measures it one by one while wiping them. There's a magic tool for this measurement, it calculates the price after you set the value standard on the ballast. It's quite an excellent thing.

However, she's implying that the [White 9 Vermilion 1] magic cores don't have any use, but I've used it normally for making diluted potions, I wonder if there are individual differences?

The guild staff breaks down the total and shows the written blackboard to me.

I've decreased the labyrinth meat I'm going to sell by 20 kilograms.

"Do you agree with this amount of money for the purchase?"

"Yes, good enough."

The deal has been made, and I receive the documents needed for us to rank up from Wood plates to the Bronze plates from the guild-san. Strangely, they don't check whether I'm carrying something out. I wonder if the checking is lax?

I got permission from the guild staffs to borrow the BBQ stove beside the counter. It seems that they're loaning the set and the fuel for one big copper coin.

◇

"Noble-sama, so you're safe!"

"I'm glad!"

The two people from the [Beautiful Wings] called and hugged me. The women seemed to have thought that we were defeated and abducted by the ants. Putting aside the muscle body of charming-san, the soft embrace of the beauty-san is very wonderful.

Since Lulu who's grilling some frog meat is looking here with a complex expression of surprise and reproach, I gently pull the two apart. Arisa and the others were busy ordering the children to line up, so they didn't notice it. It seems I've avoided the guilty festival.

"I'm glad that you two are also alright."

"It's thanks to noble-sama."

"We were really saved by you."

These girls seem to be the explorers who were going to guide the rescue unit. Apparently they received a fine for not only causing trouble for other explorers, but also the labyrinth army. The fine was expensive, so the prize money they got from the quest weren't enough. They were being vague about it, but they probably borrowed money to cover the deficiency.

The children who are treated with grilled meat on wooden skewers come to me to say their thanks, and then get back near the wall to enjoy the food. Arisa had specially told them that I was the one who treated them while she was distributing the meat. Everyone seems to be experienced from the food distribution at the duchy capital, the children line up while keeping the order.

The beastkin girls ate the little of meat that had remained. You girls, haven't you each just eaten 10 kilograms of the meat yesterday?

10-12. Courtesy Calls

Satou's here. Even though I've forgotten about it after I got used to internet payments, formalities are something that take time. Although I understand that it's necessary, it still makes me impatient.

◇

"Heya, I'd like to extend my booking period, is it alright?"

"I-if it isn't Chevalier Pendragon-sama. We're glad to see you're fine, w-w-we can extend the period yes. I'm very sorry, but we're going to clean your room, so please relax yourself in the lobby for a while. Of course we won't charge you the admission fee.

How do I say this, the inn owner looks suspicious.

Right at that time, Pochi and Tama who have gone to see the horses come back.

"The horses aren't here~?"

"The carriage isn't here too nodesu."

Hohou?

Glint, Arisa's and Liza's look toward the inn owner. I'm smiling like a Japanese person would.

"T-the horses are currently being let to exercise on the ranch. Since the carriage was dirty, it's being cleaned in a studio that usually deals with high-class carriages. Of course they're free since it's our inn's service."

I see, he secretly sold them since he thought I had died huh?

"Hou? That carriage is something that I've ordered from the master craftsman in the duchy capital, it worths no less than 200 gold coins. It's not a studio that would damage or peel the paint is it?"

"Y, yes. Of course it is not."

Let's claim 200 gold coins if the paint really gets chipped. That's the actual market price after all.

"Liza, Nana, I'm worried about it so could you go and see the carriage?"

"N, no, you don't need to do that. Everyone must be tired since you all have just got back from the labyrinth. We have just acquired some good lambs, so how about some meal. We'll pick up the horses and the carriage from the store, so please wait for it while you're having the meal, that, er..."

How do I say this, he's too small time. So small I can't imagine he's the owner of this high-class inn. Maybe he's the son-in-law taken by the family, and thus wanted some small sum of money?

"Everyone, the inn owner-dono will treat us to a meal, thank him properly."

I'll make him treat us with plenty of lamb dishes as the compensation for his trick. That much should be fine. The youth troupe thank him unconcernedly. I'm not sure if the owner thinks that his trick has been found out or if he's successfully deceived me, but he honestly treat us with dishes.

The horses and the carriage were safely returned to the inn when we had finished our meal. I guess I'll forgive him since he didn't try to change the horses. I'll treat the horses to some specially-made feed later.

Now then, even though the horses and the carriage have been returned, we still shouldn't stay in this inn for long. I've extended our booking period as intended, but I'll check the current condition of the Ivy Mansion before we dive into the labyrinth next time, and if it looks habitable enough, we'll probably move there.

◇

"What is the meaning of this, Heson!   What's happened to my carriage!   After overcharging it to 300 gold coins, now you're backing off from the deal, what is this."

There are people who don't know TPO out there huh.

I see, so my carriage was going to be sold at 300 gold coins huh. He seems to be quite excellent at overcharging people.

"Baronet Dyukeli-sama, that mistake happened--"

The inn owner draws closer to the old gentleman who looks like a wire. Urged by the landlady, we went to a passage guided by an employee.

I don't intend to thrust myself into an unnecessary trouble, so I come back to the room and take a rest with everyone. While being covered by little girls on the bed, I read the Toruma Memo in the menu.

It seems that he has investigated Baronet Dyukeli too, but as expected, even Toruma couldn't have personal connections with such faraway nobles, there are only two informations written, [A follower of Marquis Ashinen], and [Deals with Magic Tools].

However, there are slightly more detailed information written about the current viceroy of Selbira, Marquis Ashinen. Information that sound almost like he's badmouthing him; like how the previous generation had died unnaturally in the royal capital 20 years ago, or that the current marquis is stingy and like bribe money, or that he's a hen-pecked husband and arrogant.

It's written that Marquis Ashinen will soften his attitude toward someone who's brought him some expensive gift. Since it seems that it's better for the gift to be of the vulgar [Looks Expensive] kind rather than work of arts, let's present him with the gold nude woman statue I've acquired from my duchy capital acquaintance. Since that thing worths 20 gold coins, it should be enough. It's also written that he's into men, but since he likes the macho-type one, I should be safe as I'm outside his type.

I'll bring some presents for the wife too since it's said that he's a hen-pecked husband. According to Toruma Memo, she likes jewelries and confectionery, so I've decided to bring some jewelries I've got from the duchy capital, and some castella. Since hotcakes seem to be all the rage in the duchy capital right now, I choose a slightly different kind of castella.

I slip out of the bed after confirming that everyone has fallen asleep, and ask an inn employee to deliver a letter that contains my wish to meet face-to-face with the viceroy to his mansion. Since I'm scheduled to meet the Labyrinth Army General tomorrow afternoon, I've made an appointment to do this one the day after tomorrow.

◇

"My, you've already collected the needed magic cores quota?"

"Yes, this is the achievement proof I've received from the staff-san on the labyrinth entrance."

"Quite a wonderful result isn't it. Have you entered a labyrinth before?"

"Yes, another labyrinth for a bit."

I make which of the labyrinth vague. She seems to have asked about it casually too, she doesn't seem interested to ask which labyrinth it is.

"Well then, please wait on the sofa over there while for the person in charge that will guide you."

Pestered by Arisa and the others, we went to the east guild after breakfast to raise our rank to bronze. By the way, the breakfast were dried white breads, potage pumpkin soup, and scrambled eggs with thick sliced roasted bacons. The line-up somehow feels like something that have been influenced by a reincarnated person.

We've been guided to another room, and then we submit our IDs from Muno city, and sign the official registration deeds. I checked it with magic perception just in case, but there didn't seem to be any magic-related trap. We were offered to check our status and skills with Yamato stone free of charge for the rank up, but I refused since there was no need to do that particularly.

"What would you like for the party name?"

Everyone began to argue from the words of clerk-san. Since it didn't seem like it would be decided immediately, I asked the clerk-san some time.

"Chevalier Pendragon and His Mistresses."

Rejected.

"Pochi and Master."

"Ara, Pochi-chan, do you not like being together with us?"

"I-it's not like I don't like it nodesu. Pochi and Master and Tama and Liza and Lulu and Mia and Nana and Arisa is fine nodesu!"

"Long~?"

Lulu teases Pochi's verbal slip. She corrected it immediately, but just as Tama's said, it's too long.

"It should be more concise. How about Demon Lord Slayers?"

"Isn't that like a title?"

It'll be troublesome if there's someone who believes that, and most people will probably laugh at us for trying to be like heroes.

"Young Organism Protection Corps, so I recommend."

"Eh~, then we would be obliged to protect the little girls in front of the labyrinth."

"I'd like to at least protect them from starvation though."

Is there no organization or something that distribute food in this city?

"Chevalier Pendragon and His Pleasant Friends sounds nice."

"Lulu, you really are Arisa's big sister after all."

"Eh, Liza-san, what do you mean by that?!"

Looks like Lulu has been steadily dyed with Arisa's Showa power.

"Friends of Fairy."

"Well they are our friends and all~ But it doesn't sound like a party name~"

And, I guess Tama is the only one who hasn't stated her opinion?

"Nn~? Eat Meat Corps." <TLN: "Niku ga tabe tai".>

"Eat Hamburg Steak Corps."

"Eat Roasted Whole Bird Corps."

"Eat Chocolate Parfait Corps."

<TLN: In Japanese, they're all pronounced the same as "I want to eat (corps' name)">

Isn't everyone just mentioning the thing they want to eat while pretending to suggest the party name? But, I'd like to eat chocolate as it's been awhile. I feel that I'd find it if I search around the southern archipelago.

I had a feeling that we wouldn't ever decide on it if it continued like this, so I registered my house name as the temporary one.

"Well then, it'll be complete in three days, so please use these temporary bronze plates until then."

Each of us receives a temp bronze plate that's carved with East-1~East-8.

The official bronze plate probably takes time to complete since it's carved with the owner's name and the party name.

◇

The General of the Labyrinth Army is a middle-aged man with hooked nose who's the very picture of someone from a noble family with his arrogant air. It's the younger brother of Duke Bishtall from back then, Honorary Earl Eltall.

After the greeting, we begin to apologize to him. For the time being, I've brought three kinds of smoked food and the dragon spring liquor as presents. I've also asked the inn to make the liquor store deliver several kinds of first-class liquor in barrels to the soldiers.

"Hou, so he's the outstanding talent who's carrying the future of Shiga kingdom huh?"

I harden a little from General Eltall's words.

I don't remember carrying that future you know?

"That's right. Thanks to him, Muno City which had become the breeding ground of demons was saved, and even the lower demon in Gururian city was destroyed with surprisingly low amount of victim.

His and his retainers' abilities are probably equal to first-class knights' prowesses.

And, in addition to his battle prowess, he's also well versed in magic. He single handedly developed various magic, including the beautiful 『Fireworks』 magic that captivated people's hearts.

Perhaps because of his personality, even among the factions that are spread in my lord's domain, I've never heard any disturbing rumor like assassination's attempt, thanks to his cooking and personality as the lubricants."

Please stop the excessive praises. Poker Face-san is dying.

Moreover, leaving aside the Barondom and Gururian city. What do you mean by lubricant? Have I done something? Let's ask the detail from the viscount later. Were there really factions in that carefree duchy capital.

"If you really can change someone with your cooking like that, I'd like you to do something to that Marquis Ashinen."

"He might be unexpectedly changed you know? His cooking has mediated that Marquis Lloyd and Earl Haku after all."

"What! Those two who are like cats and dogs?"

Which Marquis Lloyd and Earl Haku are they talking about again?

Is it about the predecessors? The two people that I know should be in a really friendly term. They were always smiling after all.

The boy page came while bringing the smoked meat that I had presented on a plate. He had prepared cups for several people. Don't tell me we're going to drink in the broad daylight?

Contrary to his appearance, General Eltall is an affable person.

"W, what's this liquor? Chevalier Pendragon, where did you get this liquor? It's the first time I've drunk this liquor."

"It tastes like Toruma's treasured liquor huh, so that liquor was really something you had brought."

Let's fabricate some story since I can't exactly tell them that it's something summoned by the black dragon's magic.

"That is something I obtained from a merchant called Heiron in the trade port of the dukedom. I heard that it was liquor from some distant land, so perhaps it's from the archipelago or another continent."

I don't know whether it's because they comprehend that excuse, or because my Deception skill is at work, but it seems they've consented. The story flows, and I've been made to promise to give the two another dragon spring liquor later.

If I can get along with the military top position in the place where I'm staying with just one bottle of liquor in ton unit, I've got my money's worth.

10-13. Courtesy Calls (2)

Satou's here. If humans don't have an objective, or rather a purpose, they can't quite work hard at it. Too grand of an objective will break your heart though, so it might be better if you have the short and the long terms objectives.

◇

"My my, bringing such wonderful presents like these, Muno Barondom is quite rich isn't it."

The madam of Marquise Ashinen is looking at the presents from me that are in front of her, [Silk Cloth], [Sapphire Necklace], and [Coral Works] with great delight. I originally wanted to only give her the necklace, but since Arisa suggested that presents would be better if there were a lot, I slightly added it. The coral works especially, Viscount Shimen's secretary secretly advised me that they have a lot of variety on top of being rare in the inland, so it would be easy for the madam to give them to her servants.

I've packed the gold nude woman statue that's for Marquis Ashinen and handed it to the butler. It would have been sold to some merchant if I just gave it to the madam after all.

The madam of marquis Ashinen is an obese woman on her late 30s. It seems the couple have four daughters and two sons, though they're not here. The children are around 10-18 years old, two of the daughters have been married at the duchy capital, and the eldest son is working on the royal castle. Thanks to the madam's machine-gun talks, I acquired various information about the Marquis' house, nobles and the wealthy living in the labyrinth city. I don't feel particularly tired taking the role of a listener since I've gotten used to it during the tea parties in the duchy capital.

"Mother, did you call me?"

"Ara, you're late. How about her higness?"

"O madam! What do you want me for?" <TLN: She calls herself with 'warawa', and as you might've guessed...>

"I'll introduce this person to your highness. He's--"

The two new people who have entered the room are the second 15 years old plump son of the marquis couple, and the foreign kingdom princess whom I saw when I was entering the labyrinth city. Unlike at that time, her hair is in proper drill twin tail style. The silver hair ornament suits her brown hair well. A maid-san with plain face who seems to be the princess attendant follows her from behind. I guess she's the fiancee of the marquis couple's second son.

With the madam's introduction, the second son snorted like he was looking down after hearing my peerage.

"Fuhn, what, he's just a honorary chevalier huh. Making me to specially greet a sham noble who sucks up to mother for her favor, how ludicrous. Can I go back to my room now?"

This second son is just the about same as the Marquis whom I directly met in the trade city back then. He's too straight, he should be more indirect with the insult even if the other party is a lower ranked noble.

"Geritz-dono, aren't you being rude to that person? In our kingdom, we will be acting a bit more respectful even if the other person is a lower ranked noble nanoja."

As for this princess, although her way of talking is strange, she's unexpectedly proper.

The second son quietly cursed the princess, "Acting so impudent despite being a girl" in mutter while leaving the room after getting the madam's permission.

The madam apologized for his remark instead of the person himself. Is she being overprotective?

The third and fourth daughter of the Marquis couple entered in exchange. Gona the third daughter is lightly obese, while Shina the fourth daughter is thin and underweight unlike her sister and mother. Her face also looks somewhat different than the two. The older sister is still 12 years old, yet she's already been decided to marry into the house of a viscount who's their trusted retainer. Shina, the 10 years old little sister is still undecided due to her sickness.

"Excuse me."

The maid-san of the marquis's house came in while saying so. She's pushing a food trolley which has the Castella and blue tea that I've brought as presents.

"My, it's really an unusual cake isn't it?"

"It's soft."

"My, it's melting in my mouth.... What an elegant taste."

"It's a cake that the queen of a faraway elf kingdom eats, it's called Castella."

I'm not telling a lie. High elf-sama did stuff them into her mouth with great relish. Un, let's go and visit her with some castella later.

"As expected of the pastry of the large kingdom Shiga ja. Although the 『Hotcake』 from the other day was delicious, I have never eaten such delicious cake like this before. I also want to make my kingdom become able to have cakes like this freely available ja."

Glad that the princess-sama is also delighted.

The lightly obese third daughter-san has finished eating it in one go and is aiming for her little sister's plate, but it looks like she thinks it's improper in front of a guest, she doesn't seem like she'll make a move. I presented the one in my plate that I hadn't touched to her when the madam turned away her view for an instant.

"You eat it too Shina. It's sweet and delicious."

"Yes, mother."

The fourth daughter who has been urged by her mother cut a small piece of the yellow section of the castella and puts it into her mouth. After chewing it for a while, she leaks out a voice of admiration, "Delicious", that sounds like a cry. Her expression doesn't change, but her pale face has become slightly reddish, so she's probably happy.

The madam asked my purpose for coming to the labyrinth city so I answered, "Explorer". The third and fourth daughters didn't seem to be particularly interested, but the princess bit it.

"Oh! You came here to become an explorer! That's good! I also came here to become an explorer noja. I will absolutely carve great deeds like your country's Ringrande-sama, and become the hero's companion noja."

As expected, I think it's impossible for the princess to become an explorer. Her level is only two, and she doesn't have any fighting skills. She only has the Etiquette skill.

Even though I'd like to tell her some things, for the time let's be polite and only said, "That's quite a wonderful dream."

◇

"I'm back."

"Welcome back, master. I have handed the baked sweets to the butler-san."

I come back to the inn with Lulu who's waiting on the carriage. I had asked Lulu to distribute baked sweets with a lot of honey to the maids. I learned from the duchy capital that I couldn't make light of the servants network, so I gave them extravagant baked sweets as a prior investment. I didn't give them Castella since Arisa advised me to differentiate it with the one for their master.

The carriage passed through the street of the wealthy heading toward the eastern Explorer Guild.

Arisa and the others are participating in a short course that the guild has sponsored. It seems the participation is free. I intend to have Arisa teaches me the content of the lecture later. This short course seems to have veteran explorers teach beginners various things like the way to conduct yourself in the labyrinth, and important characteristics of monsters, and it's held regularly.

The short course is performed on the open space behind the guild. The lecture seems to be quite legit as they put out image of monsters to do it, though I don't know whether it's from light magic or nature magic.

Not only Arisa and the others, Jenna from back then and five other explorers, and also 40 children have also come. The children include both genders, but there doesn't seem to be any boy that's older than 10 years here.

Since it looks like the lecture is over, the staffs distribute wooden tags for participating. I wonder if that's like a completion certificate?

When I was gazing at that somehow, the receptionist lady from yesterday called me.

"Ara, Chevalier-sama. Your vassals took the lecture intently."

She seems to be carrying a large pot out of the guild building. It seems to be hot as she's using dish cloths to hold the pot. She puts the pot on the long table counter that has been prepared beforehand, and calls people who have participated in the lecture.

"We're distributing food. It's Selbira-style Stew today. Line up with your wooden tag."

I see, it's like a school's lunch program. The children who have gathered for the meal end up gaining knowledge about the labyrinth, and as the result, they will probably survive better when they explore the labyrinth. The guild must be expecting that in exchange for the food and personnel expenses, the losses of explorers will be decreased, and the number of the gathered magic cores will be increased, no doubt about it. However, since this course only opens once every five days, and the number of participants are limited, it seems that the children that can come are restricted.

The children received the poured stew with their wooden bowls, sat down on suitable places on the hall and began eating it.

"Master, thank you for your hard work."

"'Elcome~?"

"It's master and Lulu nanodesu!"

The three beastkin girls are also carrying wooden bowls with the stew in it. Since Pochi presents her spoon while saying, "Aan, nanodesu", I eat it. The saltiness is intense, but it seems to be stew with boiled scrap vegetables and some kind of meat inside. I've never tasted it before, but it's probably monster's meat. Frankly speaking, it doesn't taste good.

Although, the only one who has that impression seem to be only me, the children are eating the stew enthusiastically. The expressions on the beastkin girls look complicated, but they're eating them without any complaint.

Arisa, Nana, and Mia are still surrounding the female explorer lecturer and asking her with barrage of questions. Glad to see they're studying hard.

"Sir Pendragon. It has been a while."

"Nice to meet you Sir Pendragon. I am the friend of Gina, the daughter of Baron Keter, Heliona. I belong to『Moonlight』(party)."

Miss Heliona is a tall black-haired woman. Her hair is styled in bob cut, but there's a hair ornament with arranged feathers that make it looks like a peacock on her hair. She's wearing knight-like clothes and pants. Her breasts are small unlike Jenna, but she's a sexy girl with a nice waist line. The [Friend of the same town] that Gina has said in when we meet her is probably this person.

"Sir Pendragon. I'm sorry for my rudeness, but you should wear armor when you're entering the labyrinth. Even magicians wear leather armors before they enter the labyrinth. No matter how dexterous you are, we don't know if any surprise attack come from the surrounding. Don't be careless okay?"

Since Miss Heliona remonstrates me as a fellow explorer, I say my thanks and apology. Alas, we have become famous in the east guild due to a rumor about us getting kidnapped by the swarm of ants. It seems it was particularly known that it was an armor-less noble who entered the labyrinth while bringing some maids along. She's probably avoiding calling me "Fool" instead of "Noble". We should better wear some dummy armors next time.

"By the way Sir Pendragon, I've heard that you have a mithril sword, could you please let me see it once?"

While being bewildered with miss Heliona complete change who's fidgeting like she's going to confess her love, I pass her the fairy sword from my waist.

"Could I draw it?"

"Please."

"What a beautiful sword. However, it's surprisingly light. Won't this make it hard when you fight against big monsters? I think for labyrinth it's better to have a spear or a pole arm as the main weapon, and a dagger as the side arm.

Sadly, most people commonly wear monsters-made armors in the labyrinth city, but don't you think that nobles should wear beautiful full-body silver armor? That beautiful silver! With that comes the power to crush evil--"

Looks like she's wearing metal armor and a pole axe when she's entering the labyrinth. It seems she will fights with dagger, the side arm, in a narrow passage. She seemed to like metal armor and had thoughtlessly recommended me to wear full body one. Since her talk is long, I ignore it halfway through, but it seems miss Jenna has gotten used to it as she's having a bitter smile.

Her passionate armor talk seemed to be continuing on still, but I took the chance when Arisa and the others came back and excused myself.

In the afternoon, I go to the firm that Sunifun-san, the merchant in Seryuu city, has told me and mail some letters toward Seryuu city. My letters are for the worker guild and Zena-san, Pochi and Tama are sending letter for the gate inn Yuni. It's as expensive as one silver coin a letter, but it's probably cheap considering how far the trip is.

After sending the letters, I go toward the [Mansion of Ivy] as scheduled.

10-14. Mansion of Ivy

Satou's here. Basements appeared a lot in mystery (works), but when I was in Japan, I had never even seen one. I wonder if it's really because of the problem with the law and tax that people build it above ground instead after all?

◇

I don't know the exact location of this Mansion of Ivy, but it's easy to look for it. When I used [Spirit Seer] skill as instructed by Mia, I could see one section of the labyrinth city where the spirits had gathered. After that it was as simple as marking it on the map, and going there via the shortest route.

The Mansion of Ivy is located in the northern side of the labyrinth city. It's to the west of the north gate, at the end of the wealthy area just before the pleasure quarter. There is a lush green park not far off the rampart, and the mansion of ivy exists there.

Just like the name implies, it's covered with ivy. The mansion is less than half as big compared to other mansions in this area of the wealthy, but the land size seems to be about as big. Transparent water is flowing in two meters wide moat outside the mansion hedges. Since there are low hedges outside the moat, it seems the moat is also part of the Mansion of Ivy. The clear water that flows in the moat seems to be flowing to the pond on the park via a small canal.

The area around here is slightly elevated several meters above compared to the neighborhood. The water that has flown to the pond seems to be flowing into the town through small waterways.

The carriage suddenly changes its course just before the Mansion of Ivy.

"What's wrong Lulu?"

"I'm sorry, I don't know why but I feel that I have to change the carriage's course no matter what."

The log displays [『Forest of Hesitation (Return Home)』 magic is successfully resisted]. It seems to be some kind of people clearing magic.

"It seems that there's a magic under effect, so I will take only Mia along from here. Everyone wait here for a bit."

I tell so to everyone and go with Mia to the Mansion of Ivy.

Mia is acting normally, I wonder if this magic does not work on elves. Just in case, I pass the medallion from Giril to Mia.

There's an archway arbor with waist-height white trees that acts as the front gate. However, there's a moat that's full of water just beyond that gate, yet there is no bridge to cross it.

When I check with magic Perception, it seems that the low moat is under effect of space-based magic. According to Giril, the owner of this mansion is Trazayuya-shi, I wonder if he wanted to make a fortress? Or maybe the security in the area was so bad that you couldn't be at ease without doing this much.

『Gate, open, I am Misanalia of Boruenan Forest. Gatekeeper, Come here quickly.』

Mia read the phrase for opening the gate that's written on the back of the medallion. Even though Mia usually rarely talks, she sure is good at reciting lines isn't she.

A little girl was peeking on the opposite side of the main gate, and when our eyes met, she hid behind the gate. She's a House Fairy (Brownie). Her green hair that's nearly black is put in short ponytail.

『Gatekeeper, Come here quickly』

Yielding to the repeated lines of Mia, a bridge appears between the gates. It's a transparent bridge that looks like a glass.

"Nn."

I grasp Mia's hand which she has presented, and we cross the bridge toghether.

"Misanalia-sama, I am the guard of this Mansion of Ivy, Leriril, Giril's granddaughter."

"Just call me Mia."

"I cannot do such thing. To call elf-sama with their nickname! Please call me Leriril without honorific."

"Nn, Leriril."

Giril was also like her, but compared to him Leriril looks far more child-like. From human's standpoint, she looks like a 6-7 years old child. By the way, she's a 60 years old girl. I feel like she'd be mad at me if I say Kanreki. Her level is quite high at 20. She has hiding skill and race-specific skills. She seems to be an expert of scouting and the like.

"By the way, Misanalia-sama, who is that human brat over there? A mere human being holding hands with the honorable elf-sama, how extremely rude of him. Let me teach him his position."

I got suddenly dissed during our first meeting.

The people in the elf hometown didn't discriminate against humans, but I wonder if she has come to hate humans after being surrounded by them? I wonder why, I somehow feel that I can't defend the humans.

"Rude. Satou is my fiance."

"Eh? Eeh? That's a joke right?"

"Mwu, officially approved by parents."

"Hahaha, that, that cannot be~"

Leriril waved both her hands round and round to deny Mia's fiance remark as it seemed to be shocking for her. She passed her limit when she heard about the approval of Mia's parents, she fainted.

◇

We can't exactly let her sleep here just like this, so we bring her to a tree shade and lay her on a sheet.

Sometimes refreshing cool breeze blows from the greeneries that exist due to the moat that surrounds the mansion ground. In the dusty labyrinth city, it's only here and the park surrounding it that feel like it's from another world.

"Ha, I saw a bad dream."

"Nn, dream?"

"Yes, an elf-sama was seduced by a human brat."

What a rude thing to say toward the youngster who had carried you to a tree shade and nursed you.

She gets up unsteadily, and looks toward Mia in a surprise. And then, she seemed to have sensed my presence, she turned toward me in an awkward robot-like movement. I'll leave out the uproar afterward, and just write down that it's quite difficult to deal with the little girl.

"Now then, Misanalia-sama and Satou, please come here."

Leriril who has finally concedes my existence leads us into the mansion. Arisa and the other who are waiting outside have been excluded from the effect of [Forest of Hesitation (Return Home)], and since I've called them with [Telephone], they will probably come here soon.

It seems the Medal of Proxy that Leriril carries can control the entrance bridge and the isolation magic. The Medal of Manager that Mia carries has higher authority than Leriril's medal.

"And, am I wrong to assume that Misanalia-sama is the new master of the Mansion of Ivy?"

"No. The master is Satou."

"Eh? That br-, Satou, is?"

Was she going to say brat?

Well, it's not wrong for an old woman on her 60 to call me brat though.

"Yeah, Giril told me to go ahead and use this mansion if I'm staying in labyrinth city. That medal is also something that he has entrusted to me."

"Ceh, that senile old man.... No, from esteemed grandfather is it? I can't believe it."

"Mwu, fact."

No no, Leriril. You're too late for the retake. You've gone and said him as senile old man after all.

"Err, maybe grandfather was being senile, no his physical condition was bad at the time?"

This child really has a bad mouth.

"Satou is the benefactor of Boruenan Forest. A friend of Aze."

"By Aze, do you perhaps mean Aialize-sama the high elf? For a high elf-sama to show herself before a human! Moreover, friend is it? Even though high elf-sama is the heaven holy priest that can even be called a demi-god."

I'd have been fine if she falsify her as my lover. However, something like demi-god or heaven holy priest really, those are the most unsuitable names for Aialize-san.

"Yes, I've gotten along well with her. I have been taught Spirit Magic and Spirit Seer by her, and even taken to the observatory of the world tree."

After getting greatly shaken, Leriril fell on the floor and prostrated to beg forgiveness for her impoliteness. Moreover, she said, "I can't call you without honorifics if you're the friend of high elf-sama", and added [Sama] to call me. Afterward, she also calls other members with [Sama] since they're also Aialize-san's friends.

◇

"Misanalia-sama and everyone else too, please enter."

Guided by Leriril, we enter the mansion. The inside is of an extremely normal mansion. There is a mirror at the end of a narrow passage that's located in one corner of the living room and hard to find.

She holds her medal out, and waves-like light appear on the surface of the mirror.

"Please follow me."

And then she jumps into the mirror. Oh, that looks like a mirror that could take you to another world, wait, this is already another world. According to the map, Leriril is 10 meters below the ground, so this is probably some kind of teleport gate. After confirming that, I also follow.

The space is awfully bright even though it's underground. The ceiling is also more than three meters high. This brightness is just like the outside. Most likely, there are plants with light fiber stalks like we have on the labyrinth villa's ceiling, or some kind of magic that transmit the light from outside here.

The place in five meters radius from here is like a courtyard, weeds that look like lawn are growing. When I confirm on the map, it seems the Mansion of Ivy occupies the same space as the park above underground. It's extended 30-50 meters underground. There are more than 100 rooms it seems. There are also workshops and facilities that Trazayuya-shi has used, I have to ask if I can use it later.

"Here is the main building of the Mansion of Ivy. The mansion on the ground above is a fake for visitors."

"He's quite the careful one."

"Trazayuya-sama was a gentleman that was called the elf sage. Esteemed grandfather has told me that sage-sama had a lot of magic tools and magic engineering inventions, and when sage-sama was inside the labyrinth, there were always thieves or nations that aimed for his assets."

I see, it's not because of paranoia, but self-defense huh.

"Even now, every time the viceroy is replaced, they always attack with armed groups trying to make this mansion into their possession."

Yet it doesn't fall, isn't that amazing?

"High level explorers should be able to break through it though?"

"Anyone who lives in this city absolutely won't attack the Mansion of Ivy."

Leriril declared so full of confidence toward Arisa's question.

"After all, the Fake Core of this mansion is the thing that maintains the water source of this city."

"Uwah, taking a hold of the lifeline huh, Trazayuya is good. As expected of sage-sama."

Leriril doesn't seem to know the detail, but the thing about Fake Core is written in the documents that he has left behind. According to it, it was a magic tool that preceded the Maze Core, and it was made using large amount of Philosopher's Stones. It seems to be a good system that can do various things like absorbing magic power from the Earth's Vein nearby, using preset functions, or supplying magic power into the magic tools that are connected to it.

In this case, it uses the function of the Fake Core to draw out the water from the underground water vein.

"However, in that case, isn't it bad if we live here?"

"That's right, it'll be fine if we're inside the mansion, but a mansion dweller who's wandering outside the mansion could become a hostage, we might get involved in various troubles~"

Arisa also agrees. However, I'd love to use the facilities here.

"What about buying a house outside and enter here from there? We can just use master's or my space magic to go in and out."

"You're right, let's go with that."

Let's ask about the dummy house from the marchioness or the general if there's one that's a good fit.

After having a tea party to get ourselves acquainted, we chose our rooms in the mansion, put the carved seal board, and then left toward the inn.

Additionally, the castella was quite popular with everyone.

10-15. Red Iron Plate

Satou's here. I wonder why is my free time decreasing every time I get a promotion. Well, it goes without saying that the causes are the slightly raised salary and the many more works I must do.

◇

"I'm very sorry."

The receptionist onee-san over the counter is deeply apologizing.

We've come here to receive the Bronze Plates, but--

"Actually the guildmaster has raised an objection for it."

--An interruption has come, and it seems our promotions have been stopped.

"Eh~, I'm firmly against this!"

"I'm truly very sorry. I'm told that the guildmaster has an objection on Sir Pendragon since something like this is unprecedented..."

I understand Arisa's dissatisfaction, but there's nothing can be done even if we press this person further.

"When will we know if our promotion is admitted or not? May we use these temporary plates until then?"

"Y, yes. You can have the temporary Bronze plates as they are now. I think it'll only take a few days at the longest, so it'd be helpful if you come to the guild in five days."

Right, we haven't registered our contact address to the guild.

While calming Arisa who's still discontent, we leave the guild. An onee-san around thirty who descends from a carriage that has just arrived as we come out, calls me in fluster.

"U-um, excuse me, but are you Chevalier Pendragon-sama?"

"Yes, I am, can I help you?"

"I came for an errand from the guildmaster. I am Ushana the guildmaster's secretary. I'm sorry for being so sudden, but could you go with me to the west guild?"

Arisa is posing triumphantly while whispering, "The template is here" behind. I'm only planning to buy the dummy house today, so I don't mind visiting the guildmaster. I told her my consent, and we headed to the west guild together.

◇

A wand is coming toward me right in front of my eyes.

Sharp like a spear, it was suddenly thrust before my eyes when I opened the door. I lightly brush the attack that's even sharper than Liza's spear blow, avoiding it. The other party passes the eluded wand over the shoulder to the other hand, and attacks again. Is this what they call wand arts?

And then I continue to elude all of the ever-changing long wand attacks.

I wonder what does this person want to do anyway?

The one who stops this unreasonable attacks is the secretary, Ushana's words.

"Guildmaster! If you keep doing that any longer, Seberkea-sama will scold you!"

"Ceh, we were just in the good part. Right, Satou?"

Yes, the one who has been attacking me with the long wand since awhile ago is the guildmaster-san. Moreover, she's a 87 years old old woman, so I couldn't counterattack really. She's a level 52 magician who has fire and light magic skills. I want this childish old woman to take some lesson from Tenion head-miko.

I'm the only one who's come here. Arisa and the others are touring the guild hall below.

"Unfortunately, I'm not fond of getting surprise attacks."

"What, aren't you the battle freak who stayed overnights from the first day of his labyrinth diving, and then went on to collect more than 100 magic cores?"

How rude. I've only defeated 20-30 monsters at most.

"I was only watching from behind, my companions were the ones who actually fought."

"Bah, who would believe that nonsense. Even if that was the truth, it was because the monsters were small fries whom you did not need fight right?"

It's most likely just guessworks, but it's relatively true.

It seems she had felt that I was going to deceive her, she spoke first before I could.

"Moreover, that sword is something that old Dohar's created right? Like that old man would give the sword he made himself to a small fry. If you're going to deceive people, wrap that Truth Mark with some cloth."

I didn't specially hide the mark since no one at the duchy capital noticed it. I thought that it wasn't rare since I saw a lot of arms that had truth marks in the elf hometown, but it seems I was wrong.

"Elder Dohar is my drinking buddy."

I can't exactly tell her that I've made the sword together with elder Dohar.

I wonder why. The moment she heard "Drinking buddy" part, guildmaster's eyes lit up like a carnivore who had found its prey.

"Hou? Then, why don't I become your drinking buddy too?"

"Yes, if you're alright with me, I'll bring some liquor and appetizers."

It's troubling that she seems to be a battle mania, but I think of her like elder Dohar in the [Un-detestable Elderly] category. I would refuse if she was going to manipulate me, but it'd seem that I could hear many interesting old stories if I drank with her.

"Very well, it's a banquet then!"

"You can't."

Ushana-san who had come back while bringing a shallow box denied the declaration of the guildmaster who looked happy. It's still noon after all.

"Please confer the guild plates here first. You can do the banquet afterward."

"Ceh. I know I know. Satou, receive these Red Iron Plates."

Hmm? It should have been Bronze Plates though?

"Don't look so confused. That stiff viscount talked a lot about your achievements y'know?"

Come to think of it, Viscount Shimen was going here and there when he was trying to rescue me. Did he say something exaggerated during that time?

"Was it『The Hero of Muno City Defense War』and『Gururian City Demon Slayer』I guess? A senior explorer from our guild was there right at that time, do you remember? There was a report from that guy too. Regardless of the fact that it was a low-class demon, we can't give the party that has defeated a demon unhurt with Wooden or Bronze Plates."

"That said, giving you Mithril Plates would be too much. If you had at least defeated a middle-class demon then."

"Humph, those guild council fools, it would have been a new record if they had just nodded, it was almost there y'know."

Apparently, the guildmaster was scheming to force the Mitrhil Plates on us. I thank you the good senses of the guild councils whom I've never seen in my mind. Even though it would have made Arisa happy, I feel that the disadvantages are too many.

Ushana-san explains about the Red Iron Plates. Of course it's not just me, everyone is going to be promoted to Red Iron Plates.

We've acquired it easily this time, but normally a Bronze explorer needs to give the guild high-grade magic cores in long term to raise his status. It seems that one normally needs five to ten years to get it, this Red Iron Plate sounds trouble enough.

"Is it alright? We have only dived to the labyrinth once you know?"

"Guildmaster has authority to confer until the Red Iron Plates. We can't issue it excessively, but we haven't issued it even once in two years here, so the royal castle probably won't complain."

Ushana-san continues her talk, and it's come to the advantages of the Red Iron Plates. There are many small financial advantages like half-off for handling charges and building rents that involve the guild. I'm not too happy since I'm not in trouble financially at all.

"And finally, the most important point is--"

Please tell the most important thing in the beginning.

"--People who are holding this Red Iron Plates are treated like associate nobles. It can't grant noble privilege like Chevalier-sama has, but it guarantees the social position that equal the knights. Since this is guaranteed in the name of Shiga King, not only it is valid inside the kingdom, it's also valid even when you visit other countries."

Of course it's not only valid for humans, but also for demi-humans it seems. Looks like they can stay in the inn if they have the Red Iron Plates, even in the area where discriminations against demi-humans run deep like in Seryuu city.

I asked Ushana-san if it was alright for a non-government body to issue privileges of associate nobles.

"Even though the Explorer Guild call itself a guild, it's actually the managing body of the labyrinth resource ministry of Shiga Kingdom. The guildmaster holds the position of the labyrinth resource minister of Shiga Kingdom, and she's treated as an earl when she's in office, so there's no problem."

I see, so the kingdom is behind it after all. I thought that it was strange that they let civilians managed the money tree, but I understand now.

I asked her just in case, it seems people who held the Mitrhil Plate was not only treated as an associate noble like the people who had the Red Iron Plates, but they would be bestowed the honorary nobility peerages from the king.

"By the way Satou. About the banquet schedule, how about this evening."

"Yes, I'll make it open for it."

"Ouh, good answer. I happened to hear about this, that Eltall brat was boasting that he had just gotten himself some very fine liquor--"

Putting aside her calling general Eltall brat, the dragon spring liquor is too popular. I have to bring some goats as presents for Heiron the black dragon.

Don't tell me, she didn't do the unprecedented promotion to aim for the liquor right?

"W, what's with those eyes. It's nothing like that okay? The promotion got nothing to do with the liquor y'know?"

The flustered guildmaster was slightly suspicious, but since Ushana-san denied it, it was just a groundless suspicion, it seems.

Now then, I need to bring the Red Iron Plates to Arisa and the others who are waiting in excitements below.

10-16. Guild Disturbance

Satou's here. In the old dungeon-exploring games, you assemble your party in the bar, revive and release your curse in the temple, and getting ripped-off in stores.

◇

I explain the details regarding the circumstances and give the Red Iron Plates to Arisa and the others who are waiting downstairs.

"Yafuu! It's a promotion authorized straight by the guild master!"

"Okashiratsuki~?"

<TLN: Authorization: osumitsuki. Okashiratsuki: Fish dish served whole.>

"Its eyes are scary nodesu!"

Arisa exaggeratedly getting happy, she pushes her hands up and jumps.

Tama, that's not right. Pochi is still scared at the eyes on the fish head that she said was looking at her. The two mimicked Arisa, jumped, and almost hit their heads on the ceiling. It's dangerous if you don't grasp your own physical prowess you know?

The other members look reserved, but it seems they're also happy.

"Keh, since when did Explorer Guild become children's playground?"

I guess we were too noisy?

I looked back and was going to apologize, but that intent disappeared immediately.

Since the man was kicking the children who were gathering near the entrance of the guild around. He wasn't talking about us, but the baggage carrier children who were occupying the entrance. This man looks familiar. If I'm not mistaken, he's the party leader of the male explorer party that were running from the ants.

The kicked children don't have serious injuries yet they can't move and fall limp on the guild's wall. Just like the tigerkin back then, how could big men like them kick children around.

"Violence against young organisms are dangerous, thus prohibited, so I tell. Warn them with words, so I recommend."

"What's with you bastard? Hou, aren't you quite the beauty. Don't you have the wrong job? You can make more money as a prostitute than an explorer y'know?"

The man's hands casually stretch toward Nana.

The armor that Nana usually wears has green silk in the interior layer, whale leather in the middle layer, and the armored newt leather on the outside. It looks like a soft leather armor from the outside, and although it is actually soft, the armored newt leather part harden when it's supplied with magic power.

It's the leather from a monster with [Armor] on its name. It can repel swords and spears used by normal soldiers.

What would happen to defenseless fingers that tried to grab her breasts.

This man will learn the answer to that question with his body.

"Fi-fingers, my great fingers areee"

The man screamed like he was surprised, and crouched down on the floor.

"You bitch, what did you do to Besso"

"Enemy of Besso!"

"Denied. He has brought it upon himself, I report."

Those men seem to be friends of the crouching man. The faces of those two are red. Looks like they've been drinking liquor in daytime.

Those two did the unbelievable thing of drawing their swords inside the Explorer Guild, let alone th city.

Now then, guess I'll arrest them before anyone got hurt.

Liza drives her spear to the flank of the man, before I can step forward. Of course it's not with the pointed tip part, but the blunt one, and lightly at that.

Liza was intending to do it lightly, but with a small sound, a hole was formed on the man's armor that seemed to be made from monster's shell, and he fainted after getting his abdomen hit hard. The poked man fainted in agony, and the other man beside him lost his balance and rolled on the floor.

『Oy, aren't those guys wearing ant shell armors?』

『B, breaking that so easily like that...』

The peanut gallery are saying something, but since this armor is far more brittle compared to the shell breastplates I've given to Kon's friends, it can't be helped if it breaks.

Besso who had his fingers bent picked up his friend's sword that had fallen to the ground and tried to attack Lulu.

I was closing on her like sliding to intercept him, but in the end, it was meaningless. Lulu easily evaded Besso's sword, and then pinned him down to the ground. Besoo who has been held down is resisting, but it's almost like there's no effect, maybe it's due to her level that's almost twice as high, or her self-defense skill.

『Maid-san is strooong』

『Did you see her movement just now?』

『Didn't Besso and his gangs win against the viceroy's soldiers who were three times their number at the bar back then?』

『If the maid-san is that strong, that means those runts are also strong...』

The remaining one has also been defeated by Tama and Pochi who are barehanded, he's groveling on the floor.

『Aren't those runts too strong?』

『Then those guys are the rumored beastkin children who easily opened the labyrinth gate?』

『That means, the two frail-looking children over there are also as strong?』

『Unbelievable...』

The peanut gallery are noisy.

"Oy, I'll throw you to the guild dungeon if you're making too much rackets in the hall y'knooo~?!"

A heavily armored soldier with good physique who had come with a guild staff from the interior warned us. He ended his word strangely.

I felt like I had seen his face somewhere, so I tried to remember it. He's the explorer with a big shield who was downed by the demon in Gururian city.

『It's the Great Shield Gell.』

『He survived fighting a demon y'hear?』

『As expected of Iron Wall Gell.』

He rushed before me and asked.

"Excuse me, but aren't you Sir Pendragon?"

"Yes, we've met in Gururian city if I remember right."

He didn't seem to think that I would remember him.

"I can keep living like this thanks to Sir Pendragon who helped me."

"It's thanks to the hard works of my companions."

He's looking around for someone restlessly while thanking me.

"Ge, gell bro."

I remembered the existence of Besso after hearing his voice down below. I gesture Lulu to let him go.

"Ah, the daredevil who picked a quarrel with Sir Pendragon was you huh."

Gell treated Besso who came to cling on him coldly. Quite a difference in enthusiasm.

"You hear? Everyone hear me out!   These people are experts who have defeated a demon that appeared in a city of a distant dukedom. Furthermore! They did not only defeat it. It was a complete victory!   They defeated the demon without even suffering a single injury."

He talks passionately about how strong we were to the peanut gallery. He seemed to particularly remember about Pochi and Tama who took him to the safety zone, and thanked the two as his life saviors.

"By the way Sir Pendragon. Today, are you not together with the beautiful goddess who was fighting barehanded at that time?"

The one who was fighting barehanded at that time was only lady Karina. He's probably looking for lady Karina since a while ago.

"Yes, she has already returned to her territory."

"Territory is it?"

"Yes, she is the daughter of Baron Muno, Karina-sama."

Afterwards, Gell asked various things about lady Karina. While we're at it, I tell him about the shortage of soldier and knight of the territory army. I don't think that he will enter into government service, but explorers who have heard this story might want to go there out of curiosity.

◇

As a punishment for drawing out swords inside the guild hall, Besso and his gang are to reflect in the guild dungeon for three days, so Gell took them away. Liza used her spear too, but since it wasn't the pointed end but the blunt end, it was waived.

The children who were kicked looked like they would get some bruises, but they had gone outside before the staff could warn them.

"Isn't that macho dimwitted for calling that Karina a goddess?"

"Nn."

"Karina, strong~?"

"She's agile like, pyonpyon, nanodesu!"

Arisa and Mia have low assessment of lady Karina. Pochi and Tama tried to defend her, but since the point was wrong, they weren't really successful about it.

◇

Since we've come to the guild already, I decided to might as well sightsee the facilities here.

I'm being guided by Arisa and the others who have explored ahead of time.

First, let's go to the room where the contracted temple priests reside in the guild.

There are beautiful male and female priests to the point of me wanting to ask if they were selected by their looks. Looks like detoxification, curse dissolution, paralysis release, and healing the severely wounded person are free of charge. There's also life magicians who work as their assistants.

Stopping bleeding and disinfecting wounds are probably their jobs.

There's also a place that sells labyrinth maps and information.

Looks like they're selling information about unknown areas, or unknown passages in an area here. It seems only Red Iron explorers and higher can buy and sell information here. Wooden and Bronze ones are to trade information and maps in front of the labyrinth.

There was a map of the first area and the areas that adjoin it pinned on the wall of this room, I only knew it after coming here. Even now, there is a man that seems to be a beginner explorer who's working hard to copy it.

There's also a curio store for explorers.

They're selling emergency goods like preserved food, sleeping bags, and bandages, there are also torches, monster-warding powder, flash balls, smoke balls, ropes, thin weed strings *etc*. Some unusual things include small metal plates, and mirrors.

I'm wondering what they're used for, but it seems the metal plates are clappers for warning, and the mirrors are for checking enemies positions from the back.

The items in this store are of good quality, but since they're more expensive than the ones in the private-owned stores, the only people who buy here are the wealthy noble-borne explorers, it seems.

Of course, there is also a pharmacy that sells medicines and magic potions suited for explorers.

And, I heard something that sounded like a quarrel from that pharmacy.

10-17. Temporary Residence

Satou's here. The heavy responsibility of mortgage that you get when you're buying a house is often called one of the three trials of life. As such, buying 'my home' is a serious thing even in another world.

◇

"Anti-poison magic potion is out of stock?　Wait a minute, haven't some alchemy materials just arrived from the royal capital last week?"

"Yes, the guild exclusive alchemists had done their best to compound them, but the『Fang of Conflagaration』bought them all, saying that they were going to subdue the cockatrice."

"Ceh, those Red Iron Plate guys huh."

Real life cockatrice huh. I might want to see it for a bit.

However, people usually imagine cockatrice for its petrification, but it can use poison too huh.

"Therefore, I recommend going to the pharmacy or alchemist stores in the city..."

"Those stores are under the backing of the viceroy so they're twice as expensive as the guild store y'know. Hey, isn't there one left at least?"

The man still harasses her. The employee onee-san looks troubled.

"We have magic potions for spider poison or ant poison, but there is no general one left."

"I don't have the money to buy several kinds. Can't be helped, give me two spider poison magic potion, and also three low-rank healing potion."

"Yes, one low-rank antidote is two silver coins, and one low-rank healing potion is one silver coin."

It's quite cheap.

The male explorer pays it by lining up coins on the counter. Looks like he's not good with calculation.

"Next one please."

"Ah, excuse me. I wasn't actually queuing."

I lightly apologize for standing in a misleading place.

I asked if they would purchase medicines, but since they had exclusive pharmacists and alchemists already, they would only buy items that were in shortage.

"However, most of the items are in shortage. Medicinal plants won't grow on the outskirts of this city, and although we have alchemists and materials gathered from the labyrinth by the explorers, the consumption is too intense we're having chronic shortage."

Looks like the plentiful ones are only the ointment for stopping bleeding, and alcohol for disinfecting wounds. It seems that if you have magic potions that are in shortage with quality that's higher than a certain level, they would buy it at eight times the price the guild is selling.

When I took out the diluted magic potion for her to judge, it was worth four big copper coins.

"Even though the healing quantity barely qualifies, the stability is wonderful. This shouldn't go bad or deteriorate even while it's taken into the labyrinth."

Magic potions can spoil huh.

I have to check the magic potions in Arisa's Item Box, and everyone's Fairy Pouch (Magic Pouch) later.

That reminded me about the Dragon White Stones which I had brought a lot from Seryuu city, when I checked to her if I could sell it, she asked if they could buy it all instead.

When I was sending letters to Seryuu City the other day, I heard from some merchant that the shortest route, the northern route had been blocked, so they were going to the southern roundabout route which would take some time, that was probably the cause.

Apparently, one of the city in Lesseu Earldom was destroyed by a rampaging mid-class demon, so it can't be helped that circulation of goods has been stopped.

<TLN: Referencing last Zena's intermission. Chapter 7 Intermission 2.>

"No that story is already settled since hero-sama has exterminated the demon, but--"

"Dragon?"

According to her, it seems that a dragon has nested in the mountain pass that's located in the Zetsu Earldom that's between Lesseu Earldom and the Royal Capital. As the result, the northern highway of the kingdom has been completely blocked, and the circulation of goods stops. That's bothersome.

"Since the Kingdom Conference will be held next month, the kingdom knights and even the Eight Shiga Swords-sama have been deployed to subjugate the dragon, so please bear with it for a while."

If I compare the two Shiga Eight Swords I've met in the duchy capital and Heiron the black dragon, I'm confident that the blockade will continue for a long while.

Well then, putting aside that situation, let's go back to the trade.

I took out a small bottle out of the magic bag, and put it on the counter. There are 300 grams fine powder of dragon white stone inside. This small bottle can become material for making 30 antidotes.

She told me that they're buying it for 30 silver coins.

I bought 18 kilograms of small barrel for 10 gold coins back then. It has decreased to only 10 kilograms after I removed impurities and made it into fine powder, yet it can be sold for 20 times the initial cost.

The pharmacy onee-san seemed to misunderstand me who was slightly taken back from the excessive profit.

"I understand that it's impolite for an alchemist to only sell raw materials, but since the all-purpose antidotes are quick to be spoiled, we can't handle it if you bring a lot of the finished goods."

Thus, when someone want to buy the all-purpose antidote, the guild exclusive alchemist will compound it for them.

I decided to sell two small bottles of the dragon white stone fine powder, and five diluted magic potions. I should tell the explorer from a while ago that the antidote might be back in stock if I meet him again.

◇

"These are the three mansions that meet Chevalier-sama's request."

The male guild staff that handles real estate points at the labyrinth city map to present them.

They are a workshop in the craftsman district, a mansion in the wealthy area, and a mansion with a ranch and a farm nearby. He told me that the mansion with the ranch nearby had been vacant for nearly 10 years, so it would need some repair.

After thinking about it for a bit, I chose the mansion near the ranch since it would be easy to stock vegetables and dairy products then.

Arisa harshly said, "I can't believe you bought a house without even seeing it." but it was meaningless to worry about the condition of a dummy house anyway, so I decided to quickly buy it. I can just buy a replacement if I don't like it.

It was reasonably priced at half the market price, 150 gold coins, but due to the intervention of the guildmaster who appeared out of nowhere, it was became further half of that.

The reason that this mansion is relatively expensive for its location is because it's constructed with woods architecture which is rare in this labyrinth city. A collector would have jumped on this, but since the repair cost was high, there was no buyer.

The annual tax is 15 gold coins considering the structure and the location of the mansion. I'm told that Red Iron Plate possessor can also pay half the price of the tax. Since the discount only applies to one house, there doesn't seem to be any explorer who owns multiple houses.

In exchange for the gold coins I've taken out of the magic bag, I receive the registration documents for the mansion, and a bunch of keys. A person who had Contract skill came for the registration process.

◇

We go out of the guild building since I've finished my business in the guild.

There, eyes full of expectation from the children are looking at us.

It's a bit scary.

Lead by the little girls baggage carrier from before, there are 30-40 children looking at us in the surrounding. Beyond them, the stalls owners seem to be also watching here. I see, so they clogged the guild entrance to the point of getting kicked by the explorer from before because they gathered for the possibility of being treated to meal huh.

No one is saying anything, but the sound of the growling stomaches of the children fill the tense atmosphere.

It'll be annoying if they keep like this so I guess I'll treat them.

I give some small changes to Arisa and the others, and ask them to treat the children with some meals.

"Now then, little girls! Chevalier Pendragon will treat you to a meal. Everyone thank him!"

"""Thank you, Chevalier-sama."""

I wave my hand to reply the gratitude of the great number of little girls, and the few boys.

"Meat~?"

"Arisa, meat are nice nodesu!"

"The nutrition will be imbalanced like that, so no. Let's make it something like stir-fried vegetables that's filling for the stomach."

The middle-aged men of the stalls raise their sales voices toward Arisa and the others who are discussing which dishes.

"Li'l lady-chan, our porridge has vegetables and meat inside, so it's filling for ta' stomach y'know?"

"What're you saying, our dumpling soup is the best. There's vegetables inside too, and our meat dumplings 'ere the most filling~"

"Awright, let's go with both!   Everyone, line up on the one you like! You'll only be treated to one of them."

From the word of Arisa who feels too bothersome to choose, the children's eyes are wandering between the two stalls. In the end, they seemed to think that they will miss the meal if they were late, so when one of the children queued, two lines were immediately formed. Pochi and Tama are standing in a row to prevent the chaotic children blocking the traffic.

After saying good bye to the children who had become full, we went to the house I had just purchased.

◇

"Ugeh, it's weed everywhere."

"Leave it to me~?"

"Equipping mowing equipment nanodesu!"

Arisa leaks out her complaint in front of the mansion that's overgrown with weed. Tama and Pochi are posing with the sickles they've taken from the pouches, on their hands. Nana also takes out a long sickle. They've also been like this on the highway before, these three really like mowing huh.

I insert a key to the big padlock on the mansion gate. It's slightly rusted, but it can be opened with force.

Now then, there are about five children in the mansion, or to be exact, behind the private stable on the mansion plot. They're most likely orphans who are staying in the vacant house illegally. Their levels are low, I'll instruct Nana and the others to look at them while they're mowing.

"Nana, take Pochi and Tama to investigate the stable."

"Yes, master."

"Roger~"

"Nanodesu!"

The three make their way through the weed to the stable while making a path.

The remaining ones, that were us, decided check the water well. Arisa skillfully mowed the weed along the way with space magic.

The block for hanging the well bucket has rotted, its wreckage is lying on the floor. There is a bucket with rope beside the lid that covers the well to prevent trash from entering it. That bucket is slightly wet. The orphans just now are probably using it.

"This's baad"

"It's bad nanodesu!"

"Emergency, so I report! A life is in peril. I wish urgent relief as soon as possible."

The three who've gone to the stable rush back here.

Apparently, the orphans are not merely illegal residents, it seems.

10-18. Temporary Residence (2)

Satou's here. A long time ago, my aunt couple moved into the detached building of my grandfather's house, so I had helped the clean-up. I did the rare experiences of exchanging tatamis, and replacing shoji papers.

◇

Led by the three, I've come to behind the stable where five 10-13 years old children have sat down.

It's a bit late, but I check their details now. The map indicators default to only show races and levels. Even during extended search, it normally only shows Name, Race, Age, Gender, and Level. As for the people who are antagonistic, or have crime, they are classified in red color, while people who have unknown skills or level 50 and higher are in blue. I've adjusted like so since having too many indicators narrows the viewing field.

The ones over there are exactly according to the information, children. However, they seem to haven't eaten for a long time, they've been debilitated to dangerous degrees. Judging from the well earlier, they probably haven't drank enough water either. Their consciousness seem to be muddy, only one of them react to our presents. That child doesn't seem to be moving either.

I give the nutrient supplements that I've used at Puta town back then to these children. Moreover, I heal their wounds one by one with magic healing. Every one of the child have wounds that are bordering at turning into gangrene from bone fractures on their limbs, the lacerations are awful.

There was a child with some malformed bone from the bone fracture, but I was able to correct it by diligently applying magic healing.

"How is it?"

"Ah, their life are not in danger for the time being. I've healed them by forcing them to swallow the medicines, so they're sleeping from the tiredness. After some time, give them some water and the nutrient supplements again. They should be fine after we give them light rice porridge tomorrow morning."

"As expected of master. Unrestrained praises are overflowing!"

"I'm glad~" "Nodesu!"

I'll leave Nana to nurse these children.

I felt sorry if I left them sleep on the ground like that, so I spread out the felt that we usually used in camping grounds, put a soft sheet on top of it, and laid them down on it.

◇

"Spiderwebs~?"

"It's sticky, nodesu."

"Satou."

Mia who's covered in spiderweb, and Pochi who's also in the same state with her ears flopping down are in tears.

That's why I said to let me go first.

The result of checking the inside of the mansion; besides one section of the floor that has rotted, everything else is only covered in spiderwebs, so we should be able to do something about it.

Since there were a lot of junks like broken chairs that are left behind, I put them into the storage in the trash folder. It was easy with the combination of [Magic Hand] techniques.

It's a two-story building which also has an attic and a basement. The area are around 60 tsubos excluding the attic and the basement, it's about twice as large as an average Japanese house. The basement was camouflaged as a wine cellar, but there was a cleverly hidden door, and behind the door was a room fully loaded with machines for a specific fetish, I wasn't sure how to handle it. Since it would be bad for the education of the youth troupe, I destroyed it like 'crack' and made it into a vacant room. Let's make a dummy laboratory here later.
<TLN: Tsubo= https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_units_of_measurement#Area >

There are two separate buildings for visitors who are staying and for servants besides the main building on the plot. The visitor building is a two-story one like the main building, while the servants building is a bungalow. Each of them has around 45 tsubos floor space. There are only six rooms in the visitor building, but there are 10 spacious rooms and five narrow rooms in the servant building despite them having the same floor spaces.

Only the main building has a dining room. There isn't any bath, maybe because water is precious. Let's break one room in the first floor and turn it into a bathroom. Black splinters and ashes that look to be from coals are gathered in the stove in the kitchen.

"It's quite wide huh. How long will it take to make this habitable?"

"We should be able to make it in five days if it's just us maybe?"

Lulu tilts her head while replying to Arisa's fed up words.

"Lulu, as expected it's impossible for just us five to clean such a wide area like this. Master, how about letting the children that you've treated this morning help? If it's just miscellaneous works like weeding or wiping things with a cloth, they should be able to do it even without any skill."

"You're right, let's do that. Liza and Arisa, hire the children in front of the west guild, the rewards are one penny and a dinner. I guess 10 children should be enough? You can increase or decrease it as you want, I'll leave it to you two."

I accepted Liza's proposal, and asked them to hire more manpowers.

"Satou."

"What is it, Mia."

Mia pulls my sleeves from behind. She said that she wanted to go to the Mansion of Ivy, so we teleported to the carved seal board that had been put in the Ivy Mansion's hall for emergency. Since Pochi and Tama are still mowing the weed in the garden, Lulu stays behind in the mansion.

◇

"Leriril, cleaning."

"Misanalia-sama, to this abandoned house?"

"Nn."

Mia's business was about taking this Leriril here. She certainly has the [Cleaning] skill. She's a house fairy (Brownie) after all.

"Satou."

"What is it?"

"Become beautiful."

I didn't understand what Mia wanted for an instant, but I immediately realized it. She probably wants me to release the spirit light that I usually suppress. I don't really understand, but she probably has something in mind. I release it just like she asks.

"Nn, beautiful."

Leriril looked surprised, but Mia urged her to use magic.

"■■■■■■ ■■ …… ■■■■■■ House Cleaning."

After the long chant is over, the indoor becomes sparkling clean. I lift my foot out of curiosity as to what kind of magic is it, but the place where my foot is has also become clean.

＞[Spirit Magic: House Fairy Skill Acquired]

Spirit magic type huh. Even though Leriril doesn't seem like she can see spirits, she can use spirit magic it seems. From Lua-san's talk, it seems that you can use the magic once you have Spirit Seer (skill), I wonder if Leriril got it from her race trait, or gift?

"You're great."

"I am grateful for the praise... However, I feel that the magic is more effective than usual."

"Nn."

The effect has increased probably thanks to the spirits that I've gathered, but since Mia doesn't look like she wants to explain it, I keep silent. It'll be boorish of me to do that if she's going to tell it as a surprise later.

Lulu rushes here from the kitchen with pitter-patter.

"Master, the floor suddenly sparkles! Ara? Lirerel-chan, welcome."

"Hey little girl! I've already said that I'm Leriril!"

"Ara, I've said that I'm Lulu, not little girl right. Have you already forgotten?"

These two don't get along well somehow. Leriril is like this with anyone but Mia, but it's rare for the gentle Lulu to talk in belligerent manner. According to Arisa, the reason was because of Leriril's impolite remarks to me, she said, "They'll probably get along well before long" optimistically.

"Next."

"P, please wait Misanalia-sama. Unlike elves-sama, our magic power are not much. Most of it has been used up for the magic earlier, so I cannot use big magic for a while."

"Nn, Satou."

After seeing Leriril who appeals with troubled face, Mia calls me. She probably wants me to use [Magic Power Transfer] to restore Leriril's MP. I restore her magic power as requested. Her magic power is certainly little compared to her level. It's even less than Lulu's when she's at the same level as her. I can't compare it unconditionally though since Arisa has twice the magic power of Lulu at the same level.

"Eh? Just now what? Did you do something? br-... Satou, sama."

"Mia requested it. I transfered my magic power to you."

Leriril murmured "Transfered magic power?" while looking perplexed, but, urged by Mia, she used various magic like [<<Clean-up House>>] and [Heal House], which made me want to quip, and made the house looks brand-new.

It's quite great.

However, I feel like I can't understand the fact that the floor that should have been rotted, and the wall that should have holes have been fixed-- although it's not like I don't understand if I think of it as healing magic, house version.

I stopped Leriril who was going to clean the outside of the house, and left the outside dirty as it was.

"The roof leaks are troubling, but please leave the dirt intact. Since they don't seem to be common magics, it would make the neighboring people surprised."

"I can't comprehend what the human said. Even Misanalia-sama will certainly have a hard time."

"Nn."

Leaving aside Leriril's rude remark, shouldn't you deny it and ask her to keep the dirt instead of agreeing with her?

Nevertheless, Leriril completely cleaned and repaired every buildings according to my request.

I prepared a simple bedding in the first floor of the main building, and moved the debilitated children there. The skin of the children looked slightly reddish, so I cleaned them with [Soft Wash] and [Dry], and then let them sleep on the bed. I give Nana change of clothes for these children and ask her to change their clothes.

◇

"Alright, we'ree heree."

Liza who's riding the horse, and Arisa who's sitting behind her have come back while leading around 20 children. Half of them are humans, while the rest are beastkins like ratkins, and rabbitkins.

"Welcome back, you're faster than I thought."

"Well yeah, still, aren't Pochi and Tama too diligent. There isn't any place where the children need to mow is it?"

I understand Arisa who's looking tired. The two have already mowed 80% of the weed on this wide plot.

"The small children are to wear gloves and baskets, and then gather the mowed weed into the basket! The big children are to wear gloves and grass sickles, and then cut the weed around the mansion! If you can finish it by the evening, Chevalier-sama will treat you to a delicious dinner!"

The children cheered in joy toward Arisa who cited the reward to keep their motivations up, and began to work.

"Ara? Isn't it Leriril. Since this child is here, that means the inside of the houses have been cleaned?"

"Arisa-dono, 'please stop calling me 'this child'', I've already said that much right!"

"Ah, sorry sorry."

While dodging Leriril's protest, Arisa opens the door to the mansion.

"Leriril good job! As expected of house fairy (brownie)! I'm astonished."

Arisa looks back with a gesture and heartily praises Leriril. Leriril seems to have a personality that's easy to get taken by the flow, she pridefully pushes her flat chest from the praise.

I send Leriril back with teleport magic since she can't be away from the Mansion of Ivy for long. We can just call her back for dinner.

The mowing is safely finished by the evening, and I give one penny for each children and treat them to a dinner as promised. I've decided to serve the meal in emergency-like lunch plates since there are no tables or chairs. Inside the lunch plate, I've put Gnocchi plastered with salty-sweet sauce and lightly boiled vegetables, salted potatoes, sweetened carrots, and the main menu is the diced wolf meat steak. I've made beans cuisine as Mia's main menu. Mia is still weak against [The Meat Dish] even now.

"Smell nice~"

"Un, I wonder what's that red thing? It smells sweet."

"That is meat. A lot of it."

"I wonder if we we will get it?"

"I'm hungry."

Since the children were only surrounding from a distance without taking the lunch plates, Arisa ordered them to line up. Since I've put priority into making the easy-to-make dishes, it shouldn't be that luxurious.

The children who have received the lunch plate begin to eat it in a rush. There are children who jam the food until they can't put it into their mouth anymore, there are also children who eat bite by bite to savor the taste. Strangely, there isn't anyone who say their impression about the taste. Everyone is too desperately eating it, they don't seem to have any room left to talk. However, I wonder if it's the default to have some children who eat while crying? Please eat it normally.

"Lulu has really improved her skill~"

"It's mortifying to say this, but this is delicious. To be inferior at cooking than humans, this is a matter of my dignity as a house fairy. The cooking skill of Arisa-dono's big sister is strange."

"Ara, Leriril. Our master is even better you know?"

"That br-, Satou-dono?"

"The castella from yesterday was made by master after all~"

Leriril whom we have called for dinner is eating beside Arisa. These two strangely get along well. I'd like her to get along with Lulu like that too.

The little children are licking their plates like they don't want to part with it after they've finished eating, so I slightly divide the meatful stir-fried vegetables I've made for the beastkin girls and give it to them. Every child looks like they'll eat anything presented to them, I stop them before they get stomach aches. Since Pochi and Tama look like they haven't had enough, I'll make them some late-night snack later.

10-19. Manager of the Mansion

Satou's here. Some kind of magazine wrote that if you're attracted to the word 'widow', that's the proof of being an old man. Although nowadays there are a lot of people who have divorced before they're separated by death, or people who become a single mother without a marriage, so it's no longer a familiar word.

◇

"Then, take care there."

I see Arisa and the others off in front of the west gate. Everyone is going to the villa in the labyrinth. I'm staying behind in order to find a manager for the mansion. Moreover, Nana is also staying since we can't just leave the debilitated children from before.

I remain until everyone disappear behind the gate, and then I head toward the Explorer Guild.

I was invited to a drink by the guild master after dinner last night, but maybe the guild was open for 28 hours as there were a lot of staffs and explorers despite being late at night. High level explorers and senior staffs who sensed the presence of a high-class liquor came to visit the guildmaster's room and demanded it, the dragon spring liquor that I had presented to the guildmaster disappeared in an instant. I overlooked the Brownie Wine that the guildmaster had hidden in the shelf out of samurai's compassion.

Maybe due to the party last night, I feel that there are only a few staffs.

I'm heading to the real estate department which referred the mansion yesterday. The young man from yesterday isn't there, instead, an old man with receded head hair is standing by while looking bored.

"Hello."

"Welcome to the guild real estate department."

He seems to be a more amiable person than I thought.

"It's about the mansion that this department has referred me yesterday."

"Does it have any inconvenience?"

"No, I'm looking for someone that could house-sit the mansion and stable hands for taking care of the horses, do you have any intercession department in mind that could help me."

"This Explorer Guild can be intercession that can find you guard or someone that will do odd-chores in your mansion, but it's better for you to look for someone you can trust to do something like house-sitting."

Does this person hate explorers despite being a staff of Explorer Guild?

"Yes, of course I won't say that all explorers cannot be trusted, but it's also the fact that there are a lot of them who can't resist temptations before their eyes. For house-sitting, I think you'd better off asking your noble acquaintances to introduce you to someone, or hire a slave if you want it quick."

Noble acquaintance, the first who pops up in my mind is Viscount Shimen.

I don't know if he's still in the labyrinth city, but I try searching the wealthy area since he should be there. Unexpectedly, he's also in the same explorer guild. Come to think of it, he said that he was buying magic cores. The east guild should be the center for magic cores trading, but I guess the west guild is in charge of it?

Since his subordinate is waiting outside, I ask him for a meeting with the viscount.

◇

"Master, my name is Miteruna. I will do my best to serve under you despite my lack of ability, please take care of me."

"Please take care of me too."

The one who has politely greeted me is Ms. Miteruna whom Viscount Shimen has introduced for becoming the manager of the mansion. She's of human race, 26 years old, she can't be said to be beautiful, but her proportion is very slender. Although her stretched spine has a certain charm, her breasts-to-waist line is too straight. Her height is around 160cm, her long reddish light brown hair is knitted. Her reddish brown eyes are under her thin brows.

Her level is low at 7, and she has [Etiquette], [Service], and [Negotiation] skills.

Viscount Shimen immediately introduced her to me when I consulted to him. She's the eldest daughter of Viscount Shimen's villa manager family in this labyrinth city that has been doing it for generations. Her married brother seems to be current manager of the villa, so she's the so called excess personnel.

She was originally hired by the baronet by the viscount's referral, but she was relieved of her duty after she refused the baronet who was going to sexually harass her. I tried searching the city for a bit, and the only baronet in this labyrinth city is Baronet Dyuker. It's not like it's definite that he's a sexual harasser, but let's keep Nana and Lulu from getting close to the baronet.

"Rest assured, I'm the only man there. If I'm going to do something rude when I'm drunk, I don't mind if you hit me with nearby vases or chairs."

"No, I wouldn't do such thing."

I don't think I'd do something like that though, since I have a body that can't get drunk.

The cab carriage that we're riding has returned to in front of the Explorer Guild. I've come here to hire one or two children to become maids that will take care of the debilitated children in addition to the manager.

"Is it really alright for me to choose them?"

"Yeah, of course."

I nod to her question. The employment is going to be temporary anyway, and she's the one who's going to work with them.

She got off the cab carriage and came back bringing two older children whom she had chosen. The two girls look like some naive middle schoolers.

"He is Pendragon-sama who is your employer."

"I'm Roji."

"I'm Annie!"

The second girl who greets me in full spirit looks familiar. She was one of the children who came to the mansion to mow weed. She seems to be remembering the dinner yesterday, her slackened face looks like it's going to drool, Miteruna scolds her because of it. The first girl has dark skin, I don't know if it's tan, or if she's of different race. Either way, her limbs are thin like they're going to break.

The cab carriage can only hold two people, so the two girls are walking to the mansion on foot. They should be alright since it's only 30 minutes walk away.

I explain the facilities in the mansion to Ms. Miteruna. That said, since I only just bought it yesterday, it was over after I only showed the kitchen, the water well, the food storehouse, the toilet, the shed, and the stable.

I'm planning to have the rooms in the second floor of the main building for my party members' private uses. While at it, I also instructed her not to enter the basement since I'm going to use it for my study and also research room.

"It's a wonderful mansion. This is the first time I've seen one that has been so thoroughly cleaned and maintained. The previous master must be experienced."

I'm sorry for the Ms. Miteruna who's being astonished, but it was cleaned with Leriril's magic. Let's not say it out loud since she's admiring it and all.

I pass a small bag that contains some silver coins and gold coins to Ms. Miteruna. She's probably going to need some cash for buying fuel, miscellaneous goods and groceries.

"Umm, master. In case of noble mansion, it's possible to buy stuff with tabs, so there is no need to deposit such large amount of money to the employees like this."

Come to think of it, they were also using tabs for buying stuff in the duchy capital. Although she said 'large amount of money', it was only around 10 gold coins anyway, so I left it to her.

After Roji and Annie have arrived, Nana and I leave. It'd be troubling for me if they see us off, so I told them not to.

We teleported to the labyrinth behind the stable.

◇

"Go~ Ryu~" Nanodesu!"

Arisa and the othes arrived slightly late after Nana and I teleported into the villa. I receive Pochi and Tama who are behaving like spoiled kids and spin them around.

"Phew~ Teleporting this many people is tiring."

"Arisa great."

Mia is patting the head of Arisa who's acting like some kind of an old man, sitting down on the stump chair.

Arisa and the others were hunting in area 4 when I contacted them, so they joined late.

"Master, how is the issue?"

"Ah, I've employed a good person out of viscount Shimen's referral. She's a dependable looking woman on her late 20s."

"Is she married?"

"She seems to be a widow."

"Oh! The widow manager is here!"

I was telling Liza and Lulu about Ms. Miteruna, but Arisa was getting spirited up from [Widow] word.

"A bamboo broom, and an apron with chick pattern are the default aren't they."

No, although I understand the reference.

<TLN: Maison Ikkoku.>

"It just needs an old dog, but I've never seen any dog after we've arrived in the labyrinth city."

Pochi points at herself, but Arisa shakes her head of course.

"Arisa, I'm sorry to pour cold water on your excitement, but Ms. Miteruna is extremely slender."

Arisa was blanked for a moment, but then her tension subsided like she understood what I mean.

◇

Nana blocks with her shield, while Liza shoots down the corns that are shot like a machine gun. I caught all the corns that were going to fly away behind with [Magic Hands]. These corns that are shot by the Walking Corn have hard shells, yet the inside are edible. There was no [~resisted the poison] on the log when I tried to eat it, so it's probably not poisonous.

Looks like Pochi has exterminated the monster this time. Her Heavy

Blow skill has quite powered up ever since she learned Flickering Movement skill. She could possibly match Liza's blow after she becomes an adult, and her physique grows.

"Smells nice~?"

"Are you making something nodesu?"

"Hmm? I made pancake like thing since this seemed like corns."

"Mou, please stop making dishes behind people who are fighting. Our stomaches would ring."

"Nn, it rang."

I cut some slices, put maple syrup on it, and split it to everyone. It's a bit of snack.

Even though it looks like I could extract vanilla from the the Crawling Aroma Column (Vanilla Stalk) monster that we have defeated before this Walking Corn, I don't know how to do it so I'm hoarding it in the storage for the time being. If I can get my hand on vanilla, I can make more varied snacks. Vanilla Stalk was quite a powerful monster that could use Charm.

"Delish~"

"My cheeks are melting nodesu!"

It's not really fluffy, I should add some baking soda next time.

"Give me a bit more maple."

"Nn."

"Mou, I don't care if you two get fat."

Arisa and Mia ask Lulu who's in charge of maple syrup for more. I nod to Lulu who's looking at me with troubled face. It shouldn't have that much calorie if I'm not mistaken.

"Master, did you make this from the yellow beads of the monster from just before?"

"That's right. I make powder from that beads, and then add various things like eggs and sugar."

Nana is looking at the chick pattern that I've added on the back of the pancake. Since Arisa talked about chick apron just now, I made some adjustment to the heating magic tool, adding chick-patterned grilling surface on it.

"Master, this branding is peerless and wonderful. I recommend protecting it."

"I'll bake you some again later, so eat it."

Since Pochi and Tama seem to want second helping, I divide my share and give them half each. When I called them, they ran to me while having their mouths open, urging, so I cut big slices of the pancake and put it into their mouths.

Mia and Arisa mimicked them, opening their small mouths, but since my plate had been emptied, I threw candies into their mouth instead.

Now then, the reason why we can have snack time in the labyrinth is because the enemies are few. I thought that monsters would increase in the past few days, but only monsters around level 10 multiplied.

We have to trail-blaze into a new hunting ground to fight efficiently it seems.

10-20. New Hunting Ground

Satou's here. In net games like MMO, searching for a delicious hunting ground is one of its real thrill. Although with the growth of information exchanges on the internet nowadays, that joy only last several days after the update.

◇

When everyone was sleeping in the labyrinth villa, I went back to the mansion alone to check the situation, but there wasn't anything of note in particular. The children also seem to be healing nicely. I give nutrient supplements for to Ms. Miteruna.

Since Ms. Miteruna asked about greeting cards, I've decided to send it to not only for people in this city, but also for Nina-san in Muno barondom. I wanted to send the greeting cards to my acquaintances in the duchy capital and Bollhart too, but since there were too many people, I'll write to them when I have some free time.

I tell her that I'm going again until tomorrow morning, and head back to the labyrinth.

She asked me about my destination, but I ambiguously said that it was some minor business. During the tea parties in duchy capital, I heard that young nobles usually used such excuse when they were visiting women, so I imitated it.

◇

"New hunting ground?"

"Yeah, if we keep this up, the enemies in this area would likely die out tomorrow. Judging from the map, area 74 or area 109 look good. Area 74 is filled with amphibians and reptiles, area 109 is with insects."

"am-phi-bians?"

"What kind of monsters are they nanodesu?"

"Amphibians are like frogs. Reptiles are like snakes or lizards I guess."

There are cockatrices in area 69 that adjoins area 109. These monsters have high levels, there's even one at level 50. There are also high level basilisks in area 77 which neighbors area 74, it seems. Looking at the courses, the reason why there are a lot of monsters in area 74 and 109 is probably because the cockatrices and the basilisk are repulsing the explorers, so they can't go further in.

"There are many insects type monsters which have hard shells, so defeating them will take some time. I think area 74 with the amphibians and reptiles monsters is better here."

Liza suggests so with stiff face, but I didn't miss the glint in her eyes when she heard about the frogs. Pochi and Tama look happy about it, and the other members don't seem to object. If I'm not mistaken, a party called [Fang of Conflagration] was going to subjugate the cockatrices, so we can also avoid them if we go to area 74.

Let's pick a course where we won't encounter the explorers along the way as much as possible. If we're about to bump with one, I can just carry Nana and fly to the ceiling with Sky Drive, and we probably won't get find out.

◇

"The corner over there~"

"Monsters are hiding nodesu."

"Wait a minute, I'll check the surrounding with space grasp magic-- there are three Maze Centipedes. One of them is on the ceiling so be careful."

"I'll illuminate the ceiling with my light drop, so Mia-chan, fell it with your bow okay."

"Nn."

"Nana, provoke it."

"You centipedes! Don't think you're great just because you have a lot of legs, so I declare!"

I don't think centipedes have that in their minds.

One of the two centipedes that appear from the shadow due to Nana's provocation gets dropped to the ground by Liza's spear. Right after that, Pochi cuts off the centipede's head with her short magic sword.

Lulu illuminates the centipede that's on the ceiling with her light drop. An arrow that's shot by Mia with her small bow pierces the gap between the centipede's crust. Lulu is holding a magic gun on the other hand that's not holding the light drop, she skilfully shoots the roots of the centipede's legs. Lulu's marksmanships has become quite good.

Nana blocks the charging centipede with her great shield. The centipede vigorously climbed the great shield that it had rammed into and tried to attack, but Nana penetrates its head with her large sword from below. Furthermore Nana recites the Command Word [Tear] to activate the magic sword's special function, rupturing the centipede's head.

This [Tear] is a new feature that I've just experimented. I've put on thin membrane of force on the surface of the sword which will snap out with the command word. Since the eruption itself doesn't contain much power, I created the membrane to be in fine threads to increase its killing power, making it tear through the enemy's body from inside. Compared to [Shell], there seems to be a few situations where this can be used since if the enemy is soft, you'd be better off slashing with the sword normally.

The only one who didn't fight the centipedes, Tama, was dealing with the Goblin Assassin that was sneaking from behind. This monster is an assassin-type demi goblin that sneaks up from the shadow in narrow passages, they will launch surprise attacks from behind if you're careless. Even though their levels are only around 3-5, it seems 30% of explorers' deaths annually are caused by these Goblin Assassins.

"I guess it's around White 7 Vermilion 3?　There's rarely any Red-grade magic cores like in area 17 huh."

Arisa is complaining while lighting the centipede cores with a light drop. From all the experience so far, it seems that the older the monster, the deeper the color of the magic core tends to become. And it seems that the higher the level, the bigger its magic core becomes.

◇

Along the way, in a certain hall of area 1-2-21, we happened to pass by the party of miss Gina and miss Heliona that were fighting a Soldier Mantis. Soldier Mantises are weak monsters that are around level 13-18.

Although I've said hall, there are variations in elevation, and curtain-shaped screens are also hanging from the ceiling, so the field of view is bad. These curtain-shaped screens which I've seen here and there in the halls and corridors seem to be wreckages of spiderwebs that have accumulated dust.

The person who seems to be the party leader over there seems to have noticed us too, but it seems the leader doesn't intend to have a contact with us unless we get closer.

Those girls are in a party of 10 people, four in full-body metal armors, two in partial metal armors, and the other four are in leather armors.

Miss Gina is using a long spear instead of the flail from before, and she's attacking a monster from behind a heavy soldier who seems to be Miss Heliona. It seems she's injured as there's a bandage wrapped on one of her arm.

There's a single magician who sometimes shoots out firebolts from the furthermost behind. I feel that the firebolts often hit the magician's friends instead of the monsters, but it must be my imagination. The jeers must also be my imagination.

"Ugeh, that fire magician is terrible. The firebolt was aimed at the back of the vanguard shield-user."

"Affirmative. That magician is a dangerous pyromaniac, so I assert."

They should be able to win since there's only one opponent, but it'll be dangerous if there are many.

We continue without calling out to them, and join the beastkin girls who have gone ahead to the exit.

"Easy victory~?" "Nanodesu!"

"Master, we've collected the magic cores."

"Thank you. Then, let's go."

I receive the three Soldier Mantises' magic cores from Liza. I had asked the three to go ahead and exterminate a small group of Soldier Mantises that were coming from the passage. Since Pochi has a shallow cut on her cheek, I heal her with [Aqua Heal].

I put the remains of the Soldier Mantises besides the magic cores in the same folder in my Storage since they may be useful for something. I can also put it in Arisa's space magic [Garage], but since it consumes large amount of magic power, we don't use it for now.

There are a lot of Mantis-type and Grasshopper-type monsters in this area 21. It seems they can be sold handsomely, largish parties are encamping in each halls of this area.

Looking at them when we passed by, every party didn't seem like they were fighting all-out, they always had reserves who weren't fighting.

I thought that they were taking safety margin, but I realized that they were taking precautions against something other than monsters after they warned me. It's probably not only against the lost thieves, but also explorers who should have been their companions. There might explorer parties with a bad manner who snatch the monster that the other have defeated after much hardship from the side.

◇

We discovered a body that's getting eaten by monsters in the main corridor that connects to the area where miss Gina and the others were just now.

I shoot [Short Stun] to tear the monsters off the bodies, and Arisa's firebolts burn down the Maze Cockroaches. Apparently, it's an easily burnable monster.

The body that were getting eaten by the cockroach monsters is of one of the person who's picking a quarrel with us in the West Guild, one of the friends of the man called Besso. I put the hair of the deceased and the bronze plates that Liza has collected into the Storage.

"Ugeh, maybe he got attacked from behind when he was running."

"Affirmative. I recommend children not to see this."

There's a crossroad ahead of this corridor, the left has Besso and one of his friend, and the right is a hall with a large-scale party of 20 people. The party are fighting monsters twice their number. Among them, there are two people from [Beautiful Wings], and the party of three beastkins from the ant-train incident.

Besso and his friend seem to be escaping without any monster pursuing them. Those two only have around 20% healths left, but since their life natures seem to be dirty, they will probably survive.

Rather than that, I'm more interested with the composition of the 20-people party. The five core members are around levels 15-18, but the other 15 are levels 5-10, they're somewhat unreliable to fight monsters in this area. Bluntly speaking, it's absurd. Even the cockroach that Arisa had effortlessly defeated just now was at level 12.

I don't want to leave acquaintances to their deaths, and our members can probably win unhurt, so I guess I'll intrude upon it.

I also thought about cleaning it up from a distant, but I decided to let everyone fight this time.

I'm not thinking that we should stop being inconspicuous, but we've already been conspicuous enough after getting the Red Iron promotion from the guildmaster. Showing everyone's abilities in front of other explorers, so that the surrounding recognize it sooner will probably decrease troubles.

Fortunately, since my true strength won't spread, people will think that

I'm an incompetent noble who's surrounded by strong retainers, and I will become the target of threats or kidnapping instead. It might be nice to purposely let myself get kidnapped, and have Pochi and Tama save me afterward.

◇

"Satou, a fork."

"Yeah, there are 20 explorers who are fighting cockroach monsters like before to the right of the crossroad."

"Then, we should go straight?"

I usually let Liza or Arisa make a judgment from Mia's report, but I decide on the plan this time since people's life are hanging here.

"No, my acquaintances are there, and they will be annihilated if they're left alone so let's save them."

"Is it alright?"

Arisa asked since it wasn't like the usual me, so I told my thinking just now to everyone. Mysteriously, not just Arisa, every member is also enthusiastic to be in the situation where they save me from kidnapping.

Leaving that aside, since everyone has agreed, we proceed to the right on the crossroad.

"And, who are those acquaintances?"

"It's the female party and the beastkins from the ant-train incident back then."

"Wait you, I'm fine with helping them, but don't raise some strange flag okay."

How rude.

"I remember. Those vulgar people who were hugging master right."

I wonder what, Lulu looks somewhat dark.

◇

In the hall that we had arrived at, maybe the leader-shi was competent, there was no casualty despite the party being clearly in disadvantage.

They have already been cornered in one part of the hall though.

They're in perilous situation enough that if even one party member dies, they will be annihilated.

Now then, I'm sorry that it looks like we're waiting for our turn to show up, but let's let the cavalry out.

10-21. New Hunting Ground (2)

Satou's here. If it's too good to be true, then there must be something attached to it. There are some intricate frauds with not-really-good-to-be-true talk subtly mixed in nowadays, maybe it's for the sake of deceiving cautious people. And, even in another world, there are people who entice other people.

◇

"Mia, use your spirit magic to for illumination when I give you the signal. Arisa shoots the firebolt chantlessly toward the cockroach once Mia unleashes her magic. I will separate the cockroaches from the explorers while matching the timing of the firebolt's impact, so Liza, Pochi and Tama are to assault every cockroaches okay."

"Master, shouldn't we call out to them before we illuminate the hall?"

Liza raised her hand lightly, and gave an advice. That's true.

"We wouldn't want them to mistake us as lost thieves and attack us instead after we've gone the trouble of saving them after all."

"You're right. I entrust calling them to Liza. Mia should use her magic once Liza signals to her after she's made sure that the other party have acknowledged."

Arisa, I'm sorry, but after the first magic, don't use your magic chantlessly again, also, abstain from using space magic. Lulu too, since magic guns are conspicuous, please use only nature magic this time. Nana, you're with me house-sitting here."

"I'm dissatisfied in anger, so I complain."

Unfortunately, Nana has to persevere from her shield duty. After all, Nana and me shouldn't have been in the labyrinth.

I wait until everyone conveys their consent, and the strategy begins.

Cockroaches are encircling the explorers in the hall where they are located. We are just right on the flank of the cockroaches to begin the attack.

"We're『Pendragon』. We will help!"

"Oh, yer a big help!　If we survive this, I'll treat everyone of you in the bar!"

I thought that they would argue back, but the leader seemed to have promptly acknowledged our help. They must have been really quite cornered.

First, the light ball from Mia's spirit magic illuminates the battlefield from the ceiling. In no time flat, an explosion from Arisa's firebolt occurred in the center of the cockroaches. The cockroach that has been directly hit is blazing up, and the cockroaches around it are also burning.

I slip my [Magic Hands] in the explosion and hurl the cockroaches from the explorers to a place slightly away from them.

"Ugeh, disgusting."

"Mwuu."

I understand Arisa's and Mia's feels. I also agree. I didn't think that they would straighten up midair and began flying. As expected of cockroaches.

The three beastkin girls assault on the battlefield while leaving red traces of light from the magic edge.

It was a one-sided trampling.

The entire health of a cockroach disappeared with a single blow from Pochi's short magic sword. Tama's twin magic swords one-sidedly shaves away the cockroach's health with slashing attacks. Even though their health have been reduced by Arisa's firebolt, it's still quite something.

As for Liza, she cuts down the cockroaches on the ground with magic edge, and shoots down the flying cockroaches with magic edge cannon. She's the very embodiment of one-hit kill.

『Awesome, they're cutting down those hard shell like it's nothing.』

『Cih, I can do that much too if I only have magic weapons.』

『Imposs~ible. My mantis sword is also a magic sword, but as you can see what's happened.』

I pick up voices from the other party with Attentive Ears skill.

I had limited the cockroaches course so only as many as they could manage got close to them, so they now have room to converse.

Guessing from their conversations, looks like the monster-part weapon that the leader-shi is using is a magic sword. I didn't notice since it didn't have red trails of light. Since it seems that it's made from mantis-type monster, I'll try to create the same thing when I'm free.

◇

The vanguards aren't the only ones doing great of course, the rear guard, Arisa and the others are too.

"Fuhahaha! The cockroaches are like trash~ no~ the oily bugs they are, burning nicely~ now, once more. I'll go with Fire Circle this time~"

Arisa's tension is dangerous.

Nevertheless, it seems that she still has some sense left to chant the magic properly, and not get the beastkin girls and the other party members rolled up in her magic.

Arisa's showy firebolt and fireball are standing out, but Lulu's [Force Spear (Javelin)] is also steadily killing the cockroaches.

Since Lulu's magic power isn't as much as Arisa and Mia, every time her MP has diminished, I make her stop beside me, and I use [Magic Power Transfer] to replenish her MP.

Mia walked on the space that the beastkin girls and Arisa had opened, and began healing the explorers there. Unlike me and Arisa, Mia can't see the explorers' stats, so I use [Telephone] to instruct her to people that need to be casted with [Clear Poison] or [Water Heal].

『My pain is disappearing.』

『Oh, my wounds are healed, I can continue fighting now.』

『What's this, I can feel my numbed arms and legs again.』

『Me too.』

『Thank you! Magician girl!』

<TLN: the 'girl' part here can also mean 'kid/child'>

Mia was wearing her hood so the explorers didn't seem to notice that she was an elf, but since they could immediately discern her build, they seemed to interpret her as a girl, or maybe a kid. I couldn't see it from here, but I clearly understood that Mia was nodding while being embarrassed.

The charming-san from Beautiful Wing party seems to have gotten a direct attack from the cockroach, her upper body suffers from a big injury. Mia was going to heal her with magic, but they seemed to have used their clothes as bandages, the upper half of their bodies were exposed, it had become a sight for sore eyes. Mia seemed to have properly given them the mantles and shirts that I had asked Mia beforehand. They're just cheap things I've bought from Seryuu city long ago, but it's probably better than wearing nothing.

With Mia's magic, the explorers who have become unable to fight return to the battlefield little by little. Thanks to that, the battle over there is stabilizing.

Now then, the cockroaches extermination seems to be entering the end game.

The explorers with insufficient levels are also working in group and have successfully defeated a cockroach. Some of them begin to pointlessly chatter while fighting.

『That damn Besso, what kind of nice hunting ground is this.』

『Saying that stray maze cockroach comes out alone here so we can safely hunt it, damn him.』

I see, I thought that Besso had attracted the swarm to them, but they were taken by his cajolery huh.

『I thought I was going to die when so many of them were coming.』

『We're indebted to Pendragon huh.』

『As expected of the Red Iron Plate that guildmaster personally selected.』

I'm relieved that they're not holding some strange grudge like having their prey taken or something.

◇

Arisa and Mia have returned.

"Hey hey, the leader over there said that these many cockroaches don't usually come out around this area."

"He said."

"Looks like it."

While checking the surrounding areas and corridors with the map, I replenish the two's magic power. Arisa repeatedly said [Flag]. And, in accordance to Arisa's request, a big game is coming.

"Arisa, according to my guess, a Gushing Hole will appear in the innermost wall from my standpoint in 4-5 minutes."

Okay okay with the "Flag, it's here!", just listen to me.

"It's a『Hunter Mantis』. It's a strong level 35 mantis-type monster, so be careful."

"Okay, I'll tell it to Liza."

"Nn."

While leaving the few cockroaches left to the explorers, Arisa and the others are preparing to intercept the expected point of the Gushing Hole. Everyone seemed to have drank stamina and healing potions as their various gauges have all restored to the maximum. Nana and me are moving to get close to Arisa and the others under the cover of the darkness.

The Hunter Mantis-kun that has appeared from the gushing hole is quite big. Its overall height is 5 meters, around as high as a two-story building. It's twice as tall as a Soldier Mantis. It's a bit of a Kaijuu isn't it. Unlike normal mantis, this one has a pair of sickle arms on each side, and 10 legs.

While thinking so, I use [Magic Hand] to prevent the Gushing Hole from closing. As expected, it won't close as long as there is some kind of obstacle.

After seeing that huge body, the explorers are rushing toward the hall exit--the place where we have just entered from--in a hurry. Looks like it barely hasn't become a panic since the leader-shi over there instructs them with loud voice.

The explorers have evacuated to the border of the main corridor, but several high-leveled ones are looking here. It seems that they intend to help if things get dangerous, but it looks like they understand that they will only drag us down, they don't seem like they're going to participate at the moment.

◇

"Pochi, Tama, this time Nana isn't participating. Pay attention to keep it from going toward the rear guard."

"Don't worry be happy~"

"Roger nanodesu!"

Tama got it wrong like usual, but she jumped back to avoid the sweeping attack of the Hunter Mantis' big sickle. With Flickering Movement skill, Pochi avoids the Hunter Mantis' leg that comes trampling down from above.

Liza was trying to intercept the trampling Hunter Mantis' leg with her magic spear--but as expected, looks like it was impossible. The leg seemed to have taken some damage, but Liza's plan to deprive it of its leg didn't materialize.

"It won't get find out from this distance, so it's alright for me to mix some space magic in right?"

"Master, your permission to let me participate."

I agree to Arisa's wish. I also let Nana who looks bored to attack from behind Lulu's back. They use the same nature magic so it probably won't be exposed.

On top of having a hard body, the Hunter Mantis' height meant that only magic and Liza's spear could reach it, so they're having a hard fight.

Tama and Pochi were going to climb the Hunter Mantis' legs, but it kicked them, dropping them to the ground. It's rare for Tama to receive a direct hit.

"Ow ouch~"

"The mantis person is childish despite being huge nodesu!"

Yup, they're unhurt.

Their defenses have been strengthened. They would be severely wounded if they get directly hit by the big sickle as expected, but they seems alright if it's just a kick. Pochi has put her face guard on during the battle so I can't see her expression, but her big gestures is transmitting her indignation quite enough.

This time Liza pierced the magic spear from below the Hunter Mantis' abdomen, but since its abdomen was as hard as its shell unlike normal mantis, it didn't suffer much injury. Since it made it attack in rage like with the monster in a game instead, I feel that it's better for her to aim at another place.

"...■■ Flame"

The flame born from Mia's spirit magic burns the Hunter Mantis. Looks like it has resistance to it, it isn't damaged much.

Still, it seems to be feeling hot, the Hunter Mantis opens its back shell and spreads its wings, threatening us.

"Pochii!"

"Tamaa!"

The two who have sheathed their swords are going to do something behind the Hunter Mantis. Tama rushes to Pochi who has crouched while joining her hands--Jump! Combining the throwing power of Pochi, and Tama's own running jump power, Tama had splendidly landed on the Hunter Mantis' back.

Tama pulls her twin swords, and stab the defenseless back of the Hunter Mantis with them.

The Hunter Mantis closed its back shell in panic, but it was a bad move as it only made Tama's twin sword sink further. Making use of the spilled blood, Mia uses her [Balloon] magic to wrench open the back shell. Tama got thrown into the air from the force, but it was fine since she skilfully caught the back shell midair.

The defenseless back immediately fell prey to Arisa's [Space Destruction(Smasher)] magic and Liza's Magic Edge Cannon, decreasing the Hunter Mantis' health greatly. At this time, one of the back shell couldn't close anymore, maybe the tendon for opening and closing it was cut.

The physically reinforced Nana stealthily tosses Pochi towards that back.

After the flurry of Pochi and Tama magic edges dances, the Hunter Mantis finally used up all its strength, and collapsed to the ground.

"Big victory!" "Nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama raise their victory cries on the back of the Hunter Mantis. I can hear shouts of joy from the distant explorers.

Since I won't be able to collect the remain of the Hunter Mantis like this, I use [Magic Hands] to move it like a marionette and go away to beyond the Gushing Hole that I've left open. I collect the Hunter Mantis remain into my storage at the unseen place.

I tell Liza the plan for their exit with [Telephone], she will have to tell the explorers in my place. I also explain the plan to everyone.

"We will chase after the Hunter Mantis that has escaped!   We will not come back here, so please go back to Selbira without waiting for us!"

After we all had entered the Gushing Hole, I closed the Gushing Hole behind.

There is no Sign Monument here, so we advance through the narrow corridor with the help of the light Mia's produced.

I've confirmed on the map that this has become the shortcut to the new hunting ground.

There are a lot of enemies, but they are all small fry, so we will probably arrive faster than planned.

10-22. New Hunting Ground (3) [Revised]

Satou's here. There are various abnormal statuses that appear in games like poison or paralyze. Even though abnormal status is hard to deal during the beginning of the game, since there are a lot of games where you get items that invalidate abnormal status during the endgame, I feel that it's become a mere trope.

◇

"What's that?"

"Don't look. It's the boss of the basilisks. You'd get turned to stone."

"Could it be, that's the Floor Master?"

"No, it seems that there's no Floor Master in the upper stratum."

There are few sign monuments around this area, so someone with normal eyesights can only see shades inside the hall.

The giant lizard fit to be likened to a hill is the master of Area 77, the [Mother Basilisk]. I imagined that it would vaguely look like a crocodile, but if I have to say, its appearance looks similar to a chameleon. It's about 7-8 meters tall, but the full body length is around 70-80 meters. If this hall didn't have nearly 300 meters long side, it probably wouldn't be able to move.

Beside this boss-like monster, there are around 10 10-meter class stone lizards (Basilisks) in this hall. The Basilisks' levels are in the first half of 30s, so they originally should have been just right to be opponents for everyone, but since their petrification is dangerous, I intend to pass through them.

"Master, are the basilisks the smoked meat that we were eating during the dwarves dinner party?"

"That was~" "Delicious nodesu!"

"It felt a bit sizzling on the tongue, but it went very well with sweet liquor didn't it."

"Mwu."

I feel they're implying that we should hunt them.

"I'll hunt 2-3 of them later, so don't get close to them okay."

"Is it because the petrification is dangerous after all?"

I answered "That's right" while nodding to Arisa's question.

"Petrivication~?" "Nanodesu?"

"Gufufufu~ Let me tell you~"

"Arisa is having an evil face nodesu! That's the sign of her trying to deceive Pochi nanodesu!"

"No~ way~ I'm really going to tell you."

Tama was pulling my clothes, so I looked back, and I saw a Lesser Basilisk crawling in hiding. I quickly fell its neck with [Flexible Sword] magic and put it into the storage with [Magic Hand] without moving it from its place. There's a possibility that the head still has the power to petrify like medusa in legend after all. It just so happened that there were several Lesser Basilisks and one Basilisk in our route ahead, so I killed them and put them into my Storage. I cut only one small-sized one into block sizes that will make it easy to smoke.

"Nyunyu~?"

"What's wrong nodesu?"

Tama puts both her hands on her head and puzzle over something.

"If it stares, stone~? Bacilisik can't play staring-game~?"

"That's bad nanodesu! Poor basilisk person, they can't play staring game nanodesu!"

You were worrying about such thing huh.

"Perseus did use mirror's reflection to turn Medusa into stone. Why don't you make shields with mirror surface and let us fight with it."

Why do you want to fight so much.

"Don't complain to me if your clothes and equipment get petrified and you have to fight bare naked."

Leave the "get stronger every time you takes off your clothes" power to the oversea ninja alone. Moreover, I can see your era when you look at your own body, take a strange pose and then wink, so please stop it.

◇

The area 74 that we've finally arrived at is composed of 10 big halls and 30 small rooms that are connected. We were able to substantially cut the time it takes to get here thanks to the shortcut that connected the roaches room to the Basilisk area.

The first hall is the frogs area that's half-submerged in water. There are many megaliths covered in moss on the surface, while algae and water plant are floating on the water surface on the shore. A large lotus-like leaves have grown on the water surface in the center of the room, a lot of small insects are flying near the water plant. They seem to be normal insects as they have no particularly strange effect.

Swarm of bats are crowding near the ceiling. These bats seem to be monsters, but since their levels are in single digit, let's leave them alone unless they come attacking.

It seems that there's a hidden room in the depth of this area, let's make it into our personal Teleport Point.

After I've finished the general check, I permit Liza and the others to fight.

"Then, Tama, lure some reasonable monster."

"Aye aye sir~"

Tama erases her presence, moves between the megaliths, drawing closer to a Rock Frog that's sleeping on the shore. She attacks the Rock

Frog from behind a megalith with a magic gun. Just like monsters in games, it shouldn't have been able to notice the first attack, but it seems that the Rock Frog's view is wide as it seems to have discovered Tama.

It's jumping with its body like a frog would, and Tama avoids it by using some obstacle. Vibration shakes whenever the frog lands. While not letting the frog caught up to her, Tama brought it to the place where everyone had readied their battle formation. There's only one frog that has come. Since it doesn't seem to have a link, my turn is none.

"You frog! Drop that thick skin of yours and live in humility, so I declare!"

Pulled by Nana's usual incomprehensible provocation, the Rock Frog changes its target from Tama to Nana.

The Rock Frog is only four meters tall, but it seems to be quite heavy. Its outer skin is covered in blue rocks, looks like it'll be hurt to normally strike on it with swords. Its level is 34, and looks like it can spit out deadly poison in bullet forms.

Since I've already lectured those, everyone besides Liza has used [Shell] to protect their swords' blades.

Nana blocks the charge of a body that weight God-knows-how-many tonnes. Nana retreats back after yielding to its weight, but it's only for several meters. Nana seems to have nicely used nature magic to put spikes on the soles of her shoes.

"Flame charge nanodesu!"

With the combination of Arisa's fire magic and Pochi's physical reinforcement, she assaults the rock frog's flank like a cannon by combining Flickering Movement and Heavy Blow. The heavy body of the Rock Frog floats for an instant from the blow of small Pochi.

Arisa invokes the space magic [<<Dimension Piles>>] during that short moment, many penetrate the Rock Frog's belly. The dimensional stakes seem to pierce deeper due to the frog's own weight. She's cleverly used the opponent's weight against itself.

Lulu holds a magic artillery beside me and attacks, aiming at the Rock Frog's big eyes. The Rock Frog's eyes seemed to be protected by glass-like transparent shell as it had only dazzled for a bit even after receiving the huge bullet of the magic artillery.

From the opposite side, Liza who has activated magic edge is stabbing at the frog while aiming at its eyes and flank. Tama unleashes flurry of attack from magic edged twin magic swords on the wound under the frog's skin that Pochi has opened.

The Rock Frog is flinching, as maybe it has never received such one-sided attacks like this before. It was going to spit out venom bullets in desperation, but Nana who has promptly sensed it stopped it with [Remote Stun] of nature magic. The venom that it was going to spit out stopped in its mouth.

Mia invokes [<<Water Shredder>>] magic in its mouth, the Rock Frog suffers great damage from the poison that it has secreted itself. Is it suffering from the poison, or is the wounds hurt, it's attacking randomly with its tongue, and Nana splendidly handles it with her magic sword and great shield.

In the end, Liza settled it with Spiral Spear Attack, and the Rock Frog dropped down on the ground.

Pochi and Tama who usually do victory cries vigorously come beside me instead.

"Smells nice~?"

"Is it done nodesu?"

I'm making pickling sauce for the Basilisk meat from before. Since Arisa was complaining before, I've used (Air Control) to make the wind blows the other way and don't let the smell reach the battlefield.

"Not yet. After this sauce has cooled down, the meat has to be pickled in it and be left overnight."

"Unfortunate nanodesu."

"Looking forward, tomorrow~"

Right at that time, Liza came back while carrying a big red magic core, and lump of frog meat that should easily weight dozens kilograms.

"I have retrieved the hind legs that haven't been poisoned. I think it's better to not eat the torso meat."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't mind~"

"There are still a whole lot more frogs, so it's alright nanodesu."

Mia dejectedly apologizes for exploding the poison. The beastkin girls didn't seem to be angry, they cheered Mia up.

I take out the barbecue set that I've put into the storage beforehand, and begin grilling the frog meat. Although we've only just begun the hunt and it's still a long while until lunch, I've decided to start the lunch early since the hungry call is likely to occur.

The frog meat is too large to grill it just like that on the mesh, so I cut it into some palm-sized thick slices. The smell of the burning from the dipping meat juice spreads to the surrounding. I'm grilling two types of meat; one that's ordinarily seasoned with salt, and one that's smeared with the marinade for the smoked meat from just before.

I also grilled vegetables for Mia, and warmed the corn pancakes from before. It's quite chaotic with the smell of burning honey even mixing in. I regulate the air with Air Control to prevent the smell from getting mixed.

"Stupid delish~?"

"Grilled stuff is the strongest nanodesu!"

"It's softer than I thought, but it's truly delicious with the abundant meat juice. The meat that's grilled with sauce tastes salty-sweet, but it's growing on you isn't it."

Pochi and Tama are holding frog meat on iron skewers on both their hands and fully enjoying the barbecue while alternately biting on it. Liza is talking heartily she seems really happy. Nana uniformly chew on the meat and the vegetables. Mia still has different menu than everyone even now, but she's moving her small mouth with all her might to eat.

Arisa and Lulu are eating normally as they seem to have gotten used to monster meat recently. Particularly Lulu, she's trying various sauces on small slices of meat. She's not only doing it for herself, she also asks Liza and the others to try it, looks like she's adjusting the difference between their palates.

◇

After the meal short break, the hunt resumes.

We continue the hunt while I'm regulating so that no dangerous situation arise.

I was planning to have us rest in the Mansion of Ivy in the night because it had been a while since our last series of battles against high-level enemies, but since Arisa said some strange remark, "Labyrinth-feel will disappear", I decided to have us stay at the labyrinth villa in area 17 like yesterday.

There's no "Labyrinth-feel will disappear" even though we stay in the safe villa with bath.

10-23. Residences of the Mansion

Satou's here. I randomly imagine about some bizarre event when I look at a western-style house during the popularity of a genre called 'Mansion'. I also remember that there are many (games) where the mistress of the house is the mastermind for some reason.

◇

Now then, two days after we set the carved seal board in the new hunting ground--area 74, we decided to go back to the mansion. I went back to the mansion once every day with [Return] to see the situation there, but since Arisa and the others wanted to see Ms. Miteruna, they're currently going back through area 4. The reason why they didn't return the day after that was to hide the space magic. It would be strange if they got back earlier than the explorers who were exterminating the maze cockroaches when they should have been behind, so we delayed it by one day.

Nana and me directly teleport to the mansion ahead of them. We're teleporting to the stable. I've confirmed that there's no one beside the horses. They're good horses for not being surprised to us who appear suddenly. I've decided to give them special-made feed as the reward. It's a new one that's added with smashed corns.

We leave the stable and head to the main building. The girls who were working on the garden seemed to have noticed us and came to us. They're called Roji and Annie if I'm not mistaken.

"Welcome home, Chevalier-sama."

"Welcome home."

"Ah, I'm home."

The radar caught on Ms. Miteruna who seemed to have noticed the two's cheerful voices and then went to the entrance hall.

I've already confirmed the situation of the children and Ms. Miteruna with [Clairvoyance] magic. Although I can't say that they've opened their hearts, they've become better.

"Welcome home, master."

"I'm back, did anything happen during my absence?"

"Yes, two letters have arrived."

In the living room, I'm listening to Ms. Miteruna about the visitors and events here during my absence.

The letters are from Viscount Shimen and Marchioness Ashinen. It seems the Viscount is going back to the duchy capital the day after tomorrow, so he's inviting me to a dinner tomorrow.

Marchioness Ashinen invites me to a tea party the noon of the day after tomorrow. It seems that the wifes and daughters of Selbira's influential nobles regularly attend the tea party. Since personal connections helped me a lot in the duchy capital, I wrote the acceptance letter and gave it to Ms. Miteruna.

Oh right, I remembered about the letters.

I hand over the remaining bundle of the greeting letters that I've written last night to Ms. Miteruna. She looked slightly surprised due to the bundle's thickness. These are for my acquaintances in the duchy capital and the dwarves in Bollhart. I've written the shares for princess Menea's at the royal capital, and the viceroy's daughter Ririna's too of course.

I've also written our present condition besides greeting formalities for Sera and the people whom I'm close to.

Unlike for faraway place like Muno Barondom, there are merchant caravans that regularly go to the royal capital, and then airships can go from the royal capital to the duchy capital, so passing the letter is also easy. The dwarf hometown is slightly too far, but since there are merchant caravans that regularly go there from the duchy capital, it should be fine.

◇

The children whom we've saved have recovered enough to do simple chores, thanks to the nourishments and magic potions. After they've restored their muscle strengths later, they should be alright.

By Ms. Miteruna's advice, the children's beds have been moved to the servant building from the main building.

The reason why those children were in such place was because they wanted a kind of grass that were growing in the stable. The fruits of the grass called Tami Poppy seems to be very bitter, but it can be used as painkiller. However, it contains slight toxin, so when someone ingests it in large quantity, their consciousness will become turbid and lethargic.

They needed such painkiller due to the injuries they had gotten in the labyrinth. For baggage carriers who have bone fractures especially, their only choices are either selling themselves to the slave trader or die a dog's death. The slave trader had given up on these children. Since getting saved like in this case seemed to be quite rare, the children were extremely grateful.

That's not the reason of me wanting to employ these children as the mansion's servants though. This mansion needs various helping hands since there are magic tools in this mansion unlike the mansions of the duchy capital nobles, so this is just right.

"Then, are you going to let them stay in the mansion?"

"They don't seem to have any aim even if we let them go. Could you teach them how to work little by little?"

"I accept. I will bring them up into excellent maids."

Ms. Miteruna reassuringly accepted it. Quite reliable.

"Right, how much do people usually pay children for labor?"

"You don't have to pay them if they live in."

According to her, in exchange of not paying them until they grow up, you have to guarantee their food, clothing and shelter. If you're going to hire them after they've grown up, the common payment is one silver coin, although it also depends on their ability. The payment is not for a day worth. It's for one month. Of course the sum will go up when their job description increases, or their ability improves.

By the way, Ms. Miteruna's wage is one gold coin a month.

"Master, please give the children clothing and footwear if you're going to employ them. You don't have to give them something expensive, but if you let them wear old rags and be bare footed, people will doubt the family status of Pendragon house."

Worrying about family status of a house that's just been established for several months is one thing, but I do want to give them clothes and footwears.

"I understand. Buy them 2-3 clothes including for changes. If the money I've given before isn't enough, should I add it?"

"No, if master allow me use one silver coin from the money that has been given to me, it should be enough for old clothes and strings. Changes for underwear are needed, but it's enough to give them one clothes each. If their treatments were too lavish, the servants' attitudes would become arrogant--"

Ms. Miteruna gently reproved me. I intend to tailor maid uniforms for them later, is that bad too?

"Tailoring matching clothes for the servants is it? Having matching maid uniforms do happen in grand nobles' mansions, but only in big cities like the royal capital and the duchy capital, there is no mansion that does such thing in this savage labyrinth city."

It just doesn't exist, not prohibited, so I've decided to present maid uniforms to the children when they've become able to work their own job.

◇

Arisa and the others have returned. For some reason, she contacted me with [Telephone] when they just came out of the labyrinth gate. Looks like they've been surrounded by explorers, and can't move.It seems they will handle it appropriately and go back here.

Arisa and the others arrived one hour later.

"We were crowded, it was terrible you know. They're holding party celebrating the safe return in the tavern tonight they said. Master was also invited."

"Understood. I'll go with you since I don't have any plan tonight."

She hands me a small sack with cash while grumbling. The payment from the sales of magic cores and materials is a bit much. It seems the leader of the roach extermination party has given the magic cores payment for the roaches that we exterminated.

"He apologized that he couldn't bring back most of the roach's material since they didn't bring baggage carrier."

"What kind of things can be made from roach's material?"

"Dunno? Maybe roach armor and helmet?"

Looks like she's not really interested, Arisa absentmindedly replies.

◇

Now then, I gather Arisa and the others and the servants in the hall, and let them introduce themselves to each other.

By the way, the dying children are all human girls, and their names are Junni, Aina, Kitona, Suna, Teriona, and Hoho from the eldest to the youngest. I thought that they were ugly since the slave trader abandoned them, but every girl looks normal although plain. Their hair are all cut in short cut or bob cut since the grooming is hard.

"Then, everyone besides Nana-sama and Mia-sama is a slave?"

"Yeah, I'd like to release Arisa and Lulu but I can't since there's a bit of circumstance. I would immediately release Liza and the others if they wish so though."

I answer Ms. Miteruna's question with a bitter smile.

They've obtained Red Iron Plates after all, they're already fine enough to be released anytime. I have to seriously research the way to release the enforcement (Geass) once Arisa and the others have leveled up enough.

"Master, our wishes are to repay the favor to master. Please use us as slaves as it is."

"Unneeded child~?"

"Please don't abandon me nodesu."

They said similar things like when I was going to release them in Seryuu city back then. How about retainers instead of slaves?

"You're not unneeded child. What about becoming my retainers, not slaves?"

"Retainerrs~?"

"Everyone becomes a retainer nodesu?"

"Arisa and Lulu have to wait a bit though."

"Can we do it together~?"

"Then we do it together nodesu."

Arisa puts her arms on Pochi's and Tama's necks and shouts "Cute~ mou!" while swinging around. Lulu also looks really happy.

"Right! Since they're going to be employed here, how about teaching them letters?"

"You're right, can you lend them that learning cards?"

"Aye" "Nanodesu!"

I agree on Arisa's suggestion. The later words were from Pochi and Tama. Since they're OK with it, I ask Arisa to teach the children and Ms. Miteruna the way to play the learning cards. Ms. Miteruna looks really puzzled while saying "Teaching letters to commoner children?"

"That's right~ All members of team『Pendragon』can read, write and calculate after all."

"Th-these children too?"

Pochi and Tama who are pointed by Ms. Miteruna answer "Of course~", "Nanodesu!" and begin reading picture books out loud. They have to properly stop at the punctuations though.

I asked the senior group that are Lulu, Liza and Nana while Arisa was lecturing the way to play the learning cards.

◇

I'm absorbed in reading a book on the chair that I've put under the tree on the courtyard.

It's a dummy of course.

In actuality, I'm currently investigating the experiment for Living Armor's source of power. The prime candidate is the magic power vessel (battery) like the scarecrows use, but since it needs special material like world tree's sap, I want something more generic.

Suddenly, I thought about the holy sword and the wooden magic sword that had been filled with magic power.

Right, filling things with magic power itself is possible even without using special material like world tree's sap. The problem are the storage capacity, period and also efficiency. Now then, let's look for some usable circuit for it.

Lulu calls out to me as if she's seen through that I've decided on the rough objectives.

"Master, how about some tea?"

Lulu is carrying a glass goblet with blue tea inside. It's a cold tea that's proper with the TPO.

"Thank you, did you cool it with life magic?"

"Yes! Using magic is really convenient."

Lulu who's talking to me while smiling with her whole face is dazzling. Her magic capacity has increased with her level so she's become able to freely use the magic.

It might be a good idea to teach the children life magic and compounding after they've learned to read and write.

While thinking such thing, my mind goes back to the magic tool study.

10-24. Explorers

Satou's here. I remember about being surprised to see the figure of someone scooping the egg yolk of a boiled egg with a spoon in some kind of movie long ago. I've already forgotten the rest of the movie, but for some reason, only that scene leaves a deep memory.

◇

"Then, thanks for everyone from 『Pendragon』 for their rescue! And for our safe return, today let's drink the night away!"

"""YEAH!""

The feast begins with the leader-shi's greeting. His name is Koshin, and he seems to be the leader of a veteran explorer party called [White Horse Mane]. Gathering multiple parties and then going to the labyrinth deep like this time isn't their first time.

The party is located on the square where stalls have gathered ahead of the street with bungalows that's 300 meters to the east of the west gate. Around 30 food stalls and 10 drink stalls are lined up. The light from the stall signs are bright. Apparently, life magicians are using magic to illuminate it.

Besides us, there are also other explorers and day laborers-like people like carries who are enjoying the food and liquor from the stalls. Among them, there are young ladies with sensual clothes and strangely sexy young men here and there, sprinkling their charms. Either of them seem to be prostitutes.

One section of the square has been occupied today. It seems they've reserved one liquor stall, and three food stalls for the party.

There are no chairs and tables, it seems we're going to eat and drink in a circle, sitting on the ground. Lulu and Liza have put a sheet on the corner for the place we're sitting now.

The menu for this party this time are grilled meat, dried meat, boiled beans, and boiled potatoes. They're probably not shabby since Koshin-shi said teasingly "These are some feast" before the party began.

"Magician-san, thank you for the clothes that time."

"Mwu?"

The two people from [Beautiful Wings] come to Mia while carrying something that look like folded clothes. Since Mia who looks troubled seeks help from me, I act on it.

"Please have those clothes if it's fine with you. If you expose too much skin, bad bugs could come after all."

The two are forced to wrap few cloth on their body, so although they can hide the important places, their shoulders and stomaches are bare, it's quite sensual.

"Is it alright?"

"Thank you very much, Chevalier-sama."

The two must have been embarrassed, they readily wear the cheap shirts. They leave the mantles folded since it's hot.

◇

"Hard~"

"This meat person is quite tough nodesu."

"Haha, chibi-chan, you won't chew it if you eat like that. You thin it with a knife and then eat it."

Pochi bite through the meat with a 'pssh' sound. The man who seems to be the stall owner that gave her the advice looks at her in wonder.

"Is it tendon meat?"

Lulu cuts a thin slice of the meat, puts it on a plate, and passes it to me. I chew that meat on my mouth, it's hard alright. It could be softened if it was boiled in a pressure cooker. With some peculiar bad smell, it's hard to say that it's delicious, but it's also not bad enough to make you vomit, it's a delicate taste.

"This might be not to noble-sama's palate since it's monster meat."

"Insect meat is cheap after all, and you get used to it when you eat it everyday."

Looks like these grilled meat and dried meat are made from insect-type monsters. It's a meat that's pitch black before it's even grilled, and it's as tough as tendon meat of animals. As to what kind of insects they are, even the explorers only call it [Insect meat] or [Meat] since the stocks change everyday. It's extremely cheap, one skewer of the meat only cost one penny.

"When I've just become an explorer, I often follow along a strong party from behind and collect the meat of the monster after they've finished stripping it off the materials."

"Although it did become cash, it was quite nasty huh."

It seems there are a lot of explorers who only collect the shells or the claws that can become money from insect-type monsters, and then there are also explorers who specialize in collecting the meat from the leftover. The people who collect such monster meat are called [Corpse Retriever (Looter)], and seen as the lowest. What a strange story considering it's a fine job that supports meals like this.

Some young explorers are exhibiting sword dance-like acrobatics in the center of the explorers circle. When that was over, Pochi and Tama came to the center.

"Pochii!"

"Tamaa!"

"Tou!"

I wonder if someone incites them, they're demonstrating the jump like the one they've done to the mantis' back. Whoomph, toward Tama who's jumped five meters above, cheers are coming from the surrounding.

Nana caught the fallen Tama. Pochi and Tama, and also the spectator who plead the two to do the jump were scolded by Liza since they made dust enter the meals, they were downhearted.

◇

"These beans and potatoes are soft."

"Nn."

There are a lot of vegetables even though it should be expensive in the labyrinth city.

"These are also monster meat though."

"These are not the meat part you know. They're from the bodies of plant-type monsters called Walking Bean and Hopping Potato."

Looks like these beans and potatoes are taken from monsters. The labyrinth isn't only a mine, but also a ranch, and a farm is it.

I tried eating them a bit, and it seemed that these beans and potatoes are a bit different than normal ones. The bean has hard rind, and peculiar grass smell. There are white fibers that looks like of orange inside, this part is a bit bitter. When I chipped off the part, and then spooned the inside and ate it, it tasted like normal beans.

"As expected of noble-sama. You're refined~"

"Maybe I also should use the spoon?"

Oops, I didn't mean to look refined. Even though I only wanted to take the inside and tasted it, I got some strange admiration instead.

The potato has thin sweetness of potato and stickiness-like taste of taro. They told me that the violet part inside the potato is poisonous so I shouldn't eat it. Although it seems that it only causes upset stomach, there's no danger to life.

The <<Walking Bean>> is a 30 centimeters tall pod with arms and legs, and there are 2-3 beans inside the pod after you defeat it. Since it's four times as big as normal broad beans, it seems you can earn a penny from 20 of it.

The Hopping Potato is a strange potato-type monster that's jumping around with spiral spring, it's as big as the Walking Bean. You can get as much as 10 kilograms potato from one monster. Since one kilo is one penny, you can get some money from it.

A middle-aged spearman told me that you could easily defeat them by just readying your spear since they attack by ramming themselves. This man has been passionately talking about Liza and spears since a while ago.

Both are area 14 monsters, and explorers who have lost competition for monsters in the big first area often hunt them. Curiously enough, these two monsters either don't give experience at all, or give extremely little. They're monsters no doubt since they have magic cores the size of a rice grain, but it seems that there are people who don't level up despite hunting them for a year. Therefore, they tell me the theory of poor explorers, that is to earn income at the area until you have enough money to buy equipments and then move to another area.

"Now, now chevalier-sama. Let's pour you some."

"Thank you."

I taste the ale that I've received in the cup. It's sour and bad. It tastes like diluted beer mixed with vinegar. According to him this is a luxurious item, everyone is drinking deliciously. The alcohol strength feels less than 5%.

"Ara, Chevalier-sama, you can't drink ale with such refined manner! You have to drink it like, so, in one gulp!"

Looks like the beauty-san of [Beautiful Wings] changes when she drinks liquor, she passionately speaks the way to drink ale.

I've forbidden our members from drinking alcohol since it would be chaotic like before otherwise. Everyone is drinking fruit water that I've brought.

There are also some small barrels of wine and spirits among those, and then the contest quickly happens not long after the start of the party. Although those liquor were just normal things that I bought from liquor store along the way here, it was good that they happily received it.

The patrolling soldiers in red hard leather armor came just 3-4 hours after the sunset. They ordered us to dismiss in loud voice since there is a restriction for doing business late at night in this city.

Since I can't leave the completely wasted [Beautiful Wings] and I don't know their addresses, I've decided to let Liza and Nana carry them to the mansion. The guest room is vacant, so they can just sleep there.

We told our thanks to Koshin-shi who couldn't even articulate words properly from his drunkenness and went back to the mansion.

◇

"We have troubled you greatly yesterday."

"We're very sorry."

The [Beautiful Wings] apologized for last night while enduring the headaches from the hangovers. They don't usually drink themselves that bad in the bar, but they went overboard last night since Koshin-shi was treating. I offer them magic potions for hangover, and invite them to breakfast.

They were deeply moved at the breakfast that Lulu had cooked, maybe it suits their taste. Lulu who looked proud while being bashful from the praise was impressive.

I've heard in the party yesterday, their fine for the ant-train case is two gold coins for each. It seems they have loaned money to pay it, but the debt increases by 30% every 10 days, and they will be sold as slaves if they can't pay the interest every month. I think that's quite an usury, but if I think about the high mortality rate of explorers who die in the labyrinth, it might be appropriate.

I offered the two to let me take over their debts.

Of course this isn't out of sympathy.

Briefly speaking, this is a part of the measure for the labyrinth city orphan plan. Arisa and I racked our brains lately for this problem, and we concluded that training baggage carrier children who want to become explorers in the labyrinth to become full-fledged explorers is the quickest.

They should become able to sustain themselves once they reach levels to an extent, and if they want stability, I could refer them to become soldiers or subordinates of Baron Muno in his territory.

The former baggage carrier children who have become full-fledged explorers then can raise the next generation children and it becomes a nice loop.

The problem with the rearing is if it follows our training regime, they will level up without even getting the minimum knowledge. As the result, they would grow arrogant, careless and thought that they wouldn't die.

Then I heard the story about their debts when I was searching for teachers, so I scouted them.

These girls should be qualified as they've gone through hardships as explorers. These two should be enough for the meantime, but since the three beastkins from the ant-train case should also be suffering from the interest rate, let's think about increasing personnels soon.

I can't lead Arisa and the others for the next two days. During that period, I'll ask everyone to train these two.

10-25. Explorers (2)

<Author's Note: It's not from Satou's point of view this time.>

"Then, we will be going."

I inform Master so, and then leave the mansion behind.

Master is going to attend Viscount-sama's banquet, and Lulu has promised to teach the children how to cook and read, so they're going to stay.

This time, there are two female explorers, Iruna and Jenna in places of Master and Lulu. Although they're only as strong as normal soldiers, they've been given complete set of ant shell armors, one-handed swords, and shields by Master. They should be fine fighting against slightly higher leveled enemies.

"Then, during the time Chevalier-sama isn't here, the leader is Nana-san right?"

"In charge of battle command is Liza, making judgment during complex situations is Arisa, so I inform."

"Hee, is that so. Please take care of me, Liza-san."

I nod back to Iruna who talks to me sociably. Her way of talking sounds a bit like a man's.

"Then Arisa, what kind of place is area 11 we're going to today?"

"Eh! We're going to area 11?!"

"That is the plan, is there any problem?"

The black haired woman called Jenna cut herself between my conversation with Arisa. According to Arisa, she seems to be beautiful.

"Area 11 is a place full of troublesome monsters like Horn Hoppers or Rockhead Bees isn't it."

"That's right. You know your stuff."

"That's because that place is infamous in a bad way. There are a lot of monsters in the area so desperate explorers who have their prey taken sometimes go there, but most are either dead or receive injuries beyond recovery and retire."

I see, it's formidable. I've heard some good things. I look forward to it.

"Horn Hoppers and Rockhead Bee are certainly hard, but they're easy to handle since they go straight at you."

"Is it really?　I guess it's easy for the people who defeat that giant 『Hunter Mantis』?"

"That's right! If you're going to ride the big ship, hop aboard now."

Arisa is the right person to wipe off anxiety from this party after all.

Still, I wonder where did Arisa get information about Horn Hoppers and Rockhead Bee. She must have heard it from Master doesn't she?

◇

"Ara?　Liza-san, are we not buying oil for hand lanterns?"

"There is no need."

The inside of the labyrinth is bright enough to not be a problem during battles anyway, and Mia can use her magic to put out light in places without a Sign Monument. Moreover, we also have Light Drops.

"Can we stop by the guild for a bit? I'd like to replenish hemostasis ointments since we've run out of our stock."

"It's unnecessary. Mia can also use healing magic, and we'll give you some magic medicines once we enter the labyrinth."

"Ma-magic medicine? R-really? That's like one silver coin for one bottle right?"

I notice that my own sense of money has been numbed while nodding to her.

I've been using them readily since Master has given them readily, but I feel that I have to be economical on it.

"Your life is more important you know. Our Master really dislike it if someone he knows gets hurt. That's why, don't think that you have to save on it okay?"

Arisa advices while sending her line of sight toward me with upturned eyes as if she's read my mind. That is right, our Master is such kind of person.

"How about luminescent stones, or smoke balls and flash balls?"

"Nn~ we have the latter two from Master, but what does luminescent stone do?"

"You drop them on the junctions of the labyrinth. Although it stops glowing in three days, we should not lose the way back to the starting location if we drop these stones."

I see, since we are usually bestowed by Master's perfect guidance, we never leave traces behind. However, it seems to be quite a useful item.

We buy the item in the guild and put it into the magic bag <<Holding Bag>> that master has entrusted. Master has warned us not to use our Magic Pouch in public.

"Eh! Does Liza-san has Item Box skill?"

"No, this bag is a magic tool."

"T,there's that kind of tool huh. As expected of people employed by noble-sama."

These two are a bit noisy aren't they. Please follow Pochi's and Tama's examples. The two are being carried on Nana's arms, hanging quietly.

◇

"They're coming, four Rockhead Bees."

"You worker bees! You are not good just because you're solid, so I declare!"

<TLN: The 'solid' here can also mean steady.>

The four Rockhead Bees are rushing to Nana who's set up her great shield. These Rockhead Bees are monsters that have heads as sturdy as rocks. Master is not here today, so I cannot recklessly use magic edge. Let's go at it steadily, this is not because of Nana's provocation.

"Pochi, Tama, avoid attacking the hard heads and aim for the gap on their necks."

"Aye aye~"

"Roger nanodesu."

I move to the side of the flying bee with Flickering Movement, and thrust my spear on the gap between its rock-like shell. It seems to be a fragile monster, the head separates from its body with just one blow. Pochi and Tama had defeated them without any problem too.

"Nana! Don't kill that one, drop it to the ground."

"Understood!"

Nana blocks the last one with her great shield, and then knocks it down to the ground as instructed by Arisa.

"Iruna, and Jenna, attack that Rockhead Bee."

"Is it alright? The sword will be chipped if I attack like this y'know?"

"It's fine, just hit it! You can break one or two swords!"

The two were hesitating at first, but they finally moved after the second instruction. As for the bee, Nana has stitched its wings to the ground with her magic sword.

The two swing their sword with weak postures, but it doesn't reach. Let's have Nana teach them the way to swing sword a bit later.

◇

"Level 10 enemies are really weak aren't they."

"No no, that conclusion is strange."

"That's right, even a knight in full body armor would suffer great injury if he was rammed by this monster."

That knight must have not enough guts surely.

"You two hear me. When multiple enemies come, exterminate the last enemy that we have left like just now. You two attack the enemy Nana has pinned down."

"Eh? Is it alright like that?"

"I feel guilty like I'm a stone-throwing baggage carrier."

After I told Iruna who was showing disapproval toward my instruction that it was for the sake of raising their levels, she reluctantly agreed to it.

This kind of high pride of a warrior is likable isn't it.

"By the way, can I ask something? What's stone-throwing baggage carrier?"

"Ah, do you know that every year during the harvest festival, great number of children from the villages and towns around the vicinity come to this labyrinth city to become explorers and baggage carriers?"

"Yep, I know."

"Some of them are imprudent. There are some baggage carriers who secretly throw a stone to the monster that explorers have desperately defeated and have their level raised. That kind of act is called『stone-throwing baggage carrier』. If a baggage carrier does such thing even once, he/she won't be hired by explorers ever again."

I see, it must be like snatching prey that has been weakened. Pochi, Tama, and me raised our levels with such method at the beginning, but I shouldn't worry about it since we had received Master's permission for that.

"Eh~ parasitic people exist in any world huh. But, our goal this time is leveling you two up, so keep on keep attacking okay."

"Yeah, I understand. Much obliged."

"We'll work hard so we can quickly become useful."

Now then, the time for conversing should be over soon.

Tama has returned from the other side of the corridor while bringing some Horn Hopper.

"Pretending to be the leader just because you have a horn, how ridiculous!"

There's only monster this time. It doesn't seem like I'll have a turn, but I'm keeping alert on the surrounding to prevent Arisa and Mia getting attacked.

Tama slips through between Nana's legs. The Horn Hopper vigorously rammed its whole body onto Nana's great shield, but seemed that it was too vigorous, its prideful horn broke and fell on the ground. It's the same great shield that didn't even let a single injury in from the attack of the Hunter Mantis' big sickles. This kind of result isn't surprising in the least.

"No way, it should be able to penetrate an iron plate you know?"

"Oh dear, that's a great shield."

"You two, move your hands before your mouths."

"Yes."

"Understood."

The Horn Hopper is even softer than the Rockhead Bee from before. The two's swords are doing better than before. After confirming that the two have wounded it, I thrust my spear for the finishing blow.

◇

"Liza-san, we will be late for dinner if we don't go back soon."

That's a serious problem.

"How regrettable, we're almost at 100 monsters defeated with just three left."

"Stomach hungry~?"

"Yes nanodesu. Hamburg steak-sensei is waiting nodesu!"

It's hamburg steak tonight huh. It's a bit unsatisfactory since there's no chewiness on the texture, but Lulu should also be making steak. Leaving aside the taste, the chewiness of the monster meat we ate yesterday was quite outstanding. I wonder if the meat of these monsters are like that too?

"Iruna and Jenna, are these monsters edible?"

"Un, horn and rockhead should be edible."

"The body of the rockhead is said to be sweet and tasty, although we can't bring it back with us if we can't shave off the heavy outer rock shell. I've never eaten it before, but I've heard it from someone."

I see, it is tasty huh.

I leave my spear to Nana, and then peels off the rock shells of the Rockhead Bees by using the disassembly knife I've put on my waist's back. I line the Rockhead Bee's meat on the taking-home meat sheet, Pochi and Tama also bring and line up one body-worth of meat each. These girls must have been fascinated by the talk just now. When Pochi saw that Tama was also bringing the Horn Hopper's meat, she was also going to bring the meat in panic, but I caught her nape, stopping her. Let's have just these much today.

"Hey, do Arisa and the others always fight this many series of battles?"

"As expected, we don't usually defeat this many monsters."

"That's so, isn't it. It's usually only around 30 monsters."

"That's right huh. Your body won't be able to endure it if you always fight with this pace."

I feel that the fights with the higher-leveled enemies we usually do are difficult too, but there is no need to tell them the truth and make them feel down.

◇

We got four gold coins from the meat of Rockhead Bees which were sold for quite a price, and also from the magic cores that had higher grades that I thought. The Horn Hopper meat sold for 20 copper coins for one monster worth. There was no purchase notice for the horns of the Horn Hoppers, but it seems they can be sold for several big copper coins each if you negotiate well at the weapon shops.

I was going to sell all the meat from the Rockhead Bees, but I decided to bring one monster worth of meat as a souvenir for Master.

We had to pay the carrying tax for the Rockhead Bee's meat and the Horn Hopper's horns, but judging from Arisa who didn't complain about it, the sum was probably right.

As ordered by Master, we split the income according to the number of people, including the two girls. Arisa calculated the amount of money. I'm still bad at calculation even now.

It should be alright to split the shares for the Horn Hopper's horns after we've sold them.

At first the two refused the split income since they thought that they were just being a burden, but Arisa told them that it was Master's order, and they were forced to receive it.

"It's amazing. Earning this much by going into the labyrinth for just half a day!"

"Yeah, earning half a gold coin much for each of us is like a dream."

I tell the two who look as if they will grow wings and soar about the plan for tomorrow.

"We're going to hunt with the same pace tomorrow, so eat some good food and have a good rest today."

"T-tomorrow too, like that?"

"Uu, Iruna. I wonder if we can go back to the labyrinth city tomorrow."

I leave the two anxious girls for Arisa to console, let's quickly go home.

Lulu's meals are waiting.

10-26. Dinner and Personal Connections

Satou's here. I remember the homeroom teacher during my senior high school saying "When you've entered the society, take good care of your connection with other people." The person himself only says a stereotypical line, but I'm reminded of those words when I actually enter the society and put it in motion.

◇

"Nice to meet you, Chevalier Pendragon-sama. I am Ogusho, in charge of a trading business between the royal capital and the labyrinth city."

"Ogusho isn't only dealing with luxury goods, but also books and magazines from the royal capital. You can ask this person if you want to seek things related to ingredients and books."

Viscount Shimen introduces me to several of his noble friends and hired merchants during his banquet. Nobles who are related to duchy capital nobles have reasonable influence in the labyrinth city.

The hired merchant is boasting full of confidence that they can even handle urgent missions since they have multiple employees who have [Item Box], and golem carriages. If I occasionally stock up various goods from him, even if I use some rare things, the people around me would probably guess where I got it from.

From what I've seen in the duchy capital, there are two types of golem carriage, one that has golem horses pulling the carriage, and another where the carriage itself is the golem. His carriages seem to be the latter type.

"Hou, golem carriage huh?"

"Yes, my carriage is the golem itself, so we're unperturbed even if monsters or thieves attack."

"That's amazing. Is there a lot of people who ride on golem carriages in the royal capital?"

Ogushi-shi who's pleased at me showing an interest tells me about various things.

"Let's see, it's not something rare for upper nobles and the wealthy. However, the core part rarely appears in the market since it's something that's made during the era of Ancestor King Yamato."

Looks like automatic carriage that uses the magic power of the rider like I have is uncommon. Magicians seem to have their own private carriage, but they make their pupils operate the carriage since magicians don't like to have their magic power depleted.

For some reason, Ogushi-shi puts an unnatural gap there.

One of the listener, a young man who was either the cousin or the nephew of baron Sokel that was knowledgeable about this matter entered the talk.

"You know that a ruin was discovered five years ago in Kirik Earldom right?"

"As expected of Sir Sokel. You have extensive knowledge. Chevalier Pendragon, as you know, several power engines that are called Golem Hearts were found in the ruin that Sir Sokel mentioned. Earl Kirik has presented those hearts to the royal family, and every year, one of them is bestowed to a noble who has done great meritorious deeds."

Ogushi-shi most likely deliberately didn't talk about the thing in Kirik Earldom so that Sir Sokel could easily join the conversation. I'd like to learn this kind of thing.

Nevertheless, I've heard some good things.

I was going to have Living Armors guard the above ground mansion, I had almost made a commotion.

"That's amazing. Are those kind of ruins often discovered?"

"Ruin discovery is really rare. The ruin that was discovered before that is the one in the mountains of Zettsu Earldom, but that's a story from 30 years ago."

Looks like I'd better keep the undersea ruin I've found recently a secret.

It seems the aerodynamic engine that was sold at the dark auction back then was found from the wreckage of an airship with unknown affiliation. Since he was being evasive with the 'unknown affiliation' part, it doesn't seem to really be unknown.

◇

The banquet was over without any disaster, but I was called by butler-san when I was going to ride the carriage, and then I went to parlor of Viscount Shimen. I'm sorry for Lulu, but she'll have to wait in the carriage for a little bit more. I'm slightly worried, but there doesn't seem to be anyone who'll make a stupid pass at Lulu. Ms. Miteruna told me that Lulu was famous among noble servants as the armed maid who had defeated a big man in the west guild.

"Chevalier Pendragon, I'm sorry for calling you back."

The Viscount gets to the main point after that few words of apology.

"Are you acquainted with the viceroy of this labyrinth city?"

"Yes, we've had a bit in the trade city."

"Judging from the way you speak about it, it seems that there was some problem. That man was originally the heir of a Baronage house that was the branch family of Marquis Ashinen house--"

I already had the information that the Viscount told me from Toruma Memo. However, I added several annotations on the well-known parts. It seems the viceroy succeeded as the Marquis by marrying the Marchioness who had the right.

Thus, he couldn't keep a mistress, and turned toward males and drowned in gambling.

His recent favorite seems to be waging in the underground arena of the trade city. Looks like he's making people kill each other illegally with swords. Moreover I'm surprised to hear that he even expressively prepares the stage director to enliven the killing.

"As such, Marquis Ashinen starves for money to do as he pleases. The one who's providing him that cash is his follower, Baronet Dyukeri."

I see, that's why he likes bribe huh.

As the compensation of providing him with the fund, looks like Marquis Ashinen has let Baronet Dyukeri to have monopoly of magic medicines and magic tools sales in the labyrinth city. Excepting the explorer guild of course.

He can't restrict people bringing those things from outside since it's under the imperial command of the king, but since you need the viceroy permission to open magic shops and alchemy shops, he's able to shut business rivals out it seems. He can't restrict small scale sales from stalls and the like, but if those stalls start to have outstanding sales, his wannabe explorer subordinates will come to them with use of forces.

"Be careful of Baronet Dyukeri. He's a man who would do anything to gain money and raise his house."

Looks like he's doing as he pleases in this labyrinth city since he has the backing of Marquis Ashinen.

"I don't even want to imagine that someone talented like you impaired by that kind of man. That man should already know that you're my acquaintance. He probably won't start a fight, but that man is shrewd. Be careful not to be taken by his plot."

I guess I shouldn't try to win the favor by using my cooking skill?

Let's be careful to at least prevent Baronet Dyukeri eating my cooking.

I leave the Viscount's house after promising to meet again in the Spring Kingdom Conference.

I was slightly surprised that there was a man who was in the carriage where Lulu was waiting, but it seems he's the older brother of Ms. Miteruna. Looks like he was asking about the present condition of Ms. Miteruna from Lulu. I gave him thanks since he seemed to have given various things.

◇

"Hoe? Countermeasures for baronet?"

"Yeah, he's a person who likely will get us rolled up in some troublesome things in this city."

"U~n, I think we can just leave such underling alone though?"

I consult to Arisa who's beside me on my bed. Everyone has their own room in this mansion, but for some reason they always gather in my room at night. While talking, I confiscate the candy stick that Arisa has hidden on her back. Even though I've warned her not to snack before sleeping.

Pochi and the others are clinging in tears to Lulu on the other side of the bed. They fervently gripe about how they were returning home while expecting the promised hamburg steak, yet Lulu was not found anywhere, and there was the simplistic menu that Ms. Miteruna prepared instead. I apologized to Pochi and the others together with Lulu since I was the one who made Lulu work as the coachman.

I tell Arisa the content of the conversation I've had with Viscount Shimen.

"Fuh~n, he's the person who's controlling the medicines and magic tools."

"Yeah, he is."

"That person has the worst reputation among explorers you know."

I imagine that would be so. He's the reason why it's hard to get magic medicines that are their lifeline when there are so few magicians.

"Why don't you might as well act secretly as a mysterious merchant in disguise? You'd destroy him if you sell those absurdly good magic tools and magic medicines right?"

What a belligerent guy. What do you mean by destroy.

"Won't that make it bothersome if I'm marked."

"That's why you disguise yourself. Not as Chevalier Pendragon, but like, the mysterious merchant in black clothing, Bottakuru, or something."

That name is wrong.

You're declaring yourself as someone greedy with that name.

<TLN: The name means 'rip someone off'.>

However, it might be a good idea to disguise myself, use Kuro name, and open a magic tool shop. And if I popularize Airships and Self-Propelled Carriage as Kuro, I won't be conspicuous even if have them.

Let's think about this idea for a bit.

I lie down on the bed and make a new memo pad in the menu. I decide to itemize the advantages and disadvantages of that idea, and examine them. I've been covered in little girls when I come to myself, but I ignore it since it's the same thing like always.

◇

Early afternoon, I've come to Marquis Ashinen's mansion to attend the tea party.

Everyone besides Lulu who's in charge of the carriage is currently power leveling with Iruna and Jenna in the labyrinth.

There's the Marchioness as one of the members of the tea party of course, and starting with the wife of the younger brother of Earl Haku whom I met yesterday, there are wifes and daughters of nobles. Most of them are married, only the two daughters of the Marchioness and the daughter of Viscount Gohat who's over 20 years old are unmarried. The Marchioness daughters are the plump and the almost-plump ones. They look like they will need servants to push them into the carriage when they're riding one.

The other noteworthy member is the wife of Baronet Dyukeri. Unlike her husband, the atmosphere of the wife is like an unfortunate girl. If she was not fat and around forty years old, she would have likely been a [Beauty].

Apparently, they have a sickly son as the heir.

For some reason, the drill twin tail princess isn't attending. It seems she's not feeling well, although that doesn't seem like that energetic princess at all. The plump second son of the marquis couple doesn't come too, but whatever about that one.

"My, is this the so-called Castella?"

"It's even more delicious than the hotcake in the royal capital isn't it."

"Mother, I want to eat more."

The Castella is popular. Going as far as preparing the green tea was worthwhile.

And, the one that looks even prouder than me is the Marchioness. She proudly calls herself as the one who first introduces Castella.

This would have been a good tea party if it ended as it was.

It doesn't seem to be going that well.

Light Novel Illustrations

NOTE: These illustrations are from the light novel version, therefore some of them are different from the web novel version I'm translating on this site.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyouku

Volume 1 = http://www.sousetsuka.com/p/volume-1-illustrations.html

Volume 2 = http://www.sousetsuka.com/p/volume-2-illustrations.html

Volume 3 = http://www.sousetsuka.com/p/volume-3-illustrations.html

Volume 4 = http://www.sousetsuka.com/p/volume-4-illustrations.html

Volume 5 = http://www.sousetsuka.com/p/volume-5-illustrations.html

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Comments:

AWESOME even though the images do not match they can still hint at the characters that are in the story and help some of us imagine how they look like as well like their hair color for example!

Here The light version novels , translator:

https://miaomix539.wordpress.com/death-march/

10-27. Dinner and Personal Connections (2)

Satou's here. In a game, you often already have the item needed for the quest you've just taken. Since it takes time to travel in MMOs, I feel that it's better to collect the item before taking the quest.

◇

Just when the tea party was about the end, Marquis Ashinen who was in good mood appeared.

"Hey everyone, I guess the one over there is Chevalier Pendragon-dono isn't it."

"I am honored to meet your countenance, your excellency Marquis."

I intentionally politely greeted the marquis who had hardened for an instant when he saw me.

My trouble with him is trivial.

It originated from a carriage which had cut in to his carriage during the entry into the trade city. I was made to become the umpire for the duel between the old lower ranked noble who cut in and the Marquis. The result was a complete victory of the Marquis' representative, but he didn't pull back his sword even after I had announced the winner, and the old noble was going to be killed if it kept up, so I stopped it. The Marquis had intended to spill the blood of his fellow noble in the first place, and he seemed to hold a grudge against me who had hindered it.

The person who was in such a trouble with him came while bringing the expensive [Golden Nude Woman Statue] as a present. From his point of view, I probably look like a lower ranked noble who came for an apology while trying to curry his favor.

After lightly clearing his throat, he returned to the smiling face like when he entered the room, and returned my greeting.

"I'm sorry for my absence the other day even after you've expressively come. I have certainly received your kindly prepared item. It was quite an article."

"It is an honor."

It might have been better if it was a nude man statue instead of nude woman, but it would probably be turned into money anyway.

"By the way Chevalier. I have a plan to make a stadium for Rat Race outside the Labyrinth City, why don't you invest on it."

"That is quite interesting."

I've never heard of rat race, is it something like horse race? I'm interested not in the sense of investing in one, but I'm afraid that many people will ruin themselves if gambling is spread in a place like this labyrinth city.

Before I could give that advice to the Marquis, the Marchioness scolded him.

"Keep the men's talk for later. Now is the time for enjoying teas, and amusing rumor."

"M-my love Reter, please don't be so angry. Chevalier Pendragon, let's talk about the investment for later"

He left the room without finishing his words. His works must have piled up since he's been skipping his official duty for half a month.

◇

After everyone had left the tea party, I was called by the Marchioness's attendant, and guided to a different salon than the one just now.

The Marchioness and the wife of Baronet Dyukeli are there.

"Hoshes, don't you have something to ask Sir Pendragon?"

"B-but..."

The Marchioness pushed the hesitating Hoshes-san--the wife of Baronet Dyukeli. Looks like she's a cousin of the Marchioness. Hoshes-san was really hesitating to speak, but she began to talk little by little as the Marchioness who was beside her pressed her back.

She started and stopped talking, and when she was able to talk smoothly, it was like this.

"Sir Pendragon has been traveling around various regions right? Are you familiar with『Water of Life』?

"The『Water of Life』that I know is a kind of liquor, but what kind of thing are you looking for?"

After widening her eyes from my words, she began to talk about the [Water of Life] with downcast eyes.

"I-it is not a liquor. It is a miraculous medicine which works for all disease."

"We have asked a scholar acquaintance about it, but we only get troubling story like how it's the water drop from a spirit tree that reaches the heaven, or water from melted philosopher's stone. Doesn't the knowledgeable Chevalier know anything about it?"

The Marchioness complemented on the story, maybe she was irritated by Hoshes-san. I searched the materials in the storage, but there was no applicable item. However, I have some ideas about

the [Spirit Tree that Reaches the Heaven], or the [Philosopher's Stone].

I'll ask them to introduce me to their scholar acquaintance next time.

I've found several recipes for medicines that works for all disease, but any one of them needs materials from the world tree and the philosopher's stone. As expected the place of origin is too dangerous if I was to provide them with it.

"I am sorry, but I have never heard such miraculous medicine before. However, I also enjoy doing some compounding myself. Maybe I could offer some advices if I just know what kind of illness it is."

"Have you ever heard of Goblin Disease? It's a mysterious illness that only spreads among nobles and wealthy merchants--"

I look at the books in my storage with the search bar in the menu while listening to the talk. There are some details about the Goblin Disease in the alchemy books I've acquired in the duchy capital. Most are just like how the madam has talked about, it seems to be an incurable diseases that all kinds of curing magic potions are ineffective against. However it doesn't seem to be a fatal disease even though it's incurable. It seems you can't leave the person afflicted alone since they become bedridden.

However there's a certain document which describes that they can be cured if you give them with large quantity of fresh vegetables. It's written that it's just a fake groundless opinion, but if this disease comes from vitamin deficiency, it's possible that the afflicted person may be cured if they eat a lot of fresh vegetables.

The two are being evasive about it, but it's probably the [Sickly Son] of Hoshes-san that's afflicted with the Goblin Disease.

"I had spoken with a great doctor at the duchy capital that--"

With that preface, I talk about eating a lot of vegetables. I can make them the miraculous medicine to get them indebted to me, but I don't like using a sick child, so I tell them the next best solution.

"Would it be cured with such things?"

Hoshes-san seemed to have decided to try it while still half-convinced. I also made a promise to ask my acquaintances at the duchy capital if they could get a hold of the miraculous medicine.

The son will probably be cured just with the diet, but let's make use of this lead up in the unlikely possibility.

◇

A maid-san broke into the room when I was deciding the timing to leave my seat after the talk was over. Of course it was not because she had gone mad.

"It's terrible. Her highness princess isn't anywhere!"

"She's not visiting Geritz's room?"

Even though the Marchioness looked displeased she only asked back after lightly chiding her, maybe because she didn't want to scold a servant in front of a guest.

"T, that is, Geritz-sama is also not in his room."

"That can't be, for Geritz to be not in his room!"

I think there's something wrong with that surprise. Acknowledging her own son to be a hikikomori, that's a bit cruel. I open the map, and try to search the princess and the plump-kun, but they don't seem to be in the labyrinth city.

"Her highness princess was yearning to be an explorer. Perhaps she has entered the labyrinth?"

While replying my words with "That can't be", the Marchioness seemed to have come to the same conclusion, she instructed the servant to go to the explorer guild.

I thought of searching the two in the labyrinth with the map, but unfortunately I couldn't track them since I had not marked them.

The map is good enough to be almost almighty, but in truth it has some limitations. Once a person has appeared in the map list, their information will be updated in real time as long as they don't go outside the map. This will be automatically performed whenever I browse the map even if I'm not in that map. However, when I'm in the same map, if someone goes out and then return, they will be displayed on the list again, but when I'm not in the map when that happens, they will not be displayed on the list.

The only exception is with marking. I can pinpoint the position of people who are marked as long as they are in the map that I've known.

During the initial state of the game, you can only mark one person, and it can be added endlessly by buying premium items. It seems to be in debug mode in my case as the marking numbers is not limited--it's not and all, but checking the map will be hard if I thoughtlessly mark too many people, so I only mark important people and close friends.

That's why the present locations of the two people are unknown.

I don't know if they're in the labyrinth or outside the city, but I don't think the two have any reason to go outside, so they're most probably in the labyrinth.

The Marchioness had asked me if I could check the vicinity around the labyrinth entrance before I could even begin to talk. I undertook it willingly since that was just what I want.

Right at that time, I receive an urgent communication from Arisa who's in an excursion in the labyrinth. After some replies like we were in telephone like always, she got down to the business.

『We've saved some younger nobles who were attacked by a group of lost thieves-like people, but they can't get up due to the shock from the attack see, so can you bring some soldiers and pick us up if you're still in the Marchioness' mansion?』

Ending right when you just accepted it, this job is too fast. It seems that the princess and the second son of the Marquis are among the young nobles.

I cut the communication after telling Arisa that we would meet them.

◇

According to Arisa, there were seven young nobles including the princess and plump-kun, so I borrowed 10 viceroy soldiers from the Marchioness and went to the labyrinth. Originally, we should have asked permission from the Marquis, but they can't contact him as it seems he's gone somewhere.

When I search the map, he's in a mansion that's located in the pleasure quarter, so he must be going there to give some souvenir to his lover.

"C-chevalier-sama, o-our main duty is guarding the city, so, w-we rarely ever go into the labyrinth."

"It's alright, leave the fight to me and this maid here, so don't worry."

The captain stutters on his words since the soldiers, including him, are running after the carriage. We're not really going fast, they must be lacking exercise.

Even though there was a little problem in the labyrinth entrance, the soldiers were able to enter the labyrinth despite not having explorer certificates due to the Red Iron Plates that Lulu and I had.

I immediately update the map once we enter the labyrinth. Arisa and the others seem to be in Area 11. I contacted Arisa with Telephone magic. They're not only with the young nobles whom they've saved, but also with the 20 lost thieves they've apprehended. They're currently being attacked by 50 lost thieves who are trying to release those captives, so they're holding in a small room ahead of a passage.

I use a small hand mirror that Lulu has taken from her (Magic Pouch) and invoke the [Signal] magic as a dummy. Other people probably look at it as a communication-type magic item. After talking to Lulu in whispers, I talk to the captain-san.

"I've received a contact from our companions. They've seen a woman with princess-like clothes in Area 11. They have immediately gone to the place of discovery, we should also go there."

One of the soldier shouted, "That knight-killer area!", but the captain-san persuaded them in low voice to become silent, so we began to move. I feel that he looks pale, wonder if he's alright?

I'm advancing the corridor while swiftly dealing with the monsters we encounter using the pebbles on the ground and my fairy sword. I'm only moving at jogging speed, but the soldiers are lagging behind. As even Lulu follows along properly, they should be ashamed as soldiers.

When we've passed through the first division, I announce an information to fire them up after pretending to use the the communication magic item.

"Captain-san, I've received a communication from my companions. They seemed to have safely protected the princess. However, they're under heavy attacks from the lost thieves."

"That's horrible! Let's hurry."

I let the soldiers who have ran out of breath to drink stamina recovery magic medicines, and then we resume our advance.

<Author's note:

This isn't from Satou's point of view.

There will be a lot of [Noja] words appearing. People who don't like it please take heed.>

10-28. Princess and Lost Thieves

I'm bored noja.

Even though I've come to the labyrinth city and all, I'm not allowed to go out of the viceroy mansion even once, this isn't what is promised.

If I don't get stronger by defeating monsters in the labyrinth, I can't become the hero's companion.

But even if I go alone, I surely won't be a match to monsters.

I stare at the dagger with Nooroku family crest and heave a deep sigh. Yes, I got a sprain on the second day of my sword training, and I couldn't even make a spark after training magic continuously for two years. The only things that I can be proud of are embroidery and lacework.

When I was walking on the only place I could freely do so, the courtyard, I heard the voices of boys on the arbor beyond the thickets.

"Uwah, it's really the Bronze Plate! Jeans, you're amazing!"

"Did you make your cousin who has Red Iron Plate that you mentioned before to take you along?"

"Yeah. As the eldest son of an Earl family, I think having at least the Bronze Plate is necessary."

A light brown short haired young man who looks a bit cruel pridefully replies to the two boys who are pressing on him. The plump black haired one should be the fourth son of Baron Larupod, Peison-dono, and the the slightly clever-looking short blond hair should be the third son of Viscount Gohat, Dirun-dono.

The second son of the Marquis, Geritz-dono, and his follower, the second son of Baron Notoke, Lulam-dono don't seem like they find it interesting, they spew venom.

"Fu, fuhn. You must have thrown stones behind your cousin anyway right?"

"Right, right! There's no way you can defeat monsters when you've never even won against Merian with sword."

When the eldest daughter of Baronet Dyukeli, Merian, heard it, she quickly drew her sword and put it on the tip of Lulam-dono's nose.

"Are you saying that my sword is no match for monsters?"

"T, that's not it. I don't mean that, so please put your sword back."

You shouldn't have said careless remark if you're going to beg with cramped face like that. Or is it just how friends act with each other?

I'm a bit envious noja.

After listening to their fun conversations while feeling envious, apparently, they've decided to go to the labyrinth with just them.

"Then I'll pick you all with a carriage tomorrow, so everyone wait after wearing your weapons and armors okay. Please take care not to get found out by your family yourself. I'll prepare everything beside your armors and weapons, so everyone turn in three silver coins each."

"Eh~ that's expensive."

Lulam-dono complains to the experienced Jeans-dono's order.

"Then, can you escape from monsters when they've surrounded you without a smoke ball and a flash ball?"

"It's fine, there's no way we will turn our back from monsters with this many warriors."

"Exactly, we also have Dirun the magician. Dirun can use his wind magic to rout monsters if they surround us."

"Well, there is no monster that my wind magic cannot cut."

Jeans-dono seemed to have been taken by everyone's confident attitude, he lowered it to one silver coin each while heaving.

"I've heard it noja."

"P, princess."

Please take me with you. I couldn't hold that feeling, and jumped out in front of everyone.

"Geritz-dono, Jeans-dono, please noja. Could you take me with you?"

I ask with teary eyes while inclining my head cutely. This would have been the finishing strike if it was my father the king.

Geritz-dono and Jeans-dono couldn't bear against this just like my father the king, they granted my wish with reddened faces.

◇

"I don't feel good noja. I don't need the breakfast today. Leave me be alone until noon."

My foster sister who had been raised together with me since we were born immediately seen through my staged illness, but it was good that she interpreted it as me wanting to oversleep.

"Princess, are you ready?"

"Merian-dono, please help me a bit."

Why is wearing this clothes so hard noja. My arms and head come out of the same place, I can't move noja. I didn't think that I would face such a challenge even before entering the labyrinth! Truly the labyrinth city! What a frightening city nanoja.

After Merian-dono helped me put on the thick horse-riding clothes that she had brought and I wore the thin mantle, I immediately feel like I've become an explorer, my heart is exhilarated. It's complete when I hang the flat white mask she's given that covers half of my face.

"How is it?"

"It really suits you. Then, let us go."

"Umu, to the labyrinth!"

◇

"I'd like to register them as explorers."

"Umm, is it for special registration?"

"No, for general one please."

Jeans-dono is the only who doesn't wear a mask since he's already an explorer. For some reason, an eyebrow of the receptionist lady is twitching. Maybe she's tired?

"Then, please your name."

"『Mysterious Noble』 Geritz."

"『Black Storm』 Peison."

"『Strong Sword』 Lulam."

"『Hero's Follower』 Mitia."

Why?   Dirun-dono and Merian-dono don't continue giving their name after me and everyone else. When I looked back, they give their name while sighing. Why didn't they give their [Second Name]?

"Yes then, please take these Wood Plates. Do you need an explanation?"

"It's unnecessary."

Jeans-dono distributed the Wood plates that had been given by the representative.

Umumu. Why is my lips loosening noja. I didn't think that I would be this happy just from this tree chip. I want to dance, but I would be a disgrace of Norooku princess if I can't keep calm here.

When I raised my view, everyone was having a broad grin besides Jeans-dono. Of course Dirun-dono and Merian-dono aren't excepted either noja.

◇

"Hey, Jeans. There isn't any enemy is it."

"It really is. We've only passed other explorers once in a while. Where's the monster."

"I can't do anything about it even if you complain to me. The competitions for monster hunting are furious in the first area after all. When I came here before, I followed a retainer knight who went scouting at the border of area 11, and defeated a『Maze Moth』."

They let out their dissatisfaction for having been let down by the labyrinth after getting enthusiastic about it to Jeans-dono noja.

"Then, let's go to that area 11."

"I've heard that area 11 is a dangerous area that has an infamous monster called knight killer though?"

"That's why we stop at the border right?"

"I'll chop the knight killer with my magic if they come."

"I'll pierce it with my rapier before that happens."

Knight killer is it. Is there a monster that can defeat the like of big men with metal armor which fully wraps their bodies? It must be a gigantic monster.

Everyone is reliable noja. As expected of young nobles who have been studying martial art and magic art since they're young. Truly reliable.

◇

Even when we occasionally discover a monster, some young-looking explorers in shabby clothes are desperately engaging it, there is no monster left.

"Sheesh, those commoners are vulgar."

"It's just as Geritz-sama's said! Shall I lend my hand for them?"

"You can't do that, Lulam. Snatching monsters that other explorers are fighting inside the labyrinth is a serious breach of etiquette. If you do such a thing, your noble honor will fall as low as a lost thief."

Jeans-dono rebukes the two who were cursing the explorers.

"Hey, look at that Sign Monument. Isn't this already area 11?"

"Eh? That shouldn't be. There are a lot of monsters on the border of area 11--you're right, moreover, looks like we've even come extremely close to the interior."

"Should we head back?"

"Isn't it fine, let's keep going. There are a lot of commoner parties since a while ago anyway. It must be alright."

Jeans-dono and Dirun-dono were having careful opinions, but since most approved the strong-willed Merian-dono's opinion, we decided to continue advancing.

We found that at the place nearly one hour ahead of the place earlier.

"Look at that the color of that Sign Monument! There's something strange about it."

"Everyone! Prepare for battle. That's the sign of Gushing Hole. Monsters are coming."

The Sign Monument which shines white occasionally flickers like a candle fire in red. As if lured by everyone who has drawn their swords out, I also grip my dagger.

◇

"Haa!"

Merian-dono's rapier pierce through the Maze Moth's wing. Peison-dono's and Lulam-dono's short swords have cut the empty air. Disappointing noja.

"As expected of Merian."

"There's nothing that can avoid that rapier."

Before Jeans-dono could cut with his great sword, Dirun-dono invoked [Air Blade] and cut one wing of the Maze Moth, snatching it from Jeans-dono.

"That's dangerous! Warn everyone before you use magic!"

"I don't hit (you) right. You must adapt to the circumstance during battle."

In order to finish the Maze Moth that has been dropped to the ground, Geriz-sono swing his one-handed sword unsteadily.

"Cut it too Princess since it's alright now."

"I, I understand noja."

I also draw my dagger and participate in the Maze Moth extermination. I was surprised to see that the stomach was hard enough to prevent dagger from penetrating it even though it looked so soft.

"We did it! We've defeated monsters!"

"Hey hey, I wonder how many levels are raised?"

"Now, let's go for the next."

A voice that seems like a poured cold water reaches everyone who's excited from their first monster.

"There's no next time time for ye' guys."

Several people come out of the shadow and surround us while carrying weapons. A big bald man who's carrying a three-pronged spear on his back approaches while laughed vulgarly.

"Lost thieves huh!"

"That's right, noble young men and women. Yer' adventures is over. You can die here now and become feeder for monsters."

"I won't let it! Can you avoid my rapier?"

The bald big man casually caught the sharp stab of Merian-dono's rapier with his three-pronged spear, and broke it.

"You stupid? Ye' think yer' playing sword could reach us?"

"Uh, that can't be. Blocking against Merian's rapier."

"It's over. Save me, father..."

"Mother, I'm sorry."

This is bad noja, everyone's heart is going to break nanoja.

I encourage everyone as loud as I can. Please allow the shaking in that voice.

"Don't give up, someone must be coming to save us noja!"

"Hou? Who is coming to save you?"

The bald man rudely catches the nape of my neck, and draws his filthy face close. Uuu, it's scary noja. It's smelly noja.

My limbs become cold and shaking. The rasping sound from a while ago was coming from <<my>> clattering teeth.

"Look now, don't cry and say it? Who's coming to save you?"

"Of course it's the ally of justice you know?"

A little girl's voice cut into the audacious man's voice.

Has she come to help?!

The voice and figure of a little girl that's not suited to be in this place give courage to me. I pushed the bald man with my hands with all my might. I can't aim to become the hero's follower if I let myself become a drag to someone who's coming save me after all!

Three demi-humans who appear while leaving red trails of light easily get rid of the lost thieves like they're breaking dead trees apart. That scene was one-sided like it was some kind of play.

"I thank you for your rescue. I am the princess of Norooku, Mitia."

"Arara, the princess of the western end huh. We are『Pendragon』. We're going to take care of this, so wait a bit okay."

Noroku is of the western end she said? Does this girl come from a country in the center union?

As the 10 years old girl has promised, they have taken us out of our crisis--

"Reinforcement."

"Arisa, it's the enemy's reinforcement. I suggest to hold a defense line in the small room ahead for the safety of the protection targets."

"Okay, I'll contact master for reinforcement once we've moved there."

--or so it seems, but the lost thieves are coming one after another, we have been cornered into a small room.

The lost thieves persistently and constantly keep invading the small room. The most terrifying thing above all is the countless monsters they've brought along with the assault, it has become a [Train]. We would have been trampled by the countless monsters if there wasn't Nana-dono's impregnable nature magic. I didn't think that monsters would be so dreadful. It's so furious, it even makes Jeans-dono and the firm Merian-dono can't stand up in the corner of the room.

The time until the reinforcement arrives feels really long even though it should have been short.

And then, I met that boy.

10-29. Lost Thief Extermination

Satou's here. There were Samurai and Thieves appearing as enemies in the labyrinth PC game that I played a long time ago. I didn't mind about it at that time, but I wonder if they were living in the labyrinth?

◇

"I'll be arriving there in 15 minutes."

『Ho~i, we're waiting.』

I check the condition on Arisa's side with [Telephone].

Looks like the lost thieves are besieging Arisa and the others, and it has become a stalemate. They run away when Liza and the others come out, and during that chance, they break into the small room by using the crevice-like small passages and going along the dark labyrinth wall.

Moreover, an upper level 30 bearded man who seems to be the lost thieves boss and a unit of paralyzing blowgun users are troublesome, so they can't quite go on attack. It should have been easy with the abilities of Arisa and the others, but they're probably trying to make it non-lethal.

And then, the lost thieves boss who seems to have grown impatient with the stalemate uses his henchmen to lure monster 'train' to attack the small room where Arisa and the others are.

Checking on the map, their stamina and magic power have only decreased for a bit, no one seems to be hurt.

◇

Lulu and me are running in the corridor while taking the viceroy's guards along.

"M, master, in the front, another..."

"Lulu, don't look at it."

There is a scattered remain of a lost thief, half-eaten by monsters, lying on the middle of the corridor. I wonder how many are there with this? Obviously, luring the monster train means risking your life for it. Looking at the Collar of Subordination on his neck, this man is probably a slave.

I cut down the bee-like monsters that are swarming on the corpse with my fairy sword. They're soft like a paper despite their hard looking appearance.

While we're advancing on the corridor, Lulu and I defeat the small fry monsters from the train. The soldiers behind us have been quiet since a while ago, looks like this pace is hard for them.

Some lost thieves are reflected on the edge of my radar.

I shoot [Remote Stun] the moment we turn on the corner. The targets are the ones encircling Arisa and the others. Unlike [Magic Hand], the Remote Stunn orbs can be seen, so I aimed with the angle where the soldiers behind couldn't see it.

At the same time, I throw a bundle of wire from my storage and use [Magic Hand] to bind the thieves. It was harder than I thought.

We arrive at the place where the lost thieves are lying on the ground, tied.

"Chevalier-sama, these people are?"

"They're probably the lost thieves that my vassals have arrested. Sorry but it seems they've just been binded, but not tied on something. We're bringing them to the surface later, so can you tie them to those pillars over there?"

"Yes! Oy, gather those thieves in one place!"

I get the soldier to tie the lost thieves on the nearby pillar-like structures. While leaving a-bit-under-20 lost thieves to the soldiers, Lulu and I continue on the corridor. The captain and half of the soldiers are going to follow later. There doesn't seem to be any monster from here to where Arisa and the others are.

I hear weapon clashing sounds from ahead.

We run past the curved passage. I can see two red light intersecting in the darkness ahead of the passage.

One of them is Liza. I feel that the red light doesn't only come out from her spear, but also extends to her armor, wonder if it's just my imagination. Maybe it's due to that that her remaining magic power is severe.

The other one is a bearded man who seems to be the lost thief boss. Even though he should be human, he looks like a dwarf. The thing on his arm must be a magic axe. He's the second person I've seen using a battle axe after Elder Dohar.

"Master~?" "Nanodesu!"

Since Pochi and Tama are waving their hands greatly at me from behind Nana who's protecting the small room entrance from the monsters, I wave back at them.

The boss whom Liza was fighting deliberately took some distance away from her, and threw a flash ball he had taken from his bosom to the ground.

It's a manga-like situation.

Just before the flash ball hits the ground, I move before Lulu and protect her eyes from the intense light. It was slightly dazzling, but thanks to Light-intensity Adjustment skill, I wasn't blinded.

"Releasing your sword from your dominant hand, what an amateur!"

The boss who's put his back behind the flash is quickly approaching with Physically Reinforced speed that equals Nana, trying to take me hostage. Maybe I should have some fun by letting him take me hostage and have Liza saves me.

His big arm that's covered in bristle was reaching toward my neck before he caught me. At the same time, he pushed out his magic axe's handle toward my solar plexus.

He intends to seize me after making me faint huh.

Stinks.

A strong stench pierces into my nasal cavity.

Nope, nope.

I don't want this stinking hand catches me.

>[Stench Resistance Skill Acquired]

Before that thought even appears in my mind, I crush his arm and kick the magic axe with my knee. While my knee is still folded, I lightly kick his belly with my toes. A small sound of escaped air that's not even a scream reaches my ears. I block the smelly saliva with <<Flexible Shield>>, and I use [Deodorant] on his body to erase the stench before he flies away.

After rotating once in the air, he landed just before Lulu behind me. Lulu holds down the boss on the floor like she's flowing with the self-defense skill she's learned in the elf hometown even while being surprised by the boss that has suddenly appeared in front of her.

I capture the remaining lost thieves in the nearby passages with [Remote Stun] and wires before the flash disappears. The soldiers shouldn't notice since it hasn't entered into their views yet. While I'm at it, I use [Mana Drain] on the boss to prevent him from struggling.

Once the flash disappears, there's the figure of Lulu who has easily apprehended the boss before everyone's eyes.

Liza who's quickly rushed here binds the boss with the wire I've given her. I was a bit worried with the boss' broken arm that was dangling, but I decided to leave it alone when I thought about the corpses he had sacrificed for the monster train.

After Liza has tied him up, let's snatch the ring that seems to be for invoking magic from the boss' finger, and the hidden weapons. I point out the things she needs to collect. Lastly, I take out a [Magic-sealing Chain] from the bag, pass it to Liza, and let her tie the boss more with it. I happened to notice this item when the arson noble was arrested, and then bought it in the duchy capital when I was getting the scrolls. It's commonly sold in magic tool shops in the duchy capital. It's 10 gold coins for one chain, quite a price.

"Master, I am very sorry for I cannot stop the thieves."

After apologizing me for not being able to stop the boss, Liza praises Lulu. I catch Pochi and Tama who've come running, and go toward Arisa and the others while joining hands. I leave the thieves lying on the floor of the corridor along the way to the soldiers besides the captain-san.

Since the magic axe is deeply stuck in the ceiling and doesn't seem like it'll come down, I use [Magic Hand] and retrieve it into the Storage.

>Title [Natural Enemy of Lost Thief] Acquired

>Title [Guardian of Order] Acquired

◇

There are countless bodies of monsters in front of the small room where Arisa and the others are holding on.

"Sorry for being late."

"Master, I was scared~"

"Mwu?"

Arisa who's speaking in odd manner while clinging to me is off-putting. See, even Mia has a 'goodness gracious' face on. After she hugged me, she whispered the situation to me. It sure helps, but I think the strange acting is unnecessary.

The room is 20 tatami-mat wide with uneven stone pavements. On the left side of the room--where it can't be seen from the passage, the princess and the plump-kun, and also five young nobles are sitting. One of the young nobles is a girl. There are 25 lost thieves tied up on the right side of the room. It has increased by five who are probably survivors from the monster train. The ones that have reasonable amount of HP despite having their clothes reddened with blood must have been healed by

Mia's healing magic, I think.

Strangely, even though the young nobles should not have been injured, all of them look like they're going to die. They were probably really scared after getting surrounded by the lost thieves, and then attacked by the monster swarm. The two people from [Beautiful Wings] look better, but it feels like they're standing with willpower.

"Geritz-dono, I've come by the request of the Marchioness. The guards have also come too, let's safely get back to the surface with all your friends."

"T, thank you."

I told that to the exhausted looking Plump-kun with a smile. I thought he was going to say something like, "You should've come sooner", but he only said a normal thank after nodding a bit. I take out a wet towel in the storage from the bag, and pass it to plump-kun. I've put a lot of these towels in the storage since Pochi and Tama often dirty their faces during meals.

He looked blank for a second, but after I told him that it was to clean his face with so he could feel refreshed, he began to wipe his face awkwardly.

The princess who's sitting beside him also has some dirt sticking on her face that seems to be from blood spurt. I take another wet towel like the one for plump-kun but since her eyes look dead, I gently wipe her face with it.

"You have also done well your highness. Your cute face is dirty."

"...U, umu, thank you, for the rescue nanoja."

Looks like she's been refreshed after I wiped her face, willpower surges back from the hazy expression of the princess. I had wiped her face without caring since it was a loli face, her lipstick and makeover had come off.

Let's gloss over the failure with a smile. Although feeble, the princess faintly smiles back, so let's consider it a good thing.

The other young nobles have also recovered enough to complain, "I'm tired" or "I'm hungry" from the effect of wet towels even though their conditions are like empty shells. It might be rude of me to say this, but unexpectedly, every one of these youths properly said their thanks.

Captain-san seemed to consider that taking 70 people of the lost thieves back to the surface was going to be difficult, he suggested to cut their necks here and now, but I rejected it.

I connect every 10 lost thieves with wires, and let each of our vanguards guard each group. That's 40 people. Lulu and I are in charge of guarding 10 people who are especially high leveled, while the soldiers are to be in charge of a little over 20 young lost thieves. The princess and the young nobles are to be guarded by the two from Beautiful Wings.

Now then, the lost thieves probably will try to escape along the way, so let's threaten them. I've put gags on the mouths of the ten high-leveled ones beforehand so they won't say unnecessary things.

"Hear me! You lost thieves! I will bring you to the surface now. Someone who try to escape--"

The remain of a Horn Hopper that has been skinned beforehand with Mia's magic is burned with acid magic. The lost thieves are looking with a pale face toward the crumbling remain of the monster while a smoke with unpleasant smell is rising from it.

"--is going to be burned alive with acid magic like such, or become a transfigured figure from this decomposing wyvern poison that's worse than death."

>[Threaten Skill Acquired]

I took out a bottle that's been intentionally shaped sinisterly and showed it to the lost thieves. This bottle is the work of a young artist in the duchy capital that I've acquired, I make use of its appearance. It seems my deception skill's kicked in, the lost thieves seems to have believed my words.

30 soldiers from the Labyrinth Army had come as a reinforcement before the lost thieves could try to escape, so we were able to get back to the surface without any problem. Fortunately, no monster tried to attack us, probably because it was a large group with more than 100 people.

Now then, after I hand over the young nobles to their guardians, it would be mission complete.

10-30. Lost Thief Extermination (2)

Satou's here. There's a wonderful item that raises your experience gain by 200% in MMOs and browser games. Implementing the mechanic in the game was unexpectedly easy since it just needed an added coefficient during the time you gain experience points. I'm interested just what is the level up medicine that I saw in the black market composed of.

◇

One of the soldier immediately went ahead alone as a messenger after we met the the labyrinth army troops, so three high level guild staffs were already waiting in front of the labyrinth gate. Although I said high levels, they're only around 30-35.

"T, this guy is the 『Mad Magic Axe』 Rudaman?!"

"That Rudaman the Lost Thief King?"

For some reason, the high level staffs look awfully surprised when they checked the bearded daruma boss with a Yamato Stone. Lost Thief King uh, wonder if it's like the lesser version of Pirate King?

"Chevalier-sama, you've done an outstanding work. This Rudaman is a fiendish lost thief who have turned the table against many subjugation units."

"His reward prize should be more than 100 gold coins now."

About as much as one magic sword huh. The magic axe that I've taken just before seems quite expensive too.

"Well then, Chevalier-sama. We will have to take the lost thieves to the west guild, please come to the guild later."

"Yes, I understand. Best regards."

The bearded daruma boss is taken away by the three high level staffs. The small fry lost thieves are being made to check their statuses with the Yamato stone in a group of five by the labyrinth army.

The reason why I didn't go with them was because half of the young nobles got exhausted from climbing the meandering great stairway, thus I needed to wait them to come out while they were being carried by the soldiers.

Jeans and Merian were the only two that had come back to themselves, the princess was shouldered by Lulu. Every member besides me and Lulu said "There's still some quota for today." and then they returned to Area 11. The two people from Beautiful Wings were screaming, but they were dragged by Pochi and Tama who took their hands.

"Satou-dono! My level has been raised noja! Labyrinth is really amazing."

"Congratulations, Mitia-sama. How about Jeans-dono and Merian-dono?"

Princess Mitia had returned from confirming her status with the Yamato stone. If she could go back on her feet in this short amount of time, she might be apt to become an explorer. I also asked the two people who have arrived with her, but Jeans shook his head and denied it.

"No, we've only defeated one Maze Moth."

Merian who was brooding over something asked me like she had readied herself.

"Chevalier-sama. How should I do to become as strong as your retainers?"

"Training and actual combat. Those girls asked some famous martial artists and fairykin masters in the duchy capital and trained without sparing any time to sleep, and they also had extreme actual combat where they almost died in the labyrinth of this city and another one."

Un, I probably didn't lie. The power leveling thing is a secret.

"I see, so it really is about actual combat..."

"I'm warning you just in case, if the present you try to do actual combats in order to become stronger, you would die in not even a month."

"Wha, what do you know about me!"

I was worried at Merian who was muttering like she was obsessed, and warned her. Looks like she was shocked by my remark, she reflexively showed her dissatisfaction emotionally.

I know her actual nature only superficially, but looking at her level and skill, she would die without a doubt if she was surrounded by multiple monsters. Her level is 3, she only has Etiquette skill.

By the way, even though Jeans beside her has Bronze Plate, his level is 4, and he only has Social and Horse-riding skills. It's a mystery how he got the Bronze Plate.

"It's probably good if you hide your social position and train for a bit in a dojo. I think it'd be good if you re-challenge the labyrinth once you've gained your confidence back after working hard for a month."

"Do you also want to say that my sword is a play?"

"Merian, leave it at that. Your anger is misplaced at Sir Pendragon."

Merian was going to say more, but she apologized with reluctant face after Jeans admonished her. She seemed to be interested with the training, she asked me which dojo should she go. I saw some open dojo-like places in several vacant lands, but since I didn't know which one was good, I asked the staff-san.

"A reputable dojo?"

"Yes, if possible it'd be good if the instructor is a former explorer, or someone from the army."

"Then I recommend Horun-dono's dojo『Labyrinth Self-defense Style』."

"Labyrinth self-defense style huh. Isn't there a dojo with more actual combat training?"

It seemed Merian was dissatisfied with the female staff's recommendation, she asked about another dojo while tampering with the rapier on her waist. The female staff seems to have expected that reaction, she corrects Merian's misunderstanding while smiling.

"Ufufu, Labyrinth Self-defense style is for actual combat you know. By self-defense it means emphasizing on your own safety as the priority, evading the opponent's attack to prevent it from injuring you. Since in the labyrinth, having injury directly relates to the danger to your life."

"That makes sense. Even just getting your foot injured means that you can't evade, and you'd be killed in the blink of an eye."

It seems Merian has decided to try going to that dojo, although it's unknown whether it's because she has understood the female staff's explanation, or my follow-up.

◇

I lead the young nobles who have finally come out to leave the labyrinth. Four of them who were being carried by the soldiers kept being carried until the west gate.

Six fine carriages are waiting outside the west gate.

"You fool!"

Baronet Dyukeli who was the foremost to step up slapped his daughter's cheek with his palm. It seemed to be a relatively merciless slap, Merian dropped her knees to the ground while blood came out of the edge of her mouth.

"Chevalier Pendragon. I thank you for your help. I will pay this debt, without fail."

After telling me so, Baronet Dyukeli took Merian like he was dragging her to the carriage and went home.

The ones who came for the other young nobles were only the butlers and the servants, so they boarded the carriage and went home without any argument. The differences in accordance to their houses are great, but they have one thing in common; the ones who have come for them are not their parents, but the servants. They only came to pick the young nobles as instructed by their masters, but they told me that the family heads would like to say their thanks another day.

The butler of the Marchioness relayed the Marchioness words, asking me to come to the mansion later. I said to the butler, "I need to report this matter to the explorer guild, so I will be intruding in the evening."

◇

I've visited the west guild to explain the situation, but for some reason I have been summoned to the guildmaster's room.

"Thanks fer' coming Satou-dono. We had difficulty dealing with that Rudaman guy. I can't raise your rank Mithril as expected, but I'll let ya have preferential treatment if we get some delicious info."

"Ha, thank you very much."

"What's with that spiritless reply."

The guild master who was in good mood was going to hug me, I smoothly evaded her.

That bearded daruma would immediately made his subordinates became decoys if the fight turned into his disadvantage, on top of that, he had many hideouts, so the guild subjugation unit couldn't pin down them.

"Your reward should be quite considerable from the prize money and the selling-off of the lost thieves who become slaves. Don't forget to to get it from the cashier later."

The guildmaster added another words with a vulgar smile, "Those are some uhauha sum of money." This person is well suited for this kind of smile.

"Will all the lost thieves get turned into slaves?"

"Yeah, they will be working in the coal as crime slaves. Guys like Rudaman who has people with grudge against them will be executed publicly after they're turned into slaves. This time, the other one among the subjugated thieves beside Rudaman who will get the treatment is his aid, the vice-boss."

Originally, the work in the coal is already hazardous enough even without the public execution stuff, it seesms they will only live for three years there. I'd like to protect some children who are around junior high school students among them, but since they all have [Murderer] in their Reward and Punishment, I ended up not saying anything unnecessary when I thought about their victims and the bereaved family.

Ushana-san the secretary entered right at that time. It seems that Rudaman wants to negotiate with the guildmaster. For some reason, the conversation flowed in the direction of me coming with the guildmaster to the dungeon where Rudaman was confined.

◇

"So, what do you have to say?"

"I'm looking fer' mercy appeal."

"Stop saying stupid things. You will be executed publicly."

Rudaman is confined in a particularly strict section of the dungeon. He's tied with Magic-sealing chain inside a room with sturdy iron bars. He negotiated with an arrogant face without looking like he was in pain from the broken arm.

"That might be the proper thing to do, but I can't stand becoming an exhibition for the shitty nobles and the clean citizens. Won't ya put me into Violet?"

"Look back at your own crimes. Your unsightly head will be shown on the severed head stand of the west gate."

It seems there's quite a barbaric custom. Is this Edo era. I don't want to approach the west gate for the time being. By the way, Violet is a unit of the kingdom army that's composed of crime slaves, it seems it's a unit with high disposable rate that's specially used to fight giant monsters or as the decoy. Ushana-san told me.

"Would the kind noble over there grant me wish? You subjugated us lost thieves without killing anyone and purposely brought us alive. You don't like letting someone die right?"

"I don't like killing people, but I don't have any intention of denying a villain from getting executed."

"I'll tell ya an information that'll interest ya."

Information that will interest me huh. Might as well hear it.

"It depends on the content. I'll let you negotiate if it's really an interesting info."

"There are a lot of female children baggage carriers whom explorers handed over as sacrifices in our hideout. And those people are making Fiend Drugs as ordered by us."

"Fiend Drug you said!?"

<TLN: Fiend or 'Majin'.>

The guildmaster who was acting as a spectator in silent interrupted.

Since some threatening name came out, I search it in the documents I have. Fiend Drug seems to be a medicine that was originally developed to bestow humans with physical strength enough to fight monsters in a hand-to-hand combat. If you drink this medicine, you will be strengthened enough to close 10 level gap, on top of that, it has an effect of halving the experience needed to level up. It was spread in the kingdom in the blink of an eye.

However, this medicine has an atrocious trap laid. If you regularly drink this medicine and keep leveling up, you'll become a grotesque monster. It seems that you will become a monster with 50% probability with 10 level up, and 90% probability with 20 level up. The level up is nice, but there's no meaning to it if you end up become a monster. However, looks like there are a lot of people who yield to the temptation in this harsh world.

I'm bothered with the sacrifice thing, but let's postpone it.

"If you leave them alone, the women and children who are cultivating field in our hideout will be killed. The killer is a noble, the same as you."

"In other words, the one who needs the Fiend Drug is that noble right?"

"Yeah, we use it sometimes too though."

Rudaman wants to be put into the Crime Slaves Unit (Violet) in exchange for the information of the secret cultivation place. Still, didn't he carelessly talk too much? I can't help but feel that the Negotiation and Cross-examination skills had been accidentally used.

"So, what's the noble name?"

"The fool who should be able to tell me that has stupidly died see. I know the name of the underling who acts as the agent to sometimes bring us food and salt though. That stingy bastard was called Besso or something. Ya tail that guy, and the other side should get in contact with him."

"Either way, there's no meaning unless we catch them in act huh. Guildmaster, what would you do?"

The guildmaster had a pensive look on her face for a while, but it seemed that she judged that it'd be dangerous if the Fiend Drug spread in the labyrinth city, she accepted Rudaman's deal. I couldn't help even if I remained here any longer, so I bid my farewell to the guildmaster.

The prize money and the slave sales amount to 160 gold coins. I put it in the bag without counting it. For now, I marked Besso before I forgot.

Fumu, forbidden magic drug huh.

10-31. Fiend Drug

Satou's here. When I hear the word 'disguise', I remember about the famous thief protagonist who's good at it. I think that a lot of Japanese people remember about the gesture of which he tears off his fake face from the chin. The faces were thrown away thoughtlessly, but in actuality, making them needs some quite laborious works.

◇

Well then, let's find the culprit.

I open the map and search. The search term is [Fiend Drug].

The search discovers three points. Both of the first two points seem to be owned by explorers each. The last one is probably the catch. Nearly 100 fiend drugs are stocked there.

It's the mansion of the noble that I've just met during the viscount dinner the other day, Sir Sokel. I thought that it would have been Baronet Dyukeli's mansion, this is unexpected.

I check on the detail of Sir Sokel's mansion.

I've confirmed that he has the drugs stocked in a hidden room in his mansion. There are slaves with Compounding and Alchemy skills inside that hidden room, so there's no mistake about it.

I mark Sir Sokel, his servants and those slaves. There are 20 people in total. Among them, one is in the downtown with people who have various Reward and Punishment. Those people seem to belong to a criminal guild called [Goblin Claw]. They were a large group of around 60 people, marking them would make my map too busy, so I ended up only marking the boss and the three high leveled ones.

They're probably going to destroy evidences and kill the witnesses. That means the ones in danger are probably Rudaman in the dungeon, the lost thief executives, and the proxy, Besso.

Leaving aside Besso and his cohorts, I'd like to get the carriers and slaves who are working in the labyrinth hideout into safety. However, this one should be fine even if I don't do something immediately. I had searched the lost thieves hideouts when I first entered the labyrinth, they're quiet deep in the interior. If they could prepare a force that could assault such a place, they would have directly attacked the guild to kill the witnesses.

The alchemist in Sir Sokel's mansion is also in danger, but they wouldn't easily kill him. He's an important person who can create the fiend drug, and they shouldn't be able to replace the alchemist so easily.

Now then, I've already finished searching the culprit, let's leave it to the guildmaster to take care of them.

I used invisibility and hiding (skills) like when I was invading the duke castle, and intruded the guildmaster's room, then I left a mysterious document that read "The mastermind is Sir Sokel?" Just in case, I also added a postscript that described the hidden room in Sir Sokel's mansion and the lair of Besso and his cohorts.

After I finished my business, I took Lulu out of the explorer guild.

◇

"Master, where are we going?"

"We're going to the mansion."

It's still 2-3 hours before evening. There's something I want to do before visiting the Marchioness.

"Welcome bacc, bac."

"Welcome back, Lulu-sama."

"I'm back, Hoho and Kitona."

Looks like the children who were doing some work in the front yard could see the carriage coming to the mansion, they ran to greet us. After getting me down in the front yard, Lulu passed the rein to Kitona who had climbed to the coachman's stand, and went to the stable while teaching her how to operate the carriage.

"Welcome back, master."

"Yeah, I'm back. How are the children doing?"

"Yes, the five bedridden children have no problem doing anything besides manual labors. Roji and Ani still have some problem with their speech, but they have a good memory and they're full of motivation above all, they will probably become a full-fledged cleaning lady sooner than I thought."

I was only planning to hire them temporarily, but it might be good to let them continue working under Ms. Miteruna officially. I'll talk about it with Ms. Miteruna if there's no problem in half a moon.

After receiving some more reports, I go to the basement. I instructed Ms. Miteruna to not let anyone get close since I want to concentrate.

I've put books that I've bought in Seryuu city and Duchy capital in the basement study room. Their contents are beginner magic books that are overlapping with each other.

I shut the bolt-shaped lock on the door, and teleport to the Mansion of Ivy.

I informed Lulu that I had teleported to the Mansion of Ivy with Telephone.

◇

"Huh? Are you not with Misanalia-sama? Br-, Satou-dono."

"Yeah, Mia is working hard in the labyrinth. I've come to use the workshop."

I head to the workshop accompanied by Leriril who looks bored.

"Artificial skin huh, another weird thing."

"Yeah, I need it for a bit."

I've come to the workshop in order to make the disguise set. People will doubt the identity of an unknown masked person no matter what. Therefore, I thought of making a fake face under the mask this time. A great person once said that if something is hidden, people will want to uncover it.

<TLN: This is probably a reference of something, can't put my finger on it atm.>

The thing about artificial skin is recorded in the Trazayuya document. It's an old record that's written even before the homonculus manufacture, it seems to be developed for living dolls use that work as a nanny.

First, mix the culture fluid.

It was just a world tree sap diluted with 100 times the water, so it was immediately finished.

Next, drop the original somatic cell for the artificial skin to the culture fluid. Since Leriril looked really bored, I took one drop of blood from the tip of her finger.

I operate the culture tank that's connected to the super advanced alchemy instrument. It's actually easy since the detailed procedures are written in the document. Since it needs 30 minutes to complete even with the rapid culture, let's do another work in parallel.

First, the wig. I make it white hair and long enough to cover my eyes. I make only the bangs in black since its purpose is to make an impression.

There's still some time, so let's make the clothes and the shoes next.

I take out a cloth made of Yuriha fiber dyed in black from the storage, and arrange it into clothes. I put some shoulder pads in the jacket to prevent sloping shoulders. For the white gloves, I've gone a bit overboard by sewing pentagrams from the Green Silk thread that has been dipped in Blue Liquid on it. Finally, I prepare the sleeveless inverness coat, and it's complete.

It's the pre-war schoolboy uniform style that would make Arisa drool if she saw it. I had also prepared the hat, but it'd be too overdone if I also put on Geta, so I made sneakers made from whale leather.

The needed area size of the artificial skin had finally been completed when I finished sewing the clothes. I'm in a hurry this time, so making only one should suffice. Before long, I'll make another 4-5 pieces.

This time I'm making a disguise mask by applying process that's similar to special effect make-up with the artificial skin as the base. Another person's face is a difficult thing. Let's make the mask with the face of a famous celebrity on earth as the base. I adopted the face of a young foreign star that won't be associated to me.

The artificial skin alone won't be able to conceal my facial skeleton, so I use a fiber that can expand and one that can harden if I put it with magic power as the mask frame. The material for both fibers are abundant in the storage from the gathered materials there, it should be enough.

During the work, Leriril diligently helped me by preparing the work instruments like an assistant would, or cleaning the fallen materials and scraps.

This disguise mask that I've made has become a magic tool that can change the contour and fat of your face.

Suddenly, it flashes in my mind, "Can't I also manipulate my body figure if I use these materials?"

That might be a good idea.

I can't make it right now since I don't have enough artificial skin though. Let's postpone making the skin-colored leotard for later even though it's been on my mind. Making my body double might be possible if I add it to a living doll.

◇

Now then, let's arrest Sir Sokel all at once with the completed clothes and disguise mask.

I open the map to check the turn of events.

Apparently, the situation has rapidly progressed during my carefree handicraft endeavor.

The lost thieves besides the executive classes in the (explorer guild) dungeon have been moved to the dungeon of the labyrinth army, maybe as a precaution against a raid.

Besso and his friend are in the back alley of the downtown. The two seem to be hurt. When I checked on them with [Clairvoyance] magic, they were being chased by thug-like group of people. They're probably members of [Goblin Claw]. Some male guild staffs are also chasing after Besso and his friend.

And the vital one, the mansion of Sir Sokel has been surrounded by the viceroy's soldier.

Since there are some guild staffs in the mansion, the guildmaster who has looked at that document seems to have urged the viceroy to take out his soldiers. Still, I didn't think that she would raid the mansion of a noble without even a proof. I don't know if it's because the secret maneuver skill is superior, or the guildmaster is quick to act, or the Fiend Drug is too dangerous.

They have gathered all the mansion's servants and the slaves in the entrance hall. Sir Sokel is not among them.

From the marker list in the map search, I tap on Sir Sokel to see his current position. He is in a carriage with his butler outside of the labyrinth city. The alchemist-san in question is also with Sir Sokel.

Judging from the direction they're going, northwest, they're probably escaping to the coal mine town, or maybe they will continue going north to Eluett Dukedom. Since they're outside the map, I use [Clairvoyance] magic to see and check whether there are pursuers. The viceroy soldiers are pursuing them by riding a horse five kilometers behind them, they will probably caught up before they reach the mountain road.

Well then, it seems there's no need to use the disguise set even though I've taken the trouble of creating them.

A [Signal] from Lulu came when I was feeling exhausted.

The content is [Emergency Incident].

10-32. Fiend Drug (2)

Satou's here. When I hear the word 'jealousy', love is the first thing that comes to mind. However, unexpectedly, jealousy against the success of other seems to run quite deep.

◇

"I'm going back to the mansion since some urgent business came up. Leriril, I'm sorry but please clean-up the workshop."

"Yes, I understand Satou-sama!"

Huh~? I wonder why, Leriril seems strange. Far away from calling me brat, she even uses "sama" instead. I waved my hands to Leriril who saw me off with sparkling eyes and returned with teleport. Come to think of it, I feel that she had become quiet after I completed making the artificial skin.

Now then, putting aside the trivial, I have to go for Lulu's emergency.

I'd like to go back immediately with teleport, but let's check the situation ahead.

First, let's confirm the mansion with the map. About 10 soldiers and two high level knights have come to the mansion. They're all the viceroy's subordinates.

This is puzzling. What do they want?

After checking the mansion basement with [Clairvoyant] I return there with Teleport.

I ignore the knocking on the basement door, take out a pen, an ink, and several paper sheets from the storage and put them on the work desk. In addition, I take out a candle and a candlestick, light it, and put it on the work desk. Lastly, I put the seal ring there and the preparation is complete.

Please let them be pointless if possible.

I unlock the bolt, open the door, and shout at the one who's knocking the door.

"You're noisy. I can't concentrate!"

"I, I'm sorry. Chevalier-sama is being suspected of using fiend drug. Please come to the viceroy office."

"Me using fiend drug?"

We come up above the ground while talking.

Apparently, they're doubting us for using the fiend drug since our levels are abnormally high for being so young.

Ludicrous. The risk is too great compared to the effect. If we only want to level up, I can make them level up to level 50 in just 10 days even without using such a drug.

"Master."

"It's fine, this is just right. I have some business with the Marchioness anyway, so let's think of this as the opportunity."

Still, who instigate this I wonder?

The Marquis should be thinking that I'm a source of revenue, while Baronet Dyukeli has a debt regarding the matter about his daughter. The possible pattern is from the Marquis' followers who don't want their position get taken.

When I was asking Ms. Miteruna to watch over the mansion, she gave me some advice.

"Master, I've heard some rumor about inquisitor Baron Vilas that he abuses his Fathom skill to get ahold of merchant's and servant's weakness. Please be careful."

I see, so he would change the subject once he starts asking things unrelated to fiend drug, I should object when that happens. I won't be caught off-guard if I just ready myself. Let's have the Negotiation and Tact skills work their magic.

While thanking Ms. Miteruna for her advice, I see the basement with Clairvoyant magic. Then by using [Magic Hand], I open the ink bottle on the work desk, and write a memo using the quill pen with instructions for Ms. Miteruna. I prepare another letter asking for rescue, and stamp the sealing wax with my seal. I collect the seal and the candle into the storage.

I didn't give it directly right now in order to prevent the mastermind from anticipating it. The handwritings are a bit messy, but it should be readable enough.

"Right, Miteruna. I forgot to close the ink bottle in the basement. Could you close it before the ink dried out?"

"Certainly master."

I head toward the carriage that has been prepared by the viceroy office, I explained the situation to Arisa and the others in the labyrinth, and ordered them to stay there for the time being.

◇

I bring Lulu along to the viceroy office, the three-story big building made of marbles that's right beside the eastern gate.

"Sir Pendragon, the inquisitor will be coming in a short while, please wait a bit in this room."

The high class-like bureaucrat young man has lead us to a bizarrely splendid room for state guests. I recorded various interiors like the furnitures with [Photo] magic since I rarely came to such a place.

"Lulu, relax your shoulders and sit down here. It's quite comfortable you know."

I let Lulu who was standing behind me come to sit on the sofa beside me I asked the maid who was standing by in the corner of the room for two sets of tea.

I whisper to Lulu gently that there's nothing to be worried about in low voice while embracing her head. The maid-san shouldn't suspect anything since Lulu's face has turned red. I think maid-san hadn't had enough training since she looked like she'd even vomit out sugar.

The inquisitor guy finally arrived when Lulu had settled down. Moreover, he's even brought six armed knights along, possibly to intimidate us. They're skilled people of level 20-30.

"Nice to meet you, Sir Pendragon. I am Baron Vilas the inquisitor. Ah, you can keep sitting like that. The inquiry will be over soon."

The inquisitor is a bald man with thin eyebrows who has a magic being like Raka with a [Fathom] skill. It should be a skill that can tell if someone is telling the truth or lying if I'm not mistaken. Come to think of it, this is the first time I've meet this baron. I would have meet all the peerage-holding nobles in the labyrinth city if I just met with the vice-viceroy next.

"Then answers my questions with『Yes』or『No』. There is no need to add excessive explanations."

The inquisitor warned with a posed look on his face that would likely have a light sfx on if he wore glasses.

"Inquisitor Vilas asks. Have you used fiend drug yourself?"

"I have not."

"Inquisitor Vilas asks. Have you administered fiend drug to other people?"

"I have not."

"Inquisitor Vilas asks. Have you instructed other people to administer fiend drug?"

"I have not."

Long.

He's probably asking the question one by one to prevent deception.

"Inquisitor Vilas asks. Do you know the recipe for making fiend drug?"

A dangerous question finally came up, but I didn't need to answer that.

◇

"Sir Vilas! What do you think you're doing? Sir Pendragon has rescued my son and the state guest princess from the lost thieves. So to speak, he's the benefactor of Selbira city. He wouldn't take those lost thieves who should be his underlings to the surface alive if he had anything to do with fiend drug!"

The one who entered the room with a long protest is the Marchioness. Even the Marquis himself is behind her. A fox in tiger's clothing, version 2*. This time the connection, or rather the bribe power from the prior investment has bear its fruit.

<*TLN: Japanese idiom that means a person in weaker position who hides behind the one with authority.>

"My wife is right. Who instructed you to haul Sir Pendragon away?"

So the one who ordered him to capture me really wasn't the viceroy.

"I-it's because the story about the disparity between the strength of Sir Pendragon and his retainers and their ages was the talk of the salon..."

"In other words, you had bought into the baseless baloney in the salon, and made him, who is one of your fellow noble, underwent the humiliating inquisition?"

"Viceroy-sama, i-it's a misunderstanding--"

Apparently, I have been regarded as an eyesore for participating in the Marchioness' tea party. There really are some narrow-minded people who get upset just from a newcomer participating in the tea party once.

I took advantage of when the Marquis was reproaching Baron Vilas, and inquired him, he confessed while sweating waterfall that his goal was to seize my weakness by first inquiring about the fiend drug. Looks like it's the vice-viceroy who has instigated him.

The reason why he confessed this unnaturally far might be because of Interrogation and Coercion skills. Maybe I had better normally turn both skills OFF.

The Marquis will be discharging both the Baron and the Vice-viceroy the instigator. Since the Marchioness looks satisfied behind, leaving it to him should be fine. I thought that they would only be given some stern warnings, but since this means that they won't freely interfere with us again from now on, this is good enough.

I report to Arisa that the problem has been solved and they don't need to worry anymore.

The reason why the Marchioness conveniently intruded this time was thanks to Ms. Miteruna who properly acted upon the memo that I had left in the basement.

After I was taken by the carriage, she went to the Marquis' mansion to deliver the letter with my seal as instructed. Normally, a letter from some lower noble would have been postponed, and finished just like that, but it seems that as the result of the pastry that I had given back then, the maid gave the letter to the lady attendant, and the attendant gave it to the Marchioness, so she could quickly read the letter. I'll present them with various confections later.

Since Ms. Miteruna had come with a carriage, I lifted Lulu in and let them went home ahead. I was going to go back with them, but I couldn't reject the Marchioness' invitation to a dinner. It had become a dinner where we said our thank and apology to each side.

The princess profusely pestered me to tell stories about the labyrinth during the dinner, I answered her while taking care not to disturb other attendants. It would be bad if I carelessly told her some exaggerated stories and made her and plump-kun go to the labyrinth again.

None of the the dinner menu, the so-called full course meal, use ingredients made of monsters at all, it's probably the Marquis' house chefs' fixation. If I have to say, there are not enough vegetables. Every dish was delicious, but the beef stew was superb. I'll recreate this taste for everyone later.

◇

I thank the coachman of the Marquis' house carriage for sending me to the mansion, and enter the mansion. Ms. Miteruna who had come to meet me gave some kind of basket to the coachman. Since I smelled something sweet, it was probably confections that Lulu had made.

I search the map while relaxing on the sofa. Looks like Sir Sokel has been arrested, he's currently being confined in one of the viceroy office's room. Shockingly enough, Besso is still running away. One of Besso's male friend has been apprehended by the explorer guild, he's in the dungeon of the west guild.

I have been surrounded by everyone when I finished the check and closed the map.

"Looks like it was terrible."

"Yeah, it's going to be uglier tonight though."

"Hoe? 'I won't let you sleep tonight', that kind?"

"Yes, yes, you're cute Arisa."

I off-handedly sweep off Arisa who's playing around.

"Since the lost thieves are more trouble than I thought, I'm thinking of seriously eliminating them. And also, it seems that there are carriers and slaves whom the lost thieves have captured and made to work, so I'd also like to rescue and shelter them."

"I'll help~?"

"I'll work hard nodesu!"

"Nn."

I pat the head of Tama who looks up from where she sits on my lap. Pochi and Tama peek from both sides, but I can't let them help me this time.

However, I feel slightly lonely that Arisa didn't retort back even though I said something quite absurd.

"I'm sorry but please stay at home this time. Mia, can you create Artificial Being like Aialiaze-san does?"

"Nn."

"Is there any that's suitable for surveillance?"

"...■■ Wing Ball"

No wait, I didn't say that you have to use it now.

Mia has called something that looks like a ball with wings. Can it do surveillance even without eyes? Mia said that it's alright while beating her flat chest.

"Then, please watch the viceroy's mansion and the west guild with Mia's Wing Balls. Get in contact with me if a disturbance happens."

"Nn."

"Okke."

Now then, let's get some work done for the sake of safe labyrinth life.

10-33. Fiend Drug (3)

Satou's here. It's important to prepare things in advance. It's troublesome to do it while you're in the middle of a work, but if you don't prepare properly, you'll have a tough time later on. It doesn't feel like you need to do it until you learn it from the mistake though.

◇

Equipped with the artificial skin that I've made in the ivy mansion this afternoon, I change into a different person by using Disguise skill in full throttle. In addition, I equip a black mask to cover the area around my eyes.

Then, I change the Companion column into these. The name is Kuro, level 50, the occupation is bounty hunter, the skills are of shooting-related ones, rare magic, elf language, dragon language, and the exact opposite of Satou's modest stats. I recorded the various stats in the memo column so I won't mistake it whenever I disguise myself. I can use Nanashi if I want, but disguising myself will have no meaning if it becomes [Nanashi appears wherever Satou is], so I've decided to make the third persona.

"Satou-sama, what are you going to do with such a disguise?"

"I'm going to eliminate the lost thieves. Leriril, I'm sorry, but is it okay if I shelter the people who have been caught by the lost thieves here?"

"Please use the surface mansion if possible. There are many dangerous equipments in the underground."

Ah, I forgot about that.

I install a carved seal board for teleport on the surface mansion.

"Well then, I'm going. I'm counting on you to receive them."

"Yes, please leave it to me!"

Ah, I can't stop feeling odd at Leriril who replies promptly.

◇

I initially went to the safe area of Area 17 where the villa is.

First, I have to prepare the particular by finding the place where I can apprehend the lost thieves.

I mark all the lost thieves inside the labyrinth. There are approximately 300 people in total. 90% of them have committed felony like [Murder].

Next, I look for the working field that Rudaman talked about. I try searching the main ingredients of the fiend drug, Ruin Weed and Decay Stem in each area. Although there are places where they're growing wild, I pick ones where they're growing densely that have obviously been tended by humans, and have carriers and lost thieves nearby them. There are three places all in all. Moreover, the places cannot be reached without going through troublesome areas.

Next, I search to see if there's any noble or their servants. Miss Gina's party [Moonlight], and other three noble parties come up. Judging from their positions, every party is innocent. They're quite enthusiastic to hunt by staying overnight. Even miss Gina who was at level 6 when I first met her has smoothly leveled up to 9 now. They're probably leveling up efficiently by constantly fighting higher-leveled enemies.

Next, I need to prepare the place where I can temporarily put the lost thieves. I can't exactly bring them to the authority in the middle of the night.

The chosen site is in one corner of Area 37. It's a bit deep but since it's an area with plant-type monsters, it has watering holes. I've picked the place where Gushing Holes can't geographically appear, and with only one entrance to it.

I look for the shortest route there. I can likely get there in 20 minutes if I break the walls in two passages along the way.

While relying on Invisibility and Spy skills I fly on the passage ceilings with Sky Drive. It seems that no one from the explorers parties along the way noticed me. Even if they do, they will probably regard it as a new kind of monster.

The hall where I've arrived at is quite a damp place with water dripping from the ceiling.

Fern-type plants are growing in colony. It looks like they're monsters. I tried throwing an ant leg from the storage to it, and the fern leaves became like a chainsaw, cutting the leg. I'm unsure whether this monster belongs to a fantasy or a horror work. Let's check the leaf's structure later.

I catch sight of monsters that look exactly like triceratops between the trees. It's probably not a normal dinosaur since violet flashes sometimes appear on its orange-colored transparent horns. While producing chewing sounds, these monsters are munching the leaves that are rotating like chainsaws without even caring about it. There are also two-meter class dragonfly-like monsters fluttering around.

Geez, it's completely a Cretaceous era.

I pull myself together and begin the clean-up. I swiftly cut down the stronger monsters with [Flexible Swords]. Since they'll likely smell if left alone, I put them into the storage with [Magic Hand] in no time flat.

After I've exterminated the big ones, I use [Remote Arrow] to eradicate the small fries. I retrieve the bodies just like I did with the big ones.

In just 10 minutes, I've completed clearing the monsters in the hall.

In the center of the room, I put a lot of bowls with clothes inside and dried meats from insect-type monsters in jars. These dried meats were something that the mansion children had made for practice. They're terrible thing that even made the beastkin girls to put down their forks with just a single bite. It was clearly a failure, but I couldn't throw them away just like that either, so I stowed it away in the storage. Might as well use it for the lost thieves I'll be capturing.

Next, I block the only passage to the room with a big rock that I had stored in the storage from the aisle. Then I put a carved seal board on the middle of the passage. In addition, I make hard stone walls at a certain length in the passage afterward by using [Stone Wall] magic on the soil taken out of my storage.

The impromptu prison is complete with this.

◇

I catch the lost thieves with a series of capturing combo starting with Remote Stun.

"Who are you bastard! Who do you think this great me is!"
"Yeah yeah, I'll listen to you later."

I defeat the one who seems to be the boss of this lost thief group by pounding him with Remote Stuns. I then floor the rest of the small fries with the capturing combo.

Fumu, it's 55 people with this huh. I guess this is it for this base.

I lift the captured lost thieves with [Magic Hand] and teleport to Area 37. I advance on the passage, and then put the rock that block the way to the hall into my storage, opening the road.

Since the fallen lost thieves were crowding in front of the rock, I pushed the fresh lost thieves inside, putting them back into the room. After I've finished putting them inside, I place the rock again, blocking the passage. Booing broke out from the other side of the rock, but I ignored it since it didn't interest me.

However, it was a bit of failure. I forgot that there were also women among the lost thieves. I can let them stay in the same room, but I don't want that somehow. It can't be helped, I make another room with a door in the passage and decide to confine the female lost thieves there. Just like in the hall, I've also provided food, salt, two barrels of water, an empty jar, and a partitioning screen there.

I teleport back to the base just now and this time, I lift the carriers and the slaves with [Magic Hand], and take them to the mansion of ivy.

"H-here is?"

"Onee-chan, it's stars! I can see the stars."

"Outside? It's really the outside?"

Leriril who have waited for our coming claps her hands to gather their attentions.

"Be quiet children of human. This is the mansion of ivy, the place where sage-sama lives. I'll send you back to the labyrinth if you make an uproar."

The threat seems to be effective as the worked-up people have quieted down.

"Have your representative steps up. Porina, please explain the things to the representative."

"Yes, Kuro-sama."

Porina is the leader of the carriers whom I've saved first. She's level 7 despite being a baggage carrier. Her skills are [Carriage], [Cultivation], and [Harvesting].

I leave here to Leriril and Porina, and go back to the field earlier. I put one of the surveillance magic tool that I've created for the villa in one corner of the room. It looks like a two-meter long pole with a skull on its tip. The skull part has surveillance and information transmission mechanisms installed. The pole part has magic circuit for circulating magic power, and it can operate for three days if it's filled to the brim with magic power. I made this for surveillance around the villa, but since its appearance was unpopular (among the girls), I stowed it away.

I attack the remaining large-scale lost thief hideout and rescue the carriers who are working there. The bigger places are complete with this. Next, I assaulted the smaller lost thief groups that had dispersed in 10 places. Dealing with them was troublesome since they were running away in small groups.

Once I throw the last lost thief into the temporary prison, I take a breath.

It should be fine to take these guys to the west guild after the day has risen.

◇

In total, there are 220 people that I've saved. 110 people are carriers, 80 are slaves, and 30 are unexpectedly explorers. All of them are women. Apparently, men who were caught were either killed, or made to work as slaves until they made them became decoys for a special strategy (Train), killing them.

Most of the women seemed to be working on the field with shackles on their legs. Looks like they were also cultivating crops for the lost thieves' consumption besides the ingredients for the fiend drug. Due to that, there are some who have Cultivation, Harvesting, and Mixing skills.

There are a lot of female explorers at level 5, the ones who were higher than that were either solicited into becoming lost thieves, or killed.

Leriril was still up, but Porina and the others have gone asleep since they seemed to be tired, I'll talk to them again once the dawn arrives.

There are too many of them and not enough rooms in the mansion, so she has prepared beds in the hall and the corridors for them.

"Sa, Kuro-sama, actually, we have ran out of the reserve food. The vegetables grown with『Green Hand (Grow)』magic in the garden are at its limit too."

"Ah, sorry, I forgot to supply them."

Leriril leads me to the food warehouse and then I take out a large quantity of ingredients. Most of them are the ones I've collected in the lost thief hideouts, but I've also put things like wheat, potatoes, frog meat, salt and many other things. It should be enough for a while since they're around 6000 meal worth in all. I give her various kind of medicines since there are some unhealthy people among them.

"Is this a space magic?"

"Un, something like that."

It's dead at midnight now, and there's still quite some time until morning, so I go to the underground workshop with Leriril. Communications from Arisa comes at regular interval, reporting "No abnormal~ity" with a sleepy voice. I suggested her to alternate the monitoring work, but since she said okay, I'll let them work hard until Arisa and Mia doze off, and the regular contact gets cut off.

Sir Sokel doesn't have a peerage even though he's a noble. I feel that there's a real mastermind behind this, although I hope it's just an unfounded fear. If the mastermind is in this city, they should be raiding tonight. And right now until the early dawn is the time with the highest probability for the raid.

I thought of going back to the mansion for an instant, but I decided to prepare various things in the underground workshop and went to the streets.

10-34. Fiend Drug (4)

Satou's here. I feel that assassins mainly use poison as their weapons. I wonder since when their attack variations increase, like strangling with wire, or long-range needle attack on the vital spot. Nowadays, what's the weapon that's in fad for assassins. I'm slightly interested.

◇

"You're Sokel right?"

"W, who are you guys?"

"We're just running an errand."

There are two burglars who have invaded the viceroy office where Sir Sokel is confined. Both of them have completely covered their faces and worn thick brown mantles. Their hands are holding swords which leak out dubious light.

"From who?"

"From his highness of course."

The burglars finally noticed my presence with that question and hurriedly pointed their swords at me. While one of them proceeded to restrain me, the other one probably continuing on to erase Sir Sokel. I was unsure since I kicked the burglar before me away to the burglar in the interior, stopping him. Maybe I kicked them too strongly, both of the men have sunk into the wall. They would have come out to the room beyond if they had been pushed further.

"Goha, what a heavy kick."

"The rumored Mithril explorer huh."

"Wrong."

You guys actually have some leeway right?

The men look alright even after receiving an attack that should have normally fainted them. I think the coughed salivas have some red color mixed in, but they have enough mettle to stand up and ready their weapons.

Both are level 30 [Human] races, and their Status are [Magic Body Bestowal]. I think that it's most likely the status of someone who has drank fiend drug.

As a proof, even without chanting spells, purple flashes leaks out from their bodies, and then the area around their bodies are clad in flames.

"I don't know who you are, but I'll have you die together with that man."

"We'll offer you to the death. We are fiends. The ones who will become the protectors of the new world that his highness will build."

Their words have strange accents mixed in. Their grotesque figures were hidden in the mantles which I saw for an instant. Half of their faces have become like tortoise shell, and their eyes are like compound eyes of insects. They look quite grotesque even compared to various demi-humans I've seen so far.

They are still humans despite the grotesque though, so let's proceed without killing them. I have to at least draw that line, or else I feel that I will become a demon lord myself.

Since they are tough enough to stand against a blow from me, I hit them with normal [Short Stun] instead of [Remote Stun]. Let's go easy at first and go with 20 shots. The Rhinoceros Beetle back then could endure 20 shots, so let's go with that many.

One of them was hit with the magic, broke through the wall behind, and vanished into the next room. The other one seemed to have dodged several short stun orbs with his intuition, but the rest of the orbs caught up to him, and sunk him into the outer wall in a strange posture. The outer wall of this city seems to be quite sturdy.

Neither lose their consciousness. The drug seems to be quite excellent as a boost medicine. There are probably some people who have drank it at least once in the battlefield.

What should I do.... Ah, right. I didn't think about it.

Let's test it on one of them.
It's a success. After taking my blow, he's fallen down unconscious.

"Y, you bastard, what did you do?"
"No way would I expose my secret to the enemy right?"

While evading his attack, I destroy his reinforced state with [Break Magic], and then thoroughly snatch his magic power with [Mana Drain]. I also drain the magic power that's circulating on his weapon. I don't know how great is the magic circuit granted by the fiend drug, but it shouldn't work if the magic power that works as its fuel is cut off.

Finally, I hit him, who has his magic power stripped bare, unconscious and it's the end. The enemy still has sturdiness fits for his level, but his unreasonable toughness from just before has disappeared.

I restrain the men with magic-sealing ivy. This is something that I've made from the ivy of Thorn Foot in the workshop earlier, it has the same effect as magic-sealing chain. Unlike the usual, the maker is Kuro this time, not Nanashi.

I reported to Arisa with Telephone that I had taken care of viceroy office.

◇

I can hear the footsteps of the viceroy office guards who have finally noticed the uproar, heading here.

『Goha』

『What? There's an invisible wall here?』

『There's a magician among the burglar. You guys go from another stairs. You go call magician-dono here.』

Sorry for them, but I'm blocking the passage for now.

"Now then, Sir Sokel. Would you answer questions from your life savior?"

"Ah, I'll tell you. I'll tell you, so please shelter me in a safe place."

"Alright. I'll bring you to a safe place if you answer honestly."

I asked Sir Sokel who was desperately clinging to me about the mastermind.

"His highness is a blood relative of Shiga royal family. I think he's a man who has just come of age. I don't know his true identity since he always wore recognition inhibition mask whenever we met."

"How could you make a dangerous drug like fiend drug from the order of such a man."

"It's because his guardian is Marquis Kelten. He also hid his face, but I immediately knew it was him from his peculiar way of talking. I thought that a chevalier like me would be able to become a baronet if I cooperated with someone who had Marquis Kelten, one of the eight marquis along with his tremendous influence on the army, on his back."

I think that's a coup d'etat flag though, will the next kingdom conference be alright?

"In truth you're just disposable huh."

"That's right, how laughable."

I get information about his highness like the way he speaks, his figure, and various things that weren't hidden by the recognition inhibition mask from the listless self-deprecating Sir Sokel. It's really not the third prince huh. According to Toruma Memo, the fourth prince is 18 years old, the fifth prince is 14 years old, since the second child of the king's younger brother is 15 years old, this one is suspicious. There doesn't seem to be any unacknowledged illegitimate child of the king, but the previous king and the king's younger brother seem to have strong lust, so there are a lot of candidates that come up.

Now then, I guess I'll shelter him since he listened and all.

I release the [Mana Wall] that had confined the guards.

"You bastard! Who are you."

"I'll shelter Sir Sokel for a while. Those men over there are assassins sent by the mastermind called his highness. They're high levels and also users of fiend drug. Don't let your guard down even if they're unconscious. They're as strong as low-rank demon at least. There should be a jail for high level criminals in the labyrinth city right?   Put them there."

I intentionally ignore their words, and tell the burglars' motive and other things unilaterally. I change my tone from how Satou usually is, and speak in slightly high-handed manner.

Since I'm currently in a disguise and all, I introduce myself as [Kuro].

After I've finished telling them, I teleport away with Sir Sokel along with the bed he's sitting on. The destination is in the labyrinth. I took him to the deepest working field of the fiend drug. There are multiple intelligence systems here after all.

"H, here is?"

"The inside of the labyrinth."

"What? A, are you going to kill me?!"

"I don't have such intention. Here is a safety zone. There's no gushing hole, and monsters and people won't come here except for some odd plants that are growing here. It's the most suitable place for a shelter."

I take him to the row house where the abducted people had lived in. There is no rain in the labyrinth, but sometimes natural water drip down from the ceiling, so the roof is necessary.

I put the bed from earlier in a relatively large room. Since he asked if it was space magic, I noncommittally affirmed it. I take out daily necessities like food and water from Item Box and put it on a table in one corner of the room. I also leave a cheap knife and hatchet, although I think it's unnecessary. Any one of them are things that was used by the abducted people.

It may look like I'm doing too much, but leaving a noble who can't even cook for himself alone inside the labyrinth is cruel enough. However, I want him to taste a bit of the anxiety and pain of the people who have been captured and made to work hard by the lost thieves.

I've told him that this is a safety zone, and even though it's the truth, Sir Sokel still gets frightened from rustling sounds of the grass and small animals, he's probably going to sleep while in fear of getting suddenly attacked by monsters.

"Well then, I'll supply you with food in 10 days time. If you don't eat them sparingly, no one will come to save you even if you starve, so be careful."

I leave behind Sir Sokel who looks like he's going to protest, and go back to the mansion of ivy.

◇

When I had returned to the mansion of ivy, fire and smoke from afar came into my view.

『This is Arisa-chan, over?』

I received a Telephone contact from Arisa. Her home-telephone way of speaking has finally disappeared, but this time it's in transceiver style. Please talk a bit more normal.

"It's me. I saw the fire. Is that the west guild?"

『Un, some men with the same clothing as the ones who attacked the viceroy office earlier came flying from the sky. They have wings on their back.』

"I understand, I'll go there immediately. I'm counting on you to keep watching the viceroy office."

『Roger~』

I fly in the labyrinth sky with Sky Drive. From the sky, I see that one section of the guild hall is burning. I tilt my head in puzzlement when I look at the stats of the people attacking the guild. I understand that they've used the fiend drug, but their skill compositions are that of an assassin, not a magician. It seem they can use magic, but since it's wind magic, I don't know the cause of that fire.

The flame stretches out from the ground.

With my skill-strengthened vision, I see the man in dark brown clothing evading the flame while flying in the sky.

Oy, oy, that flame is from the guildmaster's magic huh. What are you doing burning your own base. Why are there so many pyromaniacs among fire magicians.

I want to prevent the fire from spreading further so I strike down the flying burglar to the ground with [Remote Stun] magic. People would have normally died from the fall, but they're really some strong bunch. Big shield Jell and some high level explorers who have come out of the guild hall proceed to arrest the burglar.

You guys act too early.

The burglar forcibly flings away Jell and the others with his super strength from the fiend drug. When he was about to fly away once again, the flame bullets of [Multi Flame] magic that the guildmaster had released hit him. The burglar is roasted together with the ground around him from the countless flame bullets, and rolls on the ground.

As expected of level 50. The power is incredible as long as it hits.

Since she had begun to chant [Inferno], I intervene. Just like the magic earlier, it's not something that should be used in the middle of the city.

By using Flash Drive from the sky, I land on the back of the burglar who has put out the fire and stood up. The force was a bit too much, I could feel several of his bones breaking. Looks like it's a bit too much no matter how sturdy the opponent is. Just like with the guys caught in the viceroy office, I cancel the reinforcing magic, snatch his magic power, and bind him with magic-sealing ivy. It's a simple works that only lasted several seconds.

"Who are you!"

"Rather than that, put this guy into the prison. This happens just when I've come to exterminate the lost thieves, looks like strange fellows are rampant here. As expected of Labyrinth City I guess."

I vaguely swept off the guildmaster who had stopped her chanting and asked my identity, and then threw the binded burglar nearby their feet. Then I fly to the sky, and take out ocean water from the storage to extinguish the burning guild hall. Once I've confirmed that most of the fire have been extinguished, I go back to the mansion of ivy.

Good grief, I can't laugh at the fact that the guildmaster is the one who created the biggest damage here. I wonder how is she not demoted and fired like that.

10-35. Selection Test

Satou's here. In recent games, urgent quests that suddenly appear as time-limited quest with their tedious work has given me a bit of stress. Yet an urgent quest in real life feels like a mere bothersome work that's been pushed into me, I wonder why is that?

◇

It's been three days since I eliminated the fiend drug users. Besso and the explorer who were in possession of the fiend drug have been captured by the guild, but there is no surprise attack since that incident.

The next day, by the guildmaster's request, we went to Rudaman's hideout and the cultivation fields, but those places had already been vacated and only uninhabited field remained. I'm the one who have made it uninhabited so there's no mistake. The guild staff onee-san who was going with us only collected the Ruin Weed and Decay Stem as evidences, and then we went back to the labyrinth city.

"Then, the field you found had been emptied huh?"

"Yes, since foodstuff and daily necessities were also gone, they might have moved to another place."

"We also searched for something like hidden rooms, but there was no one remaining just like chevalier-sama's said. They weren't moved by the lost thieves mastermind since there were unharvested ruin weed and decay stem that remained, maybe they might have ran away by themselves?"

The guild staff onee-san who had gone together with us in the investigation is reporting the result in the guildmaster room.

"We also tried searching the neighboring passages with magic, but we couldn't find anyone."

"That so, thank you for your hard works."

"Should we dispatch explorers again to search for the abducted people?"

"Think of the place, the place. The only ones that can search in such a deep area like that are the Red Iron bunch. Even if they were running away on their own, they would have ended up eaten by monsters before they could reach the surface."

It seems the guildmaster has decided to give up on rescuing, or rather searching for those people.

"They might have been unexpectedly saved by some explorers and returned to the surface."

"That would be nice."

"I also think that the possibility is low, but I wish that they have safely returned to the surface and gone back to their peaceful life."

"I pray that there isn't anyone with compounding and alchemy skills."

While vaguely sweeping off my words, the guildmaster said so.

"Is there something bad about it?"

"Yeah, it's bad. Someone who has the Alchemy skill must be involved in the creation of the fiend drug, even the one who has the Compounding skill should be able to prepare for the making of fiend drug. These guys will most certainly be forced into becoming slaves and made to be in non-disclosure condition to prevent them from divulging the method to make the fiend drug, after that they will probably be confined in the kingdom research facility their whole life."

"Are the other people who are involved in the cultivation alright?"

"Yeah, putting aside the Ruin Weed, Decay Stems can be found in the labyrinth relatively easy so there should be no problem."

Fumu, that means I can release people besides the ones with Compounding or Alchemy skills before long.

Then, the guild staff-san reservedly interjected.

"Umm....May I?"

"What? Say it?"

"People normally don't think of breaking through the labyrinth where monsters are crawling, away from their safety zone, I think such an idea comes up because guildmaster and chevalier-sama are strong. Even if there are some people who come up with the idea, the majority won't move unless there's a reason like having limited food. In actuality, they have crops from the cultivated field."

"In other words, there must be secret hideouts nearby where they can move safely to huh?"

"Yes, there might be hidden passages that couldn't be detected by the young lady retainer of Chevalier-sama."

"Then I guess I'll torture Rudaman until he spits it out."

Looks like the guildmaster is going to torture Rudaman after this, but since it doesn't seem like she'll kill him, let's not mind it.

◇

I acquire the consent of the women sheltered in the mansion of ivy to stay there by saying that it's because "They will be killed by the mastermind behind the lost thieves if they get out right now". Strangely enough, there were only a handful of people who persistently wanted to go back to the city, most didn't seem eager. I tell them to be patient for 10 days. I'll do something in the meantime.

At the present time, these women are unlikely to be eliminated by the mastermind.

According to the guildmaster's story, I can probably release the people who don't have compounding or alchemy skills. Since the fact that this is the mansion of ivy have been known to them I can't release those people right now. It should work out somehow if I bring them to populated places nearby the royal or the duchy capital, or maybe some villages in Muno barondom and then give them a new name and ID.

I should search some places that can accept them.

◇

"Do you want to become an explorer~!?"

"""Yeah!""

Amplified with Mia's magic, Arisa's voice is echoing through the labyrinth city outer wall. We're currently in a temporary tent right outside the labyrinth city.

100 baggage carriers who aspire to become explorers have gathered before Arisa. We're going to decide the pupils for Iruna and Jenna of Beautiful Wings from among them.

There are 70 boys and 30 girls. They're children who have gathered after hearing publicity talks from Iruna and Jenna during the past three days. Although I said children, the age range spans from 10 to 18 years old. The mean age range is at around 12-14 years old.

Iruna explains the selection test to the children with her voice alone without relying on magic.

"We will choose 15 children among you. First we will choose five children with fast legs. It's important to have fast legs in the labyrinth for scouting and luring monsters. Run once you hear this flute as a signal. The first five children who run around Selbira outer wall for a lap pass."

The children began to run when Arisa blew the flute. Some got their feet entwined by other's foot, some were tumbled by their own feet. The one thing they have in common is that every one of them stands up on their own without crying even while covered in dust, and run. They're truly strong-willed.

I used [Clairvoyance] magic along the way to see if there were any fallen children, but there were only two who had fallen from anemia. I contacted Nana who was patrolling with a horse by using [Telephone], and had them withdrawn.

For some reaosn, Pochi and Tama had somehow started running too. They must have been tempted. Pochi was the winner by a wide margin. Tama was unusually worked up and challenged her again.

When the two had finished running, I looked back at the winning children who had been passed quite far.

"Damn, to lose to a dogkin and a catkin children. It's a disgrace for a rabbitkin."

"I can't believe I lost to someone beside Usasa."

The first and second place winners looked at Pochi and Tama in frustration. They are 14 years old rabbitkin girl and boy. These children are separated quite far from the third place. The third place is a ratkin, while the fourth and fifth are human boys.

There are 10 children who have failed the first test. These 10 children are doing physical exercise lead by Lulu to build their stamina nearby the temporary HQ.

The second test will begin after a short break with sandwiches. During this break, we distributed water for re-hydration and baked sweets for calorie intake. It'd be troubling if they faint from hunger along the way.

"The next one is endurance run. The first five children who have ran five laps around the Selbira outer wall pass. Lunches are waiting for the children who have ran for more than two laps. Do your best."

"""Yeah!""

For some reason, the answer this time have more power in them than the first time. I intended to let them eat unconditionally for the test this time since we had already prepared meals for 100 people from the beginning, but since it was so effective like they have a carrot dangling in front of their eyes, I couldn't intercede. However, besides the leading pack, many children who were unlikely to be chosen by the selection members stopped running after two laps.

The boys were strong for endurance marathon too, there were three boys and two girls. This time humans were strong, among the five children, three boys and girls who had dark-skin like Roji were particularly strong. They looked calm enough to run several more laps.

The remaining five children will be chosen after the meal break. By the way, the meal menu is croquet made from Leaping Potato and insect meat, and Walking Bean with insect meat soup.

The meal this time were prepared not only by Ms. Miteruna and the seven apprentice maids from our mansion, but also five baggage carrier girls who could cook. I'm planning to have Ms. Miteruna taught these five girls, and then permanently employ them as personnels for food distribution on the orphanage and the slum. They are plain and honest girls who are at 14-18 years old.

"Well then let's begin the last test. Use the twig we have distributed earlier like you would a sword. Yes, stretch out your elbow. Keep that posture, the one who doesn't lower their arm until the end passes."

Screams broke out from the children, but this is a selection to choose the last five children with will-power. It's out of question if they can't even endure the training before entering the labyrinth.

The majority of them fell in the first one hour, but it was quite long for the remaining seven, once the last one dropped out after three more hours, the five children had been decided.

The final selected members have 11 boys and 4 girls. The plan is to have Iruna and Jenna teach these children the basic for 10 days on the surface, afterward, five of them are going to be taken alternately in three turns into the labyrinth, each group spend five days, 15 days in total, to be leveled up to level 7.

Since the contract with Iruna and Jenna is for three months, the children who have failed in the test this time still have two more chances.

"Everyone, thank you for today! We will open the test again next month, so to the one who have failed this time, please don't give up!"

With Arisa's closing words, the disqualified children go back to the west gate in groups of twos and threes. Everyone is given three baked sweets as the consolation prize. These sweets seems to become the spreading bait for the children who didn't participate this time.

◇

Iruna and Jenna explain the plan hereafter to the children who have passed. There were shouts of joy particularly when they heard that they were going to be provided with three meals and were free to ask for second.

The children are going to be drilled on the vacant land nearby which I've borrowed.

I was going to give the selected children the same ant armors that I had given to Iruna and Jenna, but Arisa strongly objected and warned me. You should not give them cheat equipments if you're going to let them become an independent explorer after the training is over, unless you're making them into your retainers.

Not only Arisa, Iruna and Jenna also stopped me. The reason is a bit different; if they have an armor that protect them from getting hurt from a monster's attack, they will neglect avoiding attacks. Moreover, if they don't get some slight wounds, they won't learn the way to stop bleeding during an actual fight, so I'm told that such armors will not let them learn the importance of them.

When I consulted to Iruna and Jenna about the right equipment for the children, they recommended the equipment called bone equipment. They seem to be goblin bones that are knitted on jacket and trousers made from knitted grasses. It seems the basic equipment advancement for labyrinth explorer is as follow : wood chips equipment to bone equipment to insect husk equipment and then to insect shell equipment.

As for the weapon, the plan is to have them use a club made from goblin thighbone, and then a short spear made from ant claw from the second area on. For the shield, it seems they're planning to use leather shield. Iruna and Jenna bought these equipments cheaply from the apprentices at the shopping district. I've revised some of the weakly-made points, so they shouldn't incur major injury from low level enemies.

By the way, the two currently use mantis-type equipments. They were very happy when I gave it as a present for the celebration of getting to level 15. Apparently, mantis-type equipments are proof of veteran in the labyrinth city. I probably shouldn't say that they only look different on the outside, as compared to the ant equipment from before, there's hardly any difference in the defensive power.

Now then, if I need permissions from the Marchioness and the guildmaster to hold regular food distribution in the city, let's get them to issue it.

10-35-2. Banquet and the Truth of Beria [Revised Version]

Satou's here. Back then, quitting your job and becoming independent by opening a cafe was popular, but nowadays, it seems that retiring to the countryside and buying a plot of agriculture land to lead a slow life there has become popular.

◇

I was invited to Baronet Dyukeli's mansion under the pretext of an apology for causing me trouble regarding lady Merian.

Looks like I'm not the only one who's been invited to the banquet, the shopkeepers of magic tool shops and medicine shops under his control in the labyrinth city have also come.

When I was in the reception room before the banquet began, lady Merian in a dress apologized for the trouble and thanked me for the rescue. She left the room while whispering me to keep the matter about her going to the swordsmanship dojo a secret from her father.

Her impish smile must have been just my imagination.

◇

"You should get acquainted with them since you're going to be an explorer of the labyrinth city."

He introduced me as his daughter's savior to the shopkeepers.

During the banquet, it naturally has become the talk about goods that are selling well and ones that are in serious shortage in the labyrinth city. Especially the healing medicines, it seems that even for the shops under baronet Dyukeli with their inflated prices as the viceroy's ally, the medicines are usually out of stock there.

"Moreover, if we want to create the healing medicine in this city, there is no choice but to stock the ingredients from the merchants in the neighboring cities who sell them at a high price, or pick them from the mountain with wolves after pushing our way through the wasteland."

"It sure is hard to compete against the guild that's selling the healing medicine without minding the profit."

"That's cause those guys are selling at the price of the Royal Capital."

"It really is, they can stock the medicines easier."

I see, although it's obvious that there are difference between the buyer's and the seller's perspectives, there is such a circumstance behind it huh. Although I shouldn't swallow their story entirely just like that, it doesn't seem like they're just being too greedy.

"However, that means during the time when it's out of stock, explorers dive into the labyrinth without even having a way to heal themselves?"

"No, poor explorers will go with leaves of Beria they've plucked."

"That still hasn't changed even now."

It seems Beria is a cactus-like plant that's growing wild on the wasteland around the labyrinth city.

They were also growing along the highway's sides if I'm not mistaken.

Beria is a succulent plant with aloe-like thick needled leaves growing around its cactus body, and as a matter of fact they're edible, while the leaves can be used to cure bleeding or burn.

As for the center fruit, even though it's relatively tasty, it has an alias [Beggar Killer] since it seems that it causes diarrhea which goes on until you're dehydrated if you eat it too much. It can make children and the elderly who don't have much physical strength to die.

Looks like the baggage carriers who have failed to get a job pick those fruits and sell them in front of the city gate to earn enough income to sustain their livelihood. I ignored it since there were many peddlers who were selling things before the gate, but there were such things being sold there huh. I'll pay more attention to various things next time.

"Maybe it's possible to make a healing medicine from Beria leaf?"

"There's a legend about the sage-sama of olden days who can create a magic potion from Beria leaf, but it's a lost tale from a long time ago."

"Nowadays, 『Healing medicines made from Beria leaf』 is a phrase only said by the frauds in labyrinth city, it's something that no one believes."

By sage, does he mean Trazayuya?

I searched about Beria on his documents, but there were no hit.

When I go to the elf hometown next time, I'll ask Tsutoreiya-shi the alchemist if he knows about the recipe to make the magic potion from Beria leaf.

◇

Later, I was able to see various treasured items on his shops when I was going around them.

Among the items, it seems that the silver sword of ant wing is quite popular. It was more of a gray sword than silver, but it seems to be the easiest magic sword to make from monster materials in the labyrinth city. Since the way to create things from ant wing is written in Trazayuya document, I'll try to make one.

The magic scrolls which I looked forward the most had the same line-ups as the duchy capital since they were all provided by Viscount Shimen.

Interestingly enough, the ignition rod that most explorers use seem to be sold at high price in the neighboring earldom and small kingdoms. It's cheap in the labyrinth city since it's mass produced by amateur craftsmen from scrap magic cores, but in other territories, the rod is made by full-fledged craftsmen from proper magic cores like other magic tools, so it's expensive there.

◇

The Marchioness has requested me to redevelop an experimental farm outside the labyrinth city, although it has nothing to do with Beria fruit.

It seems to be a place near a small water source where the previous viceroy created an experiment to grow wheat, but was abandoned since the yield was bad.

It was right when I was looking for place to employ the slave girls I had saved as Kuro, so I agreed to it.

The explorer-turned-thieves who had built a hideout there were trampled by Pochi and Tama, turned into crime slaves and taken to the coal mine.

Since the land has become barren, I decide to grow Beria fruits for healing medicines, beans for food, and tomatoes. Especially the tomatoes, I expect to mass produce them.

◇

About the healing medicine recipe made from Beria leaf, when I went to meet Tsutoreiya-shi to consult it, he quickly wrote the recipe and handed it to me. It seemed that it was a well-known recipe in the elf hometown, so Trazayuya didn't leave it on his documents since it was too common.

I came back to labyrinth city, immediately made it, and confirmed its effect on the pupils of the training school.

Since the effect isn't especially strong, I guess I'll make it public.

I wrote the recipe on some papers, put them on treasure chests, and then hid them on various places inside the labyrinth. It's a little surprise for beginner explorers.

I've divided the recipe into several pieces of paper with numbering, and put them in treasure chests.

They should understand that the recipe is real since I've put a sample of Beria healing medicine together with it.

Just in case, I've prepared six sets of the recipe instead of just one.

The first piece of the recipe was found five days later, the labyrinth city was enveloped in a slight festive mood.

In a little while, low level cheap healing medicines should spread.

While thinking that, I watch over the children who are happily harvesting Berias that are growing wildly around the labyrinth city.

10-36. The Man in Black Clothes

<TLN: Title can also mean the man behind the scenes.>

Satou's here. When I'm doing a big job, I make a list of what should be done, and then progress in accordance to the priority. When I make the priority, forgetting to take the dependency into account will lead to failure, so I have to be careful. There is no meaning if I have to plan an A-grade process before I check if the degree of completion is A-grade.

◇

"How is it? Even among the many slave trading companies in the royal capital, only Orield firm has these array of product lines."

The trader made a signal, and then 10 beautiful women and girls entered the room. It's quite a sight for sore eyes since every one of them is only wearing a thin piece of cloth.

I've come to the royal capital to look for a person with a certain skill needed for my plan.

"Orield-dono, I should have told you that I'm looking for educated people."

"Yes, of course. Every one of these girls can read and write letters, they have also been properly educated on other things."

I confirm the skills of these girls once again. Only the former Serushioku noble girls have the Shiga kingdom language skill, so I can't judge it from their skills. If I'm not mistaken, the country of Serioshioku was the country of princess Menea's fiance, the one that was destroyed by the weaselkins.

I check them one by one, and confirm whether the girl with the skill I want is among them.

The slave trader takes a languid pose while explaining each of the girl's skills and appeal points.

"Leave the second and the third ones from the right, and then the girl on the left end, and also, let's see, the red haired girl over there."

"Yes, understood."

Once the explanation was finished after about 10 minutes, I asked the trader to leave the target girl, and three other girls as dummies behind. The dummies are the former noble girls, and a girl who can use life magic.

When the slave trader gives a signal, the girls strip off their thin cloth.

No, it's nice and all but I'm not asking for that kind of service.

"How much are they each?"

"Yes, this former duke daughter is 300 gold coins. She has the blood of the royal family although of a small kingdom, she's an excellent girl who has not only Etiquette skill, but also Shiga Kingdom Language and Poem Recital skills."

She looks somewhat strong-willed. She's fair-skinned with normal breasts, but her waist looks like the type that can have an easy delivery. Her curly blond hair coil around her voluptuous body. 17 years old. Level 4.

"This former earl daughter is 200 gold coins. Her lineage is a bit inferior compared to the girl just now, but she's obedient, and her body is splendid, she would be useful for various things."

This timid girl has splendid breasts that are nearly D-cups, she's also fair-skinned. She has soft-looking straight long silver hair. Her eyes are of beautiful blue. Her skills are Shiga Kingdom Language and Etiquette. 16 years old. Level 3.

Up until now are just the opening act, the next one is the main act.

"This one is a girl who worked as a heraldry official at the castle of Earl Lesseu. She was rude to Earl Lesseu-sama, and got turned into a slave. Her body is somewhat childish, but her ice-like transparent beautiful face is something to look forward in the future. Her skills are plain with only Heraldry and Naming, but of course she can read and write letters and she excels at filing documents, so she should be helpful for merchant-dono. Her price is slightly cheap at 30 gold coins."

This girl who looks like she's given up on life is the reason why I've gone out of my way to come to this firm. I'm thinking of changing the name of the girls with compounding skills who were capture by the lost thieves, and let them hide themselves in other cities.

She's quite a beauty just like the slave trader's praised. She's beautiful enough to be compared to Arisa and Mia, although of different kind (of beauty). Her breasts are small, but they're at least A-cup. Her hair is pale gold. Her small lips and her lax-focused ice blue eyes only foster her lifelessness. Her name is Tifaliza. 15 years old. Level 5. Her title is [Orield's Slave], but there are hidden titles like [Superficial Courtesy], [Rude One].

I feel like looking for another person with Naming skill when I look at these titles.

"This one is a spell-user girl. She also worked in the castle of Earl Lesseu-sama like the one before, but she also made some mistake, and was turned into a slave."

"Fumu, she must be expensive since she can use life magic right?"

"No, she's only as much as 50 gold coins."

"Fumu, how many times can she use magic in succession?"

"I hear that it's about twice."

This girl's level is only 2 even though she can use life magic. She probably got it from a gift. Although her looks is inferior compared to the girls before her, she's cute enough to warrant the praise. She's a 16 years old girl with dark brown eyes under her red hair. Her name is Nell. She's about as tall as me, her breasts size seems to be around Lulu's. I feel that her waist is a bit thin.

"I'll buy the heraldry user and the spell-user for 30 gold coins. The fallen noble girls have good looks and lineages, but I don't need them if they need other people to take care of them."

The two girls have market price at 48 gold coins so I haggle it to a bit cheaper price, but the slave trader agreed to it just like that. Afterward, the person with [Contract] skill came, and then the trade is completed. I've confirmed that the girls' titles have changed to [Kuro's Slaves].

When I was leaving, I passed by a slave, and felt like I had been duped by the slave trader. That slave had the Naming skill, and priced only at 2 gold coins. Even though I knew that there were three slaves with Naming skill here, I feel a bit of fail.

On the other hand, since other slaves who can use life magic aren't much different in price than Nell, they probably judge the price of magicians from their ability, not look.

"Well then Kuro-sama, please come to our firm again whenever you need slaves."

"Yeah, I'll come here first thing first when that happen."

I replied with some lip service to the slave trader who was rubbing his hands, and then went back to the inn by riding the carriage that had been arranged in front of the firm.

◇

When we enter the inn room, I take out one-piece clothes and sandals, and put them on the bed. I looked back when I noticed some rustling sounds.

Why are you two taking off your clothes?

Well alright. I've already seen these girls' naked bodies in the slave trader firm just now anyway. They're clean enough to not need to be washed with life magic.

"Change into these clothes. We will leave this inn shortly."

"I understand."

"Yes."

I can't exactly stare at girls changing clothes, so I write a letter saying that I have vacated the inn, and put it on the table. I've already paid the inn in advance of course.

I took the two who had finished changing to the mansion of ivy's basement by teleporting through two relay points. I've put the relay points when I was going to the royal capital, they are 300 kilometers apart each. I've also put a teleport point nearby the royal capital of course.

No coup d'etat occurs on the royal capital. I don't know whether I've prevented it, or the notion that coup d'etat will occur in the royal capital is just an unfounded fear. I searched for places with fiend drugs just in case, but they were in the medicine warehouse of the normal army facility, it might be just their equipment.

The reports from the viceroy and the guildmaster should have arrived here, so there's no need for me to butt in on purpose.

◇

"Teleport magic.... Chantless.... Is master the hero of Saga empire?"

"No. I forbid you to disclose the fact that I can use chantless magic. This is an order."

I take off the Collars of Subordination from the neck of the two who consent. They had Collar of Subordination since they were treated as crime slaves.

"Eh? How did you take it off?"

"How, even high ranking magicians need to perform a ritual to take them off without the key..."

I take the two who are surprised to the living room.

"Kuro-sama, welcome back. Are these people the human resources in question?"

"That's right."

"Kuro-sama, welcome back."

"Porina, gather everyone besides the five people with the Compounding skill in the courtyard. Leriril, check if there's any girl left in the building."

I instruct Porina while receiving a tea from her. I ordered the two slaves to stay here while they're drinking the tea, and then I went to the courtyard.

◇

"Explorers, gather. You're going to keep them safe in the labyrinth."

I announce so, and then teleport to the labyrinth together with the 47 armed explorers. Of course I held a long wand, and even used a dummy chant.

"Here is the first area. Monsters rarely appear here, but I ask you to escort them from here to the great stairway of the labyrinth entrance. I'm entrusting the foremost person to be the commander of the escort."

"Aye sir, Kuro-sama. I will tell them that we have ran away from the lost thief."

I haven't let them bath for the past two days in order to have some credibility in that claim. Their equipments are something that have been taken from the lost thieves. They're relatively good compared to the ant armor and bone armor. I had given the silver sword of ant wing magic sword to the commander in exchange for the bothersome job I asked her. This weapon used ant bone as the base, and it had become a transparent silver sword when I made it by following the recipe. It's slightly more fragile compared to a normal iron sword when it's not filled magic power, but it's a sharp magic weapon that can cut nicely. It's written in Trazayuya document, and it seems to be a relatively major magic sword in the labyrinth city. It's roughly about 30 gold coins worth. I made it as Nanashi, so the maker is blank like the casted magic swords.

It's cheaper to make than casted magic swords, but since making it is quite laborious, I probably won't make it again unless it was a request.

Continuing on, I divide 87 carriers in two groups and then teleport with them. Lastly, I teleport with 23 slaves whose masters are still alive. I let one act as a guard in five-person groups, and then they escaped out of the labyrinth.

I had given five big copper coins to each people who were released through the labyrinth, enough for their immediate livelihood. I felt that it wasn't enough, but since Porina said that I gave too much, I didn't give more.

Now then, excluding the five people with the Compounding skill, there are three explorers, and 55 slaves remaining in the mansion of ivy.

The remaining slaves didn't have a master, so they requested me to become their master. I'm thinking of releasing the one who seems possible to go independent with their worker-type skills, while the rest can be released after I find them jobs.

The explorers who remain are the noble girls from foreign kingdoms. I have no choice but to leave them behind since they were crying and saying that they'd better off dead than having to endure the rumor about how they've escaped from lost thief.

Now then, I guess I'll continue on to the next step.

10-37. The Man in Black Clothes (2)

Satou's here. I guess communication in the ancient times relied on smoke signal and carrier pigeons? There were things like fast horses or postmen, but there weren't anything real time like the internet and emails. Although there is magic in the other world, they don't seem to be too wide-spread.

◇

I take the girls with the compounding skill to the living room.

"I'll confirm it once again. Are you prepared to have your name changed and live as a different person?"

"""Yes, please."""

The five girls voiced their consent in unison.

"Tifaliza, give a new name for these five. Starting from her it's Ann, Beth, Chris, Debbie, and Emily."

It's a secret that I take the name from ABCDE in sequence.

Since Tifaliza used up all her magic power after naming three of them, I refilled it with [Magic Power Transfer].

I take the five freshly named girls to the hiding place that I've prepared on the nearest town to the labyrinth city, Furusau. For the ex-slaves, Chris and Emily, I need to do the troublesome procedure of making them into slaves once again and then release them. After we finished the procedures in Furusau town slave trader, Ann, Beth, and Debbie also got their IDs. I made the hesitating guard to grip a silver coin when the IDs were being issued, so it had gone smoothly.

"Now then, make the items written in this list."

"Yes, Kuro-sama."

I give a bundle of recipes to Beth and Chris who can read. I will provide their living expense during their life in this hideout temporarily in exchange for them to make the troublesome intermediately materials. Since Emily the ex-slave has swordsmanship skill, I give her an iron sword for self-protection.

◇

Next, I take the slaves to the hideout on the junction town of Kelton located beyond Furusau town. The hideout is reasonably big residence, but 55 people still can't enter all at once as expected, so I only take 20 people at a time. I had their ears plugged and blindfolded since glossing over the chantless magic would be troublesome.

I go visit the smallest slave trader firm. I make the slaves to wait in the refuge.

"Is there anyone inside!"

"You don't have to yell, I can hear you. My ears are fine."

"I have a request."

"Leave it to me. We have everything to your liking, either the blond big breasted girls, or the silver haired little girls. If you have a peculiar taste, tell us beforehand okay. We'll teach them how."

I stop the battered middle-aged slave trader who's happily promoting while taking out a slide rule.

"There are 55 slaves who have lost their masters. I want you to make me their master with [Contract], and then release 25 of them. As for the payment for all those procedures including the necessary overhead, how about 20 gold coins?"

"I'll take it! Let's do it, like I'd let other people take such a delicious job."

"Very well, then, follow me."

The trader leaves the store to his boy staff, wears an overcoat, and then goes out of the store. I take him to the refuge with a carriage. I had the slave trader blindfolded like in some common plot. There's no particular problem even if he knows, but it's not really good if some strange rumor spread either.

Since the slave trader has ran out of magic power after using Contract for 15 people, I give him magic power recovery potion to drink, let him take a break, and resume the work. During each break, I bring the slaves who have been contracted back to the mansion of ivy, and then bring along new slaves out.

The slave trader seemed to be doubtful, but, losing to the gold before his eyes, he didn't ask unnecessary questions. Cheapskate is the best.

I brought the slave trader, who's blindfolded again, back and presented him with the promised 20 gold coins and high-class liquor I had bought in Furusau. For some reason, the slave trader's face cramped when he was receiving the liquor. He must be very tired. Go drink some good liquor and dream good things.

◇

Now then, about the freed slaves, since they have production-related skills, I'm thinking of building production tenement houses which also double as workshops in the city's vacant lot for them to live in. I had asked Porina, who had gone out together with the rescued explorers, to buy the vacant lot and build the temporary houses. They should be staying in some cheap inn for explorers until the tenement houses are built.

In addition, 18 of the 23 slaves with master have come back. The masters of the slaves who have been saved from the labyrinth have the right to them, but they need to pay remuneration for the explorers who have saved the slaves in the labyrinth that's equal to buying the slaves anew. The masters of the 18 people who had come back didn't want to pay that remuneration. They're presently registered under Porina as their master.

I'm planning to let the slaves who have come back and the unreleased slaves to either work in the tenement houses as apprentices, or become explorers of the labyrinth. I intend to ask them to decide their choice themselves.

In the future, it's just a coincidence that I, as Satou, am going to use the vacant land nearby the production tenement houses for the explorer training.

◇

In order to get the Wood Plate needed to enter the labyrinth, I go to the west guild.

"I'd like to register in the guild. The normal registration one."

"Y, yes. I'm very sorry, but would you take off that mask? And also please tell me your name."

"Ah, sorry. The name is Kuro."

I take out the black mask which covered my eyes.

I change my voice to be rough with ventriloquism skill. I imagine it to be like the voice of Togawa Mikaru, a voice actor.

"This is the Wood Plate--"

"The explanation is unnecessary."

I interrupted the female staff who was going to explain in accordance to the manual, took the wood plate with one hand, and then left the guild.

Since the carriage that links the east and west guild has come, I ride it behind boys who look to be beginner explorers. One of the boy seems to find my equipments unusual as he frequently looks back, but the other one rebukes him. Three veteran-like middle aged explorers get into the carriage, making it full, so it departs.

"Yo, brother, that weapon is a gun isn't it?"

"You know well. Yes, it's an old muzzle-loading gun called Musket."

"As I thought huh. I've seen it in my local governor's mansion."

Guns aren't a new weapon in Shiga kingdom, it's more like an old obsolete tool from several hundreds years ago. The reason seems to be because its accuracy is low, and it's hard to obtain the sulfur. There were also magic tool guns like the magic pistol I have, but since the military magic tools called Flame Wand and Lightning Wand are more popular, it has also become obsolete.

"Are you alright using such an antique like that?"

"It's alright, no problem."

I'm not lying. The middle-aged explorers didn't pry more than that, maybe because there are a lot of explorer's kinds. The boy who has been glancing behind since a while ago is slightly unpleasant. Just say it if you have something to say.

"Can I help you?"

"Hey hey, if you're alone, why don't you enter the labyrinth with us? We've just registered today too."

What, they're looking for a companion huh.

"Sorry. I already have an appointment in front of the labyrinth."

"I see, that's unfortunate."

"That's why I said not to do it."

I don't mind going with you guys if I don't have a business, but I can't do it now since I need to transport the lost thieves.

"Oy oy, isn't it quite lively in front of the labyrinth today?"

"Ah, there are so many young girls gathered, maybe some Red Iron guys have come back from the middle part of the labyrinth? With so many girls like that, they're probably waiting for the [Crimson Young Noble]."

"I'd like some~"

I thought that there were few high level explorers, so they're assaulting the middle part of the labyrinth huh. One of the girl notices me, and then tells her friends.

"Kuro-sama!"

"We've been waiting for you Kuro-sama."

The boys who are riding the carriage with me acting strangely while saying, "Eh? Kuro-sama? Eh?" Come to think of it, the boy who can't calm down is called [Kerou]. It sounds a bit similar.

It goes without saying that the girls who are calling me are the freed explorers. The carriage can't move due to the surrounding people, so I get down halfway through, and take everyone along to the labyrinth.

"Kuro-sama, there are 47 people in all. We've done all the preparations."

The commander-san who's hanging the ant wing silver sword stands beside me. 47 people, it's like Ako vendetta. We move to the teleport point that has been prepared beforehand, and then I leave the girls behind and teleport to where the lost thieves are to transport them.

◇

"Hyahha! You guys, we can win if we all go at him!"

"""HOOOOO!"""

The lost thieves have been decreased by 10 people. There seem to be a dispute for boss. Having bloodbath is too much no matter how you look at it. I created several prisons with no hesitation.

Since I've taken their weapons away, they come attacking me with weapons made from stones and some kind of bones, and also by throwing stones with slingshot-like thing.

Why can't you guys put those idea and effort for something proper.

I eliminate the stones which come flying with surprising accuracy altogether with the lost thieves by using three blazes of [Remote Stun]. They shouldn't be able to get up since every one of them was hit by three orbs. With this, it'd be nice if the second group become quiet without causing trouble when I'm taking them.

I wrap the two former bosses of lost thieves who have killed their own friends together with the 10 corpses that they've killed by using cloth handed by the lost thieves who attacked me just now.

I tie the fainted lost thieves in 10 people group, and teleport them to the first area where the female explorers are waiting. I entrust the female explorers to wake the lost thieves and take them to the authority. It seems they're being somewhat rough with the lost thieves when they're waking them up, but when I consider their circumstance, I decide to look the other way as long as they don't kill them.

While restoring my magic power with magic swords, I continued to shuttle 262 lost thieves, including the corpses. I leave the 38 people who haven't committed felony like murder in the temporary prison. They would be treated like the other lost thieves if they go now.

I'll take them along when I'm handing Sir Sokel to the kingdom later.

10-38. The Man in Black Clothes (3)

Satou's here. Fake name has the impression of something that phantom thieves or swindlers, those kind of criminals, have. It might be because there won't be any opportunity to use a false name if you live honestly. Even though Pen-name and Handle-name are kinds of false name too, the impression you get from them is greatly different isn't it.

◇

"Kuro-sama, we have taken all 262 lost thieves to the explorer guild. The guildmaster is calling for you."

"Is that so, I'll go immediately."

While nodding to commander-san's report, I advance through the passageway of death toward the labyrinth city. Commander-san is a 27 years old woman called Sumina. She's an intense carnivore woman with red lion hair, thick eyebrows, and thick lips. I can't call her beautiful, but she's someone with a mysterious charm.

Together with her, I go to the guildmaster room in the west guild. The guildmaster instructed commander-san to get out of the room as soon as she saw my face.

"As I thought, it's you huh."

"Fuhn, to think that the pyromaniac old woman is the guildmaster.

Think more carefully about the place when you use magic."

"Mind your own business."

I talk to the guildmaster as Kuro with haughty attitude.

"You broke that Sokel guy out of prison didn't you. I think I should arrest you here and now as a guildmaster myself, how about it?"

"Enough with the pointless mind game. I'm protecting that guy in a safe place. I want to interrogate him, but I'd deliver him in person if you can provide a safe place that can prevent him from killers or poisoning by his relatives."

The guildmaster is threatening my undaunted and proud attitude. Frankly speaking, the only reason why I'm sheltering Sir Sokel is because I don't want an acquaintance to die needlessly. I'll gladly let the guildmaster takes him if she wants to bear the responsibility.

"Who's behind you?"

"My master is the sword of heaven."

"Hou, didn't think you would answer. To think that the royal family is behind you."

No, I wanted to say that I was Nanashi's subordinate, but it seemed she misunderstood.

"So, have you suppressed all the fiend drug cultivation fields?"

"Yeah, I didn't burn them since I'd like to lure those guys out, but I had released all the people who worked there."

"You really are the person who saved all those people huh. Doesn't seem like there's anyone with Alchemy or Compounding skill though?"

"There is no one with Alchemy skill. I've put the people with Compounding skill in a proper place."

The guildmaster looks satisfied with my answer. I can imagine that she's misunderstanding it, but I don't intend to correct it.

"And, are you going to stay in the labyrinth city for a while?"

"No I originally came here by the request of an acquaintance to take care of someone from his clan who had become a lost thief. I'm going to be in the royal capital for the time being, although I intend to come here again in near future."

"That so. I'd like to give you a medal in my capacity as the labyrinth resource minister."

"Unnecessary."

I tell so, and get out of the guildmaster's room. I tell the commander-san who looks worried outside that it's fine, and head to the guild treasury to receive the prize money. It's nearly 400 gold coins. It's about as much as two Rudaman's worth.

I give commander-san and the other explorers one gold coin each. Then I handed over the rest to Porina whom I had tasked to buy the vacant site and asked her to pay the settlement.

◇

"Tifaliza, add me new names."

"Yes, what kind of name would you like to have?"

I ask the girl with the unreadable tranquil gaze to add some famous names from the earth onto me.

"Master, even if I add you several names, all of them besides the last one are going to be useless, is it fine with you?"

"Ah, I don't mind."

I nod, and then she chants the naming spell in calm quite voice.

"■■ Name Order.『Trismegistus』."

I've forgotten about the details, but Trismegistus should be the name of a famous alchemist.

Tifaliza who has finished the naming tilts her head while looking puzzled.

"Master, I'm sorry. The naming just now might have failed."

She tells it without looking troubled, to check her words, I open the menu. The Companion column stays at Kuro name indeed. To make sure, I select the name on Companion and Status columns to check, and the [Trismegistus] name has been properly added.

"It is the case that a name that has been given by someone powerful cannot be overwritten."

Although Tifaliza doesn't know about it, she explains the condition that makes naming fails. The name Kuro is given by the Black Dragon Heiron, so it can't be helped.

"I don't mind even if it's fail, add me another name."

"Yes, if that is what master says..."

Her word stinks a little like she's somewhat dissatisfied, but she immediately fixes her manner and mechanically continues the naming. While supplying her with [Magic Power Transfer] along the way, about 10 names had been added to me.

Now then, as for Tifaliza's and Nell's future--

"You two, do you have anything you want to do?"

"If it's allowed, I wish to know the well-beings of my parents in my hometown."

Come to think of it, their hometown was destroyed by the demon wasn't it.

"Very well, I cannot teleport to Lesseu Earldom, but I will check it."

I listen to Tifaliza's parents' names, levels and features. Looks like her parents have been turned into slaves together with her. As for Nell, she doesn't seem to have any attachment to her hometown since her relatives have been bereaved.

"You don't have anything you want to do Nell?"

"Right ssu. Please stop with the half-killing and quickly hold me ssu."

<TLN: She speaks like that. Try listening to Disgaea's Prinnies in the original language if you want to hear how it sounds.>

She's a carnivorous woman like Arisa huh.

"What, are you frustrated?"

"I, it's not like that ssuyo? I'm a genuine maiden ssu."

"I'll free you in two, three years, so take care of it until then."

Looks like she was anxious since she didn't know when her master would want her body.

I won't be forceful anyway. I'd just go to the brothel if I want to hold a woman, although I won't expressively say it.

"Are you going to free us? If I'm not mistaken, the two of us should worth around 30 gold coins. I have never heard anyone who releases slaves worth that much."

"I've heard story about someone releasing slaves that's over 50, 60 years old though ssu. But if I have to say, that's more like throwing them away ssu."

Is it that unusual? I think I've heard the slave trader man in Seryuu city saying the same thing.

Nell and Tifaliza don't seem like they have something particular they want to do. They said that they wanted works if they had to.

"Well, when you've found something you want to do, just say it. Until then, study magic from this book. Tifaliza, if you don't know anything, ask Nell to teach you."

"Yes, master."

"Understood ssu. Tifa-san, I'll make you to become a full-fledged spell-user ssuyo!"

Umu, good answer.

I give Nell elementary books of nature magic, water magic, earth magic, and Tifaliza an elementary book of life magic. It'd be most satisfactory if Tifaliza can learn the magic, but it's not like I'm expecting too much. Sooner or later, I'm going to take the two for power-leveling, so this is a preparation.

Now then, I leave Nell who has began her lecture at once, and teleport to the outskirt of Furusau town.

◇

From there, I fly with Flash Drive toward Lesseu Earldom.

I caught a sight of the kingdom army being kicked around by a monster that looked like a dragon.

It's a huge monster called Gaudy Mole. It has dragon-like wings, a split tail, and it wears a richly colored collar roll on its head. Since its level is 47, it seems to be quite formidable.

Is that the dragon that's blocking the highway?

I'm sorry for snatching their job, but I change into Nanashi-style with violet hair and eliminate it with Claiomh Solais from the sky. The highway blockade should be opened now.

I install several carved seal boards for teleporting along the way. I've also installed a carved seal board on the outskirt of the town in Zettsu Earldom that neighbors Lesseu Earldom. I saw an unexpected person in the town of Zettsu Earldom, but since I couldn't meet the person as Satou, I'll be waiting for the next chance. We will probably meet in the labyrinth city or the royal capital.

I arrived at Lesseu Earldom that day, but unfortunately, there weren't anyone who seemed to be Tifaliza's parents. There was no mistake about it since I had searched on the map. I also searched on the three adjacent earldoms and the two neighboring kingdoms, but the people in questions didn't exist there.

I felt slightly depressed, but since the search was over, I teleported to the labyrinth city.

I told the truth to Tifaliza, and then she went to her room after muttering "Thank you very much." I'll let her cry as much as she wants today.

I leave it to Nell to cheer Tifaliza up and went back to the mansion.

◇

"Wlcome~"

Tama finds and meets me who comes out of the basement door. Pochi also rushed here slightly later.

"Today is the festival of Lasagna and Cheese Gratin nanodesu!"

Hou, that sounds nice.

I let Pochi to dangle on my arm while supporting Tama who's climbing my body with my hand.

"Welcome back."

"Ara, welcome back. I saw it~ Master did flashy things that weren't like usual master."

"I'm back. No one will associate it with me if I do something that flashy right?"

I sit down beside Mia and Arisa who are relaxing in the living room. Before Mia could dive on to my lap, Tama quickly climbed down my neck from where she was on my shoulder, and landed on my lap. Pochi changes place with Tama, she's climbed on to my shoulder.

"Mwu."

"Reserved~?"

I've never accepted to that reservation though.

"So almost everything has been settled today?"

"Mostly yeah. I guess it's just eliminating the mastermind behind Sir Sokel and securing the way to make the slaves who've remained in the mansion of ivy to sustain themselves left?"

I wish the kingdom would do something about the former, but if they can't settle it before the Kingdom Conference, I'll intervene without reserve.

I listen to Liza's report about the children's training observation while eating the piping hot Lasagna Lulu's made in the dining room.

"Since there were many rash children, Iruna and Jenna had a hard time. They're going to live in the tent of training ground with the children from today on."

"I see, I should bring them some Brownie Wine for evening-drink."

Looks like the apprentice maids in the mansion are also being strictly trained by Ms. Miteruna. They reported happily about how they were taught letters with the learning card and magic control with magic powered spinning top by Lulu and the others during the break.

Now then, it's been awhile, let's go to the labyrinth with everyone to level up from tomorrow on.

10-39. Training

Satou's here. A scalpel can't dismantle a tuna no matter how sharp it is. Something with suitable length and size is needed even if it's less sharp.

◇

"Tou nanodesu!"

With her small body, Pochi charges toward a monster that's as huge as a two-story house. Pochi and the others are currently fighting the strongest monster in this area, the level 39 Mace Lizard. The figure of Pochi who's charging to the bump on the monster's head which has countless thorns on it looks like a hero.

Even though Pochi's short magic sword pierces the Mace Lizard's head to the sword's base, it doesn't looks like it has any effect. The Mace Lizard shakes its huge head, throwing Pochi away to the corner of the room.

"Having a large head means that you are wise is just an urban legend, so I inform!"

"Arisa, reinforcement magic. Mia, break open its mouth."

"Nn."

"Okkey."

The Mace Lizard who was going to pursue Pochi with a tail attack was lured by Nana's provocation and then changed its course.

Looks like the magic balls shot from Lulu's magic artillery only scrape the Mace Lizard body without dealing fatal damages. Similarly, Tama's twin magic swords also only gouge its thick skin, giving only little damages.

Mia's new magic, Balloon Shot wrenches open the Mace Lizard's mouth. This magic consumes more magic power than its original, [Balloon], but since it creates the needed water by itself, it's convenient to use. It's a spell that I've created by Mia's request recently.

"Here comes the reinforcement~"

"Thank you."

Arisa's reinforcement magic gives more power to Liza. Responding to boiling power from her body, Liza shouts out the technique name together with fighting-spirit-filled yell. The shout is unnecessary, but Liza always shouts after she receives reinforcement magic, maybe because her tension is raised.

"Flickering Spiral Spear Attack"

The red light that leaks out of the magic spear wraps Liza's whole body. Her figure runs through 10 meters in an instant with a boom sound as if it's cutting the air. The magic spear and her whole body, which becomes like one with the weapon, ran through the Mace Lizard's body.

It's an absurd technique.

"Amazing~?"

"As expected of Liza-san."

"Affirmative. Her attack is valorous, so I said."

Pochi who has been covered in spiderwebs totteringly comes back, I clean her with life magic.

"Thank you for your hard work too Pochi."

"Master, I'd like a bigger weapon nodesu."

Unusual for her, Pochi was being selfish, or rather, demanding for once. Actually, situations where Pochi's and Tama's weapons cannot penetrate through the outer skin of enemies that are level 35 and beyond have increasingly come up. I've actually began making new weapons for the two since yesterday, but as expected, it can't be finished in one night.

I try taking out various weapons from my storage.

"Do you want to try using a normal long sword?"

"Lots~?"

"Big weapons nanodesu!"

With sparkles on her eyes, Pochi tries to wield and feel the one-handed sword, the bastard sword, the great sword, the great hammer, and the halberd I've taken out. She can pick up every weapon effortlessly, but since her own body weight is light, it doesn't seem like Pochi can deal the inertia well when she swings them no matter what.

"Master~? Put out one more~"

Since Tama asked me to take out another great hammer like she was holding, I took it out. Although the hammer is lighter compared to the mithril alloy great hammer in the dwarf hometown, it's easily heavier than Tama's weight.

"Look look~ Spinning top~?"

Tama who's holding great hammers on both her hands spins them like a spinning top. I tend to forget since Tama's physical power loses to Liza and Pochi, but it's also quite high. Arisa and Lulu mutter [Tama is koma] while having their shoulders twitching. That seem to be the vital part. I guess it can't be helped since they're at the age where they can laugh at the most trivial thing.

<TLN: koma=spinning top.>

"Uuu, unsteady nodesu."

Looks like Pochi wants to use a long weapon like a halberd as if it's a great sword, and then she attaches a heavy weight on her body to keep the balance.

"It's not unsteady anymore, but it's heavy I can't move nodesu."

I guess the weight is too much. Even while saying that it's too heavy, Pochi moves while dragging the weight.

"Uu~n, I guess I really should finish making the type of swords that can create the blade from nature magic."

Their weapons need replacement, but there's also the problem of everyone's skill's variations which have stopped since level 20 and beyond. The rear guards are already fine as they are, but I feel that the vanguards need to add a bit more technique-type skill to their repertoires.

"Why don't we go back to the elf village to learn new techniques while waiting for the completion of the weapons?"

"Training right! It's the training arc right!"

When Arisa hears it, her eyes are shining--you don't need to deliberately use light magic to add those effects. Just how far her acting styles have expanded.

It seems the one that's positive to it isn't only Arisa. Liza and Nana who are worried about their fighting time that has been extending with every fight recently also agrees to it.

"Hitting the waterfall~?"

"Marching through the snowy mountain nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama also look eager, although the direction is a bit off.

"The elf hometown is alright, but I'd love to train at the sennin's place or the mountain where dragonkins live~"

While ignoring Arisa's nonsense, I've decided to go to the elf hometown.

◇

"You cheatttt!"

How rude.

We've got back to Boruenan forest by return teleporting five times in a row. Unlike the advanced magic Teleport, Return teleport is limited to 300 kilometers long, so we can't arrive in one go. Therefore, it's quite hard. The magic power consumption increases with the number of people, so it needs around one meteor shower worth of magic power.

Lua-san welcomed us with surprised face in the tree house on the surface Boruenan. Apparently, she had come here to check the rooms ventilations. She had already gotten used to me coming here with teleport though, she immediately greeted me back normally after I greeted her.

"Hello, Satou-san, there are a lot of people today huh."

"I'm thinking of letting everyone train, so we'll be staying here for a while."

"Yes, you're welcome anytime."

Behind me, Arisa sharply catches Lua-san's word, and says "Today?", but I ignore it. I must not react. I have to magnificently ignore it like a flowing river.

"Yes, I will call Poa and the others. Oh right, Nea said that she had succeeded extracting the vanilla."

"Yes, I've heard that one from Aze-san with Telephone yesterday."

This time Arisa and Lulu check the yesterday's schedule. Un, your memories are correct. We certainly fought monsters in the labyrinth in succession for the whole day, and I was making magic tools behind them during the time I'm free. I developed that magic tool in order to contact the slaves in the distant land. Since they don't have any way to communicate if an emergency happens.

"STOP! Jasuto a Momento."

Why in English.

"What?"

"Question #1, why was it『Today』?"

"Ara, Satou-san came here almost every other day you know."

Lua-san revealed it without even giving me the chance to explain somehow. Even though I had only come back 7-8 times since we went to the labyrinth city.

"Since when..."

"Mwu."

Lulu and Mia look at me with upturned eyes like criticizing me.

"Whenever I found some delicious ingredients, or unusual dishes, I came back here to share them."

This is the truth. Like with Gebo, or Yellow Lizard meat, or Basilisk smoked meat, I came back to bring them. I also came to Nea-san's place when she wanted to consult about the way to extract vanilla. By no means those were just because I wanted to meet Aze-san.

"Hohou? And by Telephone?"

"Huh? Haven't I said it? My telephone and Aze-san's Infinite Telephone (World Phone) can have a conversation between the labyrinth city and Boruenan Forest."

Never heard of it, Arisa and others pressed on me.

I mean, there would be [Guilty] barrage if I said it right?

Looks like Lua-san perceives the awkward atmosphere, she changes the story.

"Oh right, there are the bean from the spriggans in the refrigerated warehouse, please check it okay. "

"They've already delivered it huh, I'll check it, thank you very much."

"By beans, don't tell me!?"

Fu, fu, fu. I had asked the spriggans who were good at exploring to search every corners of Boruenan forest.

"Let's enjoy it later. I'm going to serve it for the dinner today, so don't overeat okay."

"That has come at last! Ah, would the dinner come faster. Hey, do you have something like an incense that can cheat time?"

"None."

I understand that you can't wait for it, but I don't think that's an item that warrants the need to hasten time.

◇

I was going back to the mansion of ivy to develop the new equipments for Pochi and the others while leaving everyone in Boruenan forest, but Mia told me to wait.

"Level gap, close."

"Um~m? You want to go to the labyrinth since you want to close the level gap between you, and Arisa and the others, is it?"

"Nn."

Presently, everyone besides Mia is level 35, Mia is level 27. According to Arisa, it seems that elves need twice as much experience points compared to humans and beastkins.

"Understood, then let's raise it quickly."

"Nn."

I go to the labyrinth city with Mia. I felt like I heard Arisa said, "Quickly he said", just before teleporting, I decided that I had just misheard it.

10-40. Training (2)

Satou's here. There is no level cap in this world, but there are a lot of people who misinterpret that there's a growth limit since the experience point needed for the next level jumps up exponentially.

◇

We're not going to the usual Area 74, but Area 69 where the cockatrices are, its neighboring Area 109, the insect paradise, and Area 104 which is the den of aquatic monsters.

First we go to Area 69. Come to think of it, I wonder what happens to the [Fangs of Conflagration] members that were gone to hunt some cockatrices?

I've finished carrying Mia with princess carry almost without engaging any battle from Area 74 to Area 69. I thought of letting her down, but it seemed she was quite frightened with my moving speed, her hands wouldn't let go of me.

"F, fast you know? It's too fast see. Excessive speed is the cause of accidents, it's dangerous you know?"

Mia raises her index finger while being talkative like when she's drunk and approaches me. She must have been quite frightened. She forgave me while saying "Forgiven" like she usually was when I sincerely apologized.

"Stone statue."

"Ah, judging from its appearance, it's probably an explorer."

A pony-sized chicken-like being is pecking the stone statue. According to the AR it's a Cockatrice Puppy. Probably the child of cockatrices. Its level is only around 20.

It seems the cockatrices feed on their petrified prey, as a lot of them are gathering on trees and monsters that have been turned into stones. In this hall, there are level 10-20 cockatrice puppies, level 25-35 adult cockatrices, and a pair of giant upper level 50 cockatrices.

Before I begin leveling Mia up, I rout the cockatrice puppy with Stun magic, and collect the stone statue.

"Mia, do you have a spell that affects a wide area?"

"Nn, Storm."

I hand Mia a world tree wand, and then she begins to chant. This wand has the best performance to expand the area of effect. Mia's spirit magic fills the hall, damaging the cockatrices. Just one magic has decreased Mia's MP by 30%.

The majority of the cockatrice puppies are exterminated by Mia's magic, while the rest are dying. I use Flexible Swords to cut cockatrices' necks and put them into my storage. Since cockatrices are soft, even the fragile Flexible Swords can cut them easily. I saw flea-like creatures flying when the cockatrices were being stowed.

A giant Cockatrice King and a Cockatrice Queen are coming with reverberating footsteps.

"Satou."

"Ah, I'll eliminate them immediately."

I cut the necks of the cockatrices couple who were burning with anger due to the massacre of their family, and put them into the storage. Since kitten-sized fleas are scattered around when I've put the pair into my storage, I exterminate them with Flame Storm. When the flame reached the ceiling, an explosion occurred.

What?

I immediately protect Mia in my mantle, and evacuate to the entrance.

"Mwu, hot."

"Ah, sorry. I had limited the power, but it seemed that there were flammable gas collected in the ceiling."

I wonder if it's some kind of trap too?

There was a tar pond-like place in the corner of the room. The surface of that pond is bubbling, the gas probably escapes to the ceiling from there.

There were some huge eggs of cockatrices in the room, but they had been broken from the explosion earlier.

◇

A treasure chest appears on the place where the giant cockatrices were defeated.

I've heard that treasure chests may rarely appear on the place where monsters are defeated in the labyrinth, but this is the first time I see the real thing. The one in the demon labyrinth was a mimic after all.

Since the treasure chest was set with petrification trap, I had Mia to evacuate and then removed the trap. I noticed that I should have opened it with [Magic Hand] from afar after I had canceled it, the realization came too late.

Inside of the chest, there are money and jewels, and also various magic items. There's only one weapon, a short sword, but it's made of silver and can be used to invoke magic, quite good. There are 8-9 gold coins worth of metal. As for the magic items, they're an Insect Repellent Bell and three Ignition Rods. Since they look worn-out, they must be mementos of explorers who have lost their life in the labyrinth.

Among the jewels, there are magic catalysts mixed in, some small fire stones, and lightning stones. Although this is the first time I've seen it, their names often comes up in magic tool recipes. They're materials used to make magic tools for military uses called Fire Wand and Lightning Wand.

I hand the short sword to Mia, and put the rest into the storage.

Afterwards, we thoroughly eliminate four of the five rooms with cockatrices, and Mia's level rose by 4. Arisa would probably be mad if I said that it took 30 minutes.

There are numerous individuals that were relatively stronger among the cockatrices, on top of that we got chain bonus for eliminating the cockatrices all at once. I've heard about this game-like exp-increasing bonus from Koshin-shi when I was drinking with the explorers. It's said that if you beat a lot of monsters in short amount of time, the power that becomes level up from the monsters--probably experience points--that you've defeated will be absorbed by you concentratedly, the efficiency is better.

Now then, putting that aside, since Mia's body looked sluggish from the sudden level up, I installed a carved seal board so we could go back here, and then we went back to the villa. I let her sleep on the bed after she ate some sweet things and drank water, then I decided to continue developing equipments for Pochi and the others.

I'm not planning to make something too original. I want to make a short sword with a mechanism that can make its blade extends with magic blade. I can probably make it by modifying the current [Shell] circuit a bit.

Come to think of it, making a whip sword like the Carrion Sword or

Galean Sword which Arisa's mentioned back then might be good too. I'd be worried about the strength if it was a real sword, but since the blade is made from magic power, it looks feasible, let's try to make it.

I continue to develop the designs for not only Pochi's sword but also Tama's and the others' new equipments until Mia wakes up. I've hit some difficulty while developing new magic for Lulu, but it looks like I can raise the cannonball firing rate if I use magic barrel.

◇

After thoroughly exterminating monsters in Area 109 and Area 104 until the time for dinner, Mia has leveled up to 37. The plan was to level her to 40, but exp from aquatic monsters were bad, her level couldn't quite get up.

During the third break, I searched the corridor that extended from the deep of Area 104 to the middle layer. It looks like you can descend to the middle layer from Area 66 and Area 104 besides from the entrance in Area 1. The middle layer that can be accessed from these three entrances doesn't seem to be connected, so I would have to get down there from Area 66. The middle layer that can be accessed from Area 1 has three groups of explorers with levels around 30-47 inside. Two of the groups have around 10 people each, while the last group has around 70 people.

The monsters in the middle layer have 10 more levels on average compared to the upper layer, but their numbers are less than half of the upper layer's monsters. The monsters in the middle layer accessed from Area 1 are quite few in particular. Unlike the upper layer, a lot of monsters of middle layer can use magic. Among them, monsters that can use Instant Death-type magic exist nearly in every Area. It will be dangerous if I don't cull the monsters with Instant Death attacks when we go to the middle layer for leveling everyone.

Once our objective has been met to some extent, we go back to the villa. Of course I've already put a carved seal board in a small room in the middle layer for the time we need it.

"Satou."

"Oh, you've woken up huh. It's about time to prepare for dinner, so let's go back to Boruenan Forest."

Since everyone is waiting.

"Mwu."

"Arisa and the others are going to continue training for at least 3-4 days, so we can just continue tomorrow."

I take Mia who's puffing her cheeks along, and consecutively teleport to Boruenan Forest.

"I'm back."

"W, welcome back!"

"I'm back, and also welcome Aze-san."

"Nn, Aze."

There are Arisa and Aze-san in the tree house's living room. Looking at the opened magic book before Arisa's face, Aze-san probably answered whenever she had questions.

"Looks like you're working hard."

"Uh~huhhhhhhh?! Hey wait Mia, what did you do."

Raising her levels of course.

"Ara? You've really worked hard Mia."

"Nn."

Aze-san who doesn't know Mia's level half a day ago is reacting normally, but Arisa who knows that she has leveled up by 10 in half a day screams with surprised look. She's slightly noisy.

"We eradicated the cockatrices, and the scorpion area deeper on, and then also the aquatic monster area nearby it. I can only use the scorpions to make body nourishment potion, but the cocka and the fish look quite delicious you know."

"Kuh, to be that cheat when you seriously do power-leveling!"

Level does increase with this method, but you won't master the way to fight. Mia is participating in the actual battles with Arisa and the others anyway, so this much level adjustment should be alright.

◇

"Eh? Coffee?"

When I present her the coffee cup, Arisa receives it while looking surprised. I take another cup from the storage, and hand it to Aze-san. I feel slightly mischievous, I didn't take out the sugar jar and the milk pitcher.

"That's right. Here you go for Aze-san too."

"Hee, it smells nice. The color is darker than a tea, is it good?"

"Yes, I've always drank it during the job."

Since the cup is hot, Aze-san slides her sleeves on her palm to lift the cup. It's the technique to cope with a cup without handle. Aze-san draws her face close to the steam that rises from the cup, and enjoys the fragrance. Ah, I want to become the cup. To prevent burn, she blows the cup, but she overdoes it, and then she's swooning.

This person is cute like always.

"Uu, it's too bitter I can't drink it."

"What a child. This bitterness is the real pleasure of coffee."

After enjoying the teary Aze-san plentiful enough, I take out an easy-to-drink diluted coffee that has been put with a lot of sugar and milk. I didn't take out the tea-cake since it was before dinner, but since the new coffee suited her taste, she happily drank it while saying, "I can drink this one."

"T, this is the girl power of 530.000 huh.... Aze, what a fearful child."

Arisa is Arisa, I don't know what she's saying.

I took out chocolate parfaits after the meal, but one of it was unpopular for some reason. I have properly put corn flakes in the bottom, vanilla ice on top of it, and then a lot of fresh cream and chocolate sauce on it, furthermore I've even put chocolate bars and banana cuts.

"Kuh, I can't eat it even though it's my dream choco parfait. So this is the Komei's trap!"

I've made the character of Komei on it. Unfortunately, Arisa didn't seem to notice it, she didn't have any reaction.

"Delishlish~?

"Bitterdelish."

"It's a bit bitter, sweet, and cold below, but it's the strongest even though it's cold nanodesu!"

Calm down Pochi.

Nana and Liza also gave their impressions, but it was just "Sweet." After giving their short impressions, Tama and Mia eat it with great delight. Lulu has already eaten it during the trial-run, so she doesn't have any impression now.

Only Arisa who has eaten too much during the dinner groans in front of the choco parfait. Even though I had warned her that there would be a dessert before the dinner began so don't eat too much, she fully went round the meat dish, the fish dish, and the vegetable dish. Still, I feel sorry for Arisa who has given up with teary eyes after one bite, I'll make another for her tomorrow morning so I guess I'll leave the leftover parfait to the pixies who are peeking here like an eagle.

I bite the tea-cake while drinking coffee. The slightly bitter taste of the chocolate powder is spreading in my mouth. It's like the failed handmade chocolate that can only be seen during valentine. I have to improve it more after all.

While wrapped in the sweet fragrance of vanilla, and the lovely fragrance of the chocolate, the night of Boruenan grew late.

10-41. Magic Metals

Satou's here. Even a difficult job can become unexpectedly easy if you split it into smaller parts. Even the difficulty of a large-scale program can rapidly decrease when it's cleverly split. Although, the hard part is cleverly splitting that into smaller bits isn't it.

◇

"Whip~"

"Whipywhip nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama are playing with the newly made whip swords in whip mode. The magic blades are divided by around five centimeters each, and it can go up to five meters long. Since they're trial products for the practice this time, I've modified the magic circuits to prevent injuries from using them.

Pochi who's unable to manage the whip sword finally finds her body wrapped in it. I won't go as far as saying that it's as expected, but it's really like Pochi.

"H, help! Nanodesu."

"Hoitt."

She was struggling for a while, but then she gave up and asked for help. I touch the whip sword and pull out the magic power. Pochi is immediately set free of the binding.

"Thank you nanodesu!"

Pochi stretches her body while saying "U~n."

"Pochi~, like this!"

Tama manipulates two whip swords, entangle them on a tree's branch, and climbs up the tree, and then from the top of the tree, she entwines a wooden bucket on the ground and pulls it up. Geez, she's like a certain explorer from somewhere.

I'll leave those swords for Tama and then give Pochi her true new equipment.

"Pochi might be more suited with this one."

"Amazing nodesu! It's big nodesu!"

From the short sword that Pochi holds, a nearly-three meters long blade appears. It's the same kind of magic as Magick Blade. It can cut well yet fragile. In addition, since it's weightless, it can't cut like a great sword. Someday I'll construct an inertia control circuit on it to make it able to cut like a great sword.

I've not only made whip swords for the play. I also made various romance weapons like a lance with drill mechanism, rocket-punch like gauntlets, or a pile-bunker which is a shield with a pile-driver machine. Arisa was being continuously frolic about it, but everyone was puzzled when it was the time to use them in actual practice. Well, I guess that's how it is. Simple is the best.

I present the drill blueprint with strengthened torque to Doa and Kiya couple. It probably won't be too far off before their Golem Tank is equipped with a drill.

As for the other ones like the pile-bunker, since Shagnig the leprechaun asked only the pile-driver part, I turned it into a normal pile-driver and presented it to him.

I'll make a Death Scythe and a katana with reversed blade next time.

◇

"Nevertheless, Satou-san really likes mithril don't you."

"Rather than like, it's because mithril is the only metal I have that's suited for magic swords."

Lua-san who was watching the new equipments of Pochi and the others asked while wondering. I can't use iron and lead since they diffuse magic power, while even though brass, copper, and silver can transmit magic power well, the good ones are too soft to be used for weapons. Bronze is hard, but it can't transmit magic power as well as copper and silver. In the end, mithril is the only usable one from the process of elimination. Gold transmits magic power as good as mithril, but it's even softer than copper and silver, and the cost is too high.

"Ara? If it's the convenient Divine Metal (Orihalcon), you can make both weapons or armors from it you know?"

"Right. For sturdiness and heat-resistance, there's Hihiirogane, and for weapons, I recommend True Iron (Adamantite) since it's harder than Diamond although it's quite heavy. There's also the Magic Silver (True Silver) if you need to make magic tools."

I wonder what's with this "If there's no bread, let them eat cake" atmosphere.

The things that Aze-san and Lua-san casually brought up are the so-called legendary metals. I've only ever seen Hihiirogane as the blast furnace that's used for refining mithril in the dwarf hometown.

"I will be receiving some Orihalcon from the Saga Empire's hero, but I have no way of obtaining the other metals."

"You can just make it with alchemy."

W, what?!

I grasped both hands of Aze-san who casually said it and asked futher.

"You can make them with alchemy?"

"Yes, i-it's simple you know? Orihalcon is made from copper, brass and also the philosopher's stone--"

Waitaminute. Philosopher's stone, that's.

"Aze-san, I can't exactly use the philosopher's stones unreservedly."

"Didn't we give you severals the other day."

I've already used them. I've used them for living armors and spare circuits of airships. I guess I'll take it from the airships if I need it since taking it from living armor will reset the experience.

"Then I'll give you another one."

"Is it alright? To give those so readily."

"I-it's fine."

No wait, even if you cutely sulk like that.

"If Aze-sama says so, I think it's really fine. Moreover, thanks to Satou-san's deed, we have acquired 1000 philosopher's stones from other clans."

"Ah, I forgot. When I said that Satou wished for philosopher's stones during the high elf assembly, they shared some."

"They gave it since I said I wanted it?"

"Normally they wouldn't. Although it doesn't seem like you notice it yourself, you've done that much you know."

I bulldozed through it with magic in the end though, I feel quite embarrassed when they praise my own work like this.

Or rather, why do other clans have so much of those?

"A long time ago, Ifurueze people got addicted to the plaything of Furu Empire."

That plaything seemed to be an expensive magic tool, and they paid it with philosopher's stones as the compensation. Not the courtesan beautiful women, but courtesan games huh.

It seemed they paid with several philosopher's stones at a time, but most of their philosopher's stones which had been stocked for several decades were embezzled. It seems there are various high elves huh. I'll ask them to show me that plaything later. I'm very interested in it as a game developer myself.

"Although those philosopher's stones were recovered in a thousand years time, we lost a lot during the war with the demon lord which cost us a light ship. Afterward, we used the extra philosopher's stones to repair the broken light ships, so we didn't have any saving."

I see.

However, Furu Empire huh. I feel like I've heard the name somewhere, turn out it's the country which was using the money I got in large quantity from the dragon valley. Come to think of it, there were some unusual money too. I take one out and show it to the two as a material for our talk.

"Sa, Satou-san, that coin is?"

"Yes, it's a thing called Crimson Treasure of Furu Empire that I had acquired before."

"Ara, how unusual."

I hand the Crimson Treasure to Lua-san while saying "It's a beautiful money isn't it?" The long-lived Aze-san appeared to know about it.

Lua-san holds the Crimson Treasure over the light and checks it from various angles. Lua-san let out a bombshell before I could say "Please take it with you if you like."

"This is a philosopher's stone isn't it?"

"That's right."

Eh?!

Aze-san plainly answered Lua-san's question.

"It's not the philosopher's stone itself, as it seems to have been processed a bit, but if you're using it as catalyst, maybe it's easier to use it just like that I think? If you want to turn it back into a philosopher's stone, it should be possible by asking elders and wait a decade."

A decade huh, that's really like a time span of long-lived elves.

"By any chance, magic tools can be made by using this money?"

"Yes, originally philosopher's stone should be processed first in order to reinforce its magic power when it's used as catalyst for making magic metals. I'll teach you later if you want to know about it. I don't remember it now, but it should be in the memory deposit of the world tree."

I decided to accept her kind offer. I accompany Aze-san to the world tree, and learn the way to use the Crimson Treasure and to make magic metals. The Aze-san inside the memory deposit is divinely beautiful like a demi-god that Leriril said back then, and she's showing intelligence beyond human understanding. But well, if this was how Aze-san was during our first meeting, I probably would not fall for her even though I surely would think she was beautiful. Aze-san is someone who does "Awawa" after all.

As a compensation, or not, I gave around 1000 Crimson Treasures for the elf hometown since it looked like it would be useful for them. I feel slightly proud since I was able to see the surprised looks on the elders who hardly showed their expressions.

◇

First I made an anvil and a hammer made of adamantite. Next, I used those to forge orihalcon sword. The catalyst was used during this forging process, but since I had been inside Aze-san's memory, I was able to successfully make the sword from the get go.

Even though I wasn't too fired up, I ended up making a sword that was several level above the fairy sword in sharpness and endurance. The difference is this great just because I used different material and tools huh.

I'll make another set of this anvil and hammer and then give it to Elder Dohar next time. He will surely be pleased. Of course together with all sorts of magic metals too.

I bring the experimental swords and intrude upon Arisa and Mia's training.

"Uwah, that's some gaudy sword."

"Gold."

"That's a pretty sword."

"I made these, what do you think?"

I show the sword and also some accessories made from orihalcon to the three. There are around 10 kinds of accessories including necklaces with thin chain, earrings, hair ornaments, and rings. I've also made earrings that cover the ears which seem to be popular among the elves.

"Earrings."

"Ah, Mia is unfair. I want that too."

"No."

"Uu, you're mean."

Unlike the two who's fighting over it like little children, Arisa puts a ring on her finger ecstatically. Seems that it's too big for her ring finger, it looks a bit inappropriate put on her index finger. I made that with Aze-san's finger as the assumption, but looks like it's a bit too big. I guess that size barely fits Lulu's ring finger.

After promising Aze-san to make her earrings later, I go back to my original objective.

I put the orihalcon sword I've just made in the sword-shaped mold on the pedestal. I pour Blue Liquid on the same-shaped pedestal beside it.

Since the preparation is complete, I ask Mia to cast an original water magic [Circuit Formation: Type 021]. This magic guides the poured blue liquid on the pedestal to form the type 21 magic circuit. In exchange for the fact that it can't be changed, the specialized magic can manipulate the blue liquid in micron precision, and form a very precise magic circuit.

"Arisa, please."

"Okkey."

Arisa also invokes an original space magic of the same type [Circuit Transfer: Type 021] chantlessly. Just like the name implies, this magic transfers the magic circuit that has been completed by Mia earlier to the orihalcon sword. Just like Mia's spell, it only has the function to transfer a magic circuit with fixed shape into the placed sword. They're magic which I have exclusively developed for the making of this magic sword.

Your brain needs to manipulate the image in micron meter if the magic is of general purpose, so it's not really feasible. In fact, Trazayuya couldn't come up with the solution for this problem when he was developing magic swords, he failed.

So, I thought of it in programmer-like approach. If it's difficult to make it general purpose, then it shouldn't be one. When I thought so, the two magics earlier were the result. In exchange for the limited function and condition to use it, it isn't influenced by the magician's ability. It might be what you call the shift from the world of craftsmen, to industrial.

I fill the completed sword with magic power.

The magic power smoothly spreads on the complex magic circuit. The magic circuit is activated, and then the registered magic is invoked.

Umu, it's a success.

"Uwah, it's a blue rose."

"Pretty."

"Yes, it's really pretty."

Looks like it's popular. When you fill this sword with magic power, thorns and small rose petals appear around the sword. The rose and the thorn can't be touched since they're just illusions, but they have an effect of making the opponent that are cut with them to be paralyzed or fainted. Moreover, if you recite the password, around a 10 meters long thorn will extend and bind the opponent. This technique art seems to be an ancient magic of the elves called [Sleeping Thorn]. The opponent that's binded with it will feel the thorns, and fall asleep after having been paralyzed. Yet, the rose and the petals are merely decorations, so they don't have any particular effect.

I presented this sword to Pochi's teacher, Miss Portomea. Aze-san couldn't use swords, and besides me, everyone else used short swords, a great sword, and a spear, no one used one-handed swords, so by first come first served, it became her.

Since she flaunted it too much, I ended up making a lot of magic swords with the same construction during our stay in Boruenan forest. It would be hard to make them all by forging, so I asked them the leniency for the swords to be made of bronze and of casted magic swords. This casted magic sword is a short sword size and makes red roses appear when you fill it with magic power.

For my companion use, I made the swords in short sword size and forged them from Orihalcon. There were also Arisa's dagger and Lulu's kitchen knife mixed among them for some reason.

The sashimis made with the orihalcon kitchen knife were delicious.

10-42. Mithril Plate

Satou's here. Often times I can't get my hand on something no matter how hard I endeavor. I can't reach it even though I see other people getting it so easily. Is it precisely because of that frustrating feeling that it's shining when the effort bears fruit?

This is about rare drops in net games though.

◇

Two weeks have elapsed since we got back from Boruenan forest, leveling up everyone and the labyrinth city project are going well.

"It's wider than I thought."

"Ah, it's because I got it from the lands that had been secured by purveyors."

Today I'm with Arisa inspecting the planned site where the private orphanage and the explorer training school will be build. It's about as big as an average primary school, quite big inside the city. Thanks to the Marchioness's middleman, I got them as goods, but I had to give her all kinds of accessories of the same value as the reward.

Since it was almost the time for the kingdom conference, I made some shiny gaudy accessories for the Marquis and his wife, but despite using normal precious metal and jewels, the accessories had became something that my Estimation (Market Price) skill couldn't judge. I can't help but feel that selling accessories to the nobles will be more profitable than secluding ourselves in the labyrinth. I told the Marchioness that I got them from some foreign merchants when I was visiting the trade city. I've put some some suitable name on the maker column. I honestly don't remember if it was Michaelangelo or Da Vinci.

"Next we just need a manager for the teachers huh."

"Right, I'd like a leader for the organization and an accountant, but they're hard to find."

Actually, I had interviewed Miteruna's family members, and some nobles whom the Marchioness introduced, but there weren't anyone well suited to become the leader or the accountant, although it would be different if I was hiring them as teachers. There were a lot of people who looked capable as a leader, but every one of them was either the type who despised orphans and commoners, or someone who only saw the orphanage and the school as a stepping stone to rise their position higher, so I didn't employ them.

That said, since it would embarrasses the ones who introduced them if I didn't employ anyone, I selected three reasonably less objectionable people, and dispatched them to the royal capital academy under the pretext of training. It looked like I was just getting rid of nuisances, but since I gave each

one of them 10 gold coins for two months stay and food expense, they didn't have any complaint.

"Looks like there are a lot of people who employ a slave to work as the accountant to prevent embezzlement you know?"

"It can't be helped, I'll look for one in the neighboring cities."

Since Tifaliza doesn't have Arithmetic skill, entrusting her to be an accountant is probably impossible. It seems Arisa and I have to split the work for a while.

The orphanage building is still under construction, but we have already started the admission. I had planned to start the admission after the building was completed, but since Pochi picked up some dying children in the back alley, I decided to start the management little by little.

Since there's no building, we had set up temporary tents on the place planned to become the athletic ground of the school, and added temporary sheets as beds by bundling hay bought from the farms. I don't know if Arisa's heartstring was touched by the hay beds, but she was frolic and slept together with the children on the straw beds on the first day. The next morning, she requested some strange dishes that were goat milk, and bread dipped in melted cheese. Since this is Arisa, she must be reproducing scenes from some anime or manga, no doubt about it.

I don't know where they come from but in just several days, more than 100 children have come to live in the orphanage. No one is complaining even though the meals are simple besides the ones in the first day. Mysteriously enough, there aren't any child who's being picky or leaves leftovers.

I was going to employ our maids as the regular staffs of the orphanage, but as expected, they wouldn't be enough with this many children.

By Ms. Miteruna's suggestion, I decided to employ the wives around the neighborhood as part-timers to make up for the shortage. They are women with ages ranging from 20 to 50 years old. I also have them participate in the food distribution for the poor.

Lulu investigated the reason why so many children had gathered here by using the employees' network. Since the information charge was only ant honey cookies, it was cheap. As expected of Lulu.

Now then, the reason is simple. They are children that have overflowed from other orphanages.

Originally, there were three privately and government managed orphanages in the labyrinth city. However, since this was a city with a lot of casualties, there were also a lot of orphans, so every orphanage was over capacity. The two government managed orphanages were still fine, but the privately managed one couldn't even give enough food, let alone beds.

Since the state was as such, my late-start orphanage was wholeheartedly approved. I feel that they've pushed problem children and ones who have bad physical growth on us, but it's not a problem. The mischievous kids were THUMP-ed by Arisa and Tama from the start, they're helping the adult managers now.

It seems that, up until now the overflowed children had been picked by criminal guilds of the slums, they were on the tragic course of being sold to the slave trader. And so, Kuro eliminates those kind of slum criminal guild with a villain group in the core. I left some relatively less objectionable people since other new villains from other cities would just come if I thoroughly rooted them.

As an extra, I've also finished some miscellaneous matters during this time.

I brought the lost thieves that I had left in the labyrinth prison to the authorities, and delivered the corpses of the explorers that had been turned into stones I had collected from the Cockatrice area to their bereaved families through the explorer guild.

I wasn't present since I didn't want to see the tragic scene, but the guildmaster thanked me. As for the rewards, after receiving them, I gave it to the church and another orphanage of the labyrinth city as Satou.

◇

"Newspaper extra?"

"Yes, I bought them since they were being sold in front of the west guild."

"What what?"

I read the newspaper extra from Ms. Miteruna whom I had asked to go to the west guild for some business. On the Pera paper written with ink is--

"Kuh, my floormaster's been huntedddddd"

--the news about the [Lion's Roar] party leads by a magic swordsman called crimson noble from before which has defeated the floormaster of the middle layer.

Arisa, I know you're vexed, but please stop grasping and shaking my shoulder.

"Arisa~?"

"What's wrong nodesu?"

Pochi who was playing outside seemed to have heard Arisa's scream, she came back inside through the window. Let's not say boorish thing like this is the second floor. That's why, Tama, please stop coming back home from the ceiling. Lulu will get mad at you for getting the floor full of dust you know?

"U, the shortest record of getting Mithrillll"

"Disappointing."

"Regrettable."

Not only Arisa, even Mia and Liza look disappointed.

Do they really want the Mithril Plate that much?

"Of course we are. I mean, that's [A Promise] and all. I want to TUEEE~"

<TUEEE: 'Look at how strong I am!", or something along that line.>

"To leave the record of master's achievement, it is something to be proud of even as a slave."

Putting aside Arisa, I understand how Liza feels.

U~n, I don't want to stand out though. Well, I guess it's fine. Everyone has gotten strong anyway, they probably can deal with anyone who bares their fangs at them. Having the upper nobles of the royal capital as enemies will be troublesome, but I can just enlist the kingdom's top people's help with Nanashi. Un, looks like it's manageable somehow.

I might be too soft, but Mithril Plate holder isn't an existence as special as Saga Empire's hero or Nanashi.

"Then, let's aim for it."

"Eh? Is it alright?"

"Is it fine with you master?"

"Fighting a powerful enemy once will be a good experience too."

I nod to Arisa who has caught both my arms and looks at me from below.

Lured by Arisa who jumps up reaching the ceiling, Pochi and Tama also jump up together.

"Yay!"

"Gaishu isshoku~"

<Outer monochrome>

"Kenkoichitekina nodesu!"

<Health drop>

I guess they mean 'with a single blow' and 'stake it all'? Tama is fine, but in Pochi's case it'd become sink or swim match, is that alright?

<TLN: They're pronounced the same, but written differently.>

Pochi and Tama are too excited, they climb from both my sides, so I put them on my shoulders and support them with hands.

Now then, the problem is where the floor master is.

There wasn't any floormaster-like monster in the middle layer when I checked it three days ago. There might be some kind of procedure to make the floormaster appears.

First, I should ask someone in the knows.

◇

"What's this, are you blinded by money and fame too?"

The one who replies at me asking for the condition to POP the floor master in disgust is the pyromaniac guildmaster.

"I have enough of both. My retainers want to fight against a powerful enemy."

"Geez, you guys are the seventh party you know."

I guess it's as expected of explorers.

The information I got from the guildmaster was not much.

You can make the floormaster appear by either waiting 10 years since it's last defeated, or summoning it by placing a magic core from a level 50 or higher monster on the altar and read aloud the [Summoning Passage].

"The upper layer one has been defeated by the [Witch of Heaven

Ascension] Princess Ringrande 8 years ago. The next one will appear in two years. The magic core of level 50 or higher monster is something that's quite valuable itself. There's hardly anyone who will use it as a bait to have a fight with the [Floor Master] which you don't know whether you could win."

If lady Ringrande defeated the floormaster 8 years ago, that means she was only 14 years old back then, amazing. To accomplish such great deed without cheat. I thought that she was just a violent siscon woman, but let's revise the impression toward her.

I have around 20 magic cores of level 50 or higher monsters, so there's no problem even if I use one or two. I thought of having multiple battles with many, but it seems that you can't summon the floormaster again for one year once you summon it. I was thinking of using the defeated floormaster's magic core to summon another and fighting multiple of them, but looks like I was too naive.

It seems that a floormaster that isn't defeated will reign for one year and then go back by itself. During the floor master reign, monsters are strengthened and stimulated, which in turn increase explorers' mortality rate, so in case of failure, the holy knight of the royal capital will come to subjugate the floormaster.

"Not the labyrinth army, but the holy knights?"

"Yeah, the labyrinth army is a force that acts to purely prevent monsters overrun the surface. They can't be let to carelessly fight with the [Floor Master], exhausting them."

Is it alright to exhaust the holy knights?

◇

"Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for participating in our triumphal return today!"

A handsome man and seven high level explorers are standing triumphantly on the platform that's been prepared in front of the west guild. I ignored it since there wasn't anyone on the platform when I arrived at the guild, but it seems the core members of explorers who have defeated the floormaster are giving speech there.

"Now then, after the minstrels tell the story about our gallant figures in the fight, it's the long-awaited time to show the spoils that have victoriously gained from the [Floor Master]."

The labyrinth city people who have gathered in the plaza and been treated to free food and drink by the explorers in the leading role cheers in delight.

The handsome man took out a sword.

"This is the flame sword, the [Fang of Flame Snake]."

When the handsome man fills it with magic power, flame appears on the red blade, people raise frenzied cheers that are mixed with angry words. That looks like it'll give you burn if you use it long. I guess you can use it together with fireproof gloves.

In addition, they show various magic items they've acquired like a halberd that can emit fire. When a platinum tiara with egg-sized ruby was displayed, high-pitched shrieks came from the women in nobility seats, and angry voice reverberated from the bearded old man merchants when they showed Orihalcon ore and Damascus Iron ingot. I would have cheered together with them if it was half a month ago.

However, that's not it.

The item that has pulled my soul is not that.

There isn't anyone besides me who pay any attention to that item. No, only Arisa turned her face toward me and grinned at that moment.

That item's name is [Gift Orb].

There are three Gift Orbs.

First, Gift Orb [Light Magic].

Starting from the nobles, a lot of people raised their voices of envy.

Another is, Gift Orb [Posion Resistance].

It's enough to make some upper nobles to stand up from their nobility seats.

As for the last one, most people look puzzled.

『1. Really? Nothing to do with me

2. Give it to me, please!

＞3. Kill and plunder』

Arisa shows some strange branching choices on her palm, made with light magic.

Well, I won't kill, but I'll use all of my available money, connections and skills to get it.

That is, Gift Orb [Chant].

It's a wonderful artifact that will present me the skill I desire most.

10-43. Mithril Plate (2)

Satou's here. Any organization has things like unspoken agreement or custom. After a long time, there are some cases where the particular about how it came to be is forgotten, but in most case, it never disappear.

◇

"Then, you won't hand it over no matter what?"

"Sorry. I won't comply to your demand even if you're an upper-ranking noble or the king himself. It's impossible even if you want to exchange it with the [Lost Gjallarhorn], or the world tree's branch, or an orihalcon armor."

Geryl the crimson noble told me so while looking apologetic. He probably mentioned items that are absolutely not possible to be prepared, but I would have given them except the Gjallarhorn. Even Gjallarhorn, right now I can likely make an exact copy of it.

"Give it up, this is the absolute everlasting custom that the Ancient King Yamato has established."

The guildmaster who was keeping silent during my conversation with the handsome man-shi intruded with a know-it-all look. He came out again huh, the ancient king.

"I guess it's about 600 years ago. During the time Yamato-sama alive, there was a big enough uproar among the kingdom's retainers it could have divided the kingdom due to the legendary artifact that had been dropped by the floormaster."

I see, defeating floormaster probably happens quite rare.

"Yamato-sama who couldn't stand it any longer made one rule--"

Summarizing what the guildmaster's said; first the people who defeat the floormaster have to present all the items they've acquired to the king. And then, except for one item which their representative selects, all the items are exhibited in the auction sponsored by the king to be bid equally.

Any citizen of the kingdom can participate in this auction as long as they pay the registration fee. However, since the registration fee is one gold coin per person, most people besides the wealthy and nobles don't participate. 90% of the money collected in the auction will be granted as the reward to the explorers together with the item they've picked in the beginning. The remaining 10% is collected as tax, but most of it seem to be used as the expense of the guards for the auction.

"Originally, I would have to turn you down before we have this talk and that's the end of story, but you're a promising explorer after all. I have especially asked Geryl boy to have a talk with you."

"Guildmaster, please stop calling me Geryl boy."

The guildmaster said to the harassed handsome man that he had his diaper fall even now, but I took no notice of it. Fumu, financial power means everything huh...

Oops, I have to confirm something before that. It'd be troubling if he chooses the Gift Orb as the reward after all.

"And so Geryl, what do you want as the reward?"

"The Gift Orb of course."

Geh!? Take the other two please?

"T, that is which orbs."

"The poison resistance orb."

Safe.

That's true huh. People don't normally want Chant Orb huh.

"I see, so you're aiming for the light magic orb aren't you."

"The competition for light magic is expensive. It came out 200 years ago, and it seemed to be bid at an extraordinary price of 3000 gold coins."

"That's amazing."

While being amazed, I check the number of Shiga kingdom gold coins in my storage. I can buy 1 or 2 of it with just the gold coins I have in hand. I can probably get it by just bidding honestly, but there's no meaning if there are participants who use backhanded tricks.

I'll go visit some authorized and influential people around to check whether there's a trick to it or not.

I thanked the handsome man for agreeing to meet me, and presented a liquor called [Wicked Firewater] to the guildmaster who had arranged this meeting. This is a liquor I've acquired from Ga Hou the orc, it's strong enough to make an ordinary person who drinks it to collapse with foams on their mouth. It can even make me drunk for 10 minutes. No one saw the figure of the guildmaster for three days after that. Later on, I was looked at with begrudging eyes, but she didn't complain since it did taste terribly good.

◇

Next I head to the viceroy mansion.

"Umu, unfortunately, even as nobles, no, precisely because we're nobles that you cannot violate that unwritten rule. If a noble violates it, his political opponent will certainly use it against him to make him lose his position."

Marquis Ashinen whom I'm consulting to warned me seriously. His tone is serious, but his expression is slovenly loose. His lust is not directed toward me, but the statue of a handsome young man which I've brought.

This was something I had bought in the duchy capital just when I was looking for buckwheat flour during our stay in the elf hometown. I couldn't judge this kind of things besides for their market price, so I bought it after consulting to the giant mama-san from the okama bar I had visited together with Toruma back then. His judgment was reliable since the marquis looks delighted. I cut off the figure of the marquis creeping his fingers on the young man statue from my mind.

When I was buying the statue with Mama-san, I saw the children and Sera who looked happy. I couldn't call out to her since I was in disguise, but she was probably training hard since her level had risen by one. Sera is a good writer, she's been sending letters frequently. She has already sent three letters even though it's only been less than a month since we've arrived in the labyrinth city.

She's greatly different than the poor correspondent Lady Karina who still hasn't responded back even now. According to a letter from Muno Barondom, it seems that Lady Karina wants to train in the labyrinth city too. Consul Nina seems to remonstrate her sometimes, but it seems she's being ignored.

There are a lot of monsters that can break through Raka's defense in the labyrinth city, so please don't come here if possible. Even though she's annoying, I don't really want to see her beauty damaged. Please be satisfied with exterminating thieves in your territory.

Now then, my thought has been completely derailed since I really didn't want to see Marquis Ashinen and his young man statue.

Since I've heard the things I want to hear from the Marquis, I'll go consult with other people.

◇

"This is quite rare for you to visit my home."

Baronet Dyukeli who has his stern face become even more severe encourages me to sit on the sofa.

I have only come here once after the matter with saving her daughter from the lost thieves. At that time, I was invited to a banquet as thanks, and drank together with the shopkeepers of the magic tool shops and medicine shops in the labyrinth city who were under his control.

I've come to consult him since he might know some unclean ways.

"A matter that's not like you. It'll be hard even if you have a connection with the king."

"I have been made aware that it is impossible using that method, but since I am desperate to know if there's a good way to obtain my goal, I will be borrowing everyone's wisdom."

I could probably directly negotiate with the king as Nanashi, but that's also not good huh.

Fumu, maybe I don't have to worry about underhanded tricks since they don't seem to exist.

"It is not that there is no way."

"What kind of method is it?"

"Of course, it's not a direct one."

I wait for Baronet Dyukeli who's putting an overemphasis to continue his words.

"It's the same as war. Know your opponents. Ask the well-connected Viscount Shimen for anyone who wants the item that you wish. And then by negotiations, you turn those people to become in a state where they cannot bid."

I see, information war huh. I'm glad that it's not 'actually there's a trick.'

Turning them into a state where they can't bid sounds like a crime, but even without abducting them, maybe I can turn them into a state where they're not financially strong enough to bid the item.

◇

Since the Marchioness has invited me to an afternoon tea party, I should ask her to collect information with Baronet Dyukeli's idea in mind.

After enjoying the tea and cakes and some long gossips, the talk became about the spoils from the floormaster.

"My, so even Satou-dono has something he wants."

"Yes, it is the Gift Orb. Does Retel-sama has anything you've set your eyes on?"

By the way, Retel is the Marchioness's name. After coming here so many times, I've acquired the permission to call the Marchioness's name.

"Yes, did you see that wonderful tiara? If I were to wear that to the salon during the Kingdom conference, wouldn't I become the center of attention?"

"Yes, it does really suit the Marchioness."

"How about using that egg-like big emerald in a necklace?"

The noisy wives on the surrounding flatter after the Marchioness's remark.

Baronet Dyukeli's wife stated "Panacea" in a low voice with her fleeting existence, but it doesn't seem to reach anyone's ear. I probably wouldn't have heard it if I didn't have the Straining Ear skill.

"Does the medical diet not going well?"

Since the fact that her son is sick is a secret, I obfuscate the subject.

"Yes, he doesn't like vegetables, so he didn't eat much."

"Was the recipes I gave before no good?"

"He ate the dish that Chevalier-sama's cook had made while saying that it was delicious, but he didn't eat the one made by our cooks, and said that it was bitter, or smelled of earth."

Fumu, the difference in (cooking) skill huh?

However, among the recipes that I gave there were a lot of dishes that only needed finely chopped, strained, or souped vegetables, so it shouldn't need that good of a skill...

Maybe I should make and sell vitamin supplement and vegetable juice, since there are considerable number of nobles who suffer from lack of vitamin in the labyrinth city. Let's present the trial product to Baronet Dyukeli as a thank for the talk a while ago.

The tea party became lively when the talk was about the floormaster spoils, and the Marchioness would gather information about which person want which items in the auction before I even asked her.

Although it seems that I have to bid for the tiara too now, it's fine if I think of it as the information fee. At worst, if it became too expensive, I could just make a gorgeous imitation, and she should be consent with it.

◇

Arisa and the others besides me are mastering their new equipments in the upper and middle layer's hunting grounds.

I've culled enemies with instant death attacks and armor-penetrating ones, so they shouldn't be in danger so often. Arisa's new equipment has an automatic deployment system for defense magic, so they should be able to run with teleport magic if they encounter an unexpected situation.

It's already evening, and I've already told Ms. Miteruna that I don't need dinner, so maybe I should go to the labyrinth and eat dinner with the girls.

Everyone seems to be fighting a chimera of scorpion and spider.

"Pochi, stop its leg!"

"Aye! Split bodies attack nanodesu!"

Pochi makes full use of Flickering Movement to attack, and destroys four legs on one side of the eight-legged chimera. Just like Pochi's said, her afterimages look like split bodies.

Tama who have climbed the stalled chimera's back crushes its compound eyes with her short sword. The chimera wags its head to throw Tama off, but she turns the other short sword into a whip sword, and endure the shaking by wrapping the sword on the chimera's feeler.

Looks like Tama is able to properly use the whip sword shaped magic blade and the drill magic blade of her short swords. Since Tama was the only one skillful enough to use two kinds of function, Pochi and Nana needed to change it by voice.

Lulu fires her new smoothbore gun's bullet to the chimera's mouth that has been wrenched open by Mia's magic.

The gun that Lulu is using is a riffle with two meter and a half long barrel, and it uses magic as the explosive instead of explosive powder, shooting substance bullets. During the shooting, the repulsive force occurs on the whole gun, and bullet doesn't touch the inside of the gun barrel. I had a very hard time making this circuit mold, so I instructed her not to use the gun as a club.

The bullet only travels at about half of the speed of sound, but since it's a big 20 millimeters caliber bullet, its destructive power is extraordinary.

In fact, Arisa who was going to give the finishing strike has no turn to come out, she stamps her feet to the ground.

"Satou."

The sharp-sighted Mia who has quickly found me embraces me accompanied with a 'Pofun' sound.

"Master nanodesu!"

"Wlcome~?"

Everyone gathers after noticing that voice.

After waiting for Liza who had crushed the chimera's legs on the opposite side of Pochi's to finish collecting the magic core, I go back to the villa, taking everyone along.

"What do you think about the new equipments?"

"The performance is magnificent"

"Nice~"

"The strongest of the strongest nanodesu! It truly feels like bossss nanodesu!"

It's quite favorable on the vanguard side. I don't know Pochi's reference, so I'll ask about it from Arisa later. I feel like it's from some anime or game, but I can't remember it.

"I'm sorry master. I still cannot skilfully use the acceleration to hit well."

"Ah, with that gun, the trajectory will change even if you shake for an instant. Do your best to master it."

"Yes, I'll do my best!"

I pat the head of Lulu who grasps both her hands tightly to motivate herself, encouraging her.

After all, it's a hard to use gun even for me who have Shooting and Sniping skills at MAX. It's quite powerful if she can handle it well, so I hope she can master it.

"Overkill. The power is much higher than before, it might be better to use the old wand for support."

"Nn, excessive."

As for the rear guard, most agree that the power is too high, or so they said such luxurious problem to me.

"Like with Mia, she miscalculated the Balloon's expansion range and power, it made Pochi flew to the ceiling twice."

"Arisa! Secret!"

While looking warmly at Mia who's lightly beating Arisa, I listen to the shield-user, Nana.

"I inform that it's safely safe. The consumption of magic power has increased, and the ability to continue fighting tends to fall. I request the supply of magic power after a long time of absent."

While there is a scene where Lulu tried with all her might to stop Nana who had began to strip her armor, I gave Nana the magic power supplement as she had wished during bathing. I feel that I can just use Magic Power Transfer, but this way seems to feel better. It's like the difference between calorie bars and proper meals huh.

After getting refreshed from the bath, I consult to Arisa about the schedule until the time we acquire Mitrhil Plate.

The X day is 10 days later.

10-44. The Face under the Mask

Satou's here. It's said that there are three people who look like you in the world, but while it's not so bad if it's a celebrity, I think it'll be the most annoying if you have the same face as a criminal.

◇

"Good evening, your majesty."

I talk to him with the violet-haired Nanashi's tone as carefree as possible. The other party is the king of Shiga Kingdom. I've left a letter on his office regarding my visit two days ago, but there isn't anyone besides him in this room. I think he should have left the body double in this room, and peep from another room while being surrounded by holy knights, but there are only the prime minister and the head of the Shiga Eight Sword in the next room.

I think that he's a bit too careless.

"It's been a while Nanashi."

His voice is like the body double-san too. Apparently the setting about me meeting his body double in the duchy capital is in effect.

"I've got a little business beyond the sky see."

"Fumu, the only people who are invited by the heaven are only the hero, the saint, and the savior hero of Shiga Kingdom."

No well, it's the space, not the heaven though. I guess I don't have to correct him as explaining it would be troublesome anyway.

I seem to have been recognized as the Shiga Kingdom's hero, but I ignore it.

"Sorry for taking your time your majesty."

"I do not mind. I also want to meet you."

Thanks to Arisa's supervision, I feel that my way of speaking has become more gross. I feel that there might be better way of speaking to make people not liken it with Satou. It's a regretful mistake, but I have to endure it and do it. Right, making Nanashi and Maou kill each other, and then create a new Nanashi Mk.2 might be a good idea.

"What is wrong, Nanashi?"

Oops, not good. My thought has wandered off.

"My first business is this."

"You do not need the sword of sky?"

The king frowns when he sees the fake Claiomh Solais that I've presented to him. Returning the holy sword is like declaring myself that I don't want to protect Shiga Kingdom from demon lords. Let's quickly clear the misunderstanding.

"You misunderstand. This is a fake see. Unlike the quickly made one before, this has a function to limit as to who can be its owner and the scripture to make itself flies in the sky."

Since the fake this time is made from mostly the same material as the real Claiomh Solais, its authenticity can't be judged by some half-hearted skill. Due to the alloy made from orihalcon and true silver, it's also equipped with the automatic attacks capability by using the same scripture as the original. Its attack power is lower and it cannot split like the real thing, but it has quite the ability for a fake. I had added the circuit I learned from the elf village in order to put a function to limit the sword's owner. I originally searched the circuit to prevent Pochi's and the other's equipments from getting stolen.

With this function, only [Shiga Kingdom King] and [The One the King has admitted the ownership] can use the Claiomh Solais. The procedure for it is the same as normal knighting ceremony. Only one person can be admitted, so the ownership of last one before the current will become invalid.

"This one should be more real-like than the one from before you know?"

"Umu, it looks exactly like the real thing from what I see."

"You'll know it's fake once you try using the scripture later. I'll leave the details on this paper okay."

I tell so and pass the manual. I entrusted the writing to Tifalize, and she wrote it while looking expressionless yet happy. She must like paperwork.

"Creating a holy sword such as this in such short amount of time..."

The king groans while stroking his white beard and looking at the fake Claiomh Solais. I probably shouldn't say that it was done in one week including the planning.

Rather than that, this is just the preface, let's quickly get down to the real business.

"Oh Nanashi, would you let me see the face under your mask once."

"Sure. However, only for a bit okay, it's embarrassing."

I have already prepared a disguise mask under the outer mask since I thought that he would surely ask. This time I'm using disguise mask version two that has special see-through inhibition and recognition inhibition circuits installed. The outer mask also has recognition inhibition circuit too so it can shut out most see-through magic tools.

I don't feel like putting an air, so I just take off the outer mask and show the disguise mask.

This time I use the face of an acquaintance for the mask. An acquaintance from Japan since using one from here will cause problems. I was hesitating between Mr. Overweight's or my junior-shi's face, but since Mr. Overweight's face didn't match my body build, this time I used the junior-shi's face.

"Oooh, god!"

Huh? Maybe the king likes Junior-shi's face, he's shocked to the point of convulsing. I don't think it should be at the point of praying to god though.

"N, No, Nanashi-dono, would you show that face to the prime minister too."

Dono? Leaving that aside, please stop talking like it's an old man's last request.

"Just call me Nanashi okay, your majesty. I don't want to show my face to too many people, but it's okay if it's just prime minister-san."

"I'm sorry, then I will call him."

The prime minister who was waiting in the next room came after being called by the king. According to Toruma Memo, this person is of one of the only three duke houses in Shiga kingdom, the previous Duke Dukus-san. Looks like he has handed over the house to his son, and come to the king's side to handle administration.

This prime minster's appearance completely betray his occupation. He's a big man with bulking muscle that would very much fit if he were introduced as a general. The fan he's holding on his hand is really ill-matched. How did he become like this when he only has [Self-Defense] skill as the battle skill.

"Have you called, your majesty."

Prime minister-san seemed to have been told beforehand about Nanashi, he didn't show any surprise when he saw the masked me and asked the king about his business. We finished introducing ourselves by the king and greetings.

"Nanashi, please."

"Ho~i"

When I took off the mask, at first minister-san hardened and then began crying flood of tears.

Both the king and the minister, why do you guys react like this.

Junior-shi's face is a normal plain one, and even though you could even say that it's relatively good-looking, it shouldn't be enough to make other people shocked.

Unexpectedly, maybe it's like Lulu's case, and it's reacted strangely by the aesthetic sense of this world.

"It's enough right?"

"Umu, I thank you."

I don't think you need to thank you.

"This Dukus's house is a family that has served Yamato-sama before the founding of this kingdom. They've kept the photographed figure of Yamato-sama during the kingdom's founding with the [Figure Copy Tool].

Fu~un? That's quite an abrupt trivia.

"Yamato-samaaaa!"

After wiping his flood of tears, he tried to hug me with both arms, so I smoothly evaded. The king stopped him before he tried again, so I didn't have to evade.

Yamato-sama?

Er~r, that means junior-shi's face resembles the ancient king Yamato-san's?

However, it's impossible for them to be the same person.

In case there's a slip in time during the summoning, that fellow is weak to pressure, and easily taken by the flow more than me. At the very least Junior-shi isn't someone capable enough to be a king, or rather, not the type to create a nation.

It's another person, and even if there's a relation between them somehow, maybe Junior-shi is a descendant of the ancient king Yamato.

"I'm Nanashi you know. I'm not related to ancient king-san okay."

"Aye, understood."

No, that's the look of someone who doesn't understand.

It must be the look of someone who thinks that Nanashi is the reincarnation of Yamato-san or something.

Dang, that's right, it's the hair. It's said that violet hair is the proof of a reincarnated person, and there are a lot of reincarnated people. I think it's unbecoming of a king and a prime minister of a kingdom to hastily jump to conclusion just from the hair and face though....

Well, whatever. Correcting it is annoying, I'll leave them misunderstand.

For now, I made sure to tell them not to treat me as the ancient king Yamato.

◇

"And, about the business, like, I want to sell magic tools in Shiga Kingdom see, would you give me the right to do commerce please?"

"Fumu, very well, I will prepare it."

An immediate permission. As expected of monarchy. It's nice for this kind of thing to be done fast.

"The commercial right is not a problem. Nanashi-dono, what kind of items are you intending to sell?"

"Un, I'm thinking, like, magic equipments and tools, and also things related to medicines. I've prepared airships as the featured product."

"Airships?!"

Asked by the prime minister-san, I roughly outlined the goods' genre but the king exclaimed at the word [Airship].

"Un, I was thinking of selling large transport ships, and smaller carriage-sized ships for private use. The one besides the transport ship has to use the aerodynamic engine though, so it'll start selling a bit later see."

The transport ship has the same performance as the airship that I've caught a sight of in the duchy capital. The cruising speed and maximum altitude are about the same, and it's 40% larger. I've designed it to have big load capacity.

I want to make the private airships popular among the nobles in order for it not to be unusual when I have one myself during our travel between cities.

"Private use?! Using the precious aerodynamic engines for private use pleasantry is it?"

What an exaggeration.

"It'll be convenient for viceroys if they can freely come and go to the royal capital right?"

"It is true that it's convenient, but do you have such abundant amount of aerodynamic engines?"

"Un, relatively see."

Back then with Lulu, we got a lot of it when we were over fishing tunas and narwhals. At that time, shark-shaped monsters were coming to attack the tunas from the sky. I quickly disposed of them, but their identity turned out to be the famous monstrous fish of which the aerodynamic engine are taken from.

I got a bit too much of the aerodynamic engine's parts since I had obliterated every bad monsters who were coming for the tunas around the vicinity of the ocean area. The tunas and the narwhals had parts that could be used for aerodynamic engine too but they could not output as much power as the shark's parts. Moreover, since it seems that only the shark type ones attacks the towns around the coast, only materials from this type are known to people.

"How many can you concretely prepare."

"Five large transport ships, and 20 small private ships, I think."

The prime minister inquired with slightly flustered tone due to my vague answer, so I revealed them the concrete number.

By the way, the large ship has 30 times the output power of the small ship.

Rather than that, the problem is whether they give the permissions or not, the king and minister-san look pensive.

Doing illicit trade is bad, right.

"Nanashi, due to the national defense concern, freely selling airships will be troubling."

"I intend to only sell it to Shiga Kingdom Nobles at present, no good?"

I asked in disgustingly cute way.

Ah, my life is decreasing...

"U, umu, then---"

"Please give the royal family the preferential right."

The prime minister-san set a condition as if covering the king's words who was seemingly going to give his permission. Interrupting the king sounds like a lese majeste.

"When you're selling airships, please negotiate with the royal family or the royal army first."

"Okkey."

"Okkey? I don't know that word, what does that mean?"

"Ah, sorry sorry. It's, like, affirmative."

After such exchanges, I was able to get the commercial right to sell magic tools in the kingdom.

I gave one among the five large transport ships as a sample, and was granted the commercial right and a medallion due to that achievement. This medallion that minister-san has arranged is the proof of the royal purveyor merchant, it allows me to have business transactions with nobles in equal standing.

The price of the large transport ships couldn't be set without looking at the real things, so it was for another day. For now, I'm told that I should present the ships to the airport that's used for presentation on the edge of the royal capital three days later.

As for other samples, I also give some magic sword, magic spear, and several kinds of magic medicines. As for the magic weapons, it's established that a magic sword is worth 150 gold coins, and a magic spear is 200 gold coins with excessive profit, but I sell my magic sword for 100 gold coins and magic spear for 200 gold coins.

These magic weapons aren't like the one from the duchy capital that use only bronze, they have mithril and brass alloy membrane covering the bronze base to make them look good. Their power as weapons are about the same since they're both casted magic swords, but thanks to the membrane, it won't become rusty or decayed, it's easy to maintain.

The medicines line-up are the same as from the duchy capital, in addition I've added nutrient and nourishment tonics. I present large quantity of nourishment tonics to the king and the prime minister-san under the pretext of being samples.

Please fight for 24 hours.

Ah, that means you can sleep for four hours huh. How enviable.

The payment will be in three days later since the goods will be delivered with the airships delivery.

Obtaining the commercial right this time is for the sake of the auction later.

Even though my power of money is unparalleled, I'm thinking of reducing the assets of people who are likely to become my rivals.

Now then, the preparation for the auction is going well.

As an extra, I gave Sir Sokel to prime minister-san when I was visiting the royal capital for the goods delivery. The man should be able to make good use of Sir Sokel's testimony.

The fact that the real identity of the guy called His Majesty is still a mystery makes me feel uneasy, but I'm expecting the kingdom's authorities and spies to uncover it.

10-45. Mithril Plate (3)

Satou's here. The end of year party season is the time for banquets where they served yakiniku and hot pot. However, there are a lot of people who have works during the 31st December and the new year day that they don't notice that the year has changed.

◇

"Satou!"

The one who first found me when I got back from the royal capital while bringing souvenirs was Mia after all. Looks like spirits become flustered when teleport magic is used, and although it's only for a blink, she seems to notice it.

Slightly after Mia, Pochi and Tama were also running here from the villa. It seems these two can sense either magic or space fluctuating, and aware when I'm teleporting. Since they know it [Somehow], the two themselves are not sure what is it that they're sensing.

"Knew it! It's master nanodesu!"

"Wlcome~"

The three arrive at the same time.

Mia is 'plop'-ing from the front.

Tama energetically jumps with 'pyon', landing on my neck and assuming shoulder riding position. The delicately fail, "Pao daru~in", when she landed is probably Arisa's fault.

Pochi spiritedly bumps with her head using a force that'll even knock down a knight. To prevent her from hitting the head of Mia who's on my lap, I gently receive her with Magic Hand.

Pochi appeals with teary eyes from below while saying, "Arisa is~"

I wonder what happens?

She only answers with au, au, "Arisa is" when I ask the reason, the talk doesn't advance. Due to Lulu's and Liza's disciplining her that she shouldn't talk bad about other people, looks like she can't speak abusive languages about other people.

"Nn, emotionally unstable."

From the side, Mia tells me who's carrying Pochi, but I don't know if she means it about Pochi or Arisa. I'd love to have more words.

"Kengengakukau~?"

I guess she meant kenkengougou (uproar) or kankangakugaku (heated debate)?

Tama who's riding over my shoulders is peering while scrambling my hair.

I don't really understand, I guess I'll just ask Arisa directly.

"I've brought some souvenirs with me, let's talk while eating them."

"Meat~?"

"Sweets?"

"It's both of them."

The three's spirits have raised from my words. When Pochi's eyes meet mine, she awkwardly turns away slightly while saying, "I have another stomach for meat nanodesu!", and then acts like she's whistling.

If meat are for another stomach, then what's the real stomach for? I'd like to cross-examine her for an hour.

When I open the villa's door, I can hear the dispute between Arisa and the others.

"That's why! I've said since awhile ago! We should do the first blow by attacking from afar with magics that have maximum attack power!"

"Negative. If that blow cannot defeat it, Arisa and the others in the rear guard will be in danger."

"That's right. The first spear is the honor of a soldier. The proper method should be us vanguards charging and whittling the enemy, and then Arisa and the others on the rear guard will give the decisive strike from behind."

"But, Liza-san and Pochi will be injured then!"

"Arisa, I should be aiding them, so I propose."

"Nana's guard isn't impregnable. Even a mid-ranking demon won't leave unscathed if they're hit by the triple attack of Magi Hydra's breath, magic and bite."

"It is all thanks to the equipments and the new magic. I recommend to forward the praise to master."

Looks like it's reaching the climax.

Or rather, even though I had already said that they should not fight the Magi Hydra since it had charm attacks, they still fought with it huh. After the meal, it's punishment time.

◇

"In other words, Arisa, Liza and Nana have arguments regarding the tactics, and misunderstanding during the fight?"

"That's right, but that's not it."

How complicated.

"Arisa is saying some unreasonable thing nodesu."

"Eh~, didn't I only say that you should use Lulu's smoothbore gun to hit the Bringbird."

"Arisa, hitting the Bringbird with magic is difficult enough, it's unreasonable you know?"

Lulu tells Arisa while preparing the tablewares and the dishes on the table.

"But, Lulu hit it right."

"It was a Bringbird that was resting on a rock and from a distance though. I also had the interlinked goggle and the space stake that helped the gun barrel's stability. I don't have confidence to hit a Bringbird that moves like Pochi-chan, I think."

Lulu cutely puts her finger on her chin while thinking, "Nn~", and corrects Arisa.

The interlinked goggle of the smoothbore gun is a thing I've added to cover the difficulty of using the scope on the gun barrel. Linked to the smoothbore gun, the goggle will display image from the scope. However it doesn't have enough speed to display video, it's barely enough to show grainy picture of the point blank shot.

The space stake is something that eliminates the smoothbore gun's shaking, I've crafted it by copying the world tree's technology. It's absolutely nothing compared to the space stake that holds the world tree, but it can stabilize the gun barrel to completely eliminate the shaking.

This magic circuit is activated by a button or voice input. The reply is recorded from me. I didn't feel shy since during the time when our game didn't have enough budget, the staffs took turn to act as voice actors.

"And, did Pochi hit it?"

"I did hit it nodesu... with Magic Edge Cannon."

Pochi's words fell in volume for the last line. I see, when the bullet didn't hit, she liken the smoothbore gun barrel to a sword and used Magic Edge Cannon out of desperation huh.

"Pochi is amazing~ Magic Cannon~ Bending, de gozaru."

Tama reported Pochi's feat while looking up from my lap.

Magic Edge Cannon's orbit can bend huh. She's like the strongest space pirate from somewhere. I should practice it next time.

"However, why were you practicing with the smoothbore gun?"

"It's a measure against enemies that are dangerous to approach."

"Then you can just use Magic Edge Cannon right?"

"I mean, something like Floormaster must have strong magic resistance. I want to increase our means to do remote physical attacks."

I see, that one huh.

However, we have buckshot bullets for smoothbore gun for that purpose.

"Buckshot is no good. Friendly fire is scary, and the power is weak isn't it."

"Its power should be quite powerful if you use acceleration formation."

It can even drop a jet fighter if it hit after all.

"Okay! The difficult talk stops here! Please continue after the meal."

Lulu who had completed the meal preparation clapped her hands to gather everyone's attention, and declared the closure of the meeting. If she doesn't close it forcefully like this, the argument will become too heated, and the dishes will become cold.

◇

"Uhha~! Is this marbled beef? Where did you get it?"

"Un, I found a ranch being attacked by a giant monster during my way back from the royal capital. I got it as thanks for getting rid of that monster."

It seemed to be an official ranch, and I got the meat from the half-eaten cows as the reward. The ranch called it [Damaged Article] but it sounds like a nonsense when you look at this lovely beef with its interweaving lean meat and fat meat. Although, thanks to that, I got actual meat instead of money as the monster extermination reward, so I'm grateful for the ranch-shi's opinion.

10 platters of sliced meat are served before our eyes. And then, there's a peculiar-shaped pot with steam raising from it beside them.

"Kuh~ I didn't think that I'd eat shabu-shabu when I came here!"

"The meat person is flat nanodesu!?"

"Diett?"

Pochi and Tama lowered their point of view to the table's height, checked the thin meat from the side, and gave such impressions. As far as the two are concerned, meat is probably something thick.

Fufufu, I'll shatter that illusion of yours.

"This is you see, the thing called shabu shabu---"

"Forget about that, let's quickly eat!"

Since Arisa demands me to stop my explanation, the meal begins.

Bottles of sesame sauce and ponzu, and small dishes of condiments are lined up around the large platters.

The condiments are grated radish, carrots, gingers, cut spring onions, green perilla, onions, and continuing on, sesame seeds left from the making of sesame sauce, and various other things like crash nuts and wasabi. The more the merrier right.

I hesitated whether I should also put crab and sashimi besides the beef, but since today is our first shabu-shabu, it's beef only.

"Hold one slice of the beef like this, quickly dip the beef to the hot soup, dip it to the sauce and then eat it."

I explain to them while eating it.

First I use plain ponzu to eat the meat. As expected of the official Shiga Royal Family purveyor merchant. It's delicious enough to be comparable to the Kobe beef and Matsusaka beef that the company president treated me a long time ago. The tuna from the other day was good, but beef has its own taste after all.

"You can add any condiment you prefer on your own. For the first time, try eating the beef without the condiment."

With my encouragement, Liza holds one slice of the beef and dips it into the hot soup while looking very serious. Before I knew it, she has become skillful in handling chopsticks.

However, you really don't have to look so serious while eating.

Since Pochi and Tama can't use chopsticks, I've prepared slender tongs for them to use. If I had prepared forks, they'd likely drop the meat into the hot soup after all. I've added three kind of symbols, that are of dog, cat, and chick, on the tongs' flaps. Nana nabbed the tongs with chick symbol from the very beginning.

"Delish. It's A5 rank at least! I can eat this no matter how much."

"Delicious nodesu! The meat of eego is as good as the tuna and the whale nanodesu!"

"Delishlish~?"

"I announce that the sesame sauce is the strongest and unrivaled."

"Nana-san, ponzu put with grated radish is also delicious you know."

"Nn, delicious."

Everyone eats with relish while unanimously giving their praise. Looks like Mia likes it too due to its light flavor.

I was worried with Liza who was chewing alone quietly, but since the corner of her eyes looked really happy, she must be immersing herself in the taste. Enjoy it thoroughly to the heart.

Arisa, Pochi, and Tama are quickly swallowing their shares like they're drinking. There are more than 100 kilos of them, eat them as you like. However, I have to warn Arisa not to eat too much.

"Kuh, the sesame sauce reigns supreme, but the ponzu is also nice! To have this many condiments variation come out!"

"Arisa is pushing the wasabi plate even while saying that, you can't trick me nodesu. Pochi has learned her lesson nodesu."

"I like sesame sauce."

"Everything is delicious~?"

"Uu, it's too delicious, I could eat too much."

It's interesting to see everyone picking their choice. Looks like Pochi has splendidly seen through Arisa's trick. Lulu is restraining herself since she's worried about her weight, but it feels like she's losing to the charm of the king beef. Isn't it alright once a while.

The flavor would have increased if there were chili oil, XO sauce, or some broad bean chili sauce. If I'm not mistaken, XO sauce and broad bean chili sauce use miso as the base, I'll try to make some later. What about the chili oil I wonder? Maybe red pepper?

Since Liza is eating in an unusual way, by putting a bit wasabi on the dipped meat and then dip it on the soy sauce, I tried to mimic her. This way of eating is like with sashimi, but it's quite nice.

However, Pochi, Tama and Mia who saw it and then ate while mimicking it, groaned while pining their nose. I burst into laughter when I saw them and got myself lightly hit by the three.

I distribute hot chocolate to the three youth troupe who have suffered from wasabi.

"U~n, I'm full. Hot chocolate eh~ It'll be nice if there's Choco Fondue or Cheese Fondue next~"

Arisa requested so when she saw Pochi and the others drank hot chocolate. I had often eaten cheese fondue but never choco fondue. Maybe I should try making one.

"What kind of dish nanodesu?"

"It's fondue meat poured with chocolate and cheese. Since the fondue bird only dwells deep inside a mountain with beautiful water, it's been called the phantom dish."

"Fondue hunt~!?"

"I want to hunt it nodesu!"

"Doubt."

Pochi and Tama were taken by Arisa's lie, but Mia saw through it at once. Looks like cheese fondue exists in Boruenan forest, introduced by the hero Daisaku.

◇

Next day, it seems they're training with the assumption that the floormaster can null physical attacks.

When they came back for dinner, everyone was down due to magic power exhaustion.

It seemed they had trained until they used up all the magic power potion I had given them. I was glad that they had enough sense to leave enough magic power to come back.

Since my magic power was on the verge of exhaustion too, I didn't use [Magic Power Transfer] magic, but made them dishes that were good for recovering magic power, but it was somehow unpopular.

Maybe I should have taken the magic power from the charged magic swords for emergency instead?

"No meat~"

"Pochi is reflecting nodesu. That's why, please put even tiny bit of meat nodesu."

"Pochi, Tama. You're 100 years too early to request meal from master."

Pochi and Tama seem to think that this is a punishment, they look up with pitiful look on their face while being downhearted. Pochi who used her fingers to express the "tiny bit" part was cute. She must have been expressing the thickness of meat.

Liza was reminding the two, but her voice didn't have power at all in it. Liza must also be shocked about the no meat. I think it doesn't taste bad since I have made the stock soup from chicken bones though~

"Even though I'm not dieting, why this meal!   More protein!   Gibumi mito purizu!"

"They're dishes good for recovering magic power."

Moreover, these boiled beans have protein don't they.

As for the other three girls, they're eating without complaining since they don't dislike vegetables.

My magic power had restored enough to do the magic power transfer during the meal, but I took this chance to observe the recovery rate of Arisa's and the others' magic power. I also have to make more magic power potion later.

In addition, for the four people who like meat, I let them eat as many whale meat steak as they like after their magic power have recovered. No, I stopped Arisa before she overate. I'd not like to accompany her on her diet again after all.

10-46. Mithril Plate (4)

Satou's here. There's an impression that the visiting day is the big moment for children, but when I've become an adult, I notice that it's the place for the children's guardians to compete. The teachers who have prepared the stage for the children to show off with good balance must be having a stomachache.

◇

"Wa~y, it's Poa nanodesu!"

"Shiya, been awhile~?"

Pochi and Tama who see the two people I've brought to the villa welcome them with raised arms. These two are helpers for the floormaster subjugation.

Unfortunately, they're not going to be battle forces, but as paddings to add the number of people. Each of these two lead 5 trolls and 10 spriggans, and 10 leprechauns. Just now, I had disguised myself as a plain middle-aged man, and guided them all to register in the west guild. Since they were all unusual races around here, everyone disguised themselves as a human. It was impossible for the trolls considering their size, so they were disguised as major little giants.

I've reserved one whole inn on the ground for every one of them besides two elves to stay at.

It's the high class inn which we have stayed at when we first came to the labyrinth city. There wasn't any other inn that could hold the trolls. Since all of the meals and liquor are my treats, they should currently be enjoying human dishes for the first time. I'm slightly worried whether the trolls would break the inn when they're drunk.

"Ou, Pochi! Are you well?! Let's have some practice later! Prepare some wooden swords!"

"Aye! Nanodesu!"

Pochi's master, Ms. Porutomea grins while holding the blue rose sword that I've given her before with one hand.

Pochi who went back to the villa returned while carrying two Soft Swords overhead and looking happy. Looks like they intend to start the training immediately.

"Tama, are you in good health."

"Saku-saku de gozaru~? Nin nin."

Shishitouya-shi, Tama's master, is an elf-san who dresses casually. He has calm demeanor yet warrior air around him, but since he looks young outside, he looks like a middle schooler who tries hard, it's a somehow heartwarming. Since his appearance is shota-like, he's Arisa's favorite elf-san.

These two look carefree and it doesn't seem like they will start training, so I take them along to the villa where Liza's masters, Gurugapoya-shi and Yuseku-shi, and Nana's master, Keriuru-shi and Ms. Gimasarua are waiting. These people and the other two people whom I brought today also registered on the guild while bringing 10-15 disguised people each.

The 50 people whom I've brought ahead of time are the beastkin people living in Boruenan forest. After they had entered the dungeon, I teleported with them to the Ivy Mansion and treated them to a feast made by Leriril.

"Ou! Shiya. Yer' not with Poa huh?"

"Poa is having a match with Pochi."

"Geez, that battle mania is handful."

"She sure is."

From the viewpoint of a mild human like me, these five masters are of the same kind.

"I am no match for Liza-dono after all."

"No, against Keriuru-dono is the first time I have a hard time."

"Is that excluding Satou?"

"Because master is special."

Liza and Keriuru-shi, the dwarf, said those remarks after finishing their serious match.

Even though I said serious match, they weren't crossing swords.

These two have been doing not-sake-tasting, but meat-tasting in the living room.

Liza praised me so, but I don't have absolute taste or anything. I felt that my taste had been sharpened when I raised the Cooking skill, but I'm no match against these two who can distinguish the producing area, and whether it's from male or female animals just by tasting the meat.

I just knew it by Appraisal skill and AR (Augmented Reality) indicators.

Liza and her master aren't the only people who have gone into their own world.

"I see, so we have to be careful with its Magic Invalid (Neutral Magic) and Rampage (Stampede) condition that happens after its health's been decreased."

"Umu, that's right. My master also had troubles with those two points."

The shadowkin, Seoru-shi is lecturing Arisa about the way to fight the floormaster. Looks like his party was in charge of scouting when Trazayuya-shi was staying in the labyrinth city. I asked for him to come here when I heard that he had participated in the floormaster subjugation.

"Arisa-dono, you are strong. However, the floor master is in another dimension. Even for us who had repulsed a dragon, we lost two out of three times we challenged the floormaster. If you judge that you cannot win, retreat immediately, and risk for another opportunity."

"Thank you, Seoru-san! It's OK! Because we have a trump card! We will hit hard with a boom tomorrow! Tomorrow we're going to have a banquet with food you've never seen before!"

Arisa is even more flared up after hearing Seoru-shi's warning.

That's fine and all, but I'm the one who's going to make the dishes for the banquet right? Please stop strangely upping the hurdles. My repertoire is going to run out soon. I do have a lot of fairy dishes that the elf dish study group have taught me, but elves would have been tired with those already.

Since they are served Japanese and Western food for a while here, it might be good if I put out some Chinese cuisines and original one.

◇

The next morning, I got a troubling message from Shishitouya-shi who had come back to the inn.

The trolls who were having a party until late at night seemed to have destroyed the inn's walls while they were dead drunk. It had been largely broken. The repair cost will be quite considerable.

I've decided to use this incident as an opportunity to hire them.

"Is there any trouble?"

"Oh, if it isn't an excellent young lord. Actually, our friends have made a careless mistake degozaru."

While looking bored, Ms. Porutomea ignore my and Shishitouya-shi's cheap play.

"I-if it isn't Pendragon-sama."

I ask the inn manager who's noticed and greeted me awkwardly about the damage cost.

Looks like it's 50 gold coins. Certainly, the cost for repairing this much damage and the compensation for the inn closure during the repair should be that much.

"Fumu, you guys seem to be skilled explorers. I will bear the cost of repair for the inn if you're willing to lend me your power."

"Oh! We are indebted to you. We will even help you subjugate the floor master!"

Although I'm not one to speak, Shishitouya-shi is quite the ham actor. However, he seems to really like it despite failing at it, Shishitouya-shi is acting dramatic in high spirits. Well, it's fine as long as Tama isn't infected with some strange influence.

I pay the cost of repair to the inn manager. It has decreased to 28 gold coins for some reason when we're chatting for a bit. How curious.

◇

When I'm taking along Shishitouya-shi and the others to the west gate, the townspeople are buzzing and saying whatever they like. They must be surprised with the big bodies of the trolls.

"Oy, aren't that the Pendragon young master?"

"What's he doing? He's usually with little girls and big-breasted beauties isn't he."

"If it's the Black Spear Liza-san and the Maid King Lulu-san, they've gone to the labyrinth several days ago."

"Did they not get back on schedule? That's worrisome."

"There's no need to be worried, when even the people of [Pendora] training school are that strong. The only thing that can hurt the girls of the main members should only be the floormaster~ rite'?"

Maybe due to the food distribution, before I knew it, we have become quite popular among the young explorers.

The [Pendora] that those guys are talking about is the alumnus of the training school. As their graduation certificate, we gave a blue mantle dyed with simplified Pen Dragon crest--A dragon holding a pen--to each three of them, so they became known with that name.

This simplified crest is Arisa's idea, and the favorite of Nana. The sketches that Arisa drew in the beginning have been put into Nana's pouch as an important thing even now.

However, Maid King huh, where did that nickname come from? I think it should be Queen instead of King for Lulu though.

"Maybe he's taking those seemingly little giants guys on the floormaster subjugation mission?"

"Subjugation relying on the power of money huh.... Maybe he would hire us too."

"Don't even think 'bout it. The guys who defeated a monster like Hunter Mantis unhurt are going to fight an opponent dangerous enough to prompt them hiring helpers. People like us won't even be useful as meat shield."

Alright, as planned, my goal of making a lot of people witness me entering the labyrinth while bringing a lot of battle forces has been met.

I was displaying the figure of me negotiating with four people who brought along 50 people on an open terrace with a lot of explorers, so they should be in the impression that I had hired a lot of parties.

Fuuh, next I just need to join Arisa and the others, achieve safe hunting, and it's mission complete.

◇

A little while after we've entered the labyrinth, I take everyone I've brought along to the party meeting place in the Ivy Mansion.

Since the slaves who were staying in the Ivy Mansion are working on the experimental farms in the labyrinth city and the outskirts, they're not here anymore.

Tifaliza and Nell are working in Echigoya Firm that I've created in the royal capital. Only the noble daughter explorers are still staying in the Ivy Mansion.

The five compounders in Furusau city who make medicines are treated as the medicine division of this firm, while Porina and the others who are staying in the worker tenement in labyrinth city, making daily products are treated as the the general goods division.

Our best selling item is the kickboard which Arisa's designed. It's popular enough in the royal capital that it's generated two months build-to-order list. Even though it's something that anyone can create, did the past teleported and reincarnated people not make it? It was nice that it was selling well, but transporting it to the royal capital was troublesome, so I bought a workshop in the royal capital suburb and decided to produce it there. I'm planning to send Porina as the workshop manager.

"Satou-sama, are you bringing trolls in addition to the spriggans and the leprechauns now? Giving my all is worth the trouble with this!"

"Is there enough ingredients and liquor?"

"Yes!"

Leriril's tension is high, looks like she's happy to welcome the various fairy kins.

"There are plenty of wine and mead!"

"Then, I trust you to entertain them."

"Yes! Please leave it to me!"

I leave Magic Puppets to help the enthusiastic Leriril, and bring along Pochi's and Tama's masters to the villa where Arisa and the others are staying.

◇

"Everyone, are you prepared?"

"Yes nanodesu! Both the lunchbox and the snacks are perfect nanodesu!"

"There's Bananas too~"

"Of course nanodesu! Bananas aren't with the snacks desuyo!"

Pochi and Tama hold bananas on both their hands and take a pose.

I glanced at Arisa, but the suspect was busy completing preparation, she didn't notice it.

"I inform that the equipment check is complete. The character bento that Lulu's made has a chick drawn too, so I boast."

The fully equipped Nana takes her lunch box from her fairy bag and shows it to me.

The equipment and lunch box of these three are similar.

The vanguards are wearing full armors I've made from orihalcon recently, while the rear guards are equipped with dress armors which have magic boost function. Mia's and Arisa's dresses look showy like they're some magical girls, probably because I've left the designs to Arisa.

Lulu's equipment is basically a maid uniform, but since she has the duty to protect Arisa and Mia if push comes to shove, she's the next heavily equipped one after Nana.

I project the summoning room for the floor master of Area 66 in mid-air. Arisa who looked at it and confirmed the objective place by sight used [Gate] magic to open the road there.

Now, let's go.

We stepped into the opened gate toward Area 66.

10-47. Mithril Plate (5)

Satou's here. I think surprise should only be allowed if it's a good thing. Nowadays, with all my power, I want to be spared from incidents.

◇

There is only one room in Area 66 of the upper layer.

It's a huge opens space where the summoning circle for the floormaster is located. It's spacious enough for me to dismantle five whales here, the ceiling is also high, reaching 100 meters.

Since the room is wide, you can see that it's flat but there are a lot of 2-3 meters big rocks scattered around besides on the center, so there's no problem with covers. I don't expect them to be able to become walls against the floormaster's attacks though.

"What should we do? Should I be the one who summons the floormaster?"

"It's alright! I'll do it!"

I suggested so since it was the most dangerous position, but Arisa whose eyes were glittering declined.

"I've confirmed with Seoru-san yesterday, it always can't move for 10 seconds after the summoning."

"I see, still, don't be careless and do it after you set up defense magic okay?"

"Un, I know. Sheesh, you're really a worrywart."

I warn Arisa while filling her portion of magic power that has been used to open the Gate.

Everyone takes up their battle position, keeping a bit of distance away from the vacated center lot. The floormaster's magic will be different depending on its type, so Mia's also positioned herself in the location where Nana and Lulu can protect her.

"Everyone! You've taken your position right! I'll begin!"

I transmit Arisa's voice with wind magic to everyone.

It's hard for voices to echo here since this room is too wide.

Arisa put the Magic Core that will become the trigger on the earthenware pot with strange designs located on the altar. According to the AR, it's a Holy Grail.

"I am the one who challenges the impossible! As someone with predestined length of life, I become the one who go against the god, the devil, and the law of the world! I erect this proof here and now in order to seek competition against the floor master! Carrying the three proofs, I will reach thou place soon! I am a challenger! O trial, appear here now!"

Responding to Arisa's chuunibyou-like summoning passage, red light is emitted from the summoning circle. When Arisa has finished chanting, light so intense it's hard to open your eyes run on top of the summoning circle.

And then, that guy appears as if welling up from the summoning circle.

◇

"Ah, excuse me. I've taken advantage of your summoning circle. The floor master should come soon, don't mind me and go challenge it."

An around 180-centimeter-tall gentleman has appeared on the summoning circle. He's wearing nicely tailored white three-piece suit and a white coat, holding a one meter tough stick on his hands which have matching white gloves on. With a silk hat on his armpit, he speaks to Arisa in friendly manner.

Arisa who's beside me grips my arm while trembling.

"Fumu, can you see it? I won't seal your mouth. The only ones I want to overthrow are the gods and their fanatics. Sorry, but I'm not fond of utterly obliterating gods' puppets for my self-satisfaction, so don't even think about challenging me okay?"

The dog-head demon lord with violet fur tells so as if he's pitying her.

Strangely enough, my Crisis Perception isn't reacting. He's probably serious about not wanting to interfere.

According to AR indicators, his skills are unknown unfortunately, but his level is the record high. Yet it's still not even half of my level, however, this guy's kind of class has attacks that can break through my defense magic, so everyone could be hurt if I don't interact with him carefully.

"De, demon lord."

With one hand, I support Arisa who's lost her balance from the shock. Right at that time my finger seemed to have caught on her veil, rolling it open a little, exposing her violet hair.

"Hou, no wonder you can see."

The demon lord who was going to leave saw Arisa's hair and turned back.

"O seed girl who has fragments hidden within you, I'll give you an advice."

--So Arisa really has god's fragments after all.

<TLN: It's not clear whether the fragment is singular or plural.>

"Eventually you will arrive at the truth. However, do not ever despair. Whether you're reduced to a demon lord who lost your emotion and be defeated by the hero, or a demon lord with reason like me who chooses to fight against the world, it is decided by the strength of your heart. Although, it also depends on your choice whether you become a demon lord or avert your eyes from the truth and live on as a human."

Fumu, he's rational despite being a demon lord, or rather, he's saying some meddlesome advice. I didn't want Arisa to hear about this if possible.

I gave a signal with my hands toward Nana and the others behind.

"Be careful of the hero. That guy is the hound of Parion. Kukkukku, hound huh, a dog-head like me saying that is like a gag."

Receiving the signal, Nana and Lulu deploy overlapping physical and magic defense.

The content is "A powerful enemy has appeared, put importance on your life."

I speak to him in order to confirm several things.

"Can I ask you something?"

"I won't lend my ear to a baggage carrier manservant. If you want to talk with me, raise your level to this girl's."

The dog-head demon lord turns his view toward me for the first time. Come to think of it, the Exchange column should have my level at 34.

The demon lord who saw me looked puzzled, but then pondered as if he had noticed something. He puts his finger on his forehead, and then looks up to the sky with a 45-degree slant like a narcissist.

"Impersonating a human in a place like this, aren't you too whimsical?"

He spits out such words as if he's tired.

Don't tell me he saw through my level 310? Even so, saying me impersonating a human is cruel.

"Be moderate with your play. I have the important work of burning down the temples around the world from now on."

The temples--

The corpse of Sera from the time with the wild boar king is reflected on my mind like a flashback.

And then I saw the happy figures of the temple priests starting from the head miko.

--Burning them down?!

My body acts as soon as I heard those words.

I push Arisa to Nana behind with Flash Drive, and then using Flash Drive again, I get close to the demon lord and thrust a holy sword toward his throat. The sword stops after the tip's pierced through for a bit a thin plate that's appeared before his eyes.

I'm quick tempered if I do say so myself. I might have been influenced by the labyrinth city a little.

I saw the illusion of the demon lord killing Sera and the head miko after hearing the remark earlier. Those girls should not have any way to escape that fate if they're up against this guy.

"--you're something absurd like always. To pierce through the Absolute Physical Defense (Anti-Physical) that completely nulls physical attack like this."

"Sorry but I cannot approve your remark earlier."

Good grief, even though I thought that he was a demon lord that could coexist with us. I let my guard down since he ends his words normally. <TLN: No 'noja','nari', or 'deojaru'>

Or rather, please stop speaking like you're my acquaintance. I don't have any dog-head demon lord acquaintance.

"Do you want to avoid the temples getting burned down?"

"That's right."

I'm thinking of ways to defeat the demon lord--no good, it's too cramped here, everyone will get rolled up. If I use magic with all my might, everyone won't get out unscathed with their current level and equipments.

"Let's go out for a bit."

I caught his coat, and teleported to a desert to the west of the labyrinth city.

Save for a rainy day. I'm glad that I've prepared a teleport point for experimenting with Lulu's smoothbore gun on the desert beforehand.

◇

I thought that the demon lord would resist the teleportation, but he surprisingly followed along obediently.

"Do you have any intention to retract your statement earlier?"

"None. That might as well be the meaning of my existence. I became a demon lord for the sake of destroying the wooden dolls of the gods' temples after all."

I tried to change his mind, but it was no use huh.

I slashed at him since I was heated just now, but if possible I'd have liked us to meet a common ground to talk.

However, judging from the demon's lord tone and behavior, it looks to be impossible.

"Fumu, I wonder how many times have I been killed by you with this? However, I'll bite back once in a while. Even I have pride as the Demon Lord Origin who had burned down temples around the world 20.000 years ago."

Has it already been decided that he'll lost from the beginning?

Apart from that, another important point is, "many times he has been killed." He probably will be revived in times even if I kill him. Sometimes ago, someone said to me that gods and demi-gods will be revived on their own even if they died. This guy must be in the domain of demi-god, no doubt about it. Thanks to that, he can fight without hesitation.

Nevertheless, the demon lord has been around since that long time ago even though the history of hero is only for 1300 years huh. I don't know how he knows that 20.000 years have passed, but that's trivial.

If I can't avoid fighting, I will fight with all my power.

If he's in the same class as the Golden Wild Boar King I've fought before, this shouldn't be too hard of a fight.

Without leisurely waiting for the signal to start, I take the preemptive attack with [Laser] magic.

I didn't use [Condense] magic to stack it this time. It wouldn't be a surprise attack if I used superfluous magic.

The bullseye magic that once roasted the Great Monstrous Fish (Tovukezeera) warped its trajectory like avoiding the demon lord's body and drilled through the desert, creating many hollowed lines.

Why did it miss?

"Have you forgotten? Before my unique skill 『Probability Fluctuation (Trickster)]』, magic and weapons of exact shooting type won't pass through."

This damn cheater. I understand Arisa's feeling a little. It should be called Cheat Skill instead of Unique Skill.

However, his misunderstanding seems to be still continuing on, he reveals his own unique skill which honestly helps.

It's quite an unfair skill, but it doesn't seem to be related to whether it's against a direct attack or an area attack. I was surprised that the laser trajectory was veered off, but I wonder if swinging the laser would work.

"Well then, allow me to fight you."

He picks his furs around his ears, and then scatters it by blowing it.

"--O my followers."

Those furs become violet-colored dogs which swoop down together.

Are you Sun Wu-Kong!

The indicator shows that the dogs running in the sky are level 50 Ghost Hounds. It seems they can use [Disintegrate] breath.

Since they have some troublesome-looking attack, I burn them all at once with [Fire Storm] magic before the dogs can spread out. Unlike [Furnace Flame (Forge)], this magic has extensive area of effect, so it's easy.

"You have crazy power like always. It doesn't look like the low ranked fire magic [Fire Circle] at all. You are worth fighting indeed."

No, no, Flame Storm is of intermediate rank!

--Hmm?

I noticed a slightly unpleasant thing while I was retorting the demon lord in my mind.

Is there someone who can make lower ranked fire magic to have the same power as my Fire Storm? If an existence like that exist, it's probably something akin to the Demon God.

While feeling tired, I change my objective from [Exterminating the Demon Lord] to [Gathering Information]. For the sake of everyone's safety and the sightseeing life from now on, I have to gather information from this guy.

Gathering information from someone I can't go easy on is like playing some impossibly hard game, but someone like this guy will probably chatter on his own.

10-48. Dog-Head Demon Lord

Satou's here. There's this word, Equivalent Exchange. Receiving thing of equal value as a compensation for another thing that's presented to you is an act that has existed since time immemorial. From ancient Japanese, there are legends about people asking for rain or abundant harvest by sending prayers and offerings to the gods. The gods in another world impart oracles about disasters, and help summoning heroes, but I wonder what do they get in return. I'm slightly interested with it.

◇

There are two things I have to ask the demon lord.

The most important thing is about the god's fragment. He said that the trigger to become a demon lord were despair and fear. Since Arisa is someone with extreme mood-swing, I'd like to know the way to get rid of the god's fragment if there's one.

--A gigantic monster with lion body and old man face comes assaulting me, I appropriately mince it with Flexible Swords.

The second one is the true identity of the one the demon lord calls as 'him'. I can roughly guess his objective, but I'd like to know his characters, techniques and tools he uses. If possible I prefer not to antagonize him, but if I don't prepare the possible countermeasures, it'll be bad if I can't protect everyone when push comes to shove.

--This time a giant made of flame and another giant made of tornado are attacking me from both sides, I use [Implosion] magic to crush them.

Next I just need to thoroughly beat this demon lord down, and try to make him vow not to put his hands on the clergymen. If he was a devil, I could make a contract so he would not break it, but I dunno about a demon lord.

If he was like the antagonists from shounen mangas, it would be easy to have our friendships sprout after the battle. If it became dangerous, I'd say it like "I'm the one that will defeat you!", and then helps would come.

--Looks like he's thought that the monsters just being strong is meaningless, he's summoning nearly 100 Crimson Scorpions on the desert now. The red points on my radar are increasing one by one.

I thought that their stingers would fly toward me since they had been summoned encircling me, but they begin firing fire balls from their scissors like a machine gun instead. Furthermore, a different wave that consisted of big scarlet scorpions appeared, the crust on their back opened like a submarine's SLBM pod, firing homing fireballs. They're like missiles.

I intercept the fireballs with [Remote Stuns] and destroy the scorpions themselves with [Condense] and [Laser]. Both hit their targets, so it's an easy fight.

Still, if he was going to recklessly summon monsters like this anyway, it'd be nice if they were some giant cows or giant pigs monsters. Please follow the example of the yellow-skinned demon who summoned whales. Ah, I don't need something like Minotaurs though.

However, the demon lord has only consumed 10% of his MP even after this many summons, what does it mean. Maybe he has stupid amount of MP like 100.0000 or something.

"Good grief, even the invincible army summoned by『Legion』just seem like goblins before you."

While looking weary, the demon lord glares at the pile of corpses defeated by my magic.

I was noncommittally brute-forcing through them since I was deep in thought, but it looks like he's not pleased with it.

Un, let's do this seriously.

◇

"I was thinking about something. Pardon me."

I tried being haughty to maintain his misunderstanding.

"'Pardon me' huh, another rare moment. I thought that you are someone who doesn't think anything but little girls?"

Geh, don't tell me he's a lolicon!

Come to think of it, Aze-san said to me that demon lords have never attacked the elf forest. I thought that they were scared of the elves' war forces, but the mastermind being a lolicon is way out of my expectation.

Oops, what am I getting disturbed for. I have to steer the story toward the matter regarding Arisa.

"I didn't think that you would offer quite a kind advice to the girl with violet hair from before."

"Reincarnated person isn't something unusual, but I pity the girl you are toying with."

"You can just take her fragment away if you pity her."

"You mean killing that girl? You should have already been aware that the fragment cannot be taken out once one did so much as treaded even one leg upon the god's seat."

Tsk, taking it out is impossible huh. The head miko was saying something about the godly prayer magic when I was consulting her about the geass, maybe I should ask her if that can be removed next time.

"Well then, shall we begin the second round? Let me show you the result of allowing me to recover my magic power."

The demon lord twirls his stick and then it transforms into a 3-meter-long pole arm that looks like a glaive. Unlike the glaive that I know, the tip is a blade as big as a great sword.

I also take out a holy sword from my storage. It'd be troubling if Claiomh Solais broke, so I took out the sword with stable performance--Durandal. I had lent it to Arisa sometimes ago, but it came back when I exchanged it with an orichalcum holy sword. I've said it many times before, but this has good balance and is easy to use. Moreover, even if the blade is dulled, it'll be restored you put it in its sheath, so the maintenance is easy.

This independent holy sword isn't quite up to par to the legendary class divine holy sword, but I'm still uneasy using that to fight a demon lord.

"What are you up to? You've been using heroes' weapons for a while now, you're playing around too much. Do you think I'm not worth using your prided Dimensional Sword and Nihilistic Sword against?"

Those are some very dangerous sounding weapons. I absolutely don't want to meet mastermind-shi the demon lord is mistaking me for. Please make it 1000 years before I have to fight him. No, it's said that 1000 years is a miscalculation, so it'll be nice for it to happen after the Big Crunch.

"Then, let me show you some techniques that I want to use."

The demon lord produces seven colored light spheres around him. They feel similar to the forbidden spell that the hero's companions were going to use. I guess I should crush it with Magic Destruction before it can shoot it.

"First, the flame sword."

After thrusting his glaive onto the red sphere, the glaive's blade is melted, and one meter long flickering flame is formed on it.

I was going to block the demon lord who came attacking while moving like when Pochi used Flickering Movement with Durandal that had magic powered holy blade deployed on it, but in accordance to the Crisis Perception, I chose to avoid it instead of receiving it.

The Flexible Shield and Flexible Sword that I've used to block his blade are burning.

Shield and Swords formed from magic power are burning?

"I did have altered this blade with the concept of『Combustion』arranged, but to think that it burns your God Dancing Armor and Dragon Rending Sword!"

Looks like Mastermind-shi uses higher version of my Flexible Sword and Shield. I don't like it if our way of thinking are similar. He may even have completed magics that I tried to develop but stopped during the planning stage.

Oops, let's not jump to conclusion.

"For『All Things in Creation (Library)』unique skill that I've snatched from the Troll Demon Lord to be this wonderful, what a pleasant miscalculation."

He has snatched unique skills from other demon lords huh?

Judging from the talk about Arisa earlier, he probably snatched it from demon lords who have been killed.

Huh? Why didn't he snatch Arisa's unique skills?

Let's try asking in a slightly provocative tone.

"Fun, borrowed things from other demon lords huh. Couldn't you also snatch it from the girl earlier?"

"I know my own vessel well you know."

While answering my question, the demon lord stabs his glaive which has lost the [Combustion] effect toward the white sphere.

Looks like the white sphere has [Annihilation] effect.

"The seven unique skills that I have now should be the limit for this body. If I am to procure more than this, the god fragments will eat my ego, degenerating me into a mad demon lord."

I see, so you can't keep as many as you want huh. However, he has seven unique skills? The wild boar king had three, Arisa had two, and Zen spoke one, but judging from the content of the conversation, he should have at least 2-3. Even compared to me that has four, this demon lord has more by far.

I've decided to destroy all his spheres with [Explosion] magic when I block his glaive with Flexible Sword and Flexible Shield.

Stacking the Flexible Swords and Shields, I'm going to block the approaching white blade--No, it's impossible eh. The Flexible Swords and Shields disappear as soon as they get in contact with the white light. Even though they're strong enough to resist the black dragon Heiron's breath attack for a moment, it's not enough.

I let the demon lord to be the target of Explosion magic at that instant.

It seemed the demon lord had read it, he defended against the

Explosion magic with the black curtain he created.

The black curtain is [Absolute Magic Defense (Anti-Magic)] in the AR's indication.

Oy, oy, won't he be invincible if he stacks it with the [Absolute Physical Defense (Anti-Physical)] from earlier. Even the Golden Wild Boar King only has 99% Physical Damage Cut, and 90% Magic Damage Cut; to be more than that like these, there's a limit even for cheat.

While expecting the demon lord not being able to use the two defense at the same time, I take out a Shotgun from my storage and shoot him. This buckshot is made with the same method as Holy Bolt; by over-filling it with magic power. I guess I should name it Holy Buckshot.

While the Holy Buckshots are being scattered away by the scaly multiple small shields that have appeared around the demon lord, they bore through the demon lord's lower half body, creating holes on it.

Apparently, the Anti-Magic and the Anti-Physical can't be used at the same time.

Even while losing the lower half of his body from the holy buckshots attack, the demon lord swings down his white light glaive toward me. I hit the substance part of the glaive with the long spear made of adamantite taken from the storage, and got out of the trouble.

Even for an adamantite spear, the part that touches the white light has splendidly disappeared.

It might be a bit dangerous if he had a technique to shoot this light. I'm glad that its effect didn't spread to the substantive part.

"Fufufu, to think that you even use such an antique thing like a gun! Truly like the whimsical you."

Fumu, Last Boss-shi is a whimsical person.

I should destroy the remaining spheres with the holy buckshot since they're troublesome.

"However, I haven't been serious you know? I can do something like this if I use『Legion』,『Library』, and also『Ruined Mind Madness (Berserker)』together."

The desert sand turns into demons with great momentum. Did he change the sand into seedbeds of demons with Library? The cheat is too much.

All of the giants that are made of the sand have the level of an intermediate demon class, and increased attack power by 300% added by their Berserk state. Glass-like sands are floating nearby them. It's most likely a countermeasure for my Laser.

Since it looks like it'll become troublesome if I wait for the opponents to finish their preparation, and it doesn't seem like I'll get materials from the giants made of sand, I decide to exterminate them all at once.

I move higher in the sky for a bit. The sand giants are throwing spears made from spiraling sand from the ground, but the Flexible Shield blocks the attack with no problem. One Flexible Shield disappear after taking five spears, it'll be annoying if their number increases.

In the sky, I put out sea water from the storage.

I use [Tsunami (Tidal Wave)] by using the seawater that's more than 100 school building much. Although the advanced level magic [Summon Tsunami (Summon Tidal Wave)] can be used anywhere, the intermediate one can only be used on the sea or a lake, somewhere near water source.

Some amount of the water is evaporated when it touch the hot sand, but the overwhelming mass crushes the sand giants.

Looks like they can't be defeated with just simple damage.

"Oh, as expected of The One who Rules Magic! To make a tsunami on the desert! It's not something that I could come up with!"

I feel like I'm subtly being made a fool of.

Continuing on, I use [Freeze Water] and [Icicle Field] toward the water, freezing the water, changing the sand giants into icicle skewers and shatter it. I thought that it wouldn't be effective since they were made of sands, but it looks like they've been defeated without problem.

For the sake of the next spell, I vaporize the ice with Flame Storm.

The evaporated water forms thick cloud in the sky. Flash of lightning leaks out of the gap of the swirling dark cloud in the sky, it feels like the last battle of Tenma.

The information is about enough, but I'll ask if he's interested in changing side.

"I'll ask you again for the last time, you don't have any intention of letting the temples go?"

"There is none. Destroying the temples, killing the priests and mikos, and snatching the believers are imperative to weaken the power of the gods. I need break the devout followers and the misconception that 『Gods are the absolute good』 in order to fight gods."

I wonder if the gods here are like in the Greece and Norse gods who do affair and irrational things?

"Why do you hate the gods so?"

"What are you asking so late now. They think the people of this planet only as a field to raise their own power and climb the rank of gods. If the civilization is developed to the point that it will trouble them, they instigate internal and external problem and smash it, and then cause severe calamity to make the people wish for gods. Even if you say that I'm taking it to the extreme, isn't it natural that you want to eliminate the incompetent omnipotents?"

Trusting the demon lord's words just like that is dangerous, but there are too many signs of it.

Science and growth should have been more developed if there were heroes and reincarnated people in the past. At the very least, it's too unnatural that there is no printing even though paper is really widespread. If there's not enough airship, then people should be able to create balloons or blimps, you can make a hot air balloon fly with just a single fire magician.

However, due to a sudden intruder, my conversation with the dog-head demon lord ended there.

10-49. Dog-Head Demon Lord (2)

Satou's here. I've read in some book that if there are two humans together, a quarrel will certainly happen. During my school days, I had been asked to mediate some fight between friend couple, but most cases were misunderstanding caused because the other party didn't hear the full story. Indeed, communications are important isn't it.

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"You shouldn't lend your ears to the demon lord's nonsense okay?"

The one that has suddenly appeared is a little girl of 5-6 years old unbecoming of this place.

The AR indicator shows only [UNKNOWN].

However, I feel like I've seen her face somewhere.

"Well I never, to think that you'd appear before myself! This isn't like the coward you--Parion!"

Is this little girl the god Parion who summons heroes?

The demon lord creates [Combustion] sphere like earlier, and then slashes the little girl with the transformed glaive.

The little girl burned out in an instant like she's made of a papercraft.

Huh? Are gods weak?

"You're being rude you know? My hero. I've created this figure in order to save you from the demon lord's cajolery you know?"

The little girl who has regenerated herself before I knew it rebukes me.

Don't tell me she reads my mind?

"My hero you said?"

"You be silent for a bit."

The demon lord gets imprisoned in a piece of picture that's appeared in the air.

I see, I thought that I had seen her from somewhere, she was the waving little girl inside the painting in the duke's mansion hallway.

"Looks like you've finally remembered."

Wait, if she was in contact with me at that time, that means she knows that Satou is the true identity of Nanashi?

"That's right, because I have always been beside you."

So the god is a stalker.

"That's terrible, please at least call me guardian spirit or guardian deity."

Please stop having a conversation with my mind's voice.

Oh, rather than that, there are other things I have to ask.

"God, are you inhibiting civilization like the demon lord's said?"

"I have no interest in people's business, at least for me. My only interest is only you always."

I feel like she's obfuscating something.

I have to press harder.

"Do you not manipulate humans' heart to stop them from popularizing things like printing or hot-air baloons?"

"A god who did that would be hurt you know? But, why would gods inhibit printing? What's the biggest bestseller in the earth? Remember and think about it."

Bestseller, it's that huh.

In that case, what's the objective of the god who's inhibiting.

"Then, don't you cause disasters, and gather believers from your own work?"

"I don't do it, but it seems to be getting popular among other gods. Since disaster adjustment seemed to be hard, along the way, gods who rule battles began to enjoy making their own believers to fight each other as their proxy."

The girl shrugs her shoulders like it's other people's problem.

It's certainly something that gods would have seemingly done, but it's mostly prank, and doesn't affirm what the demon lord's said isn't it?

"In addition, looks like they've become prudence ever since the demon god appeared. I mean even without us, the demon god causes the disasters called [Monsters] and [Demon Lords] in our place. The gods can live in comfort even without doing anything, they lead a leisurely life while basking in the flowing faith."

I feel that there's something odd. It's inconsistent with the legend about how the god Parion asked the dragon god to teach her the magic to summon hero. The truth might be different than the picture book though, so I'm awfully interested.

"Hear me? My hero. You are fine as yourself forever. Come to your usual strength, enough to stand beside me."

After telling that, the girl disappears like she's melted in the air.

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The demon lord who has broken out of the painting makes a come back.

"I've been thoroughly deceived, you god's watchdog!"

"Didn't you misunderstand on your own?"

Looks like he had a hard time inside the painting, he has injuries all over the place and unlike his gentlemanly appearance before. His 180 centimeters body has seemingly also undergone two-fold transformation, changed into a five-meter tall giant werewolf. He looks like he's going to bite with his bare fangs at anytime.

"Hey, demon lord."

"Shut up watchdog!"

The flexible shield endures the disintegrating breath that the demon lord has vomited for only an instant before it disappears. It can only buy enough time for me to go outside of the breath's range with Flash Drive huh. I really can't protect against truly powerful attacks if I don't get the Chanting skill in order to use advanced level magic.

"Do you know the bestseller that's sold the most on earth?"

"Fuhn, it's Bible right? Or maybe you want me to say 'Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung' or 'Quran'?"

Yes, the book that benefits most from printing is the Bible as it helps spread its ideology.

"So you know, I wonder why are temples in this world don't hold political power like on earth."

"What are you--"

The demon lord was going to deny my doubt, but the thing I wanted to say had been transmitted.

Yes, if the purpose of the gods are gathering believers, it's strange for them not to spread religious country and priesthood country.

Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire have freedom of religion since they're founded by Japanese people.

There should be countries backed by gods in a world where gods exist.

However, besides the Parion and Galeon Union, and the Tenion Republic, religious country doesn't exist. And, although every one of them is big enough to be a mid-sized country, they really can't be called large countries. They should have been bigger countries if they're backed by gods.

At the very least, a country with a god that can easily imprison a demon lord in a painting should be able to invade Shiga Kingdom easily.

And back to the argument, I don't think that gods have any motive to prevent the popularization of printing which can mass produce the sacred book, the most convenient way to propagate faith.

"In other words, you bastard are saying that the one who disturbs the progress of civilization is none other than myself!"

"There's a slight probability about other third party though. Maybe it's easier to understand if I say that the one who's hostile to gods disturbs the popularization?"

"Ridiculous..."

I wonder if he's persuaded now.

"Ridiculoussss, then what have I been doing? ....Was this long strife a mistake?!"

Ah, oops.

"Grrrrou, just for what sake, this hands killed the crying mikos noda? Killed the naive commoners who couldn't throw away their faithhhhhh"

"Calm down."

Ah, he won't calm down with that huh.

Apparently, I've also become slightly flustered.

"I am calm. Indeed I am calm, cool, and collected, the Demon Lord Origin nanoda!"

Aah, he's begun transforming.

Looks like the dog-head demon lord is changing from looking like a dog-man into the form of a beast, a demon dog. The gigantic demon dog with more than 100 meters overall-length barks toward the sky.

My words already can't reach him no matter what I say.

It can't be helped, let's thoroughly beat him and return him to his sense.

With Flash Drive, I shoot [Explosion] from 256 directions randomly, and mix Holy Buckshots shots at 16 directions. The topography has become quite dreadful, but it's sand anyway, they should be restored if the wind blows.

Furthermore, I strike him with 128 [Thunder] magic, summoned from the thundercloud.

Apparently, the demon lord has judged that the Holy Buckshots pose more threat than the magic.

He deploys the Anti-Physical to block the Holy Buckshot, and take the magic with multiple scaly small shields, and his countless followers. Some of the explosions break through the demon lord's defense, creating holes on his body.

The followers are coming attacking me while holding magic swords on their mouths, but I can easily dodge them as long as the demon lord himself doesn't come. Even if those magic swords have [Annihilation] effect from Library, there's no problem as long as they don't hit me.

While exterminating the followers and the demons that he's created, I'm beating him thoroughly to restore his sense, but the situation doesn't look favorable.

I overdid it once and killed him, but he was immediately revived like with the wild boar king. Demon lords are hard to deal after all.

"Kuha, kuhafuhahaha, this world can perish for all I care noda."

Ah, looks like he's snapped.

I guess it's better to kill him once again.

"Gods and humans and demons, they can all perish noda! 『God-devouring Wolf (Fenrir)』"

Wait a minute dog-head, please don't make this become honorable death or forced double suicide. Futhermore, since when were you a wolf.

The disintegrating light spread out with him as the center. The spreading speed is slow, but the desert is vanishing spherically.

I try to use [Break Magic] on it, but it seems to have different structure than magic as it disintegrate the [Break Magic] itself. Even when I try to snatch his magic power with [Mana Drain], the feeler is disintegrated to become mana, it doesn't go well.

This is slightly bad. Holy Buckshots and Laser were only getting swallowed by it, there wasn't any effect.

The Divine Sword can probably cut it, but considering the blade's length, it'd be over with my body disintegrating. I'm not into suicide, so let's think about other ways.

The light of disintegration speed slightly fell when it was disintegrating sand dunes. I tried to throw it large amount of debris and seawater from my storage to it, and its speed fell even further.

I guess that'll work?

I re-check the map again to see if anyone's here. Looks like there isn't anyone according to the map, maybe because this cataclysm has been going for a long time. There are some scarab-like and scorpion-like monsters, but it's not particularly a problem as long as there's no human damage.

I stow away the Durandal, and use magic while exchanging it with a magic sword that acts as a magic power tank.

While taking out seawater, I amass ice walls several kilometers around the demon lord who has stopped moving since he started swallowing the desert as the center.

Of course I don't think that this kind of things can stop the demon lord's Unique Skill.

After I've finished building the ice wall, I return-teleport to the hut on the mountain located at the verge of the desert.

And then, it came several minutes later.

Tearing apart the dark cloud--.

Trailing the light tail--.

Overwhelming masses strike the demon lord.

Meteor Shower--It once destroyed the Dragon Valley, the magic which slew the strongest Dragon God.

The disintegrating light hasn't disappeared even after getting battered by more than 100 meteors.

Un, it's within my expectation.

Stars fall toward the disintegrating light.

Even though it's broken, even though it's disintegrated, stars continue to fall.

After more than 1000 gigantic meteors downpouring onto the desert, the disintegrating light finally disappears in the bottom of the crater.

For the occasion, I used the stored magic power in the magic swords to rapidly invokes 10 Meteor Shower.

I've put the ice wall to prevent it from influencing the neighboring kingdoms, but it seems a little bit of sands have leaked out. Each kingdoms should be able to do something about it since it's just a little. It's way better than a raging demon lord.

>Title [Demon Lord Slayer『Dog-Head Ancient King』] Acquired

>Title [Favorite Child of Goddess] Acquired

>Title [Earth Splitting Magician] Acquired

>Title [Sky Tearing Magician] Acquired

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"He lost?"

"Because that guy's a nuisance."

"He's terrible isn't he."

"Au, it's painful?"

"Strange, I'm dizzy."

"Dizzy~"

"Let's go home? Lets go home."

I won't let you, you know?

I quickly eliminate the violet lights that have appeared in the bottom of crater gouged by the meteor shower, using the Divine Sword.

Due to observing it, this time I was able to confirm that the violet light had been absorbed by the Divine Sword. There is no change on the Divine Sword after all. Maybe it acts as some kind of sealing tool?

I felt some sense of guilt after destroying the dog-head demon lord, but I decided not to mind it.

He seems to be a demi-god, he's probably going to be revived on his own sooner or later. He probably won't have any unique skill left, but worrying about a demon lord is probably a waste of time. He might regain his sanity since the god's fragments had come off him.

Now then, I've disposed of the demon lord, and collected general information.

Let's go back to everyone as they're probably worried.

Perhaps, they might have even defeated the floormaster already.

Just in case, I put some vestiges of the meteor shower into my storage, and teleported to the labyrinth.

10-50. Floor Master

Level 140?

Wait, dog-head demon lord? Lies, I don't know such--no, that's not something as simple as a demon lord.

Yes, that is something written down in the myth.

It's the god of death who burned down temples around the world, and consume the angels that had descended on the earth.

The Demon God's apostle who fought against the god's army and routed the heavenly dragons.

Why is such a thing in this place?

Perhaps, because of me?

I am....

He gently embraces my head that's looping with bad thought.

Un, that's right, we have to protect everyone.

I'll use Never Give Up and Over Boost together with all my power to expulse it to beyond the dimension.

I'll do it no matter how many times if it fails once.

The god who gave me this power said.

The usage limitation is my soul limiter.

Then I'm fine with using all my soul, I'd have loved to flirt and tease more, but if it's to save my beloved and everyone, it's a cheap thing to pay.

This world wasn't bad. I can die laughing now. If possible I'd like to be reincarnated beside this optimistic master in the next life.

Deep breath, unique skill activate--eh?

The spectacle suddenly changes.

Is this Pochi's Flickering Movement? I've been moved to where Nana and the others are in an instant.

There's no doubt my reckless master must be going to fight alone.

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I tried looking for master who had teleported with the demon lord, but I couldn't find him.

This can't be, I should've been able to quickly find someone I know well!

"Arisa, it's the floor master. Let's fall back at once."

By Liza's order, everyone evacuates to the safety zone behind.

I'm being carried on Liza's armpit like a baggage, but I don't have time to complain about such treatment. I use search magic with all my power, but I can't find him. I used [Over Boost] once with the search, but I still couldn't find him. It's as if [Satou] has disappeared from this world.

"No good, I can't find him."

"What is that earlier~?"

"It feels tingly like a demon nodesu!"

"No. It must be a demon lord."

"That?!"

"Is that true? Mia."

It looks like Mia understood.

"No need to worry~?"

"But, I'm worried nanodesu!"

Looks like Tama is the only one not worried. I wonder why does this child believe so much.

Even Lulu looks ghastly pale, and Liza and Nana are looking restless.

"Good grief, Tama is the only one who's calm huh. Take a deep breath!"

The masters who had come closer before I knew scolded us.

"Breath in, breath out, breath in, breath in, breath in."

I couldn't breath, and let it all out.

But, I think I've calmed down a bit.

"Good grief, I've said that the shield user has to always be calm right."

"I am sorry, so I apologize. I wasn't able to do anything while master in danger, so I self-analyze."

"Good grief, you know that Satou isn't someone who would choose to die honorably against someone he couldn't win right? He's the type that won't hesitate to run away if that guy wasn't someone he couldn't beat. Did you guys think that he left you because he thought you still couldn't fight a demon lord? Isn't it because he thought that he could easily win even without borrowing you guys' power?"

Uuh, it's not about the reasoning. My feeling wants to run after him!

"I've been forbidden to talk about this, but it should be fine with you guys. I saw Satou killed tens of thousands jellyfish in the void sky in an instant y'know? You'd have understood that worrying about him seemed silly if you saw that spectacle that looked like a joke."

So he was doing something like that when he talked about the pest extermination....

While listening to the masters' story and building my spirits up, shaking around 3 magnitude intermittently come.

"Shaking~?"

"Shakeshake nanodesu!"

"Kya, is, is it alright?"

"The labyrinth is sturdy. It won't collapse with just this much shaking, so I declared."

"I wonder if these shaking are from master and the demon lord's fight?"

"It's probably earthquake I think. There's a volcano nearby, so maybe that's erupting."

Or rather, this earthquake is long. It's enough to imagine how scary the epicenter is.

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"I'm back. Sorry for making you worry."

"Wlcome~"

"Welcome back nanodesu!"

""Master!""

"Satou."

"Master, blessing your safe return."

That guy came back as if he had just gone shopping.

When I asked what about the demon lord, he only plainly replied, "I defeated it." Defeated it, you, that easily. Well let alone injuries, his clothes aren't even torn though.

That was something that appeared in the myth you know?

Even though it's an existence that's even out of demon lord standard....

"Oh~, that's the floor master huh. What would you do? Do you want to challenge it another day?"

"We'll do it. Everyone is going right?"

It's is unthinkable to wait for another day!

I'm glad, everyone nodded too.

After declaring in rough excitement to him who was carefreely looking at the floormaster, I explained the plan to everyone.

We'll show that we are first-rate explorers!

The floormaster that has appeared is the Thunder Squid clad in red lighting on its body surface. It's level 59--not something we can't defeat. Its water magic and electric shock are troublesome, but the most dangerous one is its eyeballs. We should quickly smash them since they're charm evil eyes.

However, this floormaster is in easy win category among the assumed case. We're lucky that the one that came out wasn't something with physical annulment like the Flame Snake from the middle layer.

"Arisa, everyone is in their position, so I report."

"Okkey."

While we were taking our positions, the Thunder Squid was spreading pink-colored mist that looked like cotton candy around it. I can hear crackling sounds from it, apparently it has electrifying effect.

If we assaulted it carelessly, we would be electrocuted, and then it's over.

We can't take it on half-heartedly even though it's an upper layer floormaster.

Pochi, Tama, and Liza who have scattered in three sides are waving here. Geez, what would you do if the floormaster found out.

"Mia, you can start preparing for the sand giant."

"Nn."

I release large quantity of sand that I've stored in the space magic [Garage].

With this sand as the material, Mia uses spirit magic to create an artificial life, [Sand Giant]. She can make it even without the sand, but the MP consumption decrease sharply if we prepare the material. I'm thinking of using the Sand Giant as the shield in the front since it's resistant to electric attack and physical blow.

The Thunder Squid has begun to move as a reaction to Mia's magic power,

Immediately, Liza who was standing-by in the opposite side of the hall struck the Thunder Squid's back with a stupidly big Magic Edge Cannon. The Thunder Squid changed its target from Mia to Liza while violently discharging electricity.

No well, it's certainly as planned, but oh Liza, you're putting too much fighting spirit into it.

Lulu who had put Pochi Tama under reinforcing magic came back here.

Lulu who's come as a substitute for our bodyguard changes with Nana who steps forward to the hall. It's still too early for the provocation. Nana drives five [Javelins] onto the Thunder Squid, changing its target.

Furthermore, Pochi and Tama mutually strike it from both sides with Magic Edge Cannon. Theirs are different than Liza's, the power is ordinary. Yes, it's good like that!

With the four attacking in turn, the Thunder Squid is getting confused to attack which one, the plan seems to be going well.

In games, ping-pong-ing the raid boss around like this does well.

The sand giant that has finally been completed slowly moves toward the Thunder Squid.

It's approaching the thunder squid with a calm face while absorbing the electric attack. Well, there's no such a thing like face on the sand giant though.

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After the sand giant had approached at a certain distance, the Thunder Squid unleashed a powerful lighting attack enough to split ears while posing in threatening manner.

Uwah, my ears hurt. I've protected my eyes with my hands, but my ears can't hear anything but 'KIIN' sound. Next time, I'll ask for armors that can protect against sounds above certain level.

The sand giant calmly walk towards the Thunder Squid despite receiving such powerful electric attack. Yet, looks like its health has decreased by 30%. If it wasn't a lighting-resistance type, it might have been destroyed by the attack just now.

Akh, looks like Pochi has seen the attack head-on, she's crouching down while pressing her eyes. Since it seems like everyone's ears have been done in too, we have to gain some time.

"Are you alright Mia?"

She looks like she can't hear me but she understands my gesture, Mia nods.

Looks like she's fine. I instruct her with my hands to order the sand giant to attack.

The sand giant wrestles with the Thunder Squid. The Thunder Squid who doesn't seem to like it strikes the sand giant back with its tentacles, but they only go through the giant's sand body without affecting much.

The Thunder Squid which has become flustered since its attack isn't effective spits out ink-like poisonous spray in desperation, but it doesn't have any effect against the sand giant which doesn't breathe.

Alright, looks like the compatibility is better than I thought.

10-51. Floor Master (2)

We attack the Thunder Squid with my fire ball and Lulu's Javelin until Pochi's vision is restored.

It's not good. They're not going through, the squid has resisted them.

"Lulu, can you aim the bombardment at the squid's eyes?"

"Since Squid-san twists its body when it attacks, I might not be able to. I think I can hit it if it stops moving a bit more."

"'Pochi will do it nodesu!'"

"'Tama will dodo too~'"

The voices of energetic Pochi and Tama came in from the telephatic space magic, [Tactic Talk].

Eh? Pochi?

"Pochi, are your eyes alright?"

"'It's cured after I drank the potion nodesu!'"

No, normally that won't heal it you know?

Well, okay.

"Can you do it?"

"Leave it to me nanodesu!"

"Aye"

U~n, I'm afraid the Thunder Squid's will changes its target from the sand giant to Pochi and Tama. We can do something about it after the charm eyes are destroyed I guess.

Yosh, women must be brave!

"Then, please."

"Understood~" "Nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama each takes a swoosh pose, and then put magic power into their magic short swords with all their might.

"Strawberry taste~?"

"This one is the special jerky taste nanodesu!"

The two drank the MP recovery potions they took from their pouches.

Ugeh, how could she drink a beef jerky-tasted potion.

After timing the Thunder Squid's electric discharges, Pochi and Tama begin their assaults. Pochi who's quickly approached with Flickering Movement pierces the Thunder Squid's eye with the huge blade produced on the Orichalcum's sword. The Thunder Squid closes its eyes from the pain.

"Not yet~, nanodesu!"

Ooh! She shoots Magic Edge Cannon while the sword is still stabbed, blowing the eye huh.... She uses quite a nasty technique even though she has a cute face.

"Whipswo~, un~, leash~"

Tama who's approaching from the opposite side stabs her whip sword that's been coated with Magic Edge. Next she shortens the whip sword and rides on the pulling force. I thought that it should be easy to slip out, but if I'm not mistaken, thorns can come out from the sword's tip. Tama is the same with the nastiness huh.

Tama who's drawing near thrusts the rotating blade Orichalcum sword with her other hand. To really use that joke weapon so well like that, the small girl is amazing.

Whoops, it's coming closer.

"Nana."

"You giant squid! Shine like a firefly squid if you think you're great, so I declare!"

Aah, if you provocate it like that.

The Thunder Squid's body surface glimmers and attacks Nana with a flash of light.

"Amazing."

Lulu holds her breath beside me.

Multiple magic shields and magic walls are floating with Nana in the center, protecting her.

This is the second time I've seen this invoked, it has absurd defense power.

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Liza enters the match when the enemy's health has been reduced by half.

"Pochi, Tama, let's do the combo."

"Aye aye~"

"Roger nanodesu!"

Ooh! It's a combo technique!

"First sword nanodesu! Magic Edge Rush (Vorpal Lance)!"

Pochi assaults with Flickering Movement while having her whole body shining bright red.

Aren't your assault nice, dog girl.

"Second sword~? Magic Edge Twin Fangs (Vanquish Fang)"

Tama produces huge fangs on both short swords on her hands. While revolving her body like a spinning top, Tama alternatively attacks with her swords, leaving bite-like wounds behind.

The Thunder Squid strikes with its tentacles out of desperation, but Tama splendidly evades it.

Enough with that acrobatic paper-thin difference evades! Leave that kind of thing to the masked assassin!

"Third arte. Magic Spear Dragon Expel Attack (Drag Buster)!"

Liza drives consecutive spear attacks on the Thunder Squid's back which has lost its defense membrane from Pochi's and Tama's attacks. In the end she revolves her body, and rides the force to do a single blow. That blow has penetrated the Thunder Fish's body's which has been shredded by the consecutive attacks.

Liza crunches the MP recovery potion she holds on her mouth and drinks it.

Her MP which was about to dry up recovers in an instant. Geez, the amount of recovery is the same as with a high grade potion.

"Over Arte. Magic Edge Explosion."

I saw many red lights flickering from inside the Thunder Squid.

Red edges which tear out the squid's rind from the inside appear here and there.

The squid's tentacles are approaching Liza from both sides.

"Are those arms, or are those legs, make it clear, so I condemn!"

Nana who has used body reinforcement magic cuts herself with inhumane speed between Liza and the tentacles.

She blocks one side of the tentacle with her great shield, while stopping the tentacle on the other side with a floating magic shield.

Everyone is amazing.

The Thunder Squid's health is below 40% now.

◇

"Arisa, it's about time."

"OK."

The sand giant that Mia manipulates crumbles after losing all its health.

There, I use [Labyrinth] magic to buy us some time. It can only keep it for 30 seconds at most, but it's enough isn't it.

I can smell honey drifting from Mia who's drinking an MP recovery potion beside me. It's honey taste for this child huh. Everyone's asked to change the potion according to their preference eh.

This time, the sand snake that's been created from the crumbled sand constricts the Thunder Squid.

"Lulu, start the preparation."

"Un, okay."

I prompts Lulu who has supported everyone with magic to start the preparation.

I also restrict the Thunder Squid's movement with space magic.

However, my aim isn't the Thunder Squid. It would resist if I directly aim on it wouldn't it.

I aim at the sand snake constricting the Thunder Squid. Stopping the sand snake indirectly restricts the Thunder Squid.

I take the MP recovery potion from the pouch and gulp it in one sitting. Bitter.

Its health should be under 30% if Lulu's accelerated bullet hit. Before it enters the Rage (Stampede) state, I will use the big magic [Space Annihilation (Disintegration)] while using all my unique skills and end it in one go.

Lulu sets up the smoothbore gun she has taken from her pouch.

I nodded to Lulu who asked with her eyes and gave her the GO sign.

"Finished aiming. Secure."

『Yes my lady, Dimension Pile stand by』

Support sounds from the smoothbore guns answers Lulu's order.

The invisible dimensional stake secures the heavy smoothbore gun in the air.

"Spread out the virtual barrel."

『OK, Virtual Barrel spread』

20 meter-long force gun barrel is expanded in front of the smoothbore gun.

Kuh, I'm burning up!

"Acceleration magic circle, limiter release."

『Aye aye ma'am, battery full charge』

The magic cylinders attached on the smoothbore gun are being filled with magic power in order to create magic circles.

Huh? It's usually enough with one, but aren't all the cylinders including the spare one used this time?

『Acceleration Over Drive』

Red magic circles are being deployed alongside the virtual barrel--wait, why so many!

Huh? Weren't there supposed to be only three magic circles?

Aren't there 100 of it coming out?

"Preparation complete!   Arisa?"

Lulu who had finished the preparation asked for the timing. Of course it's a GO.

I order her to shoot while pointing at the Thunder Squid.

"Shoot!"

『Ignition!』

Lulu pulls the trigger with her small finger, and then the shell is fired.

BOMBOOM, Lulu's smoothbore gun is shot while leaving blue trails and earsplitting explosive sound.

Eh? It's a substance bullet right?

Why is it like laser?

Uwaah, there's a huge hole opened on the Thunder Squid's body with just that one attack.

The part around the big hole is gouged inward, you can see behind the Thunder Squid through it. Finally, the Thunder Squid is shredded into slices by the hardened sand snake.

Geh, isn't the labyrinth floor hollowed in straight line until the end wall!

Right then, I heard the voice of our carefree master.

"Mach 20 really is amazing isn't it."

Mach? By 20 that means exceeding the speed of sound by 20 times?!

Restrain yourself a bit more hey!

But I'm too shocked, I can only let out stupid words like au au from my mouth.

"No well, I heard that railgun was 20 mach, so that smoothbore gun is the result of me trying out whether it can be materialized with magic you see."

That explains why there's no rifling.

"Arisa~"

"Let's do the victory pose!"

Eh? It's over with just now?

Lies? My turn is.

I haven't used that unique skill yet.

My hands are pulled by Pochi and Tama toward the center of the hall where the treasure chest appears, and then we take the commemoration photograph in victory poses. We took the second one with our masters together.

Thus, we obtained the Mithril Plate.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 1

Intermission: Mochi Pounding

Satou's here. Speaking of new year's day, it's all about new year's food, mochi, and new year's gifts. Shrine visit and new year's card are also the standard of new year. As a child, I ran to buy toys and games while grasping the new year's gift tightly, but I only remember lazying around with sake when I had become an adult. Work? There's no work during the new year's day you know?

◇

"Arisa's cheeks sure can stretch like mochi."

"Oufh, refease, mfee--"

I wonder how are they this springy even though they're thin.

"What is mochi nanodesu?"

"Stretch~?"

Pochi and Tama who caught notice of 'mochi' word came asking.

"Mochi you see, is--"

"Umm, master, please Arisa's punishment is..."

Lulu interceded reservedly when I was going to explain about mochi. When I look below, Arisa is looking up with teary eyes. Sorry, I forgot.

◇

I immediately prepare the wooden mallet, and the traditional mortar for mochi making. Unfortunately the glutinous rice has to be soaked in the water for one night, so we can't pound the mochi right away.

Even though there are ripening magics, there's no magic to speed up mochi soaking, I think magician bunch are negligent.

It's probably of water type magic, I'll try experimenting some things tonight.

Mia seems hesitant since she doesn't like memorizing, but if I let her eat some delicious mochis, she will most certainly help in making the magic for the sake of easier mochi-making.

The azuki beans and black soy beans for the mochi fillings also have to be soaked in the water for a night. I've already mass produced red bean jam for the muno roll back then, but I can't use it unless for mochi daifuku.

I continue preparing the ingredients while thinking about more ideas.

Adding things like cheese or strawberry sounds good other than traditional Japanese ones.

That's right, for this occasion I should try preparing various odd ones.

Since I don't know which ingredients would be well received after all.

◇

"Flat~"

"Flat nanodesu!"

When I was making the mochi, Pochi and Tama wanted to do it too, so I changed with them.

Nana is in charge of flipping the mochi beside them.

"Me too! I want to flip it over too!"

"Alright, you can change with me so use these."

Since Arisa and Mia looked interested in trying, I gave them thin gloves.

"Hm? What's with the gloves?"

"Your wrist would break if the mallet swung by Pochi and Tama hit it you know? These gloves are the same things Lulu used in the labyrinth, so it would produce a small magic shield to guard against the hit."

Its mainly to prevent the mochi from sticking though, however they probably won't be careful I don't make this much threat.

I can heal them in an instant even if they get hurt badly, but we wouldn't be able to eat the pink-colored blood mochi after all.

While watching Arisa and Mia who are nervously flipping the mochi, Lulu and I make the mochi into round shapes. We put the fillings that have been prepared beforehand during this process.

The little girl maids from the mansion are also helping rounding the mochi.

"Achichi, it's amazing that Lulu-sama and master-sama look fine."

<TLN: Exclamation for when you feel hot.>

"Ufufu, it'll be fine if you dip your hands on cold water beforehand you know."

"Uh, my hands are sticky."

"If you put this flour on your hand beforehand, it won't get sticky."

Well it is hot, but it's nothing compared to when I put my hand in the forge.

I continue working while feeling heartwarming from watching Lulu helping the little girl maids.

"Pochi-!"

"Tama~"

"Achichi, the mochi is the mochi isss"

"Arisa."

When I look at the noisy screams, it seems that Pochi has failed something due to strange action she did during the mochi making. Apparently, the mochi on the mallet has coiled on her body.

Beside her, Arisa who has been covered in mochi from her head down looks terrible.

Lulu goes there to control the situation while saying some wife-like thing, "Ara ara, my my."

Their burns are healed with Mia's water magic, and the dirts are cleaned with Lulu's life magic, but Pochi who was doing careless thing with food and Arisa who instigated her are being made to do seiza and scolded by Liza.

◇

Large quantity of mochi in four types, plain, sweet, staple and colored are lined up full on display.

I might've made a bit too much.

I guess I can just give the excess to the orphanage and the training school.

"Delish. Freshly made mochi is the best after all."

"Strethetch~?"

"Mo, mochi person is tough nodesu. It's sticking on my mouth~"

"Delicious."

The youth troupe are enjoying the freshly made plain mochi.

"That's right! Mochi has to be roasted!"

"Liza is already fetching the tool now."

I calm Arisa who's stressing with mochi on one hand.

"There's guga in this mochi."

"It's smooth anko here nodesu!"

"Beans are delicious too~?"

"Nn, honey mochi, good."

"Ah, I'm full before the grill came--honey?!"

Arisa looks at me while eating the mochi, looks like she has something to say.

Honey mochi is a mochi that puts out thick honey when you chew them. If you chew on them further, the honey mixed with mochi tastes unexpectedly good. It's a bit too sweet, so I feel I've had enough with one.

"This one has cubed meat in it nodesu!"

"Here is teriyaki chicken~"

"Nn, custard."

Most of them seems to be popular.

Oh? Arisa falls prostrating on the ground like orz.

Did she have a heartburn?

"What's wrong?"

"J, Japan's culture is remodeled."

You're exaggerating.

Food is something that's always evolving.

"Here comes one for the conservative Arisa."

I point at Liza who's come carrying false-brazier magic tool and wire mesh.

Arisa who's revived immediately puts the mochi on the mesh and begins the roasting.

Since the mochi didn't swell well, I tried doing various things like drying the surface, or adding cut on the surface.

"The mochi is alive nodesu!"

"Pukupuku~?"

"Slime?"

The youth troupe can't take their eyes off the swelling mochi on top of the mesh. Yup, it's worth the hardship.

Even though she's feigning to be calm, Liza's eyes has been chasing after the mochi since awhile ago.

I guess it's about time?

I hand the plate with poured soy sauce to Arisa.

"Kuh~ really, eating mochi has to be like this after all~"

However, it seems that the only people who enjoy the conservative soy sauced roasted mochi are Arisa and me, the other members are more receptive to the other mochis which I've prepared in jest.

"Cheese~ Can see the inside~?"

"This mochi is hiding the hamburg sensei nodesu!"

"Caramel taste."

"This teriyakimayo tastes wonderful. The teriyaki taste is mixed with the mochi when I chew on it, it's as if I'm eating another kind of meat texture--"

Well, it's alright so long they like it.

I bite the soy flour covered mochi while looking at everyone who looks happy.

Right, I'll challenge myself by making mugwort mochi and green bean mochi next time. Having cherry leaf mochi during the Kingdom Spring Conference sounds good too.

"Oh, looks like the zenzai is complete."

<TLN: red bean soup made with Azuki beans.>

The pot with zenzai inside is being brought out from the kitchen by Lulu.

The mansion maids unit are following behind her while carrying the tablewares.

"Ah, the combo of salty-sweet mochi with the zenzai is dangerous! They can be connected even while hot, creating the infinite combo! I'm so happy it's scary!"

"Mochi scary~"

"Zenzai is also scary nodesu!"

While thanking Lulu and the maids unit, I add another new mochi for the girls.

While eating the zenzai, Ms. Miteruna whom I'm always troubling with, and princess Mitia with her maid have also mixed in, they're amazed with the sweet mochi that Mia's recommended, passing the enjoyable time.

After the party had ended, Nana carried the case with a lot of sweet mochis and went to share them to the orphanage. She must be watching over the young organisms and the mochi right now.

◇

In the future, I ended up having to distribute mochis to my labyrinth city acquaintances who knew about this mochi party.

The little girl maids and the orphanage teachers who knew about the price of glutinous rice in the labyrinth city looked like the were going to faint. They're cheap though?

After eating the mochi, Arisa pestered me that she wanted to eat the food served in new year day, but unfortunately, I didn't know the recipe at all so I couldn't reproduce it.

I was good at sampling the new year food that my mother and grandmother made though.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 2

It's not from Satou's POV (Tama's POV)

Intermission: Pochi and Tama's Part Time Job

"Oy, you there! Come with us, we're hiring you."

"We don't need it nodesu. Besides we're in break today nanodesu."

"Don't be cheeky after the trouble of me inviting you."

"Forceful~ is no good~?"

Some dogkin children called us when I was playing with Pochi. He seemed arrogant even though we look the same age.

"I'm sorry. This guy has a bad mouth."

"Gon is a hopeless guy who can't help but speak meanly with cute girls. Forgive him. My name is Ken, this tall one here is Han."

"The heck you two."

From big to small it's Han, Gon, and Ken. The three of them are dogkin boys.

"I was called cute nodesu."

"Pochi is cute~"

Pochi is cute. However, these three boys look somewhat dirty, not cute.

"How about it? I can't pay you daily, but if you properly carry our baggages, I'll treat you to a meal."

"Meal!   Meat nanodesu?"

"Meat~?"

Master's said that he's doing barbecue today. I'm looking forward to it now.

"Alright. We are men. We're going to splurge on meat today!"

"Yay-, nanodesu!"

"Is that alright, Ken. Making a promise like that."

"Acting cool alone."

Before we knew it, we've gone to the labyrinth to carry baggage for the three. I can't let Pochi go alone. Because I'm the onee-chan after all.

◇

"Gon, get back, it's dangerous to be in the front alone."

"Hehe~n, as if I'm scared of one goblin."

"Wait, Gon, Ken. The baggage carrier girls won't catch up with us if we rush."

I exchange a look with Pochi. We're only carrying the Hopping Potato the three have defeated just now in the big bag, so we're alright.

"We're alright nanodesu."

"Piece of cake~?"

"Is, is that so."

The tall Han is breathing roughly. Are you alright?

"Uwah, two of them appear from the shadow. Han, you take care of one. Ken, handle two of them until I defeat it."

"Okay. This looks like a hard fight."

The three boys jump out toward the goblins who are 'kii kii'-ing.

I'd like to cover them by throwing stones, but since they said, "Don't throw stones from the back" when we entered the labyrinth, I won't throw.

That's why, I'll cheer.

"Do your best~?"

"Do your best nanodesu!"

"""YEAH!"""

The blood comes out dripdrip when the goblin bites, it looks really painful. Pochi covers her eyes with her palms, looks like she can't watch it.

"Need help~?"

"I'm, all, right! Don't worry."

He doesn't look really alright.

"Oy, the dogkins over there! Do you need help?"

"Thanks! Please take care the two of them."

Eh~, he just said that he didn't need help.

They obediently asked for help when another explorers came. It's a bit complicated.

"Understood! Usasa, get the one on the right."

"Yes!"

Oh? It's Usasa and Rabibi. They're Pendragon Training School's graduates. I greet them with 'Shupin' pose.

Uuh, no one notices it.

"Amazing, they defeated one in an instant."

"Don't you know? They're『Pendora』. They're elite graduates who wear the blue mantles."

The dogkin boys defeated the decreased goblins while bleeding. It looks really painful. Pochi stops their bleeding with bandages.

"Thank you very much."

"Don't mind it, we help each other in time of need--eh?"

Ah, Usasa finally notices. I greet them once again, this time with 'Shutan' pose.

"Eh? Tama and Pochi Nee-san? What are you two doing in a place like this."

"Part time job~?"

"We're in the middle of working as baggage carriers!"

Usasa's face looks strange. Do you have a stomachache?

"You two, do you know the『Pendora』?"

"Iyes~"

"We know and we're buddies nodesu!"

Ah, there's a goblin.

Swoosh, I move, and defeat it swiftly with the short sword taken from the pouch. Goblin Assassin is dangerous since it can get close to you before you know it.

"Eh? Tama-chan disappears?"

"Ah, there!"

I wave my hand toward Rabibi who's noticed.

"To notice that approaching Goblin Assassin!"

"Concentratehe~"

It's dangerous if you're not careful you know?

"Where did that sword come?"

"You lose if you mind it~"

"Is, is that so."

Huh? Something is vibrating the ground?

"Tama, something is coming nodesu."

"Communicastone~?"

This vibration is from six feet. Because it's 'Dota, dota tatta', it's a Soldier Mantis or a Steel Ant I think?

The footsteps feel a bit wide so it should be a Soldier Mantis.

"Probably, a Soldier Mantis footsteps~?"

"As expected of Tama nanodesu! It must be right nodesu."

But, everyone looks strange. I wonder if I'm wrong?

"What should we do~?"

"Pochi-san, and Tama-san, why are you two so calm!"

"It'll be a different story if there are five of you, but you can't possibly win against it with a casual short sword!"

Really? Soldier Mantis is weak isn't it? Isn't it?

Pochi also looks puzzled.

Everyone embraces each other and trembles, "what do we do?", while looking pale. If you can't win, you'd better run you know?

"You guys run, the mantis bastard is coming!"

Four men and women ran through us.

Ah~ not~ good~

Train is no good, absolutely!

"Ye, yes, we have to run."

"Run, quickly get up. Gon, help me. Han, you carry the two. Pochi-chan, and Tama-chan, don't stand around, let's run together."

You won't defeat it?

"I'll defeat it nodesu!"

"Okey~"

Only one Soldier Mantis appears from the corner. I match my eyes with Pochi's and nod.

"Pochi~"

"Tama~"

The two of us fill magic power into our short swords.

"Magic Edge" "Go~" "Nanodesu!"

While leaving red trail of light like Liza, Pochi and I cut the Soldier Mantis's forelegs, swoosh swoosh. The short swords easily cut the joints of the legs.

After cutting the legs, I make a sudden stop and turn around.

This time I climb the fallen Soldier Mantis's back, and swiftly cut the fragile neck.

Tei.

"Vic~ tory~" "Nanodesu!"

The two of us take the victory pose.

◇

Since the Soldier Mantis's meat isn't too delicious, I'm not too happy.

With Usasa's and Rabibi's help, we brought back the Soldier Mantis's core. Since we got a lot of gold coins from the staff onee-san in the labyrinth entrance, everyone ate a lot a lot of meat.

Of course with the dogkin boys, together.

The frog meat skewers we've bought from the stall, are really delicious.

"We will become strong like you two and show you someday."

"I won't lose nodesu!"

Pochi has begin eating the skewers energetically so she won't lose to the boys. There's another stomach for meat, but if you eat too much, you won't be able to meat master's dinner you know~?

The barbecue for the dinner was invincible and the strongest. Circle.

<TLN: Circle denotes 'correct' in Japan.>

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 1

SS: First Carbonated Water

I'm having a break today since I've been working without one for half a month.

I indulge myself in inactivity on the self-made deck under the tree's shade in the courtyard.

Still, I begin to crave for carbonated drink when it's this hot. There should be some carbonated water remaining if I'm not mistaken. I start preparing the beverages after asking Lulu to fry some potato chips. I add grape juice to the carbonated water, making it look like sparkling wine. I also add more sugar since I feel it's not sweet enough.

With Liza's help, I brought the potato chips and the carbonated grape juice to the place where everyone is playing learning cards.

"Bubbly bubble~?"

"Even though it's sweet and delicious, the bubbly bubble is bursting nodesu!"

"Kuh~ It's been awhile since I've had carbonated water~ If possible I'd have liked to drink Professor Pepper~"

The three who are simply delighted, and the children who are hardened. There was also a child who dropped the goblet, but Tama skillfully caught it.

"Hau, it's tizzling"

"?!"

"Hiccup."

There's also a child who can't stop hiccuping, it's quite a success.

"This is the specialty product of the grapevine mountain range right?"

"You know well. I've got it from an acquaintance. I thought of enjoying it with everyone since it was unusual."

Ms. Miteruna knew about the carbonated water since she was treated to it once when she was little by the previous Viscount Shimen. According to her, carbonated water is extremely expensive in the labyrinth city. It's not produced around this area, on top of that since it has to be carried in airtight containers to prevent the carbonated acid from coming off, there are a lot of cases where the containers explode during the transportation, so it rarely arrives here. Looks like it worths one gold coin for one cup. The children hardened when they heard that story, but Arisa persuaded them, "If you don't drink it and let time pass, it will become a normal water, so go on and drink it."

The potato chips seem to go too well with the sweet carbonated water, the chip plate is emptied in the blink of an eye. Lulu told the children who're licking the potato chips powder on their fingers, "Let's make some more okay."

Later on, I came to understand that it was easy to extract the carbonated water with alchemy. It was fast since I remembered that some liquor like ale contained a minute amount of carbonated water. Of course the local alchemists knew about, but it seemed no one did it since there was no meaning in extracting the carbonated water from it.

It looks like it could become a new specialty product if I just can cheaply extract the carbonated water.

I dream of such a future while staring at the bursting bubbles in the glass.

It was one week later that I knew there's a place where carbonated water gushed out in the middle layer of the labyrinth.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 2

This is not from Satou's POV (Labyrinth City Sentry A's POV)

SS: Fortunate Children

I lightly poke the three lumps in the darkness of the back alley with a stick. Completely lightly.

Since two of them moved while replying with muffled voice, they're still alive. The problem is the last one.

I sent a glance to my pal if he could change with me, but he jerks his chin to urge me continue the work, doesn't seem like he'll help. Since I've debt for meals, can't be helped.

It's fine if you die, but please don't be decomposed already.

I lift up the brat's face with the stick.

The mouth moved slightly, but there's probably no hope for the brat.

"How 'bout it?"

"It lives."

My next patrol will be in 10 days, it would've been decomposed by that time. I'm not a demon, so I can't kill it here and now either. Maybe I should ask boss to send me to another group for three days.

"Let's get out, it's depressing here."

"You're right."

When I pulled the stick from the brat's chin and turned around, someone was there.

Its eyes are glittering from the dark.

Eyes full of vitality that're obviously different from the lifeless ones the brat just now has.

"What are you doing nodesu? Are you bullying small children nodesu?"

"N, no."

I unintentionally stuttered.

Weird, I banter with ruffians all the time just fine.

"We're the sentry corps of the viceroy."

"Sen-try? Police officers nanodesu! Amazing nodesu!"

"Yes, that's right. We're amazing."

Dunno what the heck is police officer, but I'll suitably reply to make her scram.

Even if this guy gives food to these brats, it'll probably only make them die faster.

"Are these children sick nanodesu?"

The one who came out of the dark is a dogkin little girl. Wearing such an expensive looking clothes although she's just a demi-human. She must be a slave of some perverted noble. Would love to let my daughter wear something like that even once.

"They're dying from hunger. They're probably going to survive if they're bought by a rich merchant or noble like you."

"Hunger is painful nodesu! Hungry is sad nodesu!"

The dogkin little girl who's suddenly appeared takes out some kind of flute from her bag and blows it with all her might. I unintentionally covered my ears, but there weren't any sound coming from it.

"Master! Pochi is here nanodesu!"

The dogkin little girl who's finished blowing the flute begins to call her master with loud voice.

Damn loud voice.

"It's terrible nanodesu! Please help nodesu!"

While putting her hands beside her face, she raises her voice to the limit.

Oy, oy, you're alright? Something wrong with this brat's head?

"Oy, let's go."

"You're right."

My co-worker's tilting his head like remembering something, but I don't want to get involved in trouble.

The gust of wind that suddenly blew scrambled the sand on the back alley.

Tsk, can't breath. It's gritty in my mouth.

"Pochi, what's wrong. Did these guys bully you?"

"I-it's not that nodesu! These people are police officers-san nanodesu. It's not that nodesu, come here quick nanodesu. Stomachs are empty, they're going to die nodesu!"

T, this guy, when the heck he appeared.

"Oy, where did you come--"

Ouch~.

Looks like my co-worker hit me with a stick from behind. Can't speak from the excessive pain.

"I'm sorry Chevalier Pendragon-sama. My co-worker is being rude."

"No, please excuse me too."

There's no need to be that servile just because he's some noble young master right?

The noble-sama is led by the dog little girl's hand to the dying brats. After ascertaining that, I complain to my pal.

"What the hell man."

"That's my line. Don't you know who is he?"

Always making fun of me, fuhn, it's Pendragon right. Pendragon?

Can't be?

"Don't tell me, the master of the maid who defeated the lost thief king?"

"What kind of way to remember's that--well fine. That's the man. Incidentally, he's also the Marchioness's favorite, and competent enough to defeat a lower-class demon in some distant land. His maid was enough to deal with something like a lost thief king."

Fuh, I was close to lose my neck in more than one meaning.

<TLN: Can also mean get fired.>

"Chevalier-sama, what are you doing? Just in case, euthanasia is prohibited in the kingdom's law."

"You're mistaken. I'm only giving them nutritional magic potions."

Nutritional? Rather, magic potions? He's giving several silver coins worth of magic potion to these dying brats? You can live for half a year with that much! These nobles' hobby.... geez.

"They're moving nodesu!"

"Yeah, let's entrust them to Ms. Miteruna after this. I'm planning to take these children, is there any procedure for it?"

Toys for a perverted noble huh. It's pitiful, but still 100 times better than dying here.

"No, we're going to report it to our superior, so you can just take them now. If you prefer, would you like our help?"

Oy oy, pal-chan? What the hell're you saying?

"No, it's fine. Pochi, Tama, carry the two over there gently."

"Yes, nanodesu!"

"Aye~"

Thankfully the noble-sama declined and I don't have to do annoying stuff.

What?! Since when did this catkin brat appear?

My co-worker claps my shoulder as if consoling me.

Dunno what you're doing, but it's pissing me, don't sympathize with me!

After that day, I never see dying brats in the back alley again. The old people who looked like they were going to die loitering around the park near the ivy mansion have also disappeared. I dunno whether someone collected the corpses, or the dying people decreased.

One thing I can say, I feel better that the job of collecting corpses has disappeared.

◇

Half a month later, three unfamiliar little girls came to my station and gave their thanks.

I dunno any little girl with those nice clothings though?

My pal and me eat the cookings left by the little girls.

Yup, good food has no sin.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 3

SS: Daily Life of Explorers [Ant Wing Silver Sword]

"Sup~, is the boss here?"

"Sumina! You're still alive."

The weapon shop proprietress celebrates my safe return while crying. To be frank, I didn't think that she'd remember someone poor like me. Even though I've known them for 10 years, I'm not a good customers in the least. I've only bought six weapons during these 10 years. Like when I bought my first spear, I didn't have enough money so I had to make up for it by working as the forge lookout for half a month. I didn't know how to maintain my weapons so I regularly came here, they probably remembered me due to that.

"Oh, just when I'm wondering who, it's the snapping turtle little girl."

"I can't be called little girl anymore with my age you know. I'm already at an age said to be a woman who's missed her chance to marry."

I corrected the boss who came out from the back while saying some rude nickname. It's sinked on me that I'm already 27, so I know I've missed my chance. Wonder if Kuro-sama would make me his mistress.

"What's happened today? You're not here to only report something grievous like your safe return right?"

The boss is rude like always, but he's right on the mark.

"Hehehe, boss knows everything don't you."

"I don't know no everything."

Don't look bashful you 50 years old man.

"About it, I want you to teach me how to maintain this sword."

I pull out the sword on my waist and show it to the boss. This is the magic sword I've got from Kuro-sama, the [Ant Wing Silver Sword]. It's a transparent silver sword that can become scary sharp when I fill it with magic power. Even compared to the black iron sword I've got from the boss back then, it's many times sharper. I mean, It can even easily cut the shell of that excessively hard ant.

"Oy, Sumina. Where'd you get this sword."

The boss is staring at the silver sword with face so serious it's scary.

"What's wrong?"

"Just answer it."

Wonder why, his voice is more tense than when he's working. Not like I was trying to hide it, so I answered honestly, "I got it from Kuro-sama."

"Did that guy make this sword?"

"I don't know who made it."

"That so."

"Didn't the boss make one before?"

"The sword I made was the Ant Wing Silver Sword, but it wasn't the Ant Wing Silver Sword."

The boss said some doubtful question and answer-like thing.

He's not gone senile yet right?

"The color wasn't as this beautiful as this silver was it?"

"That's right. Ant Wing Silver Sword is expensive, but the way to make it is well-known. There are 10 stores that can make it even in this labyrinth city alone. It's something that's relatively wide-spread for a magic sword."

Figure.

"However they are all gray swords. None is like this beautiful silver."

"Fuh~n?"

"Temperature control is the most important thing for Ant Wing Silver Sword making. If the temperature slips even for several degrees during the sword dipping in the liquid medicine until it's adhered, it'll turn black and useless. It's been told that a long long time ago, the silver sword made by the Sage-sama who taught the way to make this magic sword was of the transparent silver color. Maybe this is something left behind by the Sage-sama?"

Elderly people's talk is really long.

"It's not? I mean, the sword was brand new when I got it you know? Let alone chip, there wasn't even a scratch on it."

There's a slight scratch now though. The labyrinth ant's hard see.

"Is that so.... Sumina, do you mind selling this sword? I'll pay you 100 gold coins. I'll even let you use the mantis great sword I've made."

Geh? 100 gold coins? Furthermore, wasn't that greatsword the boss's masterpiece which he boasted he wouldn't sell no matter how much.

"Sorry boss. That sword is something I got from my respected benefactor. I won't yield even if it's boss's request."

I won't be able to face Kuro-sama if I sell this sword.

"Kuh, can't be helped if that's the story. However, absolutely come to this shop when you need to repair this sword. I'll repair it carefully with my own hands. Of course it's free."

Oh, amazing.

"Thanks boss. But I'll be needing to maintain it after fighting in the labyrinth, so would you teach me the minimum care?"

"Ya bet. I'll strictly teach you til' morning. Don't think you can sleep tonight."

I took the Ant Wing Silver Sword from the boss who was holding it like a treasure, and went to the store's back. It really wasn't until morning that the boss approved my way of maintaining the sword.

I'll become an explorer that won't disgrace this silver sword I've got from Kuro-sama.

I don't plan to aim at such a foolish target like Mithril, but at least Red Iron Plate, enough that Kuro-sama won't regret giving me the silver sword--I want to become such an explorer.

I vow so to my dear sword glittering from the morning sun.

As if answering my thought, the silver sword glitters brightly for an instant.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 4

SS: Tama's Stroll

"Ninja is~ Gake~"

I run on the back alley and on top of the wall, wearing the ninja costume that master's made for me.

Tama won't be find out by anyone. Because she's a ninja.

I peer into the irrigation canal from the bridge.

I can see small prawns in the bottom of the pure water. Look delicious. My hands involuntarily reach to the water surface--

Ha!?

That was close.

There's a lot of dangerous things in the irrigation channel nyan. Wrong. A lot of dangers degozaru. Or was it gozansu~?

Either way's fine nyan. I look at my appearance on the canal's water surface, pink really is better than black after all. Ninjas' attire has to be black! So Arisa said, but still, I asked master to make it pink after all.

I mean, that one's cuter.

"From gake to gakeee~"

Gake? Or was it kage? I guess either's fine~

<TLN: Gake=cliff, kage=shadow.>

Pyon, pyon, pyon, running through the rooftops.

『No, stop it!』

『Shut up you wench?!』

I look at the back alley since I heard a scream.

Mumumwu. A man is assaulting a woman, tearing her clothes! The woman seems sad since her clothes've been torn, she's beating the man while crying. Ah, her hands are caught, and then she's thrown on the ground.

I must help.

"Tenshil! Chisil! Miracurun! Tama the mysterious ninja appears!"

Ah, I said my name.

Well, it's fine.

Toward the man who's saying something from the ground, I headlock throw his head, "Eiya!" and make him faint. It's a technique Shiya's taught me, it has to be done well or the opponent'll die. If it's samurai, she'll be full-fledged after mastering taijutsu was it?

His eyes are white it's gross, but since he's twitching, he's alive right?

"Umm, thank you?"

"You're welcome~? Nin nin degozaru~"

Yes, Arisa's taught me that 'Nin nin' and 'gozaru' are important for ninjas.

In addition, ninjas have to leave immediately after saving someone or it's not good. It the destiny of one who lives in darkness.

"Sabara, degozaru~?"

<TLN: Should've been 'saraba', meaning farewell>

I throw a smoke ball down my feet, slipping into the smoke to ju~mp onto the roof. Come to think of it, Arisa's said that ninjas use katana to jump, but I wonder how do they do that? They can just jump normally if it's to a roof.

Ah, this time an old man is being bullied over there. I must go save him.

Wait for me old man, I'll save you immediately.

When I come back to the mansion, Tama will have master listen to her activities from his lap~

--Degozaru.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 3

This is not from Satou's POV (Tama's POV)

Intermission: The Adventure of Ninja Tama

I check the pink ninja clothes that Master's made for me in front of the mirror.

Un, cute~

I wanted to show off to Pochi, but I couldn't find her anywhere.

Seems she's gone playing first thing in the morning~

"Tama-chan, here are your lunch box and snacks for today."

"Sankyu~ Vary ma~"

I'm so happy, I hold the lunch box set Lulu's made up above and spin merrily.

Today must be a good day too nyan.

◇

I'm patrolling the city again today.

Because, ninjas are destined to live in the shadow, I'll watch over the city's peace from the background.

Ah, it's dragonflies!

I chase after the dragonflies flying on the streamlet from the side, pyon pyon.

I wave my hands toward the oba-chans doing laundry, and the one~san holding a baby.

Everyone happily waved back at me.

Huh? Ninjas shouldn't have been seen.

Well, it's fine~

Ah, an old-man is being bullied!

Wait for me~ Ninja Tama, will go now~

◇

"Please wait! I can't continue my business if you take those!"

"We can sell her to the slave trader right?"

"Father! Help!"

"Ah, please forgive my daughter!"

Um~mm, these hoodlum people are bad people?

Complicated~?

"Hah! I'll let you off with these cooking tools and your daughter today!"

"Why, my debt should only be one silver coin!"

"There's this thing called interest! It's 100 gold coins now!"

"No way, even usury has a limit!"

Gold coins? Nyu~n?

I got one gold coin from Master this morning, but it's not enough.

Ah, they started beating the old man with sticks.

The Onee-san is crying!

Crying is not good!

"Tenshil! Chisil! Miracurun! The mysterious ninja Tama appears!"

Oh right, I'll use ninjutsu here!

"Ninja art, Uchisemi no Jutsu~"

<TLN: Should've been "Utsusemi no Jutsu". Uchi means house.>

I changed the fainted hoodlums' with clothed logs in their places.

Leaving the logs, together with the hoodlum people to the roof, I ju~mp.

Err, I quickly tie the hoodlum people, and then throw them away to the back alley.

Spinspin~ spin, and poi.

"Eh? The people from the Avarice Fox are gone?"

I secretly land beside the surprised Onee-san.

"Aku, soku, zazan!"

<TLN: From Aku, soku, zan. Lit. evil, immediately, slain.>

I'm triumphant while taking the victory pose.

Onee-san opens her mouth and hardens. Insects would go in you know?

"I exterminated them~ degozaru."

"T, thank you."

"You're wlcome~, nin nin."

Are you going to leave the old man behind you like that?

When I tilt my head and look at the old man, the Onee-san finally notices it.

"That's right! Father, hold on!"

"Let him drink thiss~ degozaru."

Potion is the best for injuries you know?

They were surprised after he drank the potion from Master.

◇

In the park near the Ivy Mansion, I've a lunch.

U~n, there are a lot of greeneries here, I like it very much.

It's the next best after Master's lap.

If there was a short ear rabbit, I'd have chased and play with it.

Huh? Someone is coming.

Tama leaves a doll on the ground, and climbs to the top of a tree.

Because, I'm a ninja.

"Found you! It's you right! The one who beat up the third."

"Hey hey, what's wrong? Isn't she too scared she can't even turn around?"

"Gyahahaha~, We're the Avarice Fox gang who make children run away crying after all!"

Err, fat flag? Diet is hard you know?

The hoodlum people stab the doll with their swords and talk in loud voice.

They will notice soon?

When I don't have turn like this, it feels a bit, irritating.

"The hell is this? It's a doll!"

"Damn, she ran away!"

Ah, they're looking around.

They also look at the trees' tops, but they don't notice Tama. Because ninjas can't be seen.

It's about time for the windmill to appear!

I take out a windmill from my pouch and throw it to the hoodlums below.

Eyy.

"Uwahh, aniki! Aniki isss!"

Huh?

The hoodlums became squashed under the windmill.

Strange~, Arisa said that it was windmill for time like this.

"Why is a windmill in a place like this!"

"Oy, you alive?"

Are windmills and pinwheels different?

Evidence destruction~?

I collect the windmill with the whip sword and put it into the pouch.

"Ah, that pink guy is on such a place!"

"Oy, shoulder aniki, let's run."

Ah, they ran away.

I have to chase them! Because, they're running away!

◇

I jump from shadow to shadow while eating a potato and chasing the hoodlums.

This potato is delicious. I'll give half to Pochi.

Since I'll likely eat them all, I wrap the remaining potato and put it into the pouch.

"Boss! The pink monster is attacking!"

"What'd you say! Get Sensei here."

"Ey."

The hoodlum people are holding hatchets and bone clubs, I take it off their hands and hit them, take it off and hit them.

Holding back to prevent them hurting badly is hard.

"She's too strong."

"Is Sensei's not here yet!"

Two people left.

A bearded old man and a thin old man who've only been ordering around with loud voices without doing anything since awhile ago.

"Mou, I was still in the middle of eating the meat skewers nodesu! Punpun nanodesu!"

A samurai wearing haori hakama came out from the back!

Samurais are the rival of Ninjas!

Her face seen from her hood looks similar to Pochi, but Pochi's name is not Sensei, so it's a different person.

"The bodyguard of justice, Kin-san the bum nanodesu!"

<TLN: A bum samurai wearing haori... Good thing it's not 'Gin' huh? ;) >

"Mysterious ninja~?"

Her real nature is a mystery.

Kin-san pulls out a Japanese katana and sets it up.

"The way of full moon nanodesu!"

"Falling leaves~?"

I cut the coming red Magic Edge Cannon's halo with the ninja katanas on both my hands. I avoided two out of three, they flew and broke the wall behind. They'll get mad at you, you know?

To be able to use Magic Edge Cannon like Pochi and Liza, Kin-san is strong.

"My turn~?"

Using Bunshin no Jutsu, I split into three and attack in three directions.

"Amazing nodesu! As expected of a ninja nanodesu!"

Mumwu, she's moving fast like Pochi's Flickering Movement, attacking the bunshin.

Foul play~?

"If it's three people, then I just have to attack with triple the speed nodesu!"

"It's the real body this time tough~?"

From the ceiling, I randomly shoot shurikens.

I occasionally grab onto the ceiling, and make a feint.

"It's no big deal if it doesn't hit nodesu!"

All of them are swayed by her Japanese sword.

Amazing, amazing! There's a girl this strong besides Pochi.
I'll tell about it to Pochi later.

"I'm settling it with the next move nodesu!"
"Me too, certain kill technique~?"

Certain kill is written hissatsu (必殺).
Certainly not kill is 必生 (hitsunama?). Arisa told me that.

"Magic Edge Rush (Vorpal Lance)!"
"Magic Edge Twin Fangs (Vanquish Fang)."

The Samurai whose whole body shines red shouts the killer technique's name.
She understood the promise well~

◇

"Alright, stop there."

Huh?

I've been caught and lifted lightly.

I look up, and there's Master.

"Master~?"

"Master nanodesu!"

Huhuh?

I take off the ninja costume's hood and look at Kin-san.

She also took off her hood like me.

"Pochii!"

"Tama nanodesu!"

Now wonder she's strong, nyan.

People who came from behind Master are tying up the hoodlum people.

"Well then, Captain-san, I'm counting on you to deal with these people."

"Yes, Chevalier-sama."

It's the sentry Captain-san!

This person often treats me to a lot of meat from the food stalls.

While being lifted by Master, I greet him with 'shupin' pose.

"Why are you arresting me!"

"All you guys' deeds have been investigated by Marquis-sama's intelligence. In addition, since you were smuggling the necessary ingredients for Fiend Drug's production, you're charged with treason. Don't think you can defend it."

Complicated~ Make the explanation shorter!

While handing the potato from before to Pochi, I tell Master and Pochi my remarkable activities today.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 5

SS: Lulu's Kitchen Knife

I'm going on a sea date with master today.

The ship is flying a bit higher than the sea surface though, but I don't mind the minor details.

I mean, it's a date with just the two of us.

"Lulu, you can see it now. That's the sign."

"That, is it?"

Master is pointing toward a flock of seabirds.

If I'm not mistaken, we're going to catch fish called tunas today, I wonder if it's been changed to birds?

"Un, the small fish those birds are aiming should be being chased by tunas."

"Yes, master!"

As expected of Master. He's amazing.

I've made a [Promise] to Arisa that I'd talk casually with Master after saying [Amazing] when I'm praising him. However, it feels a little embarrassing, when I let out my voice, I talk to him like usual.

<TLN: Lulu usually talks to Satou in formal tone.>

"Master, are tunas delicious?"

"Of course! Especially the fatty tuna see, when you eat it, you feel like your mouth is melting! Ah, just how can I put this into words! Lulu will also understand once you eat it. It's such that you'll be hard pressed to say which is better when you compare it to the highest grade marbled beef! It's truly fit to be one of the two matchless kings of the sea together with whales."

I could only nod to master who was being talkative.

I mean, Master is like when Pochi-chan talked about hamburg steak, he's so cute. Ah, it feels like I'm going to have a nosebleed. I can really understand the feeling of Arisa who's grinning when she looks at Master once in a while. Even though Master is usually calm, the Master who's talking about his favorite things is sorta cute. It's a secret though.

"See, look under the sea, those are tunas... right?"

"Yes!"

Why was it a question Master?

Master who slightly bends his head looking doubtful is also lovely. Yes, Arisa would've said it's "Rare."

Tearing the sea surface, the tunas are flying and eating the seabirds.

As expected of the King of the Sea.

I wanted to catch several of the birds as souvenirs for Liza-san, but they're all going to be eaten looking at the current state.

The tunas flying in the sky are coming here.

How gallant of them to come here themselves to get cooked.

I take out the golden-colored [Tuna Slayer] I've got from Master last night from the fairy bag. I can't use Magic Edge like Liza-san and the others yet, but I can do it if it's just filling it with magic power. I set up the huge two-meter long kitchen knife glowing blue light, and cut the attacking tunas right half in two. As expected of an [Orichalcum] knife. The sharpness is wonderful.

I wonder what's wrong?　Master's smile is stiff.

I wonder if his fatigue from making swords every days has piled up?

I'll devote myself to make Master thoroughly enjoy the tunas he's looking forwards so much today.

Grilling the tunas' heads, and also making sashimis from them. Among the dishes, he was really pleased with the tuna sushis.

Even Arisa was crying while eating it.

She must really like it.

The words master said after he's finished eating, "It was really delicious, Lulu." is the highest reward for me. Since we've caught a lot of tunas, maybe I should make [Negitoro] and [Pickles] for him next time. There are some missing things like [Quiz] in the recipes I've got from masters, but trying to do various things for its completion is fun.

Ehehe~, my mother said something.

"The way to a man's heart is through his stomach ", she said.

Let's do my best tomorrow too!

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 6

This is not from Satou's POV (Pochi's POV)

SS: Hamburg Steak Fraud

"I'm home~?" "Nanodesu!"

Before entering the mansion, I washed my hands and feet with the water jug beside the entrance nodesu. Because Lulu would scold me if I didn't properly wash nodesu.

There's the delicious aroma of hamburg sensei in the mansion!

Huh? It's strange nodesuyo.

"It smells different nodesu."

"Stew~?"

"It's unusual for Lulu to change the menu by her mood isn't it."

"Nn."

When we go into the mansion, the head maid Miteruna meets us nodesu.

Lulu usually greets everyone with only her voice, "Welcome home everyone" from the kitchen, but she's quiet today nanodesu.

"Welcome home."

"I intend to report our return to Master."

"That is, Chevalier-sama hasn't returned from the dinner with Viscount-sama."

Master isn't here, it's lonely nodesu.

That Viscount person... nanodesu.

"The meal has been prepared, please come to the dining room. Aina and Kitona, take everyone's tools to their room."

""Yes.""

Chasing after Miteruna, I entered the dinner room, and not even one dream was there nodesu.

"Huhuh~?"

"Hamburg-sensei is not here nodesu!"

I climb the chair and look around, it's really not here nodesu.

I got scolded by Liza, "That's bad manner." but I think that there's more important thing to note nodesuyo!

"Ah, Lulu-san isn't present, so the hamburg steak has been changed to black meat stew. I couldn't use the kitchen as I please since the chef was absent."

Such cruel words from Miteruna went through my ears nodesu.

"Pochii."

"Tamaa."

While sharing the despair with Tama, I grimaced a little at the black meat stew I ate nodesu.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 7

This is not from Satou's POV (Seryuu city Gate Inn's helper Yuni's POV)

SS: Letters to Yuni

"Yuni?!"

"Ye~s, please wait for a bit. I'm going n~ow."

Heave-ho. These firewoods should be enough now.

I half-jogged to Martha-san who called me, and she pushed to me some kind of paper bundle.

"Umm?"

"They were brought by the merchant just now. They're letters for Yuni he said."

Letters? Maybe it's!

"Aah! It really is!"

"It's amazing that you've acquaintances who contact you with letters like this, you're like a merchant or a noble-sama."

Ehehe~. I feel ticklish from Martha-san's words which sounds so envious.

I open the letters and read them.

First, it's from Tama-chan.

『Reached the labyrinth city. Tama.』

Tama-chan's letter is short.

But, I'm glad that they seem to have arrived at the labyrinth city safely.

Next, it's from Pochi-chan.

『Pochi and Master who had departed from Seryuu Earldom were attacked by more than 100 insects swarm in the mountain's foot nodesu. Pochi and Master together opposed the overwhelming insects by resolutely shot them down with crossbows nodesu. And then, the red helmet ratkin who was protecting a fairykin princess that we met--』

Er~rr, this is a letter right?

It looks like there are more than 100 pieces of Pochi-chan's letters.

....Yup, I'll read it later. Yup, that's good.

The next letter is from Arisa-chan. Even though we weren't too close, I'm glad that she's sent me a ltter.

『Dear Sir and Madam, I am pleased to hear about Yuni-sama's increasingly efficacious activities.

In regards to the present conditions of Pochi and Tama, everyone has safely arrived at the labyrinth city without a single injury. The package that is sent together with this letter is a token from our Master, Chevalier Satou Pendragon, please receive it willingly.

That is all we can inform you in haste.

Sincerely yours,

Arisa Pendragon』

Stiff. Arisa-chan, your sentences are too stiff.

There were some lines that I didn't know and had the landlady-san to teach me though, but it's not a letter written by a child.

Satou-san, I thought that he was rich, so he really was a noble-sama.

In the package, there is a [High-class Hand Cream] for the landlady, a coral necklace for Martha-chan, and for me, there are a comb and a hand mirror.

A hand mirror!　It's the first mirror I've ever had!

According to the landlady, it's a mirror made from glass that's far away more expensive than the bronze mirror in the Seryuu city.

Uu, I'm happy that it's reflecting neatly, but I can clearly see my freckles.

Huh? There's another piece of letter.

"Ah, isn't it nice. After you write a reply letter, you can send it for free to the labyrinth city if you bring the letter together with this to the firm."

Yay!

I can't send a letter to the labyrinth city if I don't save money for around a year.

I've to write a reply about my present state quickly.

But, before that, I'm gonna read Pochi-chan's masterpiece all night today!

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 8

This is not from Satou's POV (Arisa's POV)

SS: Liza's Buying and Eating

"Oh, found Liza-san!"

When I came to the snack area before the west gate, I noticed her.

I was going to call her, but I shouldn't do it when she's in the middle of choosing the snacks to buy and eat. When I did it before, she shifted her line of sight like it was going to devour me. That was at the degree that can only be seen in a dream.

Under the pressure of that gaze, those old men at the stalls can serve their customers with a smile while washing the greases, they truly have the spirit of merchants. I'd have rated them [First Class] if their smiles weren't cramped though.

"Oy, isn't that the Black Spear Liza?"

"Oh, what kind of meat is she picking now?"

"Looks like she's hesitating between the lizard meat skewer and the rabbit meat bone skewer."

"Either is one big copper coin much huh~ As expected of a powerful Red Iron Plate explorer."

I heard the conversations of the explorers nearby. Liza is quite famous isn't she.

She's choosing between the steel lizard meat skewer and the rock rabbit meat bone huh. Either sounds tough.

However, that guy had given everyone one gold coin each early in the morning, so she could just have picked both.

Choosing between things is fun though so it's alright~

"Oh, she's chosen."

"Which is it?"

"It's the lizard meat skewer."

"Oy, oy, is she a cannibal."

Mu? When I turn around to see the one who said the last line, the neighboring Liza's fans are already beating him.

Arara, no turn for me huh.

I couldn't use magic in the middle of the city, so my skill-level-0 wand art was going to howl. Maybe I should get self-defense skill like Lulu after all I wonder? I wonder~?

"It's splendid. The steel lizard's meat at first tastes like it's plain, but every time you chew on it, the savoriness oozes from inside--"

Uwah, oh Liza, she's begun to have a narration while biting the skewer.

But, is that really a meat? I can hear some strange sounds you know?

"Oy, Liza-san's『It's splendid』appeared. Looks like that skewer is a hit."

"Hah! You amateur. Listen the words after『It's splendid』well."

'Amateur' eh, you guys....

"Right right, you shouldn't buy it if she praised the chewy texture. Our feeble teeth not gonna stand against it."

"Don't lump me with you humans, there is no meat that we beastkin can't eat! Old man, give me the same meat as this guy's!"

The beastkin man who ignored the peanut gallery's advice and ate the same meat as Liza's crouches while moaning, "My teeth."

My condolences~

Even so, stocking a meat like that, what a challenger.

Since half of the meat skewers she holds have different color, I wonder if they're from different variety?

Liza is chewing the second type of meat she's picked. This time she's saying, "The chewiness is not quite there."

I see, so she wasn't picking which to eat, but which to eat first. I consent.

"Yosh, I'm going to get the rock rabbit one."

"Next time, when I earn a lot of money in the labyrinth, I want to eat the rock rabbit meat...."

I pray that the last guy didn't raise his death flag....

In the end, I was only able to call Liza-san after her fifth meat, the frog meat skewer.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 9

Filed Under: Desumachi, Web Novel on Friday, December 18, 2015 62 Comments

This is not from Satou's POV (Arisa's POV)

SS: The Trick to Enjoy Food Carts

There are really too many things recommended by Liza.

Along the way, I took along the little girl maid who were on an errand and went on to capture sweets.

"It's not really that good isn't it."

"Really? Any one of them is delicious, I'm so happy."

The labyrinth bee honey pastry was slightly good, but ever since I ate the sweets made by that cheat Master, it felt lacking nowadays. This is a dangerous sign.

"Arisa-chan, that."

The little girl maid who walked beside me pulled my sleeve, and when I looked there, Pochi and Tama were together with other children flapping their mouth while looking at the meat skewer stalls near them.

What are they doing?

"Pochi, Tama, what are you two doing?"

"Arisa~"

"Arisa! It's a discovery nanodesu!   If you sniff on the delicious smell from the stall, flap your mouth while matching a person eating meat skewer, it feels like you're eating one nodesu!"

Pochi stresses, exhausting her strength.

"Is it fun?"

"Of course~"

"It's very fun nodesu!"

I see~, it's fun huh~ but, let's speak without reading the mood.

"Hey."

"What~?"

"What is it nodesu?"

"You can just buy the meat skewers normally can't you?"

You guys got pocket money from Master too right?

"Ah" "Nanodesu!"

The two look at the money Pochi's taken out, and then tremble.

"Buying and eating~?"

"Biting at every cast nanodesu!"

No I don't understand what that means.

"How many~?"

"You got one gold coin right? You can buy 100 pieces of meat skewers with it."

"A hu, hundred nanodesu?! Can you eat that many nodesu?"

"You won't be able to eat Lulu's dinner if you eat too many, be careful okay."

"Aye~"

"Nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama cutely make the 'Shuta!' pose, get close to the meat skewer stall, and buy a large amount of frog meat skewers from the surprised stall old man. Looks like the warning earlier fell on deaf ears.

No no, those many skewers are impossible even for you guys right?

"Line up~"

"One skewer for each nanodesu!"

Ah, they're distributing the skewers to the children who were watching the stalls together with them huh.

The children who got the meat skewers unanimously say their thanks to Pochi and Tama. Looks like the two are embarrassed with it, they are unusually being bashful.

Surrounded by around 10 children, the two are eating the skewers with great relish.

The little girl maid has intruded among them too of course.

That girl sure is shrewd.

"Delislish~"

"Grills are really the strongest after all nanodesu!"

"It's really good."

"Un, it's not hard like black meat."

Ah, the oil from the skewers are falling to Pochi's and Tama's chest, stickying them.

I know now the reason why Lulu made them wear cheap common dress.

That girl is steadily becoming a wife~

"I'll give them to Arisa too nodesu."

"No, I'll reserve myself."

"Eat the reserve~?"

It's not that I'm reserving. My waist has been painful since awhile ago.

"I've been eating sweets just now, so I can't eat anymore."

"Diet~?"

Ahh, like a revolving lantern, it's flashing on my mind, that days of suffering!

I absolutely can't do that again. I can't!

"You really don't want it nodesu?"

"It's delicious~ see?"

Don't tempt me~

I pulled the little girl maid's hand, and escaped that place at full speed.

Because, I don't want, to diet again!

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 10

This is not from Satou's POV (Arisa's POV)

SS: Very Popular

Hm? This melody is Mia huh?

Just now, I've eaten yakitori with Liza, this time it might be nice to eat some sweets with Mia.

That girl is liked by old people, so she often gets simple sweets from the locals.

Um~m, she's on this open space I think. I think?!!

Hwhat!

"Arisa?"

Mia inclines her head while looking at the surprised me. Damn, aren't you cute.

The good looking men who were listening to Mia's lute play beside her glanced at me once, but they immediately lost their interest and looked back at Mia.

Kuh, what's! With that attitude!?

Tsk, Mia, even though she usually behaves like a spoiled child, saying [Satou] or the like, she's this popular behind our back!

A kind-looking black-haired shadowkin young man, a bad-boy-type red-haired leprechaun boy, a stiff blond-haired longears-kin, and an ash-colored short-haired ogre-kin man with a bit of muscles surround Mia like they're protecting her. They are all so good looking no one will object if they refer themselves as one. What is this, otome game?

"Mia, aren't you quite popular. Affair?"

"Mwu, no."

Even though it was a joke, she denied it seriously. Maybe there was some envy in my words.

"We have hurriedly come here in order to protect Mia-sama's day off."

"I'm here to hear Mia's lute though."

"Use 'sama'! The elves-sama of Boruenan forest are the masters we should serve!"

"Fufufu, Mia-sama always looks so young and lustrous like a green grass."

Black, Red, Gray, and Gold, The handsome men pamper Mia in turns. Riajuu explodes!

I mean, I want to be popular too! Mainly with our Master!

"Arisa, want?"

Mia raises apple-like red fruit from her lap and offers it to me. Looks like the fruit is gouged to act as a container. The inside has the fleshes of the fruit cut and soaked with something that looks like syrup.

"Un, give me a bite."

I open my mouth, a~n, and have Mia spoon me a bite. I don't usually do something this les-like, but I did it in order to show it to the handsome men around us.

Oh, they're really glaring at me. Surely, they must be envious.

Chomp, I gulp the the content of the spoon Mia is presenting. The taste is also similar to an apple. I thought that the syrup was maple, but this is honey I think? No, this viscous feeling is the ant nectar. U~n, I think honey is better for this one.

"How many point?"

"60 points I think. It'd have been 70 points if it used honey."

The blond handsome man is shocked to receive my strict evaluation. That guy made it huh. Like our Master, being good at cooking like this despite being a man, are you a character of some otome game.

A man should just be good enough to microwave curry powder or ready-made porridge to make them explode. If they don't do that much, I can't participate in the delicious situation of nursing them.

<TLN: Probably a reference to something. Not sure what, from an otome game maybe?>

I didn't have such an opportunity even once though.... orz.

I was going to invite Mia to a sweets tour, but since the retired people in the neighborhood had gathered to listen to Mia's music, I left that place while saying, "Later." I shouldn't take away the pleasure of old people in their remaining years right.

◇

I caught sight of Pochi and Tama having a feast on a stall with some dogkin boys, but it must have been an illusion.

It must've been a shock after seeing Mia getting surrounded by handsome men.

Un, seeing Nana carrying a white featherkin and a black featherkin infants on both her hands must also be a mistake.

Please let it be not a kidnapping!

I came across a group of children in a vacant lot. They're children of our orphanage. They're doing a volunteer work by weeding the vacant lot I guess?

"Ah~! It's Arisa! Let's play hide-and-seek, hide-and-seek!"

"You can't, Arisa-chan is going to play house with us! Arisa-chan's demon lord is amazing you know!"

Ah, why are the one who come after me are all kids~

Looks like I'm going to play as a demon lord again. Let me become the princess once in a while too!

Damn it, I'll play so hard to bury my worries today!

"I'll play in turn! You guys! Be prepared!"

"Ou!"

"Ya~y!"

I played hard until the sunset and went home.

Maybe because I played fully, and ate fully during the day, that even though it was the long awaited day of me sleeping together with that guy, I went asleep before I could enjoy his sleeping face.

Ah, I want to flirt!

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 4

This is not from Satou's POV (Nana's POV)

Intermission: Golden Knight and the Caged Birds

The sight monitoring system has raised an emergency directive.

Adding the object before my sight with priority tag.

There are two figures of young organisms over there.

They are imprisoned in the birdcage hanged in front of the slave trader.

The logic circuit urges to have me rescue them.

Executing rescue--Error.

Re-execute--Error.

This is a grave situation.

Confirming that the reason for the error is Master's commands which have the maximum priority.

There is an entry that prohibits me from relocating articles without being accompanied with money transfer.

It cannot be helped.

I do not have the authority to break the prohibited matter.

I step into the firm, and proceed to secure the young organism via the regular route.

"Proprietor, I want to release these children, so I claim."

"If it isn't explorer young lady, you have discerning eyes. These are quite a rare species even among the featherkins--"

In summary, "Bring me 100 gold coins if you want to own the young organisms", such an unreasonable thing has been established.

The money in hand, two gold coins.

Lacking 98 gold coins more.

I will have Master's support.

In accordance to the answer from logic circuit, I leave the shop.

◇

"No."

"Please reconsider."

"No."

Master refuses to secure the young organisms.

I tried to entice him with puff-puff, but Lulu interfered.

Logic circuit announces that without Master's support, helping the young organisms is hopeless.

I am troubled.

"What's wrong? Nana-sama"

The beastkin person who works as a teacher of the training school applies for a conversation.

"I am currently searching the way to secure fund. If you have a good idea, please present it."

"Let's see, I think everyone from Pendragon probably can subjugate the Ruby Golem in the upper Area 33 for quick money?"

After searching the name 'ruby', I've identified that it is a kind of gem.

The size of the ruby that composes the body of a golem should be worth at least 100 gold coins.

I tell my thank to the informant and leave right away.

"Ah, Nana-sama. Nearby the Ruby Golem, Deadly Poison Slimes are--"

◇

I confirm the route on the explorer guild, and depart to the labyrinth.

I change my equipments with Orichalcum ones, and raise my moving pace. If I were slow, the permitted time to release them would expire.

Following Master's example, I exterminate the small fries with Flexible Swords, and crush the strong ones by smashing them with the Orichalcum great sword.

『What's that? A golden knight?』

『Oy oy, who the heck is that? It killed the labyrinth scorpion with a single blow.』

『Maybe it's some Red Iron bunch?』

『There's no one that showy!』

Sometimes I pass by other explorers, but since dealing with them has low priority, I put actions like talking with them to the furthest end of the processing queue.

Against opponents that occasionally appear and are ineffective against material sword, I promptly eliminate them with nature magic.

『Oy, did it just use chantless magic?』

『Chantless, the hero-sama?』

『It's the golden hero-sama!』

Some explorers that I've saved by chance apply for a conversation with me, but since my processing queue is packed, I cannot respond.

This time, a hydra with five heads is blocking the way.

I want to promptly eliminate it, but since other explorers are fighting it, eliminating the hydra would classify as one of the prohibited matter, [Sideswipe].

Every one of the explorers is acting inefficiently.

I searched for the way to cope with this, and got one conclusion.

"I ask! Do you wish for relief!"

Yes, if the other party requests relief, it won't qualify as a prohibited matter.

It's an excellent idea if I do say so myself, so I praise myself.

"Please help us!"

"I take charge of the relief."

Activating the function [Fortress] on the equipment that Master has given me.

Eight force shields and three magic walls block the hydra's fire and poison breath.

I do not have overwhelming offensive power like Liza and Pochi.

However, I have the the impregnable defensive power that Master has bestowed.

I nullify the entire attacks, and eliminate the hostile unit with plain great sword attack.

"Ooh! The hydra's head is cut with one swing of the great sword!"

"Apart from that, why is it fine against the hydra's flame that can even melt iron!"

I am equipped with Master's armor.

This result is natural so I analyze.

I eliminate the hydra and hurry toward Area 33.

Noise asking about the core entered my hearing circuit from behind, but since its sequence priority was low, I canceled it.

In order to increase my moving speed, I grant myself physical reinforcement with nature magic.

◇

I check that here is Area 33 from the Sign Monument.

I could have defined the Ruby Golem's location if I had Master's enemy searching function.

Discovered a passage full of slimes ahead.

Using Force Spear to eliminate them--failed. Confirmed it absorbs force spear.

Using Flexible Sword to eliminate them--failed. Cutting is not effective. Confirmed it absorbs the blade.

Using the great sword to eliminate them--failed. Cutting is not effective.

Searching for effective countermeasures--not applicable.

I evade the slimes and continue searching.

Discovered a Ruby Golem in the space ahead.

Confirmed several slimes along the way.

Searching for effective countermeasures--not applicable.

Searching for ways to get close to Ruby Golem--not applicable.

Searching for effective countermeasures--not applicable.

Searching for ways to get close to Ruby Golem--not applicable.

Searching for effective countermeasures--not applicable.

Searching for ways to get close to Ruby Golem--not applicable.

Confirmed that the logic circuit is looping.

Analyzing breakthrough measure--discovered Arisa's collection of sayings, commencing search....

Discovered the countermeasure.

Booting up multiple [Shelters].

Activating Orichalcum Armor's emergency vernier.

I pass through the defending camping slimes with the sudden acceleration.

Confirming the scattered slimes behind me.

Threat level, low. I leave them alone.

"Ruby Golem! If you think that you're great since you're a gem, that's a misunderstanding, so I refute!"

I crushed the approaching Ruby Golem with continuous [Force Spear (Javelin)] blows.

Since the objective is rebelling, I use the great sword carefully, I'm worried with my remaining mana.

The condition that allows the use of emergency measure has been cleared--utilizing the magic recovery potion.

All Mission Complete.

Commencing return.

◇

"This is a Ruby Golem! How did you get it in complete shape!"

"Conversion."

"No, how did--"

"Conversion."

"Ah, yes. Please wait a moment."

I've safely secured 100 gold coins.

Successfully safeguard the young organisms in the slave firm.

Naming the white featherkin young organism [Shiro].

Naming the black featherkin young organism [Kuro]--error.

Searching the library, re-naming it to [Crow].

After returning home, I introduce them to Master.

"I have secured them. They are Shiro and Crow."

"Return them."

Master-!

Searching for countermeasures to oppose the merciless order--Requesting supports from friendly units.

"Please reconsider."

"No."

"Isn't it fine, raised right, they can be the communication unit, or the bombardment survey unit~"

"Cute~?"

"That's right nanodesu! Cute is justice nanodesu!"

"Nn."

"Master, I would also like to ask for it."

"I am sorry to intrude, but since Nana has bought them as slaves, how about training them as maid apprentices?"

With the help of friendly units reinforcement, Master finally raises the white flag, and I have safely acquired the permission to let Shiro and Crow take a new post in the mansion.

With feeling full of gratitude, I was going to do puff-puff that Master liked when we were going to bed, but I received concentrated bombardment from the friendly units.

It is absurdly baffling.

I evaluate that expressing gratitude is something with high degree of difficulty.

While being confused with bewilderment and delight, I wrapped myself with Shiro's and Crow's wings, and fell asleep.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 5

Intermission: The Journey of Zena Squad

"Lilio! I've found some survivors! Call the laborers here!"

"Hooi!"

Contrary to her light answer, Lilio whips out her body that's collected fatigue to run.

I hurriedly chant the next magic since I can't overlook it.

"Zena-san, you're using too much magic. Please take a longer break."

Even though Iona-san is worried about me, I shake my head to refuse it.

I tell her that helping the people who are buried alive is more important right now.

As expected, after chanting so much my jaw is hurting. I have to be careful as to not fumble the [Whisper Wind] magic chant.

"Iona, since the rescue over there is going well I've come to help."

"If Zena-san is in the middle of chanting spell, Ruu should be the one who talks with the man in charge of rescuing. Is it alright with you?"

"Yes yes. Will do."

Even though Ruu's voice had become like a man since she shouted so much, she still undertook it gladly. Ruu is like a dependable big sister, she can help calming the people who are waiting to be rescued.

After I've confirmed the activation of the magic, I shift into meditation while leaving the rest to Ruu. I have to restore even a little of my magic power in order to use my magic to look for the next survivors.

There are sounds of galloping horse, and Iona-san who's on lookout nearby, tells "Successor-sama has come" to me who can't open my eyes during the meditation.

I want to recover my magic power a bit more, but continuing to mediate in front of an upper-ranking noble will be too impolite, so I give it up.

"So you're Lord Marientael. Your good jobs have been conveyed even to me."

"Yes, I am honored."

Did the next Earl-sama come himself to say his gratitude to a mere soldier?

"I heard that your little brother-kun succeeded the house. If you wish, you can be my retainer. At first I can only grant you honorary noble peerage, but I promise to make you become a permanent noble depending on your work."

"I am undeserved of the invitation, I have already pledge my allegiance to Earl Seryuu. Please kindly pardon me."

It's quite an extraordinary invitation, but as a person of Marientael house which has worked under Earl Seryuu for generations, I don't have any intention to work under another house after all this time.

The young Earl successor seemed to think that he wouldn't be refused, his face looked unpleasantly angered. However, it seems he has enough tact to not act on the feeling.

"Is that so, if you change your mind, you can come anytime. I'll always leave a seat vacated for you."

After saying so, he left with his knight attendants.

"Are you alright with that Zena? When your little brother-kun succeeds the house next year, won't your standing fall to a quasi-noble?"

"I don't mind. As long as I'm in the army, there's no difference between a noble or a commoner."

"Right isn't it~, Zena-cchi has the boy waiting right."

Mou, Lilio!

Satou-san has nothing to do with--maybe a bit.

"Moreover, it's not decided whether he will succeed the earldom or not after all."

"Really?"

"On top of piling up many victims, he borrowed the power of the Saga Empire hero-sama to defeat the demon after all."

"I see, he made a blunder on top of having no achievement. To make matter worse, he rashly made people out to the field who then died, so the young master's fame has dropped to ground."

"Wait, Ruu."

There's a limit even if you're only speaking your mind. What would you do if Earl Lesseu's man heard it!

◇

Another 10 days has elapsed after the fight with the demon is over.

Among the selected Seryuu city labyrinth regimen, half of the front-liner have been killed in action. Norina squad and ours are miraculously unhurt, but Rodril magic squad and mixed squad are mostly annihilated.

The day after the fight with the demon, Captain Derio who had lost one of his arm, and a holy knight went back to Seryuu city in order to report to Earl-sama.

A carrier pigeon was sent at the same time too, so the reply from Seryuu city should be coming soon. In case the reply never come, we're going to go back to the Seryuu city after we've finished confirming the survivors and the KIAs of the Labyrinth Selection Regimen.

The Vice-captain Riro who was thought to be dead was found safe under the debris, but he had to pay with one of his leg for his life.

"Everyone hear me. The directive from Earl-sama has come--The Selected Regimen is to continue their mission."

Everyone has various reactions toward the order read by Vice-captain Riro, people who are spirited, people who are dejected, and people who smile bitterly.

"Vice-captain, please, let me go back to Seryuu city. People can call me a coward behind my back all they want. I just want to be near my wife and children."

"Vice-captain Riro, I also want to go back to Seryuu city. I can't swing the sword well with this hand."

After the man with big body, a retainer man who has lost one of his arm from the demon's tactical magic proclaims so dejectedly. Several other people who seem to be in agreement also press the Vice-captain Riro.

The Vice-captain Riro holds them back with both hands while smiling wryly.

"Don't get flustered. There's a continuation to the order--"

People who have lost their limb, and people who has lost their will to continue to the labyrinth city are to go back to Seryuu city, so it's said.

Surprisingly, Rodril is also going back to Seryuu city. She really must have been enduring the fact that she was the only one remaining after her escorts were all death.

◇

"Knight Henz, I entrust everyone to you."

"Yes, I will become as good as a Shiga Eight Swords when I return to Seryuu city."

"Hahaha, that's the spirit."

I wonder if it's just my imagination? I feel that Riro-dono's laughter was dry when he encouraged the new captain, Knight Henz.

In the end, there are only 18 people who will be going to Labyrinth City, Selbira, which are the Knight Henz and his attendants, Norina's and my squads and the civil officers, and lastly the survivor from Mixed Squad, Gayana and another soldier.

After seeing off the people going back to Seryuu city, we also hasten our preparation to leave Lesseu earldom.

"Zena, do you really not have any regret?"

"What is this about?"

"Didn't you receive an invitation from Successor-sama."

Norina who has finished her preparation brought up the subject as if making fun of me. Not only me, I think she was also invited by the next Earl-sama though?

"Look, I was invited to become a common magic soldier."

I wonder what is Norina talking about?

I think the Successor-sama invited me only because he wanted to have a magic soldier nearby though?

"I've said it's useless. Successor-sama's desire completely didn't reach Zena-cchi at all."

"Right~ I mean, the one who came for me was a retainer, but for Zena, it was the Successor-sama personally himself who came."

"Right~"

Lilio, and even Gayana-san and Norina-san were saying some strange things. If you think about it normally, there is no way a legitimate child of an upper-ranking noble would want a daughter of the lowest-ranking noble like me as his partner.

If Knight Henz who couldn't read the mood didn't order us to depart, Ruu and Iona-san would have joined the nonsense love talk.

Thus, we departed from Lesseu's earldom while the snow started dancing in the sky as if they were pushing our backs.

◇

The journey from Lesseu Earldom to Zettsu Earldom was quite hard. The remnants of the monsters collected by the mid-class demon had built their nests here and there.

I thought that the safety of the main road was the responsibility of the Viceroy, but Knight Henz, who sympathized with villagers grieving about how the soldiers weren't patrolling, undertook the job to hunt the monsters, resulting in our journey not advancing well.

It seems Earl Lesseu's Army which was nearly destroyed aren't the only army that aren't patrolling their area, Earl Zettsu's army are also not. If the rumor about Earl Zettsu we've heard along the way is to be believed, it's because the army have been gathered to protect the cities against the demon's surprise attack.

After a long journey from the north to the south of Zettsu Earldom, we have finally arrived at the southernmost city. Once we leave this city, we should be entering the territory directly under the royal family in several days time.

It's just a little more until the labyrinth city--please wait for me Satou-san!

"Hey, isn't Zena looking strange?"

"Ah~, that's she thinking about the boy, firing herself up. Pretend you don't see it and watch over her heartwarmingly."

"That's right Ruu. The power of love is really wonderful isn't it."

Mou! Everyone is saying as they please!

Especially Iona-san! Your mouth is laughing.

◇

"There's a sign of an enemy between the cloud above!"

"Is it a monster?!"

"It's most likely a wyvern!"

With Lilio's warning, everyone has started to prepare the action that each one should do.

We've been accustomed with the appearance of a powerful enemy ever since we departed Seryuu Earldom. Everyone has already grasped their own role.

"All members, prepare for anti-air battle!"

Knight Henz orders vigorously.

Ah, it seems there's one person who hasn't grasped his role here. However, the Retainer-san promptly covers for him. It seems he's been a retainer for generations, looks like he has it hard.

"The order is revised! Evacuate to the woods beyond that hill! If the wyvern approaches, Zena and Norina are to knock it down with magic to gain some time."

Everyone began to follow the order while looking relieved.

"Sure wish our new captain (temp) properly understand his own region's strength. No way dozens people could win against a wyvern."

"Lilio-san, please stop wit the (temp). Even though he's like that, he's doing his best to bear the sudden heavy responsibility."

"Because Iona likes weakling. If a man comes crying to--no, never mind. That's why, stop pulling out that great sword! Okay!"

Iona-san is going to pull her great sword while smiling, but I think this isn't the time for that.

"Lilio! Look at that wyvern's tail and right wing!"

The scout of Norina squad confirms to Lilio about the out of place feelings she's sensed from the wyvern.

How'd she see at that high. I can only see it as a small black lump.

"Un? Let me see~, ah! Everyone abort the retreat! That's the Wyvern Rider of the Kingdom."

"The one's riding on it--is wearing a white armor! Perhaps it's Sir Trell of the Eight Shiga Swords? I've heard that he rides a wyvern right?!"

The white armor knight is waving his hand while circling in the sky at low altitude.

He must be under some kind of mission.

On that day, we heard an unexpected story in the border city, Fau.

"Dragon?"

"Yeah, because of that, all caravans going to the Royal Capital have been stuck."

Apparently, a lower-class dragon has nested in the mountain range on the territory's border.

As one would expect, a real dragon, even though it's a lower class, isn't something that humans can do something about. We have no other choice but to be stuck in this Fau city for the time being.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 6

Intermission: The Journey of Zena Squad (2)

We've been stuck in Fau city for one month already.

It'd been alright if there were some way to detour the mountain-pass the dragon was occupying, but so long as we can't fly like a bird, we don't have any choice but to go back to Lesseu Earldom and go through the mountains range in the south route passing through Muno Earldom, or circumvent through several small kingdoms by passing through Eluett Dukedom.

It'll take several months to go through Muno territory route, and going through the small kingdoms is out of question. Even though the purpose will be not to wage war with them, we are still the army of Seryuu Earldom after all.

"Zena-san, how about your side?"

"Unfortunately, every store has raised their price compared to yesterday. We really should have bought it the first day we arrived in the city."

Regardless whether we choose to go through Muno Earldom, or wait for the Royal Army to repulse the dragon, securing provisions are important in order to resume our journey, however, the prices have become so bad we can't buy enough amount. We tried to go the neighboring farm villages to buy directly, but some sharp merchants had already bought them all.

"Zena-cchi~"

There's a small shadow waving hands beyond the crowd.

I can't see the figure, but there's only person who call me like that.

Lilio and Ruu who have gone to investigate for the shortcut come back after 10 days. Doing it in the middle of the road like this would surely make us a hindrance, but I couldn't stand it and went to hug them, celebrating their safe return.

"Welcome back Lilio. Did the shortcut look usable?"

"People can probably go through it, but it's impossible for the civil officials and the maids."

"It's hard even for soldiers you know? Even I gave up in the middle of the way while wearing my usual armor."

If it's impossible for even Ruu who prides herself in her stamina, it's surely something that's harsh for officials-san.

"We also saw the dragon on the mountain pass."

"It's really a lesser dragon?"

"No, that's--"

According to Ruu and Lilio's story, it doesn't seem to be a lesser dragon. I've certainly never heard a dragon which has colorful collar on its head. Moreover, it doesn't have wings. In Iona's opinion, it's, "Probably a sub-species dragon-monster like wyvern or hydra."

"Then if it can be defeated, we can go through the mountain pass right."

"If we're talking about size, it's even bigger than a real lesser dragon, moreover, it can spew out mist-like thing that can melt stones see~"

I was relieved to hear that it wasn't a dragon for a brief moment, but then fell like a withered blooming flower from Lilio's and Ruu's words.

"Do you have any idea why it's placed itself in the mountain pass?"

"Apparently it likes the oranges growing on the pass. It was having a nap while chewing the oranges together with the trees y'know?"

I wonder if it's a grazing monster? Thinking about the feeding habit of the monster is probably pointless since it apparently drank the stones it melts.

For the time being, I suggested them to report to the captain, and then we went to the temporary residence with heavy steps.

◇

When I saw a young man with black hair, my eyes involuntarily chased after him.

Considering the time when he departs, Satou-san should've been around here.

Ara? I feel like I've seen that black haired person--I wonder who?

Lilio who chased my line of sight said, "Ah! Found you!", and then ran after him.

"That Lilio, what's wrong with her?"

"It was the kid who was waving to Lilio when we left Seryuu city before remember."

I remember after hearing Iona-san's words. It's someone from Seryuu city, a one-armed person called Joi, or Jomis who taught me the way to make croquette and starch syrup. Even like this, I'm good at remembering person's face, but I can't remember that person's name or face no matter what.

"Why are you here now when you departed Seryuu city three months ago? Didn't you said that you'd make it big in the labyrinth city?"

"Didn't I say that the plan was undecided? I heard that there was a ruin on the verge of Zetssu Earldom see, so I went there to have a look."

"Did anything appear?"

"You can say something did, and did not appear."

"What's with that-!"

Lilio and Jo-san's conversation continues without a pause. Even though Lilio should have been tired from the investigation, she seems to be enjoying their conversation while smiling lively.

"It's said that even goblins can't eat a couple's squabble, so let's leave these young couple and report the shortcut investigation to Captain Henz."

"You're right. Feel like I'd get a heartburn if I remain here."

We waved our hands to Lilio and went back ahead to the barracks to report.

◇

"Another shortcut? Is there something like that?"

"Un, according to his story, looks like there's one."

"But Lilio. Even the soldiers-san of this city said that there was only one shortcut didn't they?"

"You see, there seems to be a road that goes pass the valley where the dragon-sham from before resides, see. Carriages can't pass through there, but the slope is gentle so it should be better than the the other shortcut."

Everyone becomes enlivened with the information that Lilio carries when she gets back as the night advances. Since there's a possibility we can break the current situation.

Knight Henz was looking like he would immediately charge to the valley, but his retainer skilfully arbitrated him, and then it was decided that we should send a scout unit first.

However, why does everyone look at me?

--I feel a bad premonition.

After clearing his throat once, Knight Henz ordered, "Then, I entrust

Zena Squad to investigate the valley." Of course we do not have the right to veto it. After receiving the mission, we began to prepare the investigation.

◇

The next morning, in order to hear about the shortcut from Lilio-san's boyfriend, we went to a restaurant in the downtown.

"Then, the problematic places during the journey are the valley where harpies are nesting, and the rocky area that springs up slimes?"

"Yeah, there are other places where monsters come out, but judging from what I've heard from Lilio, you guys should be able to pass through the valley with the fighting forces you have."

We're checking the boyfriend's story with an opened map. The map is roughly made, but it's filled with landmarks until the opposite side.

"Ara ara, my my, Jon-kun is building a harem."

"Geh, Mito."

"What? Your acquaintance?"

A woman who seems to be the boyfriend's acquaintance appears, and then she pokes the boyfriend's cheek while floating a joyful look on her face. She has the same black hair as the boyfriend's, and looking at their faces, they seem to come from the same town.

Is this perhaps the thing called shuraba?

<TLN: kind of like lover's quarrel, only worse, lovers' carnage?>

"Oh, it's a shuraba."

"W, wait, Ruu."

"That's right, it looks more like a relationship between a man and a woman, or rather like between siblings."

If Iona-san who's sensitive in regard to relationship said so, it must be true.

I was panicked that it would become a shuraba.

"This is Mito, a grandma dressing like a young woman."

"You're cruel, I've said that I'm eternally 20 years old haven't I? I'll spank children who can't be obedient you know?"

"That way of talking smells of grandma."

"Gaan."

<TLN: Onomaetopia for *shocked*. Search for がーん image.>

"Don't say that out loud."

Is it my imagination that they look like they're flirting?

Lilio's mood is worsening.

Ah mou, what should I do!

I look toward Iona-san for help, but she seems to be enjoying the situation. Ruu has been eager to be the curious onlooker from the beginning...

"What kind of acquaintance?"

"I picked her up in a ruin."

"Ruin? Is she an explorer?"

"A loo~ong time ago. There was a time when I was an explorer."

I feel that she's not an ordinary person, but she doesn't look like a warrior at all. I wonder if she's magician? If that's true, she doesn't seem like she has any wand or tool to invoke magic.

"Is she maybe your new girlfriend?"

"That's impossible. I'm not into grandmas."

"That's right~ Far from having feeling to this cheeky brat, I don't even see him as a man."

"Fu, fuhn. Okay then, I believe it."

Lilio finally softened after hearing the woman declared that she didn't have any feeling toward the boyfriend-san in relaxed manner.

After finally returning to the main issue at hand, we finished listening about the route. We would have liked the boyfriend-san to guide us if possible, but--

"I can sneak into any place if I'm alone, but I can't show my real ability if I'm with other people. Since my fighting power doesn't even reach you guys' foot. I don't intend to follow you since I'll only become a drag."

--He confidently refused like such.

◇

We pass through the valley that has strange steams coming out of the ground. It's called Withered Valley, and just like the name implies, the trees here are withered. It's alright if we're here for a short time, but it'll be bad for the body if it's for long.

Due to the spraying steam, the scenery in the distance is hazy, the poor visibility is worrying. Monsters could have a surprise attack if we let our guard down.

"Seems that the harpies should appear soon."

"Un, should I go to scout?"

I contemplate for a short while whether I should let Lilio going ahead alone.

However, the contemplation is a bit too late. In the next moment, a shadow interrupted by flying pass us overhead.

"Take the anti-air formation! Lilio search for the enemies around us. Iona-san, I'll leave the command after this to you."

I begin to chant the spell for anti-sound defense.

A Captain who can't command once she starts to chant, geez!

"Yes. There's a high possibility that the shadow earlier is a harpy. Lilio-san, how many crossbow's short arrows do we have left?"

"Sorry, there's only seven left since we used too many for the monster earlier."

"There's probably only one enemy. Those many should be enough."

Un, with Lilio's skill, seven should be plenty enough.

However, the way the harpy flew earlier was odd.

"....■■■■ Sound Protection"

It's perfect with this I think?

The fearful thing with harpy is its sleep-inducing song.

If we can just defend against that, Lilio should be able to take it down.

I start to enter meditation to recover my magic power right at this time.

If it's as I've expected, I'd better recover my magic power to the maximum now.

We couldn't hear anything thanks to the soundproof, but the harpy attacked from top of the forest while screaming something.

"Hahha! With a target this big, I can hit it with my eyes shut!"

Lilio's arrow hit the root of the harpy's wing, and the harpy which had lost its ability to fly crashed to the ground.

"Ruu, guard Zena-san!"

"Ou! Leave it to me."

Iona-san mercilessly smashes the harpy's head with her great sword.

Lilio has also pulled her short sword, but it looks like there's no turn for her.

And then, slightly after it, the creature that was chasing the harpy showed its visage between the gaps of the Withered Valley's trees.

That is the strongest being--

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 Intermission 7

Intermission: The Journey of Zena Squad (3)

--that is, Dragon.

Something that humans can never win against.

The existence that even the mobilized holy knights from the royal capital were barely able to repulse.

It seems to be a lesser dragon judging from its body size, but there is no point to such classification. If we fight we will definitely lose--no, it won't even be a fight, but a simple trample.

That appears from beyond the haze, glaring at us.

The dragon is doing just that, but it's enough to make us forget to breathe and solidified our body, we cannot take any action.

The actual elapsed time should only be for a moment, but I feel that it's the longest I've felt in my life.

As if losing its interest, the dragon shifts its line of sight from us to the harpy's body, and then he's turning its head toward the haze once again.

I almost fell down from the relief, but even slight sound might attract the dragon's attention. I grit my teeth and endure it.

The dragon was going to turn its body around, at that time--

--A new intruder appears.

『Heya, heya! For I am! The one praised in Shiga Kingdom, the fourth seat of Shiga Eight Sword, Trell the [Gale]! Right now and then, I challenge dragon-dono to a match!』

He's begun to introduce himself to the dragon while circling in the sky while riding the wyvern

Shiga Eight Swords are the strongest warriors of Shiga Kingdom. It seems there is a magic weapon that's even longer than a lance on the hand of Sir Trell who's riding the wyvern.

However, his opponent is too much for him.

It's something powerful enough to fight the greater demon which appeared in Seryuu City Castle alone. If the Silver Masked Hero didn't appear at that time, none of us would have been able to survive.

The dragon collects its power and in an instant springs up to the sky, flying without even doing an approach run.

Its eyes I saw when it was jumping up was glittering like a mischievous boy, it must have been my imagination.

"Oy, Lilio! You've to run now. That goes for the squad leader over there too."

My arm was caught and pulled from behind.

It was Jon-san wearing leather armor who has appeared out of nowhere.

Behind him, there's the woman called Mito wearing casual clothes as if she's "I'm going out for a bit to buy something", she waves her hand lightly when our eyes meet. As excepted she does wear journey boots, but it's amazing how she's wearing those clothes to a place like this.

"Oy, squad leader-san?!"

"Oh right, all members disperse! To behind the rock!"

I came back to my sense from Jon-san's puzzled words, and then ordered everyone.

◇

In the sky, the dragon is fighting Sir Trell like it's playing around. It's as if a cat playing with a mouse.

During that chance we successfully evacuate to the crevice on the Withered Valley's rocky cliff that Jon-san led to.

"Sheesh, there wasn't any dragon when I came here before y'know?"

"Ara? Isn't there a rumor about a dragon in the whole town."

"That's about the sub-dragon thing that likes oranges above the mountain pass."

"Therefore, we should assume that it's the existence that's driven away the sub-dragon above the pass."

Jon-san and Mito-san are casually talking in front of us, but my mind hasn't recovered enough to participate. Actually, even Lilio is only watching the conversation between the two while looking displeased, since she's not in the state to join them.

It seems the dragon is tired at chasing them, it knocks the wyvern down to the ground.

The knocked wyvern is rolling on the ground toward us while getting the withered trees mowed.

"Oy oy, don't come here."

"Ara ara, that wyvern can't fly anymore I think?"

Just as Mito-san's said, the wyvern's arm that supports the wing is broken until the middle part, it's in awful state.

It probably can't fly anymore unless it's healed with advanced healing magic.

The wyvern seemed to have absorbed the impact as Sir Trell who had been thrown from such height was still able to firmly hold his lance while shedding blood.

『O Dragon! I hang my whole life on this spear! Warriors, hand down my deed!』

Red light tingles on Sir Trell's lance, and then the tip of the spear produces light.

Perhaps that's--

"Magic Edge eh"

"That's..."

Jon-san held his breath and remained silent after hearing Mito-san.

Magic Edge is a secret technique that only two people can use even in Seryuu Earldom.

『Now! Come! Magic Edge Rupturing Strike!』

Sir Trell charges toward the dragon while wielding the lance like a cannon ball. The ground he's stepped upon is gouged, flinging dust behind.

While leaving red afterglow on the white haze, the lance stabs the dragon as if sucking into it.

With that technique, it should be able to pierce through the dragon's scale no doubt!

The lance tip is creating intense sparks on the dragon's surface. Yet, the lance tip doesn't even reach the dragon's scale. It's blocked by defensive membrane of light that acts like an armor, appearing before the dragon scale before I knew it.

『Not yettt-!』

Responding to Sir Trell's spirited yell, the red light that covered the whole lance's surface gathered on the tip, and it successfully cracked the defense membrane of the dragon a little.

"Awesome."

"Old man's cool."

Beside me, Mito-san is clapping lightly. I wonder why is this person is so carefree.

『GROUUU?』

The dragon leaned its neck to one side, and removed the lance that had stopped on its scale like someone brushing off a biting bug. Sir Trell who's distracted by the sudden disappearance of the lance on his hand is flicked away by the dragon's hand.

Like the wyvern earlier, Sir Trell rolled on the ground and then lost his consciousness. His level should have been more than 40, yet someone like that is played like a child to such an extent...

The dragon approaches Sir Trell, and poke him with its finger to see his reaction.

"Zena-tan, can you use healing magic?"

"Y, yes, I can do the simple one."

I'm concerned with Mito-san's strange way of calling me, but it's not the time for that now.

"How about something like the advanced『Cure Stream』?"

"I'm sorry, I'm only up to middle rank..."

"Is that so, then healing bone fracture is not possible."

Mito-san doesn't look like she's dejected by my words, and then after contemplating for a bit, she speaks unexpected words with a cheerful smile and walks out.

"Then, can't be helped. Everyone hides here okay."

"Oy, grandma Mito. Old person's indiscretion is--"

"Is this the bad mouth here~?"

"--young beautiful Onee-san, it was a slip."

Jon-san was going to follow Mito-san who had carefreely gone out of our hiding place, but Lilio-san hurriedly caught his arm and hugged it on her chest. I also tried to stop Mito-san with low voice, but she told me, "It's okay, just watch", with a smile.

"The dragon-kun over there. The game's ended okay~. The old man can't fight anymore, so can you go back to Fujisan Mountains?"

"ZUGOOOUN"

"Ara, it's really no use?"

She took out a stick from a black hole that had appeared beside her.

Is that a wand? Or maybe a flail?

"Can't be helped. Then I'll be your opponent for the second round."

She produces transparent blades and boards around her that look like something created with nature magic. They are like shields that protect her, like spears that eliminate foreign enemies, and like living creatures that follow her every movement.

It's like the offense and defense advanced magic of the Ancient King-sama in the legend-- magic? Come to think of it, when did she chant the spell I wonder?

"Lets get away for a bit!"

The invisible rain of cannonballs that Mito-san has shot hit the surface of the dragon and get repelled away. The dragon who was standing upright when it fought Sir Trell just before looked like it was hurt from this attack and flew to the sky, running away.

--A dragon is running away?

"Then, I'll be going for a bit."

She went to challenge the dragon in the sky by jumping through the sky, as if there were invisible scaffolds in the air. This might be the first time I've seen someone nimbler than Satou-san.

I don't know the detail of Mito-san and the dragon's fight since it's unfolding beyond the Withered Valley's haze.

However, from the screams of the dragon, and laughter full of joy that could be heard once in a while, it must be a one-sided battle.

If people hear about this story, they must not believe it, thinking that it's a joke.

◇

After we've finished giving emergency treatment to Sir Trell, the area around here has become silent as the battlefield may have moved beyond the Withered Valley.

"Hey, just who is that person really?"

"I said I dunno. She was sleeping beyond the hidden door in the depth of the ruin."

"Maybe she was living in the ruin interior?"

"That can't be right."

"Rather than that, can you please be quiet for a bit?"

I close my mouth from Iona-san's words, and listen carefully, I can hear sounds of flapping wings from beyond the haze. So it's the dragon who won in the end I wonder?

"Oy, it's over."

It was the figure of Mito-san waving hand on the back of the dragon. Her other hand is holding a chain produced by magic that connects to the dragon's head as if it's a horse rein.

"I'm going to return this child to Ten-chan in Fujisan Mountains, so this is a farewell. Jon-kun, it was short but fun! If you miss me, you can probably find me in the downtown of the Royal Capital."

"I won't miss you! Or rather, take me along with you!"

"I'm sorry, I can't bring other people to the sacred ground of heavenly dragons. See ya."

After Mito-san said so while waving energetically, she flew away beyond the sky by driving the dragon. Her figure was like the Ancient King-sama and the Dragon Knight-sama that appear in the story of the kingdom found.

◇

In the end, we decided to part from Jon-san and the Withered Valley, and stopped our search to carry Sir Trell back to Fau town.

About Sir Trell, it seems he was going to retire from Shiga Eight Swords due to his old age, and so he was apparently searching for an opponent appropriate for his parting. During that occasion, he heard the rumor about the dragon, so he thought it would be fit to be his last opponent before retiring, so he said.

It seems he never thought that he would survive int he first place, he muttered, "I've failed to die" while staring at the empty sky while the day is fading into twilight. He must be praying for the peace of the wyvern that has died.

About the shortcut search which had been interrupted, we didn't need to resume it.

A few days after this, the sub-dragon has been eliminated.

I've heard hearsay that the one who subjugated the sub-dragon wasn't the dispatched Royal Knights, but the violet haired Hero-sama who wielded the kingdom-defense holy sword Claiomh Solais.

Maybe.... That Hero-sama's identity might be Mito-san.

Thus the dragon disturbance ended, and we were able to resume our journey toward the Labyrinth City once again after we acquired provisions from some kind merchant.

After many mysterious cases, we finally arrived at the gate of the Labyrinth City. The two huge stone statues on both sides of the gate are glaring as if they were the gatekeepers.

This here is the labyrinth city, Selbira.

I'm going to see you soon.

Satou-san!

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10【SS】11

【SS】Hot Sand Extra Hard Training

"Arisa~, How many me~ter~?"

『Wait a minute, it's 1109 meters eh.』

"Wa~i, new record~?"

『That's right, congrats.』

Arisa is talking from beyond the sand dune.

Magic is amazing.

『As expected of Tama nanodesu. Pochi also won't lose nodesuyo!』

I see Pochi greatly waving her hands beyond the sand dune.

With a small [Pohyun] sound, Pochi jumps.

--ah, she broke her balance.

She begun to spin, guruguru bosun, and then she got buried into the sand dune.

After Pochi, Liza and Nana also jump.

Both jump shorter than Pochi's.

Because, they're big.

Pochi who's buried in the sand dune isn't coming out.

I rushed to her anxiously, but before I could dug her out, Pochi pushed her way out, wasa wasa, and came out.

"Peh peh, I failed nodesu."

Pochi shakes her body to remove the sand.

Of course I had ran away before she did that.

"Mwu."

"I'm sorry, nanodesu."

Mia who's been completely covered with sand is pouting.

Pochi apologizes to Mia while brushing the sands off her.

『Pochi, you're 1050 meters. Unfortunately.』

"Regrettable nanodesu."

"Pochi, don't mind~"

"I won't lose next time nodesu!"

Pochi is challenging for a rematch while taking the shupin pose.

Of course, I'll take up her challenge anytime.

Because, Tama is the onee-chan.

◇

I'm having a dashing competition with Pochi to race back to Master.

Mia who's buried in the sand behind us is really angry.

Pochi goes first this time.

She leaps toward the third [Acceleration Gate] ring with the Flickering Movement.

"Uwah~, nanodesu~"

Pochi jumps and spins like before.

She looks like she's having fun.

Perhaps, doing the jumping spin is fun?

I looked up when I felt a gaze, there was the gentle smile of Master.

I reflexively laugh, nipa~

"You can imitate Pochi if you want, but be careful not to talk during the spinning since you could bite your tongue okay."

"Aye aye sir~"

Master sees through everything nyan.

Tama replies Master with Shupin pose, and then goes toward the Acceleration Gate.

Yo~i, don!

I try to break my balance in the air like Pochi.

Spin, spin, my eyes are spinning.

The sky goes below, the ground goes above, it's dizzyingly fun.

Even though Master's warned me, laughter escape my mouth spontaneously.

Ah, the ground is already--

I plunged into the sand dune like, 'Bosun'.

But it can't stop the jumping force, I break through the sand dune, pop out to the other side just like that, and then roll and roll on the ground.

--Fun.

I shake the sand off, exchange a look at Pochi who's run to me worryingly, and then laugh out loud.

Now, once more!

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10【SS】12

【SS】Hot Sand Extra Hard Training (2) Flying Boots Arc

--It was fun.

After playing so much until I can't move anymore, I'm resting on the water bed that Mia's made.

Pochi is also sleeping beside me.

Arisa who's together with Master and Lulu came teleporting in.

"Everyone, is there any place where it's hurt?"

Master asks full of worry, but it's alright.

There is no pain anywhere, I'm only sleeping from fatigue. Everyone replies the same.

"Looks like firing the catapult with the acceleration gate and the deployment of [Shell] to act as the gliding board are going well."

"However, isn't it dangerous if they break their balance like Pochi if it's not in the desert?"

"Pochi isn't hurt nodesuyo?"

"Un, normally people will hurt badly with that velocity even if it's in the desert with the sand acting as cushions. However, the some of the [Shell], besides the part that acts as gliding wings, protects the passenger with thin membrane, so some amount of impact is not a problem."

Master's explanation is difficult nyan.

I'd like for something a bit simpler.

I drink the [Sport Drink] that Lulu gave me and recover my spirit~?

After drinking and giving the cup back to Lulu, Tama plays signal with Pochi who also doesn't understand.

"Then, let's try the Flying Boots this time."

"It's the magic circuit that was used for the False Claiomh Solais back then huh. Have you finally succeeded making people fly with it?"

"It's a different circuit than that one. The fuel consumption is very bad though. This magic circuit is something that imitates the Sky Drive I use."

I wear the pink boots that Master gave me.

The small wings beside the heel are cute.

"When you put magic power into the boots, a force field that will support your body will appear for an instant."

"Aye~"

"Do your best nodesu!"

Nyunyu, it's difficult.

My feet are sticking like kyuu, and fumu. It's like when you fall into a pit hole.

However, it's fine.

Because, Tama is a ninja.

"Oh, as expected of Tama."

"Uwah, you're walking in the sky. You're good~"

Master and Arisa praise Tama.

More, praise Tama more please. Tama grows up with praise.

"Mumwu."

"Ah, I fell! Nanodesu."

"It's difficult isn't it."

On the side, Mia and Pochi didn't do well, their faces crashed to the sand.

Liza seems like she hasn't risen from the ground in the first place.

"Keep at it~"

I cheer everyone while walking in the sky. With [Appare] and [Hinomaru] folding fans I've got from Master on both hands, I dance the [Raising Up] dance.

Arisa taught me to do this for when I'm cheering.

Aryarya, my eyes are spinning~?

"Are you okay, Tama."

"The sky is spinning~?"

"You ran out of magic power huh. The circuit really still need improvement after all."

Master supplied me with magic power while I was being princess carried.

Since it's become like this already, I'll cheer everyone while we're like this.

Master's arms felt warm, it was full of happiness, I went to sleep.

I, I have to cheer...

--Impossible nyan.

The drowsy person is too strong.

....Good nigh~t. ZZzz.

Death March kara Hajimaru Isekai Kyousoukyoku 10 SS 13

SS: The Melancholy of Leriril

"I can't believe it!"

No one will reply even if I raise my voice in my private room.

Even though I've been entrusted to take care of the mansion left behind by Sage-sama, a human brat becomes the new master....

It would have been nice if it was the elf Misanalia-sama instead.

Moreover, he made up a foolish story like being a friend of the high elf-sama and even made Misanalia-sama to take part in that. He's a vexing guy.

Furururu, the Manager Medallion is making a sound.

When I looked at the Medallion while thinking it was probably the brat calling, turned out it came from the world tree.

I check my appearance in a hurry, then I tap the Medallion lightly, turning it into a telephone.

『Nice to meet you, you're Lirerul right?』

『Aze-sama, that's wrong. It's Leriril.』<--<TLN: This is not Leriril's line, but most likely Lua's.>

『Eh? No way oh. I'm sorry, Lerirul』

『I said it's Leriril.』

I usually would have shouted, "Stop mistaking other people's name", but I don't have leeway to do that now.

Because the one who's projected from the Medallion isn't just a normal elf-sama, it's the Sacred Tree-sama that looks so divine as if it's smashing my eyes--High Elf Aialize-sama....

I will surely die today.

Even just meeting an elf-sama has taken me 10 years of my duty, to think that I'm exchanging words with the Sacred Tree-sama whom my senile Grandfather never meets.

I don't care about something like mistaking my name.

『Lirerel, please treat Satou well okay. Satou should be able to use the Ivy Mansion's facilities effectively. He's also aware of Touya's last will, so I'm sure he will only use it for good.』

"I will follow Sacred Tree-sama's wish. I will serve him with all my heart."

『Aze-sama, there's a call from Birowanan clan regarding the philosopher's stone matter from before.』

『Ara, I should go see them right away. Then Leriril--um, it's right isn't it? Do your best to help Satou okay.』

To get an encouragement from Sacred Tree-sama and called me by name!

Aah, I'm elated enough to die happy. I'll help the brat with anything if there's an additional gain like this.

◇

"Huh? Are you not with Misanalia-sama? Br-, Satou-dono."

"Yeah, Mia is working hard in the labyrinth. I've come to use the workshop."

For a mere human to call elf-sama with her nickname, he's a very impolite guy.

However, since Holy Tree-sama has asked me, this Leriril will smash her selfishness and help you.

He probably won't be able to operate even one facility of this mansion without my help anyway.

....Why is he operating a device he's just seen for the first time like it's usual for him?

"Ah, that's because I've looked over the documents left by the late Trazayuya. Moreover I've been in [Hearing] with Giril about the Ivy Mansion's facilities, so there's no problem. Leriril, sorry, but I'm going synthesize the culture fluid, so can you please bring me some hygienic tray and large bucket?"

"Y, yes."

He shouldn't be able to use them even if he has been taught though.... He's managing them well isn't he?

Weird. Even this Leriril-sama learned the way to use those equipments only after undergoing hellish training from senile Gramp for several years.

But, brat, Satou-dono is using them normally.

He's like a chef cooking a dish using tools he's familiar with.

He's using several alchemy equipments with magic in parallel, I can't believe my eyes.

Moreover, even though he's assisted by the Fake Core of this mansion, he hasn't lost his magic power even after using those many magic at mad pace, I can't believe he's a human.

It's too impossible my head's hurt, geez.

He's certainly fit to be recognized by Sacred Tree-sama.

That's it! Satou-sama must be a demi-god or an apostle of the gods pretending to be a human, no doubt 'bout it!

I can consent to that.

There's no way a human can be a friend of Sacred Tree-sama, and married to an elf-sama.

"I'm going back to the mansion since some urgent business came up. Leriril, I'm sorry but please clean-up the workshop."

"Yes, I understand Satou-sama!"

I have to serve him with all my heart from now on!

After seeing Satou-sama who's going out, I rolled my sleeves and went to clean up the workshop.

Main Characters' Level and Skills Change (End of Chapter 10)

<TLN: I'm using this occasion to revise one thing.

'Nature Magic' is renamed to 'Force Art Magic'.

There are actually two kind of 'Force Art', and I've always translated them as 'Nature Magic' but this is not correct. 'Force Art Magic' is a magic that needs chant, while just 'Force Arte' is a kind of active skill and doesn't seem to need chanting. Revising them in past chapters will be a gargantuan task so I will only make this effective for new chapters for the time being.

IIRC only Nana, Ringrande and Trazayuya in one side chapter use the active skill one, Force Arte, so far.>

● Main Characters' Levels and skills change.

Arisa Level 51

Skills:

[Never Give Up]

[Over Boost]

[Self-Status]

[Status Check]

[Hide Skill]

[Item Box]

[Space Magic Lv10]

[Fire Magic Lv8]

[Meditation]（new）

[UNKNOWN(Plural)]

Liza Level 51

Skills:

[Spear]

[Thrusting]

[Heavy Blow]

[Spiral Spear Strike]

[Magic Edge]

[Magic Spear Dragon Strike (Drag Buster)]（new）

[Magic Edge Explosion]（new）

[Magic Edge Cannon]

[Magic Armor]（new）

[Magic Operation]（new）

[Meditation]（new）

[Flickering Movement]

[Dismantling]

[Cooking]

[UNKNOWN(Plural)]

Flickering Movement Spiral Strike is not skill but combination skill of [Flickering Movement] and [Spiral Spear Strike]

Tama Level 51

Skills:

[Short Sword]

[Throwing]

[Two-Swords Style]

[Magic Edge]

[Magic Edge Twin Fangs (Vanquish Fang)]（new）

[Magic Edge Cannon]（new）

[Magic Operation]（new）

[Flickering Movement]（new）

[Enemy Search]

[Unlocking]

[Trap Release]

[Trap Discovery]

[Space Grasp]（new）

[3D Maneuver]（new）

[Horse-riding]

[Dismantling]

[Gathering]

[UNKNOWN(Plural)]

Pochi Level 51

Skills:

[Short Sword]

[Heavy Blow]

[Helm Splitter]

[Magic Edge]

[Magic Edge Rush (Vorpal Lance)]（new）

[Magic Edge Explosion]（new）

[Magic Edge Cannon]（new）

[Magic Armor]（new）

[Magic Operation]（new）

[Shooting]

[Shield]（new）

[Throwing]

[Flickering Movement]

[Enemy Search]

[Dismantling]

[UNKNOWN(Plural)]

Lulu Level 51

Skills:

[Shooting]

[Sniping]

[Self-Defense]

[Shield]（new）

[Parrying]（new）

[Life Magic]

[Force Art Magic]

[Chanting]

[Meditation]（new）

[Marshalling]

[Etiquette]

[Cooking]

[Compounding]

[Alchemy]（new）

[Service]

[UNKNOWN (Plural)]

Mia Level 51

Skills:

[Short Sword]

[Wand]

[Bow]

[Self-Defense]

[Water Magic]

[Spirit Magic]

[Meditation]（new）

[Musical Performance]（new）

[Spirit Seer]

[Horse-riding]

[UNKNOWN(Plural)]

Nana Level 51

Skills:

[One-handed Sword]

[Heavy Armor]（new）

[Shield]

[Shield Bash]

[Parrying]

[Flickering Movement]（new）

[Magic Operation]（new）

[Force Arte]

[Meditation]（new）

[Provocation]

[Space Grasp]（new）

[Horse-riding]

[Abduction]

[Capture]

[UNKNOWN (Plural)]

Force Artes:

[Magic Arrow]

[Short Stun]

[Shield]

[Light Boost]

[Signal]

[Sonar]

[Fence]

[<<Floating Board>>]

[Sense Magic]

[Sharp Edge]

[Shelter]

[Protector]

[Fake Patch]

[Magic Shelter]

[<<Flexible Shield>>](new)

[Flexible Sword](new)
[Magic Hand](new)
[Break Magic](new)
[Mana Drain](new)
[Mana Wall](new)
[Multi Shield](new)
[<<Multi Mana Scale>>](new)
[Javelin](new)
[<<Multiple Javelin>>](new)
[(Blank)](new)
[(Blank)](new)

Name: Satou Pendragon
Race: Human
Level: 40
Affiliation: Shiga Kingdom Muno Earldom
Occupation: Mithril Plate Explorer
Rank: Chevalier
Title: Magician of Dinning Table
Skills:
[Force Art Magic]
[Water Magic]（new）
[Life Magic]
[One-handed Sword]
[Evasion]

[Alchemy]

[Blacksmith]

[Engraving]（new）

[Woodworking]

[Cooking]

[Arithmetic]

[Estimation]

[Social]

[Heraldry]

Rewards and Punishments:

[Muno Barondom Medal of Blue Gleam]

[Muno Barondom Army Medal of First-class]

[Oyugock Dukedom Medal of Blue Flame]

◆

[Muno City People Medal of Honor]

[Gururian City People Medal of Honor]

[Puta Town People Medal of Honor]

[Selbira City People Medal of Honor]

デスマーチからはじまる異世界狂想曲

Death Marching to the Parallel World Rhapsody

6

愛七ひろ Hiro Ainana

Illustration・shri

Honobono tokidoki Serious soshite Harem

カドカワBOOKS

11-1. Victory Celebration Party

Satou's here. Celebrations are pleasant to have, but I prefer to refrain from showy things such as a parade. Arisa and the others who like attentions are happy about it though....

◇

"Celebrating the Floormaster subjugation, cheers!"

"""Cheers!"""

Today, I've lead people to have a toast several times already in the Ivy Mansion.

The plan is for us to return to the labyrinth city after three days.

It seems that there's never a case where people who've gone to subjugate a floormaster come back in the same day, so after considering the time to travel there and subjugate the floormaster, the schedule has become like such.

It has already been half a day since the victory celebration party started after we crushed the floormaster and teleported back to the Ivy Mansion though.

◇

We teleported back to the Ivy Mansion after we had finished collecting the booty and the squid's body and tentacles that had relatively little damage.

I'm concerned about the situation above, but I should really straighten up the things with my companions first.

I called only Arisa to my private workshop in the Ivy Mansion.

I made up my mind, and told her the information about the reincarnated people and demon lords, unique skills, and god's fragments I've heard from [No Life King] Zen and the Dog-head Demon Lord, I also added my opinion regarding them.

"--that's about it."

"I was wondering what kind of secret it was...."

Since she had fallen silent with severe face, I hugged her, put her head on my chest, and was about to pat her, but she lightly replied, "Of course I knew about it", so my hand which was going to pat her head froze.

"I mean, god had explained about those things when I was being reincarnated."

"Can you tell me the detail?"

Since Arisa put her hands below her lips and said some half-asleep things, "I'll talk anything if you give me a sweet kiss", I made her talk with [Order].

"Uuh, you cheapskate."

"Okay okay, just talk."

Good grief, I don't understand how far is Arisa's action being serious.

"U~n, you see. I can't talk about everything I've heard you know? God forbid me to speak, or rather put a restriction about it."

Arisa began to talk with that preface.

There's not much new information.

--When someone gets reincarnated, they acquire the god's fragments, one fragment gives one unique skill.

I've already roughly guessed this.

--The soul of the human needs to have the aptitude in order to receive the god's fragment.

Most reincarnation candidates can't even accept one fragment and get their souls annihilated, someone that can accept two or more fragments seems to be a rarity.

According to Arisa, it seems that she could somehow feel about, "I can still go on", or, "It's already impossible", when she was receiving the fragments.

--The reincarnated people who have acquired the god's fragment won't necessarily become a demon lord themselves.

Rather, it seems them becoming a demon lord is something that's quite rare. Although there are cases where a single-fragment holder became a demon lord, most are the one who has three or more fragments.

....That means, more than Arisa who has two fragments, isn't it more dangerous for me who have four?

--The usage number of the unique skill is the limiter of soul.

You can exceed the number of uses, but the soul which exceeds the unique skill usage limit will become unable to hold the god's fragment.

And then, at the time the soul can't hold it anymore, the soul, which is the vessel, will be either broken or annihilated, and transformed into a demon lord.

The, "Fall into despair and become a demon lord" that the Dog-head Demon Lord was going about probably referred to how reincarnated people who've fallen in despair exceed the unique skill usage limit and transform into a demon lord.

Lastly, I inquire her information about the god.

"So, what's the name of the god who reincarnated Arisa?"

"That you see~, the god only told me『God』so I lightly consented,『I see~, it's the god~』. Like in stories about reincarnation, there's no one who asks the name of the god right?"

"Did you see how the god looked like?"

"The god met me as a soul without a body, so I don't know. I don't know whether the god was a man or a woman, an old man or an infant, handsome or uncouth, I didn't even know if the god had human-like appearance."

She heard some unfamiliar word such as god reincarnation, but she ignored it since she somehow understood it.

In conclusion, the god's identity seems to be unknown.

I can guess god's identity to a certain extent, but since it's not good to arbitrarily decide upon it, I put aside the conclusion.

Since the other party is a god, there's a possibility that I may have been misled.

Before all that, I don't even know if it was really the god.

A devil or a third party pretending to be a god is a cliché in tales after all.

◇

I feel chills down the spine when I heard that Arisa was going to exceed her limit to fight the Dog-head Demon Lord when we met him.

I make her taste eight pickled plums so she reflects on it. Of course the underlying cause was because of myself who was hiding my true level, so it might be a good time to tell her about it soon.

I could just tell it to Arisa, but I decided to also tell Liza who tends to worry like her.

Since other members don't seem to mind about my capability in battles, I'm considering whether to tell them about it after I see these two people's reaction.

"Three hundreds and eleven?"

"As expected of Master."

'Poka~n', Arisa's mouth falls like there's a sound effect, looks like she can't continue talking, her mouth is still open.

Liza speaks words of admiration like she's proud about it while being surprised, she nods marvelously.

Liza grinning like this might be quite rare.

The difference in these two's reaction must depend on whether they have the actual feeling about the abnormality of the news.

Especially Liza, since she has been focused in fighting higher leveled enemies with the boost and her equipments, she must no have the actual feeling of needing more experience points as her level increases. From her viewpoint, she must recognize level 311 as only, "Something that can be reached someday if you just work hard."

I'm thinking of telling it to other members if they ask me to tell them.

I instructed the two to keep the information about my level an absolute secret.

◇

Now then, the thing regarding my companions is enough with this, next let's care about the mansion like the employees and such.

Before calling Arisa, I had checked the situation in the residence and the city with [Clairvoyance], it seemed to have become quite a big uproar.

Ms. Miteruna at the mansion, Porina at the worker row house, and the two Beautiful Wings at the orphanage and the training school each struggled hard to keep the order at their respective place.

Thanks to them, looks like people who tend to feel anxious aren't panicking. The infants were grandly crying, but I expect the older children around to comfort them.

The city is the one in big uproar instead.

People are flooding to the viceroy's mansion, Explorer Guild and the Labyrinth Army's garrison, and are making uproars big enough it could cause riots.

At the Explorer Guild, the guildmaster shot fireballs to the sky and declared, "The demon lord will come if you don't be quiet!" which did stop the uproar from getting bigger, but she got scolded by an elf girl and the secretary-san beside her.

On that subject, Ms. Sebelkea the elf is a beautiful little girl that looks calm, although I've never met her directly. When I heard about her heroic tale from the guildmaster during our drinking bout, I imagined that she was unimaginably cute.

The guildmaster probably exaggerated.

Since we couldn't possibly join the uproar, and more importantly, we wouldn't be able to enjoy the party like this, I conveyed, "The demon lord has been defeated by the hero" to Ms. Sebelkea via Aze-san. It took a bit of time to reach her since it had to go through the high elf of her clan.

Nevertheless, it seems to have been properly conveyed, the labyrinth city that was on the verge of riots has now returned to its festive mood.

Akindo the self-proclaimed, "merchant acquainted with Satou", presents a feast to the orphanage and the training school as a congratulatory gift for the, [Demon Lord's Fall].

Of course, the real identity of Akindo is me myself in disguise.

Ah, how complicated.

Just in case, I notified the hero about the Demon Lord's extinction with the transceiver I had received from him before.

Of course as Nanashi, not Satou.

Since the hero seemed to be in the middle of investigating a labyrinth in the weaselkin empire, the one that got in contact with me was a woman with monotonous voice called Nono.

Since she had immediately departed the labyrinth city Selbira to tell the hero in our place, I didn't directly meet her.

She must be a kyonyuu since she's a hero's companion. I wanted to meet her once.

◇

"Hfey, are you dringing?"

"I'm drinking."

The drunken Arisa leaned herself on my collar to entwine my body.

Since Tama and Mia continue to have their furious fight on my lap, she seemed to have given up that side and came from behind.

I've especially permitted them to drink liquor since today is the celebration for the floormaster subjugation.

"That's riight~ andthen violatte this unripe body~"

"Okay okay, I'll gladly accept in 10 years okay."

While tearing Arisa, who's holding my face and going to steal my lips, off me, I vaguely answer her.

"Aren't Tama unfair? I think she's unfair. I mean, not allowing monopoly while monopolizing herself, that's baad isn't iit? That's why, shouldn't you hand it over to me once in a while? Hand it overr."

"Nyu~? Here is Tama's place. Because, it's relieving~?"

Mia having a long talk is rare, but Tama having it is even rarer.

She said monopoly and all, but Mia often sat on my lap herself when Tama wasn't present.

"Liza! This silver meat is really too strong nanodesu!"

"This is quite splendid! Pochi, listen to me okay? First spread magic power on your teeth. However, be careful not to pour too much or your teeth will feel pain."

"Aye nanodesu! Magic Teeth nanodesu!"

As a joke, I've prepared the hard part of the whale that even Lulu's kitchen knife can't cut by cutting it with a holy sword, making it look like sashimis as decorations, not as food, but....

Apparently, it has plucked Liza's and Pochi's heartstrings somehow.

"Kunyunyu, I can't chew it nodesu."

"This chewiness is something I've never encountered before. The taste resembles whale but my stomach won't be able to digest it if I don't chew it properly."

"This meat person is too strong nanodesu!"

Liza and Pochi are probably drunk.

They hold the sandal-sized piece of meat that glitters palely and bite it with all their might, but it seems they can't chew it.

It's amazing they can even leave tooth marks on it.

I'll prescribe them some digestive medicine later so they won't upset their stomach.

"Master, an obstacle in my magic power circulation has emerged. Please the maintenance!"

"Wait, Nana-san, you can't! Don't take off your clothesss~!"

Lulu who's holding a sheet intercepted the drunken Nana who was in the middle of taking off her clothes.

Lulu's action has become too fast ever since her level increased, I feel that the Lucky Lewd Rate has fallen.

The masters and people who've acted as a padding for party are also enjoying themselves with the liquor and the dishes in the party hall.

The drunken masters were grumbling about how they wanted to try new techniques, so I brought them to a hunting ground in the upper layer.

Apparently they've been fired up from our girls' battle.

Even while drunk, they let me see various secret techniques up close, and then I brought them back to the party while they were looking pleased, but for some reason, Mia and Arisa branded me guilty.

I guess it was bad for Ms. Poltomea to be upper half-nude after all?

It's quite upsetting since there's no way I'll crave a girl of around middle-schooler age.

Putting that side, the party continued until morning, we drank the night away by stuffing ourselves with many valuable things like the Dragon Spring liquor and the Dwarf Slayer.

Having more people in a party really is the merrier.

11-2. Reunion (1)

Satou's here. Having an unexpected reunion with an old friend is a joyous event. Even if you can't remember the name of the person you're reunited with.

◇

"My, that's quite a big magic core. It looks as if it's the magic core of the floormaster--"

Even though Arisa has half of her face covered in bandage, she presents the huge magic core while looking proud.

The face of the guild staff who received the magic core while looking slightly surprised froze. Since she has item appraisal skill, she probably understands what that magic core is.

She turns toward me, moving like a rusty robot.

"Umm, this is perhaps."

"That's right! We've defeated the floormaster of the upper layer!"

Arisa answers but the guild staff matches her eyes with me, staring as if she wants me to deny it.

Does she really not want to believe it?

"Yes, it's the magic core of the floormaster."

After I declared so, that guild staff fell down fainting. It'll be troubling if the magic core is dropped, so I catch it together with her.

I've never seen her before, wonder if it's a beginner staff?

An older guild staff behind her contacted the guild and took over to nurse the fainted staff.

As for us, we're going to the labyrinth city with his guidance.

Since it seems to be customary for the party who've defeated the floormaster to carry the magic core, I bring it along with me.

◇

Noise spread when we exited the west gate.

There were some uproar when we got out of the labyrinth gate, but it's even bigger here.

We are equipped with old equipments which have been made to look damaged, and also used special make-up and bandages to make it looks like we had a fierce battle.

We don't actually have any real injury, but defeating a floor master without any injury would lessen the authenticity, so we make it like such.

『Oy! Those [Wound-free Pendragon] bunch are injured!?』

『It's true! Even the Shield Princess's shield's been split in two!』

By Shield Princess, do they mean Nana?

However, [Wound-free] is too exaggerated. They just have always been healed before we return to the surface, there is never a case where the members, including the three rear guards, are not injured.

『They couldn't possibly challenge the Floormaster right?』

『No way that can be even for the Pendragon bunch.』

『Yeah, even the [Depth Round Dance] guys who went out in fanfare after gathering several Red Iron bunch got partially destroyed when they tried to hunt the magic core needed to summon the floormaster, let alone the floormaster itself.』

So such a thing happened when I was running around to many places.

We continue to go toward the explorer guild while I vaguely listening to the hustle and bustle around.

『Those two armored children the Black Spear Liza is carrying aren't death right?』

『Ah, since she's carrying them well they're probably alright? Look, they're even waving hands.』

Pochi and Tama who are playing dead wave their hands sociably.

There's no point in their serious injury make-up like this. Well, it's fine.

"Fuhahaha! See this well!"

Arisa whom I'm giving a ride on my shoulder raises the beach ball-sized floormaster's magic core up high, showing it off to the surrounding.

Buzz, buzz, explorers and the townspeople are exchanging words noisily.

Arisa is dressed with bloodied-bandage that looks like an eyepatch on her face, acting like she has some serious injury. She's properly equipped the blond hair wig together with a hood.

"This is!"

Arisa stops at that interval.

The people around who are making buzzes hold their breath together, anticipating the next words.

"This is the Floormaster's, 『Thunder Squid』's Magic Core!"

When Arisa declared so, explosion-like uproar burst out.

She really is someone who likes to show off.

◇

"Geez, you've really gone and done it, defeating the floormaster."

"Yes, although it was thanks to the alliance with these people."

I reported the detail of the subjugation in the guildmaster's office.

Each of the people who act as if they were the party leaders who participated in the subjugation are in this room.

The other members are in my mansion under the pretext of healing their injuries.

"Then, you challenged with 7 group of 72 people, and came back with 15 survivors huh. There are a lot of victims, but this is the shortest record."

"That's because the parties' composition prioritized firepower."

I was slightly surprised about the shortest record, but I made (Poker Face) skill to work hard.

For the time being, let's make up some story.

Nevertheless, even though I had properly added the calculated time needed to travel in the labyrinth, and there should have been time loss from when I destroyed the dog-head demon lord, we still got the shortest record huh.

Secretary-san continues the talk while lining up various documents on the desk.

"Then, there are five parties of 15 people, 『Pendragon』, 『Samurai General』, 『Blue Rose』, 『Twin Oni』, and 『Blessing of Great Spirit』 that apply for Mithril Plate, are there not?"

"I will politely decline."

"It's unnecessary for us."

"Same."

"I do not intend to be affiliated with a brat who haven't even lived for 50 years."

"U, umm..."

These masters should have done another rehearsal for their performance. Looks like the contents of the lecture from the party yesterday have all but vanished.

Since Secretary-san seems troubled with the unexpected replies, I send her a lifeboat.

"We will apply for it."

"Y, yes, then, other parties besides『Pendragon』will not apply, am I right?"

"Long-winded."

"We'll leave Sir Pendragon to manage the rest."

Looks like the guildmaster and secretary-san have decided to pull back after the masters said so. The guildmaster allowed them to go out of the room.

They probably intend to negotiate with them later.

The guildmaster and secretary-san wished for me to negotiate for them, but I indirectly declined.

They asked me regarding the masters' origin, but I deceived them by saying that I just scouted people who seemed strong outside the labyrinth city so I didn't know the detail.

I was asked to choose one among the treasures, so I selected the [Item Appraisal] orb.

It seems to be a skill that's coveted on the same level as [Item Box] among the treasure orbs.

I'm planning of letting Lulu uses it for appraising ingredients.

◇

The next day, we are made to participate in a parade jointly sponsored by the guildmaster and the viceroy.

Looks like we have to ride on three separate gaudily decorated horse-drawn carriages and parade around the town.

The masters have all gone back to Boruenan Forest yesterday, so it's just our members now.

The very first carriage has me, Arisa and Mia. The second has Pochi, Tama, Liza, and the last in line has Lulu and Nana.

Besides me, the members' composition seem to have been decided in a lottery lot yesterday, but to even have a preliminary lottery draw to decide the drawing turn is too strict. They must have really been looking forward to this parade.

Everyone has dressed up, on top of that they've also equipped the equipments taken from the loot, sprinkling smiles around.

Of course I've also worn a robe more formal than usual, and a gold-braided short mantle that Arisa's picked.

『Arisa-cha~n, look here~』

『Mia-sama, your figure is so beautiful, it dazzles my eyes!』

『Arisa! I'll treat you to some skewers later!』

『Ah, Mia-sama. Your fresh profile today is like a refreshing lily of the valley--』

Oh, Mia is popular. When I commended her, "You're quite popular", she strongly denied, "NO." I might have been unthoughtful. Gonna reflect on it.

Still, I feel sorry for Arisa who get called only by little girls and brats.

I leave it alone since Arisa must also not want to be consoled for it. Arisa has been sending glances to me while muttering, "Another brat huh~", but since there can be time when gentleness is painful, the correct answer should be to ignore her.

Some prostitute-like onee-sans wave at me along the way while calling, "Young master~", so I wave back at them. It goes without saying that Arisa and Mia pinched me from both side.

While being led by [Pendora] children who are swinging a rod that had flower basket on the tip, the parade train entered the venue for the unveiling of the floormaster subjugation.

◇

And then, we safely finished debuting the floormaster subjugation which took two hours.

Although the first subjugation greeting was embarrassing, it was quite painful when I had to listen to celebratory messages from the nobles, the city personages like the Mithril and Red Iron explorers while smiling.

Afterward, Arisa debuted the loot by reciting them in entertainer-like way of speaking, in addition to Mia's musical performance, the excitement of the people doubled, making the tension on the venue increased dangerously.

After all the programs from before have finished, the buffet party on the venue begins.

Various dishes and liquor have been prepared on the stalls on this venue, and they're all free to take.

It seems the cost is burdened by the Explorer Guild--or rather the King himself. I didn't particularly mind paying for it myself, but since it was a custom, I decided to rely on the kindness.

"But hey, is it really alright?"

"What is?"

Arisa talked to me while looking awkward when we were walking to the waiting room of the venue.

"I mean, you've always said that you don't want to stand out right."

"I don't mind. I didn't want to stand out because I was afraid that some strange guy would have an eye on our girls before they could protect themselves."

Right now, they should be able to do something against even an army, as long as there is no poison or powerful trap involved.

I've built enough personal connections too, so if there's someone influential that's hostile to us, I will naturally hear about them, and I can just make use of the enemy of my enemy to quickly eliminate them.

In my case, demon lord flags seemed like it'd be raised if I were to eliminate people who set their eyes on me, so I didn't want to stand out. It would be hard to enjoy the trip if we were being chased by the people around us.

For the same reason, I don't intend to reveal the fact that hero Nanashi is me myself to anyone besides my companions.

I don't want to become like the hero Hayato who's too busy with official businesses he doesn't have time to play.

"However, won't we get pushed with some weird positions from Shiga Kingdom?"

"It's probably alright. Most positions besides the guildmaster's minister, and the general are filled with nobles. Even if they come to invite us, it's probably for a position such as a knight captain or intelligence right? If something like that happens, I'll pull my connections to refuse them so it's fine."

Rather, the possibility of me becoming a chef in royal palace looks way higher.

◇

I carry the presented loot from before to a safe underground while being accompanied by some guild staff.

It's the job of the guild staff and the royal knight to bring them to the royal capital from here on. I've put a marker on the Item Appraisal orb just in case.

"Everyone, thanks for your hard work. I'm going to greet some big-shots on the buffet party now, how about everyone? You can get back and rest on the mansion if you're tired okay?"

"No we won't! I'm going to have a live stage with Mia and the others!"

"Nn."

"Tama is a fascinating dancer~?"

"Pochi is also going to dance spin, spin nodesu!"

The four youth troupe live performance huh.

"That sounds fun. I'll go see it later."

"Nn, promise."

"You have to absolutely come okay?!"

"I'll work hard~"

"We'll make the best stage!"

These energetic four seem fine, but how about other members?

"Master I will go to the orphanage to collect Shiro and Crow."

"I cannot rest in the mansion. Because I have the mission of conquering all the meat on the stalls!"

These two are unchanging.

"Master, I have been asked to perform on the labyrinth monstrous-fish dismantling show, is it alright if I go?"

"Of course it's alright. However, use the normal kitchen knife from the mansion okay."

"Yes!"

Still, the labyrinth monstrous fish only appear in the middle layer, I wonder who hunted it?

There shouldn't be enough time between our return to the present, so it might be a leftover item from the viceroy's request.

I walk back to the ground floor of the guild while hearing everyone's plan.

There, we reunited with a nostalgic person.

11-3. Reunion (2)

Satou's here. The word shuraba is originally about a pathetic scene which involves complication of mad love. Fortunately, that kind of shuraba has never entered my life, but the kind of shuraba that happens in the clean-up of a crashing project is an everyday occurrence for me. I wonder which one is better...

◇

I had already noticed it from my radar beforehand, but I kept it a secret to make it a surprise for other members.

『Oy, look at that.』

『N, no way.』

『Oh...God....』

I understand their feeling, but the last guy is exaggerating.

『How beautiful....』

『Oh! My beautiful goddess! Have you forgotten--』

I saw that the Great Shield Gell was removed in the middle of his talk beyond the stirred crowd.

"Satouu!"

She flew in the sky from beyond the crowd and appeared before us.

The lobby of the explorer guild has high ceiling so she didn't hit it, but I'm not sure what to think of flying while she's in a dress.

Even while thinking such thing, my line of sight was robbed by two shaking miracles.

"I've come!"

While looking shy in red face, she declares so with folded arms so arrogantly.

I wonder why is this person mistaken in this kind of thing.

"Karina~?"

"Now, let the match begin nanodesu!"

Ah, wait.

Pochi jumps out energetically like there's a 'gyun' sound effect, and Tama also jumps triangularly using the ceiling to assault Lady Karina.

Pochi indiscreetly breaks through the barrier created by the magic creature Raka, and blows through the wall behind together with Lady Karina.

I was able to stop Tama barely in time, but both Pochi and Lady Karina are on the other side of the wall.

"Oppai-san is sinking. Namu~"

"Pochi great."

Arisa and Mia are being cruel for no reason.

"Karina-dono should be alright. She often played with Pochi and Tama in Muno Castle after all."

"They certainly also played happily in the duchy capital, but she doesn't look too well..."

"She would have been dead if she were a common life-form, so I assert."

Liza doesn't seem to be worried, but Lulu peek through the wall worryingly.

Of course, just as Nana had surmised, if Lady Karina took a serious blow from the current Pochi, she would have died instantly regardless of Raka's protection.

It only ended in her fainting since Pochi was going easy by not using Flickering Movement, and I followed up by immediately using [Magic Hand].

She usually could control her strength, but it seems she was really happy about reuniting with Karina. Yet, I still have to scold her in this regard.

While I'm nursing Lady Karina, both Liza and me scold Pochi together.

The punishment is three days without meat.

◇

"Karina-sama~, where are you~?"

I heard someone searching for Lady Karina beyond the crowd, and there was Erina, the combat maid of Muno Earldom, when I looked there.

"Erina, she's here."

"Ah! Chevalier-sama!"

There is a figure of female soldier behind her I've seen for the first time. I feel like I've seen her somewhere before, but I can't remember. There wasn't someone like her among the baron's maids and the territorial army's soldiers---

--I remember now.

It was the girl who was ran over by the carriage rode by Toruma at Muno city.

Still, I didn't think she would work under Baron Muno after what she had been through.

The other party shouldn't know about me, so I greet her, "Nice to meet you."

"Did Pina not come here?"

"Yes, Pina has been promoted, so it's only me and newbie-chan this time. Taruna looked like she was wanting to go too, but she had been selected to guard the exchange students from the duchy capital."

Lady Karina seemed to have recovered when we were catching up, she opened her eyes.

"How are you feeling?"

"Sa, Satou, I'm, fine, desuwa."

Even though I've especially looked after her on my lap, lady Karina awkwardly gets up and takes some distance away from me.

Pochi apologizes, "I'm sorry, nanodesu" while looking dejected.

Then, a new intruder appeared.

◇

"Chevalier-sama! Congratulations for your achieve...ment?"

"Thank you, Merian."

Merian, the daughter of Baronet Dyukeli, appeared and congratulated me from the crowd, but it was changed into a question halfway through.

Her eyes shifted to Lady Karina, or rather she focused on her breasts.

After Merian, Princess Mitia and her exclusive maid-san came together. She's also together with a bodyguard-san with scary face of course.

"Satou-dono! Congratulation for your exploit noja!"

"I am honored, your highness Mitia."

Princess Mitia talked to me innocently like usual.

Lady Karina muttered, "Your highness?", beside me.

Erina is whispering, "It's a formidable rival!", to the newbie's ear, but the true formidable one exists at the world tree.

Lady Karina pulled my sleeve from behind like some shy girl, and whispered, "Introduce me."

This is quite rare for this haughty girl. I've always intended to do just that from the beginning of course.

"Your highness, she is the daughter of my master, Karina Muno-sama."

"Oh! To raise Satou-dono as their retainer, your parent must be a very noble-minded statesman! You are also truly beautiful noja! ....Perchance, are you not the fiancee of Satou-dono?"

"N, no--"

"That is not so, your highness."

Since Lady Karina clogged her words, I told Princess Mitia that she was not my fiancee in her stead.

Lady Karina seems discontent about me talking ahead of her, she sends some reproachful glance toward me.

Please don't look at me with such eyes. It is contrary to the fact, so I cannot exactly affirm it right?

"Karina-sama, she is Princess Mitia of Norooku Kingdom--the western leader of the kingdoms union."

"Satou, don't tell me, you!"

I can guess what she wants to say, but please be relieved since I won't make a move to the loli-faced princess Mitia.

Therefore, I corrected it, "That imagination is a misunderstanding", close to her ear.

However, the peanut gallery are being noisy since a while ago.

『Not only he has the Shield Princess, and Jenna, he also hid such a beauty?!』

『Damnit, he wouldn't make Noja princess his mistress right? Right?』

『You, she's still at that age....』

Like always, someone who has almost done lese majeste is mixed among them. No, it would have been out for him if he were heard huh.

Now then, leaving that aside, the favorite is arriving soon.

◇

『The real Explorer Guild is packed after all.』

『You're right Iona-san. It might've been better if we went to the East Guild as advised by the knight.』

I still can't see her behind the crowd.

『Ruu, give me one of those meat skewers too.』

『Ou, awright. Trade with that red skewer.』

『Mou! I was wondering where you two were, so you're buying and eating!』

『I mean, every stall is free. Can't do without eating them.』

『There seems to be some kind of festival, but it's quite lavish for them to have everything free.』

『Un, they say this Chevalier Pendragon subjugated a very strong monster even though he's a noble.』

They're noisy like always.

I saw her sun-colored hair beyond the crowd. Blond color that's brighter than Nana's and Karina's.

『Mou! We have to register as explorers, and greet the staffs--』

Our eyes met.

"Sa, Satou-san!"

She gives her luggage to Lilio like she's throwing it, and then she pushes her way through the crowd, running.

While apologizing to people whom she's almost bumped, her gaze never separates from me.

"Satou-san."

"Yes."

She couldn't stop her momentum, I gently caught her who jumped into my arms.

She's lightly dressed in leather armor, but her softness is in good health.

"Satou-san."

I wait for her who repeats my name.

She looks up from my chest, tears are gathering on the edge of her eyes.

"--I've come."

The word is probably filled with many emotions.

She spins her words with shaking voice.

"Welcome to the Labyrinth City, Zena-san."

Hearing my words, although slightly looking anxious, Zena-san smiles like a flower in full bloom.

I'll patch things up with Lady Karina who complains about the different in treatment later. Pochi and Tama clap Lady Karina's legs, like 'pon', from both side, but there should be no ill-will in that.

It has been awhile.

Zena-san.

11-4. Reunion (3)

Satou's here. When you meet old friends in a class reunion, I wonder why do things that happened such a long time ago can be so vividly recalled? I usually can't remember them at all, it's strange.

◇

"When did you arrive at the Labyrinth City?"

"Yes, it was late at night yesterday."

I knew about it of course, but I refrained from accidentally going to the Corps where Zena-san was since it would have made me look like a stalker.

These girls were staying inside their base during the parade so I shouldn't know that they were here.

"Excuuse me. Okay, okay, separate now~"

"Nn, shameless."

Arisa and Mia push themselves between Zena-san and me who were inadvertently talking while hugging, pulling us apart.

Zena-san who noticed that we were hugging parted away while swinging her hand, saying "wa wa wa."

"I, I'm sorry, I was...."

"No no, I'm happy that you're exalted with our reunion."

Zena-san unexpectedly has a passionate side huh. She also hugged me, tackle-like, when I escaped Seryuu city labyrinth back then.

"You two seem to be quite close don't you? Would you introduce her to me?"

Lady Karina puts her hand on my shoulder and grinds it from behind.

When I looked toward Lady Karina, Princess Mitia and even Lulu stared at us curiously.

Huh? Lulu should be acquainted with her though?

"She is someone whom I'm very indebted with during my stay in Seryuu city, one of the magic soldiers of the territorial army, hailing from Chevalier Marientail house, Zena-san."

I've heard her house name once before, but it's the first time I've said it.

I've always only called her Zena-san after all.

The way I introduced her seemed bad, Zena-san's expression got slightly clouded.

Maybe I should have said that she's my friend?

Behind us, the peanut gallery started to buzz about Seryuu city's rumors, like, "The city was safe even though an upper-class demon attacked it", or, "They're ruthless army whose soldiers even fight wyverns."

It must be quite popular to have many people know about it even though it's a territory located on the opposite side of the kingdom from here.

"Zena-sama. Although you might have forgotten, I am Liza whose life was saved by you in Seryuu city. Owing to that, I am now serve under Master, and have been able to accomplish great feats. I can never thank you enough."

"Thank you~"

"Thank you, nanodesu."

Liza puts her weapon on the ground, kneels, and respectfully bow to Zena-san.

It seems that Pochi and Tama also remember that their life have been saved by Zena-san, they convey their thanks while looking meek.

『Oy, Black Spear Liza let go of her spear!』

『Rather, she saved those three's life huh, just how incredible is she.』

『So the rumor saying the soldier of Seryuu city treats wyverns like they're small fries is really true after all.』

『That girl looks plain, but don't you think she's unexpectedly cute?』

The peanut gallery are fussy.

Should we move to the guild's business room where only Red Iron holders and nobles can use?

"My ability might be lacking, but please order me if you need me for anything. If Master permits, I will rush over immediately."

"Oh no, your words of gratitude are already enough."

Zena-san is at a loss from Liza's sincere words.

Even though dragons are still impossible for the current Liza, she can easily solo something like a wyvern.

"Hey, introduce her to me."

Lady Karina who was unusually sociable today demanded me so.

Someone intruded when I was opening my mouth to introduce Zena-san to Lady Karina.

"Ah! Arisa-chan, why are you still here!"

"Arisa, and Mia, quickly go to the stage. I've asked the intro guys to stretch their part, but they can't keep doing it forever."

Jenna and Iruna of [Beautiful Wings] who are in charge of the stage have come to call Arisa and the others.

Come to think of it, Arisa and Mia said that they were going on stage.

"Uwaah, I forgot."

"Nn."

"Hurry~"

"Oh no nanodesu! Karina, let's go together nodesu! I want you to look at the gallant figures of Pochi and her friends closely nodesu!

Lady Karina is pulled by Pochi and Tama from both sides toward the stage.

She was calling my name even while being pulled so she might have some business with me, but I can just listen to her tonight.

She probably came here thoughtlessly without arranging for the lodging.

"You too Master, please don't keep flirting, come look at the stage!"

"Yeah, I'm going of course."

I replied positively to Arisa who asked to make sure of it, and sent her out by waving hands.

Princess Mitia also said, "I certainly have to listen to Mia-dono's performance!", and then she pulled Merian who seemed to still have something to say toward the stage.

"Master, I declare myself to go collect Shiro and Crow."

"They're probably tired of waiting, you should get them quick."

Nana excused herself and left to the orphanage.

I think Lulu said that she would go back to get the kitchen knife.

"Lulu, when you're going back to fetch the kitchen knife, tell the girls who are house-sitting to prepare the detached room. Karina-sama and her companions probably going to stay there."

"Y, yes."

The preparation for their lodging should be alright with this.

◇

"Sa, Satou-san, umm. She was.... Um--"

"Boy, been awhile~ Were there your mistresses or fiancees among the beauty army just now?"

"There aren't. Incidentally, there is no lover either."

When Zena-san was hesitating over how she should ask, Ms. Lilio asked the question with the crux of the matter like she was sending a life boat.

It was groundless, so I denied it immediately.

Arisa and the others are important to me, but if I have to say, they're more like relatives or family to me.

Lady Karina feels like an annoying junior, or a daughter of my superior. It feels like those demonic breasts would snatch my soul, but I don't intend to yield just yet.

More than anything, Aze-san wasn't present in the group earlier.

Right at then, the rough voice an adult man who can't read the mood cut in.

"Black Spear Liza! I am Kerun the『Knight of White Spear』! I challenge you to a match!"

"Master. May I?"

"Go for it. Don't kill him okay."

"Yes."

"Hahhaa! Now's the only time you can afford to talk big!"

Since bloodshed is forbidden inside the guild, Liza and him went to the temporary arena space in front of the Labyrinth Army fortress.

This arena space has been built because there are usually a lot of people who start having brawls during the height of a festival, and buildings could collapse if they fought carelessly with their high strength.

"Um, Satou-san, is it alright for you not to follow them?"

"Oh it's alright. Liza can defeat him without sustaining any injury."

There's the level difference too, it's probably going to end up a one-side game.

If I were to go see it, Liza would be in high spirit and her opponent might get injured.

◇

After the four of them have finished registering as explorers, we go out of the guild together.

Zena-san and her colleagues are going to meet with her fellow territorial soldiers in front of the west gate to assault the labyrinth in one hour.

It hasn't even been a day since they arrive in the labyrinth city yet they're already going to enter the labyrinth, quite aggressive.

Although I guess we're not one to talk about challenging the labyrinth in the same day of the arrival.

"Have you purchased the provision?"

"Yes, we've been told to prepare only our own equipments since the engineers will be the ones responsible for the provision."

I see, the engineers have it rough since it seems there are 12 people in all.

"Zena-cchi~, we're going to the stalls to recharge our spirits."

"Zena, remember to get some grub besides the love affair."

"Ruu-san, you don't need to speak unnecessary things. Zena-san, just be careful not to be late for the meeting okay."

The three Zena-san's colleagues slipped into the crowd after saying such nosy things.

"Mou! Everyone is like that!"

"Shall we go, Zena-san."

"Y, yes."

I take Zena-san's hand so she won't get lost, and go toward the stage where Arisa and co. are performing.

Since now is immediately after the parade, some unfamiliar explorers and townspeople called me [Young Master].

Some brothel onee-sans also called me, but they practiced their tact when they saw Zena-san beside me, they changed the subject very naturally, saying, "Please visit our establishment at least once."

As expected of employees of high class establishments. Truly tactful interactions.

Let's give them generous tip when I go visiting them with [Pendora] guys.

The venue has seats not only for nobles, but also for us as the leading actors today, but only Lady Karina and her companions, and Nana who are with Shiro and Crow on both her sides are there.

I was going toward there too, but since Arisa's stage had begin, I decided to view them from the general audience's seats.

"The music is wonderful isn't it. I wonder if the light orb behind that girl produces the sound?"

"Yes, it seems to be a fairykin magic called『Instrument Player』. However, the music is wonderful because the skillful players."

"Yes....That's right, I can understand. It's quite wonderful sounds."

Mia who's doing the orchestra alone is certainly amazing, but I can't make light of Arisa who's accompanying her by singing the anime theme song.

While listening to the song, I get myself healed by watching Pochi and Tama who are dancing on the stage by matching to the song. Some shrill voices hang on the venue as the two are flying in the sky in pixie outfit.

When I listen closely, it seems Pochi and Tama are also singing while dancing.

I guess the singing coming from the venue are of the orphanage children?

Arisa who's singing with all her soul doesn't notice me, but it seems Pochi and Tama do, they wave their hands while rotating in the sky.

I wave back at them, which seems to have made them happy, the number of the sky rotations increases.

◇

After Arisa and co. stage is over, I enjoy the festival together with Zena-san by snacking some meat skewers, and potato chips made from Hopping Potato around the stalls. It reminds me of the time when we were going around the stalls in Seryuu city.

Right, since I was introduced to the Seryuu city specialty products by Zena-san back then, let's introduce her to the specialty products here this time.

So I thought, I went to the shopkeeper who was exhibiting dried fruits, but--

"I'm sorry, the date palm is sold out. The load coming from the western part of the continent has been scarce for the last half month."

--unfortunately, it's out of stock.

The shopkeeper-san indiscreetly joked, "The demon lord might have been revived beyond the desert", but I couldn't laugh since it sounded probable.

We watch Lulu's Labyrinth Monstrous Fish Dismantling Show, and enjoy the freshly-made fried fish.

Since the fish was a bit grotesque-looking, Zena-san was hesitating to eat it, but she resolved herself and put it in her mouth after she saw me eating it.

"Delicious!"

Zena-san opens her eyes wide from the shock.

"....Amazing, the taste is so delicate even though it looked like that. It looks like a croquette from the outside, but it's soft and crunchy inside your mouth, it's really tasty. Moreover, it matches so strangely well with this white sauce."

After she's finished chewing it, a faltering impression comes from Zena-san.

The fried fish that she was holding disappeared into her stomach in a blink of an eye.

"Even though she's that young, she's amazing."

"Lulu is the greatest chef in the labyrinth city after all."

I leave behind my praise, "It was delicious", to Lulu and turn over the place to other guests.

Having staggering queue is only natural for food this delicious.

I encourage the little girl maids who are helping Lulu and then escort Zena-san to the west gate.

Unfortunately, we're running out of time.

"Zena-cchi, it'd been alright if you were a little bit late."

"I can't do that since I'm the squad leader."

"Are you seeing her off boy?"

"Yes, and this is a present."

From my bag, I take out a small bag containing several intermediate healing potions and magic recovery potions, and also some all-purpose antidotes made from dragon white stone. The magic potions have ordinary effect since they were compounded by other people.

Zena-san was declining since they were expensive items, but it didn't continue since Iona-san beside her accepted it.

"Have all members gathered? These people are the explorers who are going to guide us this time, Heliona-dono, the daughter of Baron Ketel, and Gina-dono, the daughter of Chevalier Daryl, both from [Moonlight]."

The young knight who appeared to be the captain of Zena-san and her colleagues introduced miss Gina and miss Heriona who are acquainted with me.

According to AR indication, miss Heliona and Captain-shi seem to be related.

Miss Gina noticed me after she was done greeting Zena-san and her colleagues.

"Ch, Chevalier-sama! Please continue the favo--"

"Calm down, Gina. That's the line for wedding. Chevalier Pendragon! I endeavored to catch up to you who was a Red Iron holder, but I wouldn't have dreamed that you would defeat the floormaster and acquire the Mithril Plate! Allow me to selfishly make you my aim from now on too!"

"It is an honor."

I wonder since when did we became rivals?

If I'm not mistaken, I've only ever talked to Ms. Heliona once.

"Chevalier? Pen-dra-go-n?"

Zena-san looks dumbfounded at me with wide eyes without light. Her speech was broken for some reason.

Huh? Haven't I said it?

Come to think of it, the townspeople up until we came here all called me [Young Master].

But, is it really something to be that shocked about?

According to Consul Nina, many people got elevated to the lowest ranked honorary knight in any territory every year.

"Did I not say it? Actually, I have been given the rank of honorary knight from Baron Muno, so I am called Chevalier Pendragon now."

"Eh, then, then the leading actor of this festival was you boy?"

"To be exact, one of the leading actors. There were a lot of people who challenged the floormaster."

To be more correct, the leading actress are our girls only, I'm just a bonus.

Captain-shi who can't read the mood shouts "Then, let us depart!" out loud, and the people of Seryuu Earldom Army begin moving toward the labyrinth gate.

"I will guide you to visit recommended shops when you've gone back from the labyrinth. Would you be willing to hear the full story when that happen?"

"Y, yes. Surely, okay?"

I promise Zena-san who's still not recovered from the shock.

I wanted to go together with her, but Zena-san's standing would fall if an outsider tagged along with her on a military exercise to the labyrinth, so I refrained myself.

The guides are the two people from Moonlight, so they shouldn't go that deep.

Let's confirm her safety with [Clairvoyance] magic once in a while.

I've forgotten to ask their scheduled return, but they probably won't go for several days for their first attempt, I guess I'll reserve some restaurants and bring her there everyday until I depart to the Royal

Capital in five days.

During the days she can't go out, I can just let acquaintances who have worked hard like Ms. Miteruna to go instead.

What awaited me when I came back to the venue was the complaints of Lady Karina who was in the noble seat and got exposed to the curious eyes of the onlookers.

Even though Lady Karina is a beauty, she's not used to people's gazes strangely enough.

11-5. Karina's Weapons

Satou's here. I like meat, not as much as the beastkin girls do though. Or rather, besides vegetarians, there should be not a lot of people who aren't fond of meat

This doesn't have anything to do with the above, but there was an illustration of a heroine's silhouette with only the word 'meat' written on it in a light novel I read long ago .

Meat are nice, aren't they.

◇

"Fuh, I feel so refreshed."

"Please wait Karina-sama, I haven't tied the girdle."

"Karina-sama, don't move until after I dry your hairr~"

Lady Karina and her companions who had refreshed themselves on the bathroom in the main building after the long journey entered the room.

She does wear the same bathrobe that we usually use after bathing, but I didn't think that she would enter the living room just wearing that.

Lady Karina is wearing the knee-length robe so the area around her waist is covered, but the breast area is dangerous.

I feel like getting sucked into the deep valley.

Ah, the devil is whispering to my ears. I'm in the same mental state of Adam who was being tempted to reach his hand toward the [Fruit of Knowledge] by the snake--

"Guilty. ■■■■ Darkness"

--The joyous image was cut by Mia's spirit magic.

I won't ever forget the image just now.

Absolutely!

"What? Magic?"

"Shameless."

"That's right, you can't entice him with those cheat weapons."

"Karina-sama, the stimulus from those clothes is a bit too much, so I'm sorry, but please change into this one piece."

Bewildered Lady Karina was getting complaints from Mia and Arisa, and then Lulu followed up.

I cannot see them since they are on the other side of the darkness curtain made by Mia's magic.

Of course I could have seen it if I just used [Clairvoyance] magic, but that would be like peeping, so I restrained myself.

◇

Mia canceled her magic, and then Lady Karina who had her breast area firmly guarded came back to the room.

It seems these girls didn't bring any change of clothes for their journey, they had only prepared the dress Lady Karina was wearing earlier for her.

I feel sorry if they have to change back to dirty clothes after taking a bath, so we've lent them Lulu's and Nana's clothes for today.

It seems to be a bit too tight, I wont' say where though. The clothes are screaming.

"Please bear with those clothes today, I'll call a tailor to make new clothes for you first thing tomorrow morning."

"I still have the dress I've got from before, so I don't need a new one desuwa."

Lady Karina curtly refuses my suggestion.

I don't know if it's because she has just got out of the bath or because of the bathrobe appearance from before, she's blushing in slightly cherry blossom color, it's a bit sexy.

"We have been invited by the viceroy's Madam to a tea party, you can't possibly attend with the same dress right?"

"I will be absent. I'd like you to convey my refusal desuwa."

That can't be accepted, so after some back-and-forth arguments, she agrees to have new armors and weapons to challenge the labyrinth.

And also one other thing.

"We will be departing to the Royal Capital for the Kingdom Conference in five days. A letter jointly signed by Consul Nina and Baron Muno has arrived, instructing me to take Karina-sama along."

"No desuwa!"

"The matter has been decided."

"N.O."

Lady Karina is throwing a tantrum like a child.

"Karina, selfish~?"

"Your right will be scolded if you don't do your duty properly nodesu!"

There come supports from Pochi and Tama, but the content of the persuasion is subtly strange.

"You can go back to the labyrinth city again once the Kingdom Conference is over right."

"But, won't they tell me to go back to the barondom then?"

I personally think that's fine, but returning home five days after arriving from a long journey seems bitter.

"I'll support you when that happens."

"You absolutely will desuwayo!"

I will support you.

I can't ascertain that you will absolutely go back to the Labyrinth City though.

◇

"Meat-san, why are you meat nanodesu?"

Pochi is being melancholic while staring hard at the meat on a picture book.

Was she really that shocked with the meatless dinner earlier.

Even though I, Lulu, and even Mia accompanied Pochi by eating meatless vegetable-only dinner.

Tama's share wasn't without meat, but there were only half of the usual quantity, so she looked a bit painful.

"Pochi, tomorrow--"

"Do you mean! The meat ban is lifted tomorrow nanodesu?!"

Pochi hyper-reacted to my words and said such things, but she really has to introspect herself this time, so I won't be lenient.

"--there's no meat, but I'll make the curry that Pochi loves."

"Dejected~ nanodesu."

Pochi who had a short-lived elation helplessly crumbles on the cushion.

Her favorite curry didn't help to recover her huh.

I pick up the jerky that Tama tried to secretly give to Pochi with [Magic Hand].

"No~?"

"No."

"Tama's feeling is already quite enough nanodesu. Pochi the criminal has to receive her punishment nanodesu."

Pochi looks like she's acting somehow, looking at how she keeps glancing at me, it must be suggested by Arisa, so I ignore it.

◇

After putting everyone to sleep, I move to the Ivy Mansion's underground workshop in order to make equipments for Lady Karina and her companions.

I wanted to investigate the lower layer of the labyrinth tonight, but I postponed it to tomorrow night since some unexpected jobs came up.

Leriril in her sleep-wear met me and then started to prepare the work bench, but since she was being unsteady and looking sleepy, I returned her to her bedroom.

Oh right, let's check Zena-san's condition in the labyrinth before I start working.

By relying on Zena-san's marker, I peek at her situation in the labyrinth using [Clairvoyance] magic.

Apparently, they're still in the Beetle Area since the dinner time.

I was worried whether they would go to the neighboring Mantis Area, but if they're in Beetle Area, they should be fine since the only dangerous monsters are the Labyrinth Beetle, and the Short Horn Beetle that are around level 20s.

The overflowing Labyrinth Crickets from the Gushing Hole would be dangerous for normal explorers, but since there are two people who can use area attack magic among them, they shouldn't be in any danger. Rather, it's tasty exp.

I begin to work on the equipments after feeling relieved.

First, for Lady Karina, swords are no good.

She couldn't control the blade part well that she was banned to use them by Sir Zotor in Muno Castle after she broke several swords.

Blunt weapons are probably better for her.

I thought of Knuckle Guards and Thorn Gauntlets, but since there are many enemies that are dangerous to fight in close combat in the labyrinth, I ought to make a long weapon.

I also thought of Flails, Maces, and Tonfas, but since she has superhuman strength from Raka, she'd probably better off with a

Hammer or something along the line.

Pure Mithril Hammer is fast to swing, and has good power to match, but I can't imagine Lady Karina managing magic power well, so I'll make it from Mithril and Iron alloy.

I'll make one with a small hammer on its tip, and then change it into bigger hammer as her level increases.

I quickly make a casted hammer and then etch it with Baron Muno seal.

I lightly swing it to check the balance.

I made it by referencing the great hammer I had used at the Dwarf Hometown, so it has come out well in just one try. Samples are important really.

Her armor should be good enough with the Hard Newt leather armor, just like Arisa and the others' armor in public. I create the helmet and armor by matching her size which Arisa's measured.

Just in case, I make it so the breast area can be adjusted in three sizes. Since the size that Arisa's measured is different from what I've observed by one or two cup.

I've made Lady Karina's armor to be easy to move with, and also added Knuckle Guards for close combat after all.

I guess some normal pre-made one-handed swords and round shields are good enough for Erina and the other.

◇

"Ah, the fukufuku smell makes me feel like I'm in heaven nodesu. "

"Fukufuku~"

Pochi and Tama look so happy as they put their nose toward the yakiniku's smell coming from the stalls, I think they're mistaking fukuiku (sweet smelling) with it though.

Even though they've just eaten curry for lunch, it's probably, "There's another stomach for meat."

"Master, reporting my arrival."

"Mornin', masta."

"Good morning, masta."

Nana who've come carrying Shiro and Crow put them down to the ground.

These two call me master, looks like they've been influenced by Nana.

"The pronunciation is different. It's『Mastar』."

"That so? Mastar?"

"Is it Mastar? The pronunciation sounds different than Nana-sama's though..."

Shiro acts its age, but Crow speaks like an adult despite its 1st year primary grader age.

<TLN: Their gender is unknown according to the author.>

"Pochi, Tama. Let's go! Our battles are waiting desuwa!"

Lady Karina who's shouldering a Pole Hammer gazes at the west gate toward the labyrinth with an expression full of fighting spirit.

"Satou! Let me fight you once I get back okay? I'll let you check my body which will have rapidly grown in the labyrinth!"

Lady Karina who's laughing fearlessly speaks something slightly erotic.

The peanut gallery that only heard the half-end is buzzing.

It didn't seem to be a remark with innuendo as Lady Karina pulled Pochi and Tama with her hands toward the west gate triumphantly.

Now then, I had specially came to see them off since I had other business.

I've come to heed the guildmaster's summon, but that granny probably only wants to boast about some rare liquor she's gotten hold of, so I can't be careless.

"Young master."

I heard someone calling me in low voice from the alley next to the guild hall.

A suspiciously swaying slender hand invites from the shadow, and I move my legs toward the alley.

11-6. Omen

Satou's here. When I hear the word 'stray child', I remember department stores and amusement parks. The time when a teary-eyed lost child holding his trousers asked me, "Mother, where?", feels nostalgic.

Since my appearance was suspicious due to an all-nighter, I immediately pushed the child to a sales clerk nearby though.

◇

As I go toward the alley where the voice is, a sexy prostitute-like woman with emphasized cleavage is waiting for me there.

"Young master, it has been a long time."

She touches my neck and then leans herself to me coquettishly, making us look like we're having a lovers' talk.

"Mou, please be a bit more embarrassed."

"Forget about that, do you have any new information? Say it quickly."

I urge the woman who's playing her index finger on my chest like she's sulking to press ahead.

The woman is an intelligence agent of the Marquis house.

Due to the matter with Inquisitor Vilas back then, the Marchioness instructed them to tell me about various info.

The information are mainly about nobles who bear ill-will toward me, explorers with bad attitude, and the movement of criminal guilds.

For some reason she doesn't inform me with letters, but by directly telling me while acting as a prostitute or an explorer instead.

"Mou, I've put some effort to look like a prostitute and all, at least gently rub my hair or butt please."

"If you don't have any business, I'll go okay?"

I know that she has some, but we'll be like this forever if I follow her pace, so this kind of attitude and tone are needed.

In short, she's of Arisa's kind, someone who likes young boys.

"I'll do it seriously! First, about the matter with the Fiend Drug--"

In the end, my fear about coup d'etat in the Royal Capital didn't happen, and the one that got regarded and disposed as the mastermind was the subordinate general of Marquis Kelten, instead of the marquis himself as Sir Sokel had told me.

"--the lizard no doubt cut its tail to save himself, but since the the uncle of Sir Sokel, the one who gave the testimony, was in Duke Oyugock's faction...."

For that reason, Duke Bishtal who hated Duke Oyugock the most, came to protect Marquis Kelten.

Who was Duke Bishtal again?

I check Toruma Memo after a long while since I couldn't remember it. According to it, he's a family member of the Labyrinth Army's general, and a lord of a big territory north of Marquis Eluett territory that's north of the Labyrinth City itself.

In the end, it seems the head of the army that were found managing the fiend drug warehouse was to become the criminal and got disposed of.

It was the one I found when I went to the Royal Capital back then huh.

Who'd have thought that the warehouse of the regular army would unashamedly store illegal items...

"There's more about the fiend drug matter, the seized drug were taken by the Royal Research Institute, but some part of it flowed to the outside--ah, please keep this a secret from other people."

"Ah, of course."

Some of those fiend drug were taken to the Foreign Trade City, and were smuggled away on several ships. The ships' nationality was unknown, but it seems they were heading toward the western part of the continent.

"Fumu, by the way, isn't the later part of the story unnecessary?"

I do have something to do with the Fiend Drug matter, but it was mainly as Kuro, so I think there's no need for Satou to know the particulars.

"No, that's a side issue."

"And the main issue?"

"Yes, do you remember an organization called 『Wings of Liberty』?"

"Yeah, they were fanatics who not only kidnapped Sera-sama, but also planned to resurrect the demon lord right?"

I was being vague, but [Wings of Liberty] were the bunch who resurrected the Golden Wild Boar King.

Although, it's unclear whether it was really their intention or they were tricked by the greater demons that acted as their executives.

"Some of the guys who smuggled the Fiend Drug were members of the 『Light of Liberty』."

"Light? Wasn't it 'wings'?"

"Yes, [Wings of Liberty] are the extremist group driven out of the [Light of Liberty]."

According to her, it seems [Light of Liberty] has a headquarter in Parion Holy Land located on the west of the continent. To have demon lord believers existing in the country of the god who summons heroes to exterminate demon lords, what a strange story.

As a sidenote, it seems that there's a similar organization in the royal capital called 『Wind of Liberty』.

It seems that there's actually a faction of [Light of Liberty] too here, but they're moderate, or rather, they seem to be just a small-time group which collect forbidden books, and perform immoral ceremonies as they like.

They didn't even have anything to do with the Fiend Drug matter from before at all.

"And?"

"Yes, the remnants of『Wings of Liberty』might possibly get their hands on the fiend drug through『Light of Liberty』, so..."

So she wants to tell me that some [Wings of Liberty] guys who have grudges might use the fiend drug and attack us huh.

I'd have liked if she made it briefer.

She told me that the political situations on the western part of the continent were unstable as the last irrelevant information.

Currently, it's only at the degree of trade closure and small-scale skirmishes, but it seems at the level where war could break out anytime.

Wars between nations should have been difficult to happen during the Demon Lord Season, so why is this happening. I wonder if demons and demon lords are instigating it behind the scene after all?

Apparently, that's the reason why the date palm has stopped being distributed here.

As expected, stopping wars in order to ensure date palm distribution here is 'that', but I wonder if Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire can stop war by pressures?

I'll try to consult it with the hero who's searching for a demon lord in the Weasel Empire's Labyrinth once he's returned to the surface.

Come to think of it, one of the oracles said that a demon lord would appear in Parion Holy Land too huh. Hero Hayato should have investigated it before he went to the Weasel Empire though....

◇

Arguments between some men and women are resounding from the Guild's entrance.

"Like I said! Gelca isn't the kind of child who would disappear in the middle of a battle!"

"We've reported it to the guild, so we should know immediately if she merely escaped right?"

"Why aren't you going to search for her."

"Even Sosona understands that it's impossible to go into that area without a magician right?"

"I can use earth magic!"

"Without a fire magician, the best we can do is becoming fodders for the monsters. Give it up."

The Leprechaun girl is flaring up to the leader-like warrior, but the leader treats her curtly.

I thought I had seen them from somewhere, they were the guys who were fighting against monsters in the duchy capital during the yellow-skinned demon assault.

I'm not eager enough to deliberately search for her, but since we have somewhat of a connection, I'll at least search for her name when I enter the labyrinth.

By the way, it seems she's not in the labyrinth city.

I passed through the quarreling party, and went to the guildmaster's room.

◇

"Look at this Satou! This luster--enough to make you drool as you imagine the taste right?"

The guildmaster flaunts some transparent high-quality liquor contained in a bottle.

So it's really about this after all....

That bottle should be from the famous liquor brewery in the Royal Capital, the Shiga Sake. Judging from its cost, it's not a liquor that the guildmaster, whose alcohol bill keeps piling, can afford.

It's most likely a bribe from some merchant.

"Is it good?"

"But of course! Although it's not comparable to your Dragon Spring Liquor, one of this famous sake is enough to sink some Baron-class fortune."

The guildmaster is flaunting the sake bottle bullishly, "Hey hey, ya want it?", but I'm not that desperate to drink it, so I'm not particularly interested. Moreover, I don't think it's only as cheap as sinking baron-class fortune though.

I'm not a child who will speak that out loud though, so I accompany her with, "I'd have loved to taste it."

"Alright! Then it's a banquet tonight! I'll leave it to Chevalier for the liquor snacks!"

The guildmaster gleefully smiled as she pushed me the work to prepare the dishes for the feast.

So that really was her aim. However, I want to check the labyrinth tonight.

If the dog-head demon lord came from the lower layer--or maybe even below--there may be other 30 demon lords after all.

"I'm sorry, I already have a previous engagement tonight. I'm open tomorrow, but I've been invited to a dinner with the Marchioness the day after tomorrow."

"Women again huh? Yer' going to get yourselves stabbed before long y'know?"

How scandalous.

Please stop talking as if philandering is bad. At the very least, I've never played around with amateur women you know?

"By the way, have you called me today just for the drinking bout?"

"Ah.... Of course, it's not the main subject."

I'd like to ask the reason why she was hesitating, but it'd have made our talk longer, so I put it aside.

"Do you know that weapons made from monster material in the labyrinth city have sudden price jumps?"

"Yes, I've heard about it from a familiar weapon store."

I've heard it as Kuro though, but there's no problem with that.

Someone from [Pendora] said that there were a lot of requests for hunting monster material, so the competitions were fierce.

Apparently, merchants outside the city are buying all the magic weapons at twice the market price.

Judging from the intelligence's story earlier, it's probably flowing to the western part of the continent.

"It'd be alright if they gather the material the honest way, but some fools have tried to steal it from inns and houses of explorers."

However, I think there aren't a lot of explorers who leave magic weapons in the inn.

There's probably some guy who make them sleep with drug and then steal the weapons.

"They're aiming for Red Iron-class guys or someone who lives in a big mansion like you, so be careful okay."

This seems flag-like, but I never leave magic weapons in the mansion.

Maybe I should put some dummies?

I should better put some information-gathering Scarecrows just in case.

I confirmed the schedule for the feast with the guildmaster, thanked her for the information and then left the room.

◇

When I left the guild hall, I met a group of metal-armored people with wounds all over their body.

It's probably a party mainly consisting of nobles and knights. Normal explorers don't use these Chain Mails and Plate Mails since the price-performance ratio is bad.

"Boy!"

Oh, it's Lilio.

That means, this group are people from Seryuu City Selected Labyrinth Corps huh.

I didn't notice it since Zena-san's marker wasn't present.

--Huh?

Lilio continues her words as if affirming my unease.

"Zena-cchi has gone missing in the labyrinth!"

11-7. The Whereabouts of Zena

Satou's here. There's this saying 'a bolt out of the blue', you don't know when something happen in life. That's why, spend the day enjoyably without regret--that's what my grandfather in the countryside always told me.

◇

Zena-san is missing?

I quickly open the map, and pick not the search bar, but the marker list.

Her current position is--the lower layer of the Labyrinth?

Why is she in such place.

"Zena-cchi might've been kidnapped by a monster! Boy, you have a lot of influences right? I beg you please search for Zena-cchi!"

Lilio grabbed my arms and begged.

Tear lines overflow on her cheeks.

For the time being, Zena-san isn't hurt. Doesn't seem like she's in abnormal state either.

That said, we don't know if it will keep like this, I have to act quick.

"I understand. I'll go look for her."

"Please wait."

Miss Iona beside her catches my shoulder.

Her armors are also broken, her shoulders are bare.

"What is it?"

I want to quickly rescue her.

"Where are you going without knowing the place she's gone missing at and the situation."

"That's..."

Damn, I was too impatient. Was it a bit unnatural.

An excuse. Deception skill, show me your serious mode.

"I'm going to gather people. I know someone who's good with searching magic, so I'm thinking of asking his help. I'll listen to the situation later, so please go ahead to the temple branch to heal yourselves."

"Yes, I understand. Since Zena-san had serious injury before she was kidnapped by the thick fog, please get someone who can heal her too."

Serious injury?

Looking at the map, she's been completely recovered though.

Moreover, [Kidnapped by the thick fog], was there such a monster?

Oops, let's postpone questions for later.

I took Miss Iona's request and left the guild.

◇

I go back to the mansion with cab carriage, and move to the Labyrinth Area 66 with [Return] magic from the basement. I'm glad that I've put a carved seal board there when we were subjugating the floormaster.

I go down to the middle layer from there, and look for the shortest path to the entrance of the lower layer.

Just in case, I've changed into Kuro when I arrived in the Labyrinth.

I contact Arisa with [Telephone] magic while I'm moving.

"Arisa, sorry but could you please suspend the food-sampling, and make the preparation to enter the labyrinth?"

『Okay.』

An immediate answer without even asking the reason, as expected of Arisa.

She's too handsome.

I tell Arisa about the [Disappearance of Zena], and get her to organize a dummy search party.

I'm sorry for Lulu who's doing a special training for the Duchy Capital Cooking Tournament, but I'll be borrowing the three advisors, Liza, Arisa, and Mia for a bit.

While relying on the Hiding skill, I make my way through the labyrinth's passages near the ceiling using Sky Drive in order not to let the explorers who are hunting in the middle layer notice me.

Some winds may be left in my wake, but please overlook that much.

I drilled a hole through a gigantic slime that blocked the way, smashed some carnivorous plant monsters that had grown closely together to become a forest, and repeatedly mowed down steel string nests in the Massacre Spider's area before I came out of the middle layer.

I had also exterminated some large monsters who blocked the way, but it's just trivial things.

I stop at a mysterious metal door on the path that continues to the lower layer.

Apparently it's a sealed door with Riddle.

I immediately knew the way to open the door with [Riddle] skill, but since it seemed that it'd take time to do, I forcefully severed the door using the holy sword Caliburn, opening the way.

Moment time is precious right now.

I wonder how long the spiral staircase beyond the door continues underground.

The radar finally notified that I had entered an unknown area.

I use the [All Map Exploration] after a long while absent, and check the lower layer.

The lower layer of the labyrinth is apparently slightly different than the upper and the middle layer.

If I liken it to plants, imagine there are eight gigantic bump-shaped rhizomes, connected to several hundreds mesh-shaped small rhizomes.

These rhizome parts are what you call 'Area' in the upper and middle layer. The smaller parts are only as small as 1-3 average area, but any one of the eight larger parts is big enough to put the whole Selbira city inside it.

And Zena-san is in the biggest one among those.

◇

I immediately knew the one who kidnapped Zena-san after searching the map, but it's someone I can't be careless with.

A Vampire--in addition, a True Ancestor.

Whats more, it has a skill called [Concentration]. It smells like a unique skill although I don't have any proof.

Moreover, the level is 61. Looking at its skill composition, it's more of a Magic Swordsman than a Magician.

The name displayed on the map is [Ban Helsing]--I can't help but feel that the name is somewhat wrong for a Vampire.

It's plainly the name of a reincarnated person.

I was thinking that it might be a descendant of a reincarnated person, but its detailed information is [Founder of Count Helsing House], so it probably made the house name itself. There was probably no one who retorted [It's not Van'?].

There is a big castle which occupies almost all of the large area where Zena-san is.

Inside the castle, there are seven Vampire Lords, countless Poltergeists, and 17 human women.

Strangely enough, there is no normal vampire.

Inside the room where Zena-san is located, there are six other women who have been seemingly kidnapped, there's also the woman whom I've heard to have disappeared in the Explorer Guild, Gelca.

The ten people outside this room have the title of [Maids of Perpetual Night Castle], so they're probably people who are working in the castle.

I can break through the front gate just fine, but it'll be troubling if they make Zena-san a hostage, so I've decided to invade it stealthily.

I use earth magic to make a path on the labyrinth wall from the small area directly under the large area.

I had used the same magic to escape the underground labyrinth in the Duchy Capital back then, but this labyrinth strongly resisted me making the path, thus the work consumed large amount of magic power.

I wanted to come out on the basement of the castle where Zena-san was, but since there were massive quantity of water which seemed to be an underground lake, between us, I avoid it.

I can store the water in my storage, but the structure above would collapse if the water suddenly disappear, the Vampires would notice it, so I decide against it.

Nevertheless, the path-making is complete in 10 minutes, and I've safely invaded the large area where Zena-san is being held.

I slip out of the hole and hide myself in the nearby bush.

I put my head out of it and calmly check the surrounding.

Scenes that fit the word 'Underworld' more than 'Geo Front' spread before my eyes.

I reflexively confirmed my map, but I am still in the labyrinth.

Skeleton Farmers are working on a large vineyard, Marionette-like Living Dolls are harvesting the crops and carry it with awkward movements.

There's an underground lake beyond the field, and a white castle on top of it stands out against the moonlight.

Yes, even though this is underground, there's a moon in the sky illuminating this vast space. That moon is most likely a magic or a magic tool.

A twisting bridge has been built connecting the shore to the castle.

My Magic Perception skill tells me that there's some kind of barrier on the lake.

I fill the hole I've used to invade with earth magic, and recharge the used magic power from some magic sword just in case.

I want to invade stealthily, but the people in the castle would surely find me if I put my feet on the bridge.

I can also see Gargoyles-like shadows on the lake, and it seems there are monsters underwater too.

Now then, how should I invade this I wonder.

I can of course discuss with the lord of the castle directly to get her returned, but Zena-san's safety is my maximum priority.

They did heal Zena-san who was seriously injured, but although they're probably not evil, they're still vampires after all is said and done. There's a high possibility that they've captured Zena-san and the others to make them work in the field or make them into vampire's brides.

For the time being, I'm going to check the place where Zena-san is with [Clairvoyance] magic.

--Huh?

It's failed to work, it seems space magic is being restricted here.

Wonder if it's because of the lake barrier?

Since it seems my Map and Radar aren't inhibited, I make Zena-san's marker to be active and her location to appear on the AR reading.

The function is originally used to navigate to NPCs for quests and the like, but it seems it's possible to use it like this.

To be frank, it's too convenient.

Zena-san's marker on the AR reading seems to be moving, wonder if it's just my imagination.

Don't tell me, she's trying to escape herself?

When I check the map, it seems only Zena-san and Miss Gelca that are trying to escape themselves.

On the map, a luminous point appears at the place where they are heading--It's the True Ancestor.

It's probably going to apprehend them.

--There's no time.

I predict the place where the girls will move, and decide to charge straight ahead there.

I take out the Divine Sword from the storage, and run past the lake with Flash Drive in a straight line.

I tear through the barrier along the way with the Divine Sword, penetrating through the opened way.

After leaving the barrier, I put the Divine Sword back into the storage.

I stand still just before the castle wall, and then create wall with [Air

Curtain] magic behind me to scatter the squall produced from the Flash Drive.

I place my hands on the castle wall, and use earth magic to create hole in one go toward the passage where Zena-san and the other girl are.

Alright, I can see Zena-san's face.

Since Zena-san has stopped moving while facing toward her destination--she's probably squaring off against the True Ancestor--I appear before Zena-san with Flash Drive, and then I put both girls on my shoulders before they can raise their surprised voices, and use the [Return] magic.

Just before the teleport, the surprised Zena-san hardened her body on my shoulder.

I was worried whether the teleport would be inhibited like with the [Clairvoyance] earlier, but maybe because I had broken the barrier with the Divine Sword, I teleported away without problem.

It was slightly at the limit, but Mission Complete.

>Title [Rescuer] Acquired

>Title [Fugitive] Acquired

11-8. The Whereabouts of Zena (2)

Satou's here. In movies, when you've feel relieved after the panic, the next panic always waits for you. It still surprises you even though you knew about it beforehand isn't it.

◇

After teleporting to the first area of the labyrinth's upper layer, I put down Zena-san and Miss Gelca on my shoulders to the ground.

However, the states of the two look strange--they're stiff hard, unable to move.

I'm sorry to Miss Gelca but I make her wait in the air with [Magic Hand] magic and check the detail of Zena-san's condition.

According to AR, she seems to be in [Restraint(Hold)] state.

Checking on the log, the True Ancestor attacked them, and me, with [Hold Geiss] status attack right before we teleported away.

Quite incredible considering the time I made the hole and teleporting were in only several seconds.

No, I guess I jumped right to the place where Zena-san and Gelca were going to get hit with the attack huh.

I shivered thinking what'd have happened if I didn't have the resistance against it.

Since I didn't get any resistance skill, one of the skills I already had probably worked.

For now, I'll try to see if [Break Magic] could release the abnormal status.

I should talk before that though.

"Calm down. I am here to save you."

Zena-san and Miss Gelca calmed down for a bit.

It seems they haven't talked since awhile ago not because they were being cautious, but because of the [Hold] condition.

[Hold] magic should only make it difficult for you to talk, not disallowing you to talk at all, looks like the effect is a bit different with the vampire's unique skill.

"We've escaped from the vampire's castle. I will release you two from the abnormal status. Relax and wait."

I tell the two so and use [Break Magic].

I felt slight resistance, but I could cancel it without any problem.

"I have to ask just in case, are you the one called Gelca?"

"Yes, it's me."

"I see, I've come to save you by the request of a girl called Sosona. There is no problem of me saving the girl over there as well right?"

I make it to look like I saved Zena-san incidentally together with Miss

Gelca.

I'm sorry for Sosona, but I'll use her as an excuse in place of the reward for saving her friend.

I urged the two to hurry with the escape after coolly replied their thanks.

I'd feel bad for Lilio and the others who are worrying her if we're too slow.

Right, I'll give Zena-san and her companion the weapons for self-defense.

There are only demi-goblins on the way to the exit from here, but I'll use this good chance to give Zena-san a magic weapon and a high performance wand.

"This is the first area of the labyrinth's upper layer. I'll escort you two until the big hall before the exit. Use these to protect yourself."

"It's a simple but beautiful dagger.... Is this possibly made of mithril?"

"It is not of pure mithril. It's just mithril alloy, so do not mind it."

Miss Gelca who seemed to have noticed the dagger's material was at a loss of word as she asked me.

While answering her suitably, I pass a short sword to Zena-san.

This one is also a mass produced casted magic sword being sold by Echigoya.

"It's amazingly sharp.... I can feel stronger power than the magic sword Captain Derio had."

"Use this sword belt. You cannot put your sword with that clothes."

I take out a stylish sword belt that was made to be sold to nobles and push it toward Zena-san who's looking at the 10cm-long blade she's pulled out of the sheath.

The girls cannot wear the sword without a sword belt since they're wearing thin dress and delicate pumps.

"Um~, could you please give us a wand too if possible? We are magicians. We'd be happier to have a wand rather than a sword for self-protection."

"Very well, use these."

Since I had planned to give them one in the first place, I take out long wands out with [Item Box] and give it to them.

I've made these wands from the old evergreen oak of Boruenan Forest, it's capable of limiting magic loss during magic converging and invoking.

It's fit to be used for continuous battles in the labyrinth and bombardment.

I originally planned to give the wand to Arisa, but since I got ahold of a lot of world tree's branches, the plan was shelved.

Miss Gelca immediately use reinforcement magic on herself and ascertain the long wand.

"Oh, this is some amazing stuff! My magic is streaming smoothly to the point of being scary."

"....It's true. Moreover, the magic power's consumption has been greatly diminished."

Zena-san used [<<Wind Protection>>] on everyone including me, and muttered her impression.

I'm glad that they like it.

It's better than letting the wands become fertilizers for my storage.

The creator's name is blank (nanashi/nameless) anyway, they shouldn't suspect the maker.

We advance the passages toward the exit.

We meet some girls and boys who were fighting some demi-goblins, so I ask them to escort Zena-san and Miss Gelca to the exit.

"Please guide these girls to the entrance. I will give you rewards of course."

"Kuh, at least until our fight is over--please wait."

A boy wearing blue mantle politely replied while he was fighting against the goblin.

They seem to be graduates of [Pendora] but I'm not familiar with their face.

Still, having a hard fight against some demi-goblin, how shameful.

They came to us after they've defeated the demi-goblins in a few minutes without injury.

"Tsk, the dagger of this thing is only dirtied with blood."

"What, it wasn't a poison huh."

The boys are having such conversations while illuminating the shaved bone dagger which the demi-goblin held.

"Recently, there are some demi-goblins that use poisonous dagger around."

I see, so they have to fight while being careful from getting hit huh.

The leader-like boy told me so even though I didn't ask.

"Sorry but guide these girls to the entrance. This is your reward."

I tell them unilaterally, and pass a small bag with several gold coins inside to the leader.

"Understood. We can just escort them until the great staircase right?"

"Ah, I'm counting on you."

He received the small bag while it's letting out clang sounds, and agreed to escort them after confirming the inside.

The exit is just 30 minutes away, so he probably thinks that it's good for some extra money.

"Farewell then. Give my best regards to Sosona-dono."

"Umm, please tell me your name."

"I am not one to give my name."

....What am I even saying.

Well I could give Kuro name, but I returned to the mansion with [Return] magic after hiding myself in the passage's darkness.

◇

"Ah! Boy! Here!"

I found Lilio and the members of [Moonlight] gathering in front of the guild when I came there with Arisa and the others.

They are also with other members of the Seryuu Selected Corps who have been healed of course.

As expected they didn't have enough time repair their equipments, so the damages on their armors remain.

Zena-san and Miss Gelca have started advancing through the [Passage of Death] before the labyrinth's gate when I was greeting the selected labyrinth corps' captain, Sir Henz.

When they have come near the west gate, I suitably close our conversations and walk toward the west gate to meet Zena-san.

"Ze, Zena-cchiii!"

"Lilio! I'm back."

Lilio jumps to Zena-san who comes out of the west gate when she saw her.

Slightly after her, Miss Iona and Miss Ruu also congratulate her safety.

"Zena-san, I'm glad that you're safe."

"Satou-san!"

Even while being hugged by the three girls, Zena-san extends her hand between the gap, and I grip her white hand to congratulate her safe return.

Arisa and Mia lightly kick me from behind though, please stop getting jealous during reunion.

◇

It seems Zena-san and Miss Gelca couldn't talk about the vampires due to the [Contract] skill, so they reported to the guild that they were kidnapped, confined and then, saved by a mysterious person.

The mysterious person was immediately judged as Kuro once they described the appearance. Due to that, it's decided that the one who had kidnapped Zena-san were to be the Lost Thieves.

I guess I can just talk about the vampires to the guildmaster as Kuro later.

Zena-san and the others are not going to enter the labyrinth for the next few days to repair their equipments and they're going to have as much rest as possible today after we have promised to eat some meal together tomorrow.

By the way, the reason why the Selected Corps were devastated was not because of the vampires but because some Soldier Mantis came out of the gushing hole and linked when they were fighting some Beetles so it became a fierce battle.

At that time, Zena-san was immediately kidnapped by the thick fog once she sustained a serious injury.

I heard later that Miss Gelca was also kidnapped by the thick fog when she was dying after getting attacked by an Assassin Shadow Goblin.

I wanted to ask for more details, but since Lady Karina appeared from the west gate while looking like a corpse behind Nana, I was forced to suspend it.

Apparently, she was being put on the [<<Floating Board>>] made with Nana's force arte.

Not only Lady Karina, Erina and the others, and Kuro and Shiro are also being carried while looking dead tired.

They probably fall down from the sudden level up.

"Master, reporting our return."

"I'm bacck~?"

"I'm back nanodesu!"

"Welcome back. Are Karina-sama and the others having level up sickness?"

"Yes, so I affirm."

Looking at the AR indicators, Lady Karina has leveled up by 3, while Shiro and Kuro have gone from level 1 to level 7.

What kind of wild training did they do.

I have to tell them to hold back a bit during the labyrinth training tomorrow since she has to come to the tea party and the banquet with me the day after tomorrow.

◇

And then, the night of that day, I went back to the labyrinth after comforting Pochi who was feeling down from the meatless kid's lunch.

Yes, in order to meet the aforementioned True Ancestor who might be a reincarnated person.

11-9. Vampires (1)

Satou's here. Equaling demon lords, there are many stories and games that have vampires as the last boss, however aren't them not good to play the role as a villain with such varying weaknesses?

Sunlight, garlic, can't cross running water, can't enter into a building without being invited first, they have array of weaknesses, as such stories usually depict them being defeated with just wisdom and courage without relying on heroes.

◇

After returning to the lower layer, I've decided to examine the lower layer a bit more before I go to the vampires.

I haven't examined it in details since I was focused in saving Zena-san before, so I'm going to investigate it now.

There are around 30 beings that are level 50 and above in the lower layer.

The highest-leveled one is the Elder Root at level 99 that exist in the second largest area. It seems to be a plant-type monster that extends to the entirety of the large area.

Its level is about the same as the Great Monstrous Fish (Tovkezeera), but it doesn't seem to be the Floormaster.

I tried to search for Floormaster just in case, but it didn't seem to exist.

The second highest one is an Evil LesserDragon at level 80.

It's a lesser dragon even though its level is higher than the Black Dragon Heiron.

I wonder what is the basis for differentiating whether a dragon is lesser or not?

Let's ask Heiron about it next time.

He probably would answer, "Dunno", but since there's no one else I could ask, it can't be helped.

The third highest one is [King Mummy] at level 72. On top of having unique-skill sounding skills like [Metal Creation], and [Fantasy Factory], this King Mummy's name is [Tetsuo].

He must be a reincarnated person like the True Ancestor.

I'll try seeing him after meeting the True Ancestor.

And then there's also the somewhat lower-leveled one at level 53 called [Iron Stalker].

He also has some ominous and unique-skill sounding skill called, [Spirit Possession]. Since his name is [Takeru], the possibility is high for him to be a reincarnated person.

His race is Living Armor, he probably uses [Spirit Possession] to make a metal armor become his body.

If Arisa hears about this, she would likely try to coax him to "Say『Nii-san』."

<TLN: I hope you know where this reference comes from. ;)>

These two reincarnated people (assumption) are each positioned on two neighboring large Areas.

They're probably close friends.

◇

Some guardians have been placed in front of the gate before the path that connects to the area where the vampires are.

『Show me your power if ye wish to cross this gate』

『Show me your wisdom if ye wish to cross this gate』

『Swords and Magic, retrace your steps if ye do not posses both』

Three mouths engraved on the gate are speaking words like living things.

As for the guardians, there are two large golems that are bigger than 9 meters, and a semi-transparent Wraith.

The golems are a skeleton-like Bone Golem and a robot-like steel-made Iron Golem.

The Iron Golem has a cannon and an axe-like weapons, while the Bone Golem has two short swords, a mace and a round shield on its four arms. Although I said short swords, that's only relative to the nine-meter big golem, from my perspective it's pretty much a thick great sword.

I guess annihilating them would be bad if I'm going to have a talk with the vampires.

Without caring for me who had been lost in thought, the Iron Golem began its attack.

The Iron Golem shoots out a flaming ball from its cannon.

Using the [Break Magic] is troublesome, so I flick the flaming ball with my hands, changing its course.

The out-of-course flaming ball made a big explosion on the passage wall behind me.

With that as the signal, the Wraith has begun chanting [Ice Paralyze], and the Bone Golem started to dance with two weapons on its arms.

With small motions, I take some light steps to dodge the furious assaults from both sides, and then I lightly touch it with my palms by matching the timing of its attacks.

Right at that moment, I drain its magic power with [Mana Drain] in one go to make it unable to act anymore.

The Bone Golem which has lost its magic power breaks down to the ground as if it's been attacked with Turn Undead.

I capture the scattered bones of the Bone Golem with the magic-sealing ropes and wires I've made from Thorn Foot in the mansion in order to prevent it from returning to battle.

Of course I didn't do it manually, I used [Magic Hand] magic.

Ignoring the Wraith's chant, I go toward the golem which is setting up its cannon to neutralize it.

Even if I'm paralyzed, I could release it by using [Break Magic] chantlessly, so that one is for the last.

It seems there's a time lag before the Iron Golem can use the cannon again, it's attacking me with the axe part, but since its movement is slow, I lightly dodge it without even using the Ground Shrink, and then I neutralize it with [Mana Drain] like with the Bone Golem.

I tie its right leg and its left arm behind its back with magic-sealing rope, restraining it.

I direct a jumping kick toward the Wraith while seeing the log informing successful resist against the paralyze at the edge of my view.

It seems the Wraith has a special characteristic of invalidating physical attacks, it's waiting my kick while looking calm.

Wraiths have an atrocious skill called [Life Drain], so from its point of view, I probably look like [A moth flying into the flame].

The moment I touch the Wraith, I generate magic edge on the spikes on the sole of my shoe, kicking it away.

Of course, I didn't forget to hold back so it wouldn't be defeated in one blow.

It seems to be quite painful as the Wraith that has been kicked away runs away toward the graveyard beyond the gate while screaming like it's startled.

Wraiths that are weak to pain, how rare.

Do they even feel pain in the first place?

No one answers such a question of mine as the gate simply opens silently.

>[Life Drain (Drain) Resistance] Skill Acquired

◇

Since they don't come to meet me, I decide to enter at my own discretion.

My appearance today is the custom version of Kuro set with a different disguise mask.

I could go as the normal Kuro, but since I'm going to meet a reincarnated person who call itself as a famous vampire hunter, Ban Helsing--although the true name should be Van Helsing--, it's probably better if the face is of a Japanese person instead of a foreigner, so I've made a new disguise mask.

<TLN: TL Error, the vampire's name is 'Ban Helsing', thus why Satou retorted 'why isn't it Van?', back in ch. 11-7. Revised.>

I'm borrowing the face of the outsourced debug staff, Tanaka-shi. The face of Mr. Metabolic doesn't match my body build, so I've chosen the face that's hard to left an impression with.

Two female Vampire Lords are waiting for me near the bridge that connects the castle on the lake.

They're lords even though they're women huh. I'd like to ask the person who gives the name, why isn't it 'Lady'.

There's no helping it even if I complain since it's their race name, but since it's too retort-prone, I'm going to call them Vampire Princess at my own discretion.

The two Vampire Princess are a short childish girl, and a tall adult beauty.

The childish-san is a 300 years old level 49 girl with white hair and blue eyes, and the glamorous beauty with blond hair and pale blue eyes is a 100 years old level 41 woman. The discrepancy between their age and their outer appearance is just like the vampires in fictions.

During the occasion, I activate the [Life Drain Resistance] I've got just now to the maximum.

"Welcome, strong one."

"Are you seeking a fight? Or the treasure sphere of knowledge and moonlight grass?"

"My wish is to meet the True Ancestor-dono."

I answered plainly to the two vampire princess who was asking my purpose.

I'm not role-playing Kuro's way of speaking this time.

"Is that so.... You don't want to fight do you...."

The beauty is disappointed for some reason.

Did she want to fight?

The childish Vampire Princess tells me [Wait a bit], changes one of its hand into a bat, and then sends it to the castle.

How convenient (fantasy).

I had a chat with the two since we were free during the wait.

The little girl didn't reply while looking disappointed, but the beauty normally talked with me as she seemed to be amiable.

That said, since we didn't have a common topic, I asked questions about the odd spectacles around us like 'how do the grapes bear fruit with only moonlight'.

Apparently, that seems to be a plant-type monster called Dusk Grape. Just as the name implies, it can only grow in darkness, and will wither if it's basked in sunlight.

Only Skeletons and Living Dolls can handle them since they're carnivorous.

I see, they can eat their farmers huh.... To think that the crops are underworld-style too....

It seems the Vampire Princesses don't need to eat meal, they're only growing it as indulgent food.

I was glad the she taught me various things, but it was troubling how she asked for a fight at random, "I'll give it to you if you can win against me", whenever I got interested with some of the odd things.

I'm not going to deem that vampires are all Battle Junkies by only looking at her, but please stop those sparkling eyes wanting to fight.

When we were having such chats, the bat came back and returned into the little girl's hand.

"It seems Master will meet you. Follow me."

The little girl bluntly said so, turned her body toward the castle without even waiting for my reply, and then began to walk.

11-10. Vampires (2)

Satou's here. I think the saying [Noblesse Oblige] is from France, but I wonder when was it got popularized.

I've only ever seen the words in manga or anime in Japan, but it seems to be a relatively common deed in another world.

◇

"That stand-up collar, black hair and eyes, and that name. And above all, that face! 『Are ye a Japanese?』"

『That's right. Just as you can see, I was born and raised in Japan.』

"It is so dearuka."

Since the latter part was said in Japanese language, I also replied back in one.

The True Ancestor before me is a young man with seaweed-like naturally curly violet hair.

Even though his skin is pale-white and his face looks like a Frenchman, his accents when he was speaking Japanese was in Kansai dialect.

No, I guess his current appearance has nothing to do with his previous one.

Maybe the name Ban (「番」) was from the kanji 「播」?

"You don't seem to be a hero of Saga Empire, are you a <Lost One> who has been spirited away dearuka?"

"I'm not familiar with that <Lost One> term, but I'm probably one of those so-called teleported people."

"Hou? Several hundreds years ago, the holy kingdom Hellon imitated the Saga Empire's hero-summoning ritual, and summoned heroes from Japan, so another kingdom is repeating the same thing again huh..."

He mutters some dangerous things like, "Kidnapper bastards", and, "Should I get rid of the summoner and the kingdom's central figures again" with a grim face.

From his perspective, teleported person=summoned person huh.

The True Ancestor is level 61, but if he leads the level 40-50 Vampire Princesses, they can destroy some small kingdom easily.

Most of all, as far as I know, there is no kingdom called Holy Kingdom Hellon in this continent.

Let's do something about it for Princess Menea's sake.

"There is no need to do that. It seems they were already attacked by a Greater Demon, and the summoners, including the people involved had already been eliminated."

"Even demons do some good thing sometimes dearuna."

I tell the True Ancestor the thing Princess Menea has told me.

Although I don't know whether it's true or not, there was probably no point for the princess to lie at that time, so there's no need for me to excessively doubt it.

"I would like to talk about various Japanese things, but you would be better off finishing your business first dearu."

"Right. My business is--"

After apologizing for destroying the barrier and the castle during my rescue, I asked him to release the women who were with Zena-san.

"Those women are people whom I've legally bought as slaves dearu."

"I can pay the compensation if you want?"

"I am not troubled with money dearu."

--Not possible huh.

"By buying legally, don't tell me you went to the city?"

"Certainly not, dearu. A secret market opens in the upper layer of the labyrinth once every two months. There, I bought the exhibited slaves with the money made from selling magic cores and monster materials dearu."

Moreover, he seems to be a regular customer there, they even brought expensive slaves that only him would buy.

"Are you keeping the slaves as the source of blood supply?"

"Watch your tongue dearu. Those women are important servants of the castle. I will have your retract the 'keep' part."

<TLN: The 'keep' here is like for 'keeping pets'.>

"Excuse me, I withdraw my words earlier."

I purposely tried to provoke him, but he denied it unexpectedly fierce.

"I ask the slaves I've bought to provide several dozens cc of blood every month, but other than that I only have them work as maids in the castle. I do not turn them into vampires against their will, nor I do cruel or sexual violence against them."

I feel that I'm not wrong about them being blood supplies, but it seems the vampires don't take away the women's free will.

It seems his normal sexual desire has gradually disappeared ever since he became a vampire.

All the vampire princesses seem to be his wives, but their relationship only goes as far as hugging and exchanging kisses.

His only desire is to drink a cupful of wine with a droplet of blood three times day, it's a bit different than the image of vampires I have in mind.

How do I say this, he's the kind of vampire that appears in the woman-oriented stories and novels.

"I will free those who wish for it in 5-10 years, but since I provide them education and skills, and also living expenses enough to play around for years during the period of their employment, the slaves choose for themselves whether they want to be freed."

With all those hospitalities, there's probably a lot of people who want to work under him even though he's a vampire.

The vampires give education and skills to the slaves partly for their self-reliance after they've been freed, but it's mainly a way for the vampire princesses to spend their free time.

The purpose seems more vampire-like than charity.

However, they can't get sunlight here, they'll likely become ill if they're here for 10 years.

"That worry is unnecessary dearu. There is a hermitage of a light elemental magician at the end of this big area. I have ordered the maids to sunbathe there once a day."

"A light elemental magician in the domain of vampires?"

"It is of a man and his daughter and her husband who have ran away to the labyrinth after getting victimized by a stupid son of a grand noble who tried to rape his daughter. I provide them with food and necessities in exchange for their works dearu."

I see.

I feel that he's a bit too considerate to the slaves, but he also has his own reason for that.

"A hero will come here if we recklessly abuse and slaughter them. Co-existence and co-prosperity are good in moderation."

The True Ancestor boasted so while smiling pretense of evil.

◇

"However, there's no need to abduct Miss Gelca and the others if you buy your slaves right?"

"Umu, there is no need."

"Then, why?"

"The black market didn't open this month, when I was going to see the the lost thieves who are the market's boss, I caught sight of some dying girls."

According to the True Ancestor, Gelca couldn't move since she was stabbed with a poisonous dagger, and going to be eaten by monsters, while Zena-san was dying after getting hit by a Soldier Mantis's attack, he saved each of them.

The poison and bleeding would stop when they became mist together with a vampire, so he brought them to this castle and healed them with the magic potions stocked here.

I'm interested with just how is the [Became mist] part possible, but let's quench the curiosity later.

"Are you doing charity for your pastime?"

"Fumu, the greatest enemy of living a long life is boredom dearu. I decided to help someone who had a bad luck before me on whim. And when they are beautiful girls, is there any reason not to help them?"

"Indeed."

Though, it seems he only ever came to the black market whenever he went out of the lower layer, so him bringing someone to the castle to save them like with Zena-san happened for the first time after a century.

◇

I thanked the kind True Ancestor for saving Miss Gelca's and Zena-san's life, and asked him if he wanted anything from the surface as the reward.

"Umu, I'd like to drink some『Blood of Lesseu』dearu."

I thought that he would say that he didn't need anything, but he unexpectedly replied immediately.

If my memory serves me correctly, it should be the name of a cheap wine brand.

"Quite an unusual wine of choice. I have Item Box and Teleportation, so I can provide fresh foodstuff and cloth you know?"

The True Ancestor looks at the Vampire Princesses who are waiting upon him nearby.

"Fashionable dresses."

"Mithril, or if there isn't any, iron or silver ingot."

"Cute accessories."

"I want paper and ink."

I wrote the items that each of the vampire princesses told in the companion column's memo.

Except for the [Blood of Lesseu], they were all items that I already had in the storage.

I can hand it over immediately, but it's probably better to do it together with the True Ancestor's wine. After confirming the item by reading the memo out loud, I make a promise of the time I visit here again.

The True Ancestor stopped me when I was going to leave.

"Since you've already come here and all, why don't we have a match."

◇

It was a close battle at the beginning, but the match with the True Ancestor is ending with my complete victory.

"Checkmate."

"Wait, don't do that move."

"But, didn't you say that the『Wait』earlier was the last?"

"Gunununu. Then I'll give you three Blood Spheres, please wait for it again dearu."

"Okay, this is the last y'know?"

"Umu."

Yes, the match is for Shogi.

The match began with the Shogi board that the True Ancestor had prepared, but his skill is only at the level of someone who's crazy at but not good at it.

Doing the wait is okay since I'm getting rare materials of vampire-san for it, but playing Shogi with him is accumulating me some stress.

I'm relatively strong for a beginner (Shogi player) since I was given some devilish training by Mr. Metabo during the meeting for the making of Shogi app for my work.

Moreover, since the app has several difficulty level, I'm well-informed with the way to skilfully hold back, yet right now it's next to impossible for the True Ancestor to win this match.

Even if I plainly make an opening, he would make a move that can't be said to be anything but suicidal.

No matter how much he relies on [Wait], his chance of victory is thin.

Although, the vampire princesses who are watching the match don't seem to care about the outcome.

Whenever the True Ancestor calls for [Wait] like a child, groaning while looking vexed, the girls look at him adorably with eyes full of affection.

Well, let's not find faults on someone else's hobby.

The Shogi showdown with him continued until near dawn, when a certain person visited.

11-11. Vampires (3)

Satou's here. In horror movies, there are scenes where a head without body laughs maniacally, or with someone who doesn't die even if there's only their head left while it's cursing in resentment.

I can't help but wonder just how are they making voices without a throat and lungs.

◇

"I've come to beat you! Ban-sama!"

"Semeri, you're energetic today too."

A beautiful woman riding a giant scorpion followed by a Tyranosaurus, and a Roper, which has ivies as its limbs, confront the True Ancestor in the castle's courtyard.

<TLN: Roper >

Her pale body entwined by her wavy black hair is quite captivating.

The woman is one of the True Ancestor Ban's Vampire Princesses, a Vampire Lord. The giant scorpion and the monsters accompanying her have also been turned into vampires like her.

I asked Ban since I found it strange for his subordinate to come attacking him, but he reply in carefree manner, "She's in her rebellious phase nanodearu."

It's probably a part of entertainment for him.

Moreover, Semeri who's come to defeat the True Ancestor has her pale body dyed in violet color.

Contrary to her word, her eyes are those of a girl in love.

"Now then, who are going to be the vanguard today?"

"Ban-sama, me!"

"No, let me do this."

"I want to do~ it."

Not only the blond haired beauty from before, the red-haired and the black-haired women also applied.

Apparently, she's not the only battle maniac around.

"My turn."

The white-haired taciturn little girl Vampire Princess who has been silent since a while ago raises her hand quietly and goes to the courtyard.

The little girl cuts her wrist with the fingernail that's extended from her small finger.

The blood spouting out of the wrist moves like an animal, forming a scythe.

....It's very like vampire, or rather template-like, it's truly a fantasy spectacle.

As for Semeri, she puts a great sword made of monster material on her shoulder.

"Fuhn, wouldn't have thought the white princess to be the vanguard? I thought the fat blond over there would be the one."

"I-I'm not fat! I'm only a tiiny bit plump!"

Semeri called the glamorous blond-san fat, but even though I don't think she's thin, she doesn't look fat at all either.

The little girl who's arrived at the courtyard pushes her scythe toward Semeri as if she doesn't hear the two's bickering.

"My vanguard is Tyranon. Go, Tyranon!"

I felt slight affinity with Semeri's questionable naming sense.

The little girl jumps to the Tyrano which swings its tail with one leg as the pivot.

The six-meter big Tyranosaurus is comparatively agile for its size.

The little girl easily cuts the Tyrano's tail with her scythe.

However, the Tyranosaurus seems to have assumed that the tail would be cut from the beginning.

The blood spouting out of the cut part of the Tyrano's tail suddenly burst into flames for some reason.

Just as the flaming blood that's spraying like flamethrower about to engulf her body, the little girl turns into mist to evade it.

However, it looks like they've grasped vampire's ability well, the spraying blood seems to be have the special characteristic of burning the body of a vampire that has turned into mist.

The other vampire princesses who are watching the game hold their breath, while Semeri is smiling.

"....Naive dearu."

The True Ancestor muttered.

Even according to my AR indication, the little girl is only slightly damaged.

The little girl emerges from the shadow under the Tyrano and quickly cuts both its legs.

Apparently, the mist was a fake, the real body had merged into shadow.

It's not a shadow magic, but a race-specific skill called [Shadow Walk]. Only few people posses it, including the little girl and the True Ancestor.

It seems to be a skill that only vampires who have aged past certain years posses, the 170 years old Semeri doesn't have it.

The Tyrano which has lost its mean to escape is cut into pieces without any resistance.

Apparently, vampires turn into ash when their HP becomes zero.

"Winner, White Princess Ryuna."

The taciturn little girl grips her small fist, secretly looking happy.

The girl gracefully walks toward the True Ancestor, and then presents her cheek toward him. When the True Ancesotr lightly kisses her cheek, she smiles broadly.

It's rather cute.

◇

"The second one is, Roper! White princess can't fight again okay?"

When the little girl who was still smiling was going to walk toward the courtyard, Semeri stopped her in irritated tone.

The little girl turned toward the True Ancestor to be the judge.

"Umu, one-side game isn't fun dearu."

With those brief words, the second round is a fight between Roper vs the blond beauty.

Just like the little girl, the blond beauty cuts her own wrist and create two short swords from her blood before going to the battle.

The beauty evades the randomly-attacking tentacles with speed that surpass humans, while warding off the ones that she can't evade with her short swords.

Unlike with the Tyrano, the sap of this roper doesn't seem to burn.

However, it seems it has strong viscosity as the blond beauty's movement is getting dull.

The nail-like cornified parts at the tip of the roper's tentacles are tearing the beauty's clothes.

"Ahahaha! Good good Roper! Expose that fatty's shameful body under the broad moonlight."

"I, am, not, fat."

The blond beauty's breath seems to have been thrown out of order after arguing with Semeri, she's finally unable to dodge and caught by several tentacles, she's lifted on the air with her limbs tied.

--quite an erotic pose.

For her honor, I shift my glance behind.

I could hear crackles like from electricity from behind.

The blond beauty is affected with paralyzed status, it seems she's taken electric attacks from the tips of the tentacles.

It seems she can't turn into mist in this state, her defeat is decided without even a counterattack.

"Game over, winner Roper."

I turn around since it's ended--Oh my, it's a splatter.... the corpse of the blond beauty which has been split in two are dangling on the Roper's tentacles.

The blond beauty's head which has been thrown by the Roper is picked by the little girl.

"Unsightly."

"....Regrettably."

Geh, as expected of vampires.

She can talk even with only her head.

"Do not worry. She will be immediately revived if she takes some blood dearu."

The True Ancestor followed-up when I was shocked to see the freshly-severed head talking.

Confirming on the AR indication, her health gauge is gradually being restored.

◇

"Roper is going to fight again. It's the leader's turn over there!"

Semeri looks toward the True Ancestor.

The True Ancestor looks at me as if she didn't notice her gaze.

"Routine works cause laziness dearu. Let's change the plan today. Kuro-dono, would you show us the techniques you use to defeat the guardians?"

"Yeah alright."

I don't mind since I can just tie the Roper with [Magic Hand] and defeat it in one blow with fire magic.

"This Roper is a special kind for Ban-sama. Like I'd use it against a human! I'll torment him directly."

....Didn't you just use it against the blond beauty.

And also, I'm afraid to ask just what kind of things is she going to use it for.

"I prefer not to injure her, is there any tip to hold back?"

"You human, hold back you said?! You underestimate this Semeri-sama."

"Don't worry dearu. Vampire Lords won't perish even if they turn into ash."

I consulted True Ancestor in whisper, but it seemed vampire princesses had good ears as Semeri heard it, she was enraged to the point of looking like her blood vessel would rupture.

The True Ancestor gleefully said, "She would be revived immediately if you put a magic core on top of the ash and drip some blood, so I don't mind if you go all out dearu.", as if fanning the situation.

The castle maids would become victims if I do it seriously you know.

They won't die even if you cut their head, I guess I'll end it by doing that.

"Ban-sama! The term won't change even if I beat this guy y'know?"

"Ah, if Semeri won, I would be your captive until next month as promised. However, if you lose, Kuro-dono will be given the right to order you."

No, I don't need such things like an order right.

Semeri's expression becomes warped when our eyes meet.

Please stop covering the deep valley that you're fully displaying from my view.

It's really vexing.

"S, shameless orders are no no!"

"Ara, Semeri, do you feel like losing?"

While still staying as a head only, the blond beauty teases Semeri as if getting her revenge for before.

The scene is too surreal.

These girls are really Undeads huh.

I produce a glass-like transparent sword with [Magick Sword] magic chantlessly, and wield it.

"Hou, you're making a weapon from『Dancing Blade』type of magic huh. Really quite unusual way nanodearu."

It makes me feel that I'm really odd when those were said by a vampire who's lived for a long time.

However, I had to disrupt such thought since Semeri was coming to attack me, wielding a great sword with her slender arm.

I thought that she was a brute-force type of person, but it seems she unexpectedly practices proper swordsmanship.

She's probably been swinging swords in her free times during the 170 years of her life.

Her swordsmanship is polished enough to liken her with Pochi's master.

However, her craftiness isn't comparable to the elf master--thus, she's easy to read.

In addition to that, Semeri's expression is too rich.

Just like when I'm training with Pochi, I allow her to do the attack she wants while gradually cornering her.

Semeri who's been cornered cut her wrist and attack with the blood that have turned into needles.

I disperse such a desperate attack with [Short Stun] and destroy Semeri's great sword with the magick sword.

"Kuh, damn."

I block the blood sword that Semeri's created with the magick sword in one hand, slip to the bosom of her body which is pushing in, hitting it with my palm.

The moment my palm touches her body, I drain her magic power in one go with [Mana Drain].

Losing her magic defense, I drive in my palm which is shaped like it's gouging thing.

Looks like even vampires breathe, Semeri stopped moving after losing her breath.

While pulling my palm back, my other hand is swinging the magick sword toward her neck, but it stops right before it hits the neck.

No, I stopped it.

I couldn't cut the neck of a woman who looks like nothing but human save for her pale skin.

Even though I know she won't die, I'd likely still feel repulsed.

"Winner, Kuro-dono!"

However, the True Ancestor seems to have judged my victory.

Semeri coughs violently with both her hands on the ground.

"Kuro-dono, what do you wish of Semeri."

Before answering the True Ancestor, I look at Semeri.

She's gnawing her mouth in vexation, trembling in disgrace.

My sadistic side is incited, but I'm not going to ask perverted things.

None.

"Right then--"

Please forgive me for making Semeri a bit anxious.

She has the natural characteristic of being easy to tease.

"--Could she guide me around the attractions of the labyrinth's lower layer?"

My request seems to be surprising, Semeri tilts her head in puzzlement while saying, "Attractions?"

True Ancestor seems to like it, he claps my shoulders while laughing pleasantly.

"Attractions it is! Leave it to me. I'll let you see astounding attractions that you have never seen before."

Apparently, Semeri interprets it as a new challenge from me, she energetically points her hand at me.

Looks like she's eager to guide me immediately, but it's going to be dawn soon, today I'm going to have a date with Zena-san in the noon, and a party with the guildmaster in the evening.

I have to escort Lady Karina to the tea party and the banquet tomorrow, so I ask for the tour to be held the day after tomorrow.

I could do it tonight, but I'd love to have a proper rest before touring the attractions.

As for the rewards of the fight from the True Ancestor, he's going to introduce me with the reincarnated people who live in the lower layer.

Let's visit them as I'm touring the attractions later.

11-12. Date (1)

Satou's here. Talking about greeneries when I live in the city, I feel that I've only ever seen roadside trees and decorative plants there.

I do take walks in the park sometimes, but it's a shame that doing it at the dawn of the day after an all-nighter will likely get me questioned by the police.

◇

"Now, let's go!"

"Aye~"

"Roger! Nanodesu!!!"

Tama answered Lady Karina's yell in her usual carefree manner, but Pochi raised her voice louder than usual.

I wonder if the slight desperation I've heard is because of the stress from the meat absent.

From now on, let's make it only two days for the meatless punishment.

"I'll prepare full-course meat party tomorrow morning, so do your best okay."

"Guah! I'll do my best nodesu!"

Pochi who has regained brightness on her eyes grips both her hands and psyches herself.

"Full cour~se?"

"That's right. Starting with three kinds of roast beef as the hors d'oeuvre, then shabushabu, karaage, teriyaki chicken, beef stew, and last but not least, thi~ck steaks. Of course there are seven kinds of hamburg steaks including the orthodox Japanese style and Western style. For the entremet, there will be shrimp and crab dishes with sukiyaki."

Pochi's tail is swinging faster whenever I narrate each item.

"Aaa.... I'm looking forward too much, I don't know what to do nanodesu!"

"Wakuwaku~"

<TLN: Excited.>

"It sounds very wonderful. In order to empty my stomach, I will also be participating in the labyrinth exploration today."

It's not only Tama and Pochi who can't express their joy, Liza seems to be excited with the meat festival, her tail is banging on the floor.

They like meat that much huh.

I see the energetic beastkin off, "Do your best."

I felt a slight pity toward Erina and the others who are being dragged by Lady Karina, but since they would also participate in the meat festival, I encouraged them to work hard also.

◇

"Satou-san, it's a good day today isn't it."

"Yes, the cloud unusually come out, it makes the sunlight feels nice."

I've come to the lodging estate where Zena-san's Selected Corps are staying, but Zena-san who's been waiting before the gate of the estate looks awfully tense.

Hmm?

What is she tense about after all this time?

I get off the carriage I've borrowed for the date today and escort Zena-san to it.

She might be embarrassed because Lilio and some others unfamiliar faces from the corps are peeking curiously from the other side of the gate.

The old coachman puts a stool on the ground to support Zena-san who's wearing skirt to get on the carriage.

He's someone dispatched by the cab carriage association, I often employs him when I use cab carriage since he drives the carriage carefully and is unexpectedly attentive despite his taciturn unsociable-like demeanor.

"Zena-san, have you eaten breakfast?"

"Y-yes."

Her reaction is slightly slow when I talk to her.

Maybe her condition isn't good after all?

"If you're still not feeling well, why don't we postpone the outing?"

"No, I'm fine."

She doesn't look that fine, so I'm going to refresh her at a place with good sceneries.

I instructed the old coachman to take us to the park near the Ivy Mansion.

◇

"I didn't know that there's a place with such rich greenery in this city."

"There's a facility made by someone called the Elf Sage nearby that enables water from a water-source to flow on the ground surface. The nature here is rich as the aftereffect."

I narrate back what Leriril has told me to Zena-san who's wide-eyed after seeing the trees and lawn of the park.

In fact, it's not just merely a water source, it also draws up [Mana] from the earth's vein.

Putting that said, since Zena-san's vigor has come back a bit, let's take walk here.

I tell the old coachman to stop the carriage on the grassland near the park entrance.

"Would you like to take a bit of stroll?"

"Yes, I'd be glad to."

"It feels really refreshing to walk around here, I'm sure you'll feel pleasant."

I tell the old coachman to wait here, take Zena-san's hand, and relaxedly walk on the lane under the tree shadows.

"Satou-san...."

"Yes."

I do not urge Zena-san who's faltering after saying my name, I'll just wait for her to collect her words.

It's very cool here, probably due to the vapor from the morning dews.

In addition, the sounds of birds chirping between the trees are really nice on the ears.

"Um, Satou-san, have you, umm, been a noble since you were in Seryuu city?"

"No, I was a normal commoner at that time."

It seems she wanted to hear that, Zena-san's shoulders lose her tense after hearing me saying so.

It's not that important of a thing right?

I briefly talked about how I saved some relatives of a noble from thieves, brought them to Baron Muno which ended up in Liza and the others repelling the monsters that attacked Muno city, as the result, I was granted chevalier title by the Baron.

"....Then, that beautiful person was?"

Someone whom Zena-san expressed with [Beautiful], meaning it's either Lady Karina or Nana?

It's probably Lady Karina since I've introduced her to Zena-san before.

I explain to her, guessing so.

"Is it about the woman with rolled blond hair?"

"Y-yes."

"That person is Karina-sama, she's the daughter of Baron Muno. She's always wanted to go to the labyrinth city since a long time ago, she's currently enjoying herself exploring the labyrinth, guided by Liza and the others."

Zena-san looks puzzled, I guess the daughter of a baron exploring a labyrinth is unexpected.

"She probably wants to become strong since she said she wanted to become the hero's attendant."

"I can understand that!"

You do huh....

Zena-san and Lady Karina might unexpectedly have similar taste.

◇

While taking half a hour stroll, I talked about the event when I met Mia and Nana.

Of course, I can't exactly tell her the thing about the [Maze of Trazayuya] and the [Undead King Zen], so I've revised the content here and there.

I heard a small sound from Zena-san's stomach during that time.

She probably hasn't eaten breakfast after all.

There should be Tama's napping space ahead of these trees.

Let's have a lunch there today.

We can't see it from the lane, but if you just follow the animal trail for a bit, you'll arrive at Tama's napping space.

Small butterflies are flying among the sunlight between the trees, small squirrel-like animals peek their face from the shadow of the branches.

It's a space that's quite pleasing for hearts.

I put a sheet on the meadow for us to sit down, and take out sandwiches and whale karage from the lunchbox I've made this morning.

I've prepared honeyed lemonade as the drink. Though I've said lemonade, I used some handball-sized fruits that tasted like lemon to make the fruit juice.

"Um, does Satou-san has [Item Box] skill?"

"Oh it's just that this bag is a magic item. Just like the [Item Box], it can hold a lot of item."

"Amazing. You're like the magician from picture books."

I pass the magic bag (Holding Bag) to Zena-san who was eagerly admiring it, letting her touch it as she wants.

I hid it in Seryuu city it, but there's no problem showing it now because I've been using it normally with everyone's fairy bag as the camouflage ever since we arrived at the Labyrinth City.

Surprisingly enough, there wasn't anyone who tried to steal this bag as it seemed the Red Iron Plate worked as repellents.

"Now then, why don't have a bite."

I pass Zena-san a handmade paper napkin and teach her the way to eat the sandwich.

We're going to eat the sandwich by wrapping it in paper napkins, but I've brought two forks for the karage.

"Is this a white bread? This is the first time I've seen a bread this thin and soft."

"It's a kind of white bread called loaf bread."

I made this loaf bread for Arisa who requested it strongly.

I got the bread's yeast in the Royal Capital, but it took me half a month before I could made good loaf bread.

Arisa bit the completed loaf bread in her mouth while running in the corridor, saying "I'm late, I'm late", which made her getting scolded by not only Liza and Lulu, but even Ms. Miteruna.

I understand the parody, but just what was she trying to do.

"You could eat this karage as is, but dipping it in this red sauce or this yellow sauce would make it taste even more delicious."

The red one is a slightly sweet tomato sauce, the yellow one is a slightly bitter mustard sauce.

There are two kinds of sandwiches; egg sandwiches, and cheese & ham sandwiches.

I had prepared tuna flakes too, but since that peculiar flake sensation was popular among the mansion maids who tasted it, I passed it off this time.

"Delicious"

Zena-san mutters a single word and becomes speechless after nibbling a light bite of the sandwich.

It's been awhile since I see such reaction.

"It's really delicious. I thought this red one was pepper, but it's sweet isn't it."

"Yes, that's a flavoring made from the royal capital's specialty fruit called tomato."

It seems the sandwich and the karage were to Zena-san's liking, they were gone into her stomach in a blink of an eye.

While Zena-san is having a late breakfast, I tell her about my workshop visits and Sir Tisrad's wedding in the duke castle at the duchy capital humorously.

When Zena-san hears about the fireworks that adorned the wedding at the end, she leaks a sigh like she's envious from the innermost depth of her heart, "It sounds wonderful", while looking entranced.

Since that behavior was so cute, I unconsciously promised Zena-san to show her fireworks next time.

I feel bad if I have to ask Arisa, so let's make some magic tools that can shoot fireworks once again.

With Zena-san who has fully recovered, we leave the park behind.

11-13. Date (2)

Satou's here. I completely don't remember the field study of my schooldays era, but I remember well the field study at the beer factory, and the semi-conductor factory during the time when I was a working adult.

The depth of fascination really is different for things that interest you.

◇

After we're done eating, per Zena-san's wish, we're going to look around shops specialized for explorers.

I ask the carriage to wait on the entrance to the arm street, and then we march there on feet.

Many craftsmen are making Maces and Bone Hammers made from monster materials on the joint establishment located beside the weapon shop.

Although it's probably for the sake of efficiency, please stop piling up the unprocessed materials on places that can be seen from the street.

"Aren't these corpses of monsters?"

"That's right. However, I think it'd be better to call it materials rather than corpses."

Since I sensed that the air among the craftsmen became unsettling with Zena-san's nonchalant word, I'm correcting her in low voice.

Zena-san who realized that she had a verbal slip apologizes toward the craftsmen while lowering head.

It's very like Zena-san to act like a good young lady like this, but it seems the craftsmen didn't expect her to lower her head to them, after getting taken aback, they accepts the apology, saying [Don't mind it.] brusquely.

There are a lot of arms made from monster materials that are processed without change around this area.

Shops that produce pseudo-magic swords with alchemy are doing their works indoor or in their courtyard to prevent people stealing the technique.

I've guided Zena-san to a shop that deals with such pseudo-magic swords.

"The shops here look grand."

"That's because they're the foremost weapon and magic tools shops-joint in the labyrinth city."

The weapons that are sold here is 10 gold coin much at the lowest, so average explorers don't quite go to the luxury shops here.

However, quality-wise, they're undoubtedly the finest in the labyrinth city, so I'm thinking of making Zena-san known to the shopkeepers.

Although it's probably going to be awhile before she can buy here, but since the Seryuu Selected Corps are excellent, it should be not long before they're coming here to have transactions.

When I enter the shop while escorting Zena-san, several sociable female shopkeepers energetically greet us, "Welcome", together at once.

I urge Zena-san who greets them back after being lured by their vigor, and go on to check on the displayed weapons and armors.

There are around 10 display stands in the excessively spacious shop interior, each of the stands have two shopkeepers without exception.

Those women are former explorers, and it seems they're not only here to be shop assistants, but also as guards for the commodity.

I've seen many times the case where a guest tried to touch the neat and trim female shopkeeper's butt only for her to twist their wrist while smiling brightly.

Putting that aside, I walk on, guiding Zena-san toward one of the display stand.

"This is a dagger made from the crystal horn of the Dread Beast, Crystal Dagger."

"It's beautiful."

Zena-san who saw the crystal dagger shown by the shopkeeper breathed out a sight of admiration.

This is a weapon made from horn of the triceratops-like monster I saw when I was exterminating the lost thieves.

It can produce electricity that paralyze enemies like a stun-gun if you fill it with magic power.

Zena-san is probably charmed by its jewel-like appearance though.

"If that interests honored guest, please try holding them if you would."

Encouraged by the female shopkeeper, Zena-san timidly takes the dagger.

Zena-san holds the dagger while looking a bit excited, but then she looks like she notices something and puts the dagger back to the stand while looking pale.

Hm?

"Was there something wrong?"

"T-the price tag."

Zena-san whispers to my ear in low voice.

While feeling slightly ticklish, I look at the dagger on the stand, it has the price tag of [120 gold coins].

It wasn't like this before though.

Furthermore, that's three times the market price.

When I ask the female shopkeeper, turns out it's not a sudden price hike, but it's priced to be sold to merchants who come from outside the city.

The price is clearly exorbitant, but sometimes there are merchants who still buy it at this price.

"If it isn't Chevalier Pendragon-sama. Welcome to our humble store."

The middle-aged shop manager comes out of the back and greets me while nodding to his other regular customers.

He's been a sociable person ever since he was introduced to me by

Baronet Dyukeli, but the reason why he gave such a grand welcome is because I've lend a hand on reproducing the recipe to make this crystal dagger.

Of course, I didn't directly give the recipe, but pretended to give the hint by coincidence.

Leaving that aside, as I've wanted, I make Zena-san's face known, bring her to tour the workshops, and have the craftsmen teach her the way to strip materials from monster in order to sell them high.

While waiting for Zena-san who's writing a memo about the way to strip materials with serious face, I go to see the manager-shi who's standing beside another craftsman making a pseudo-magic sword's blade made from [<<Soldier Mantis>>]'s material.

"It comes out well. Chevalier-sama, would you like to try it?"

"Yes, if you allow me to."

I take the sword manager-shi's presented to me.

The grip hasn't been made yet, but there's no problem in holding it since I'm not going to slash thing with it.

I put magic power into the blade.

Looks like it's not made well, I feel some resistance when I'm putting magic power into the great sword. I feel that it's stuck halfway through.

I concentrate at the place where the magic power is stuck, and then wring my magic power like a needle, operating it to expand on the path.

Normally it'd take a long time for the user to familiarize themselves, but I guess it's fine since it's not something that other people can notice.

I'm being careful since the blade will break and magic edge will be generated if I put too much magic power into it.

After 10 seconds, faint red light appears on the surface of the blade.

"As expected of Chevalier-sama. To infuse magic power into a magic sword that you've held for the first time!"

Manager-shi flatters me, but anyone should be able to do this much right?

All of our vanguards can commonly do it, even Lulu and Mia can do it after taking some time.

Zena-san raises her face when she hears manager-shi's praising voice, and leaks a surprised sound when she she see the magic-coated blade.

"Satou-san. Is that possibly magic edge?!"

"No, this isn't."

Although it seems she's misunderstood, so I correct it.

"It's not magic edge, but you can make red light appear on the blade of a magic sword made from monster materials if you pour it with magic power."

"It looks beautiful."

"Yes, however it's not just the look, when it's like this, it can give damage to substance-less monsters, and it won't be damaged by attacks of monster that use acid and decomposition breath. It's quite useful if you're engaging in series of battle inside the labyrinth."

I explained it with an all-knowing look toward Zena-san, but I heard this trivia from the roach-raid leader from before, Koshin-shi.

Without Item Box skill and a magic bags, bringing multiple weapons to the labyrinth is too inefficient, so people value this ability more than simple offensive power.

I put out the magic power from the blade and give it back to the manager.

For some reason, he praised me, "As expected of a Mithril Plate explorer", but I've heard this trivia from Koshin-shi, a Bronze Plate holder.

Since the craftsman looks like he wants to discuss the blade with manager-shi, I read the mood and leave the shop behind.

◇

We leave the arm shop street, and go to the street where alchemy and magic items are lined up.

There are a lot of small shops that sell consumable goods here, so there are a lot of explorers here compared to the arm shop street earlier.

I make Zena-san's face known to the shopkeepers while teaching her the market price of goods such as magic potions and ointments, and bargain items on each shop.

I know a lot of shopkeepers here introduced by Baronet Dyukeli during the banquet, so my aim is to get them understand that she is my acquaintance, reducing the risk of them selling her some weird item.

"It's cute. I wonder what is this accessory?"

"Well now? I wonder what is it."

Zena-san is holding a ball-sized magic item in a certain fancy goods shop.

Just as the color indicated, it's a lewd tool, so I suitably dodge the question.

The female shopkeeper approached Zena-san who was going to return the tool to the shelf, and then she whispered to her ear the kind of tool that was.

Zena-san who's become red, quickly returns the tool to the shelf like she held hot-iron.

Then she seizes my arm and runs away from the shop as fast as she can.

Still, I didn't know that there were such magic tools.

Looks like people still do what they do even when the world changes.

We're striding the street until Zena-san calms down, she finally does after we stop and drink some tea near the west guild.

This shop has sweet baked cake and blue tea.

I've been recommended this shop by the female staffs of the west guild.

Today it seems they don't hang the cloth for warding sunlight on the open terrace since the sunlight is weak today.

There are no sands in the wind since it's blowing toward the desert, so we're having some tea on the open terrace.

"The fruit water from before was good, but this blue tea is also nice."

"That's because, according to the guilds staff, this seems to be the shop which serves the best blue tea in the labyrinth city."

Some voices interrupted us when we were having such conversations.

◇

"It really was master's smell nodesu!"

"There's Zena too~"

Pochi and Tama who lean their body on the fence of the cafe's open terrace appeal themselves while swinging their tail.

Liza comes from behind them and then lift them both.

"Master, Zena-sama, please forgive us for disturbing you."

"It's alright."

I give the baked sweets left on the small plate to the two who are being carried under Liza's arms.

"Pochi, Tama, a~n."

"A~n?"

"Nanodesu!"

I decide to act like I didn't see Zena-san opening her mouth a bit when I was turning to her.

Feeding the two little girls is one thing, but doing it to Zena-san who looks like a senior high school student in public is too high of a hurdle.

"Are you done with the labyrinth exploring for today?"

"No, we have finished the work at Area 13, so we retreated to have a break."

Looks like they're working hard.

While leveling-up Lady Karina and the others, Liza is also trailblazing the depopulated Area 13.

It'll be complete after they create safety zones and cull out dangerous monsters that can endanger their hunt.

At the moment, [Pendora] guys are opening it, they're probably going to use it for the Training School's guys after the monster number has decreased a bit more.

By opening, it's not because there's a door that prohibit intrusion, they're only going to tell the safe route to Area 13 and distribute map of the safety zones there.

I don't see anyone beside the three beastkin girls, so I confirm it to Liza while rustling Pochi's and Tama's hair.

"Karina-sama and the others are resting in the explorer guild sickbay since their level-up nausea were bad. They should be fine since Nana is with them."

"It's the person who was being carried yesterday right? To have the nausea continues until the next day, maybe it's better if the priest check..."

"Zena-sama, that is not correct. Karina-sama and the others have leveled up again during the exploration today."

I saw Zena-san's surprised face while playing [Look that way] game with Pochi and Tama.

My eyes are chasing the two's fingers since our [Look that way] game adopt the house rule which states that you'd lose if you can't follow the finger.

"W, what kind of drill did you do?"

"We only performed some dozens of battles. We only defeated a bit less than 100 monsters, so it is not enough to be called a drill."

"H-hundred?"

"If Zena-sama is interested, how about training with us once? Is it alright Master?"

Liza suggested so to Zena-san who was at loss.

Thinking about Zena-san's group goal, power-leveling her probably will help guaranteeing her safety.

After confirming whether Zena-san would be a hindrance to them, I approve it since Lady Karina's and her maids' levels are lower than Zena-san's.

Zena-san hesitated for a bit, but it looks like she's decided to go together with Liza and the others to the labyrinth.

I lent the carriage to Zena-san to come back to the lodging estate and take her equipments.

I was going to lend her Lulu's hard newt leather armor since her armor should be destroyed before, but she declined and said that she was going to borrow the leather armor of her magician co-worker.

They're with Nana today, she should be fine even with common armor.

Until she comes back, I continue accompanying Pochi and Tama's [Look that way] game which have accelerated to the speed where an average person won't be able to keep up.

11-14. Power-leveling

"Thank you for taking care of me today."

I greet the daughter of Baron Muno in front of the explorer guild.

She splashed her luxurious golden-colored hair to the back, slanting her body while looking displeased.

Even if I'm referred by Satou-san, it must be unpleasant when an outsider suddenly takes part after all.

"Karina-sama?"

"It's nothing. Just don't become a drag."

"Karina~?"

"Tsuntsun is no good nanodesu."

"Zena-sama is a master of wind magic. She will not be a hindrance."

Karina-sama criticized me with some harsh words, but she begrudgingly accepted my participation with Liza and the others' mediation.

My chest feels slightly fuzzy when I see Karina-sama who's reddened as Satou-san whispers something on her ear.

◇

"Mot~"

"It's a Maze Moth nanodesu!"

The two featherkin infants shoot their light crossbow toward the direction Pochi and Tama, who are acting as the vanguard, point at.

The Maze Moth got hit with the two arrows and fell to the ground.

Their aim is as good as Lilio even though they're so small.

They must have undergone strict training ever since they're aware of oneself, no doubt.

We have only fought weak ones like maze moths and goblins during the journey so far since other explorers worked hard (to cull monsters).

Gina-sama of [Moonlight] has said to me that there are only a few monsters in the main corridors that connect between areas.

"Be careful, we're going to arrive at our objective Area 19 soon."

Everyone including me nods at Satou-san's warning.

We go through the crevice of a row of rocks that block the main corridor.

Tama who's going first says, "Trap", and then she goes to a corner of the corridor with careful steps.

"Procedure~ Canceled~"

"As expected of Tama nanodesu!"

--Fast.

To cancel it just by rustling a bit in the shadow like that.

"Monsters are coming from the front nodesu."

"It's a needle caterpillar (Needle Crawler). They can shoot needles that can paralyze you, so don't let it hit you okay."

"It's awright~"

"It's alright if they don't hit you nanodesu!"

Despite the Needle Crawler's dull-looking appearance, it's coming to us faster than a running man.

"Zena-san, please put up defensive magic."

"Yes!"

Oh no. I should've chanted it before Satou-san urged me.

I began to chant [<<Wind Protection>>] wind magic in panic.

However, the Needle Crawler that's approaching faster than the magic taking shape, stops, then it spreads its body and readies itself to shoot.

--I won't make it.

But, I can't stop the chant.

I'll stop a few of them at least!

"Caterpillar! Shooting needles, acting like you're an archer, how ridiculous so I mock!"

Nana-san who held a great shield came to the front and provoked it.

Countless needles shot by the Needle Crawler rush toward her. I feel chill down my spine as the rapier-sized needles fly one by one.

The dying figure of Nana-san who has been pierced with countless needless along with her great shield.

--such hallucination did not happen fortunately.

Her great shield which is made from material I've never seen before bounces the hitting needles while leaving heavy sounds.

Pochi and Tama skillfully intercept some needles which have missed her great shield.

The [<<Wind Protection>>] magic that has finally been invoked block the second volley of the needles.

"This monster is a bit dangerous huh. Sorry but let's not use this monster for the [Power-leveling]. Take care of it with Nana's magic before it approaches if you find one."

"Yes, master."

One term that I don't understand is mixed among Satou-san's talk.

However, I think this isn't the time to have a chat.

"Pochi, Tama, let's destroy it. Follow me."

"Don't worry be happy sir~?"

"Roger nanodesu!"

Liza and the others rush toward the space where the third round of needles are flying.

They're too reckless no matter how you see it.

"Wait!"

Karina-sama told them to halt, but Liza and the others aren't stopping.

But, I've misunderstood.

Karina-sama joins the battlefield where the needles are flying around.

With her golden-colored hair fluttering from her helmet, her beautiful limbs dance in the air as if she's the incarnation of beauty itself.

Satou-san stopped me who was lured and had made a step forward.

"It's dangerous. Those four should be able to handle it."

Just as he's said, Liza and the two others handily beat the monster.

Not only Liza's spear, Pochi's and Tama's weapons also shined red light, so they must be magic swords.

Karina-sama swings the Heavy Hammer she's shouldering, knocking the entire body of the monster to the ground.

A whip-like tentacle sprouting from the Needle Crawler's head is going toward Karina-sama.

However, a small shield that appears before her blocks the tentacle even though it's cracked because of it.

Is that magic?

Or a magic tool?

Satou-san who has noticed my line of sight calls out to me.

"Karina-sama is fine since he has the protection of the Magic Creature Raka."

It seems the decorations on her neck and limbs are Intelligent Item.

To have a family heirloom that only appears in fairy-tale like that, as expected of a territory-holder lord.

--She's rich on top of being that beautiful, it's really enviable.

◇

"....■■ Air Blast"

My magic intercepts the Armor Moth who was rushing here.

Slightly later, the featherkin infants shoot their light crossbows.

Liza's spear and Nana-san's great sword cut its armor, Pochi and Tama's stone-throwing create holes on its wing.

Karina-sama and her two female soldiers take turn to hit it once, and lastly the three beastkin girls finish the battle.

Even though my magic and the girls' attack were repelled by its armor, Liza, Nana-san and the others easily cut through it.

I think this is the difference between us and Mithril Explorers.

One needs that much strength in order to stand by Satou-san's side....

I feel uneasy about my remaining magic power after doing so many battles, but it should have run out faster if not for the wand I've received from Kuro-san.

Although I feel dizzy after overusing my magic, I won't be able to catch up to Satou-san and the others if I rest.

I will fight with the Magic Short Sword I've received together with this long wand if I run out of magic power.

"Are you tired?"

"I-I'm fine!"

I muster up a bravado as to not worry Satou-san.

"You would collapse if you overexert yourself you know. Go ahead and refresh yourself with this."

I receive the small bottle that he's presented to me worryingly, and drink down the citrus flavored liquid.

I feel that magic power wells up from within my body, subsiding the dizziness.

--Don't tell me it was a magic power recovery potion?

My question was quickly affirmed, but the magic potions that I know are hard to drink with strong grass flavor.

Moreover, even though it should be several silver coins worth even for one, he said, "I have a lot", and gave me more bottles.

"Recovering magic power with meditation will use up the time, so please drink it freely."

Although he said that, I don't think I can drink these expensive magic potions so readily.

Even in territorial army, it's a valuable item that's supplied to me only one bottle for emergency...

--I feel like it'll make my sense of value go haywire.

◇

I wonder how many monsters we've defeated.

I understand why the eyes of the two Karina-sama's guards looked like a dead fish's when they were entering the labyrinth.

They've been repeating this absurd ways of fight day after day.

The two guards expressed their poor physical condition right after the featherkin infants, so we're taking a break in a small room called Safety Zone, guided by Satou-san.

Come to think of it, Satou-san has been guiding our journey so far, but I've never seen him use luminance stones to check the course, nor did he check map even once.

I wonder if he has memorized all of the routes?

Satou-san has never pulled the mithril sword on his waist so far.

He must be in charge of direction and mapping.

"Zena, a~n."

"Thank you."

I receive the honey cake that Pochi presents and put it into my mouth.

It's sweet enough to be too sweet, but right now, this sweet spreads out deliciously.

....Looks like I had gone to sleep before I knew it.

I was laid on a carpet with tender felt that had been put on the ground.

When I look up, I see Pochi and Tama silently playing signal-like game with their hands.

"Have you woken up?"

I receive the tureen and a spoon that Satou-san, who says "You're hungry right?", presents me.

The tureen is warm with appetizing steam rising.

--Steam?

I see a hot pot that's being heated on fire behind Satou-san.

It looks like he's cooking inside the labyrinth. The people of [Moonlight] have taught me that it's an act that must not be conducted since it'll gather monsters.

"It's alright since this is a safety zone."

As if reading my worry, Satou-san informs me with his usual calm tone like he's whispering.

When I'm with him, I feel like I'm hallucinating we are in the middle of the city.

The thick vegetable stew that I have is more delicious than any other dish I've ever had.

That's why, I involuntarily asked for a second helping.

--To be that much delicious is unfair.

◇

My body feels light thanks to the light sleep.

I have a feeling that my magic power has increased somewhat.

We continue the same kind of series of battles after the break, but we are now able to reliably defeat the enemies since everyone has grasped their role.

That appeared from the Gushing Hole as if to prick such carelessness.

--Scissor Centipede

Its very long body looks like a tower when it stands up, sharp claws on the tip of its countless legs are shaped like swords.

And, its crab-like pincers on the sides of its head are emitting fiendish red light.

That pincer swings down toward me who's frozen over the centipede's gigantic body.

We are currently fighting nearly 10 powerful monsters.

There's no one that can prevent that fiendish blade--

Even though I know it's futile, I holds my long wand up to block the swinging-down pincer. Another enemy would skewer me if I were to avoid to the side.

--Just before the pincer bisects the wand in two, a black tornado cuts in.

After kicking away the swinging right-pincer, Satou-san who had appeared out of nowhere brought me to a safe location.

"It's alright now."

Satou-san smiles refreshingly as if to make me feel relieved.

He still looks relaxed even though he's just saved me from danger. Nimbly so, like he always is.

"Insolent fool who tried to put their hands on Zena-sama."

The left pincer which pursued us is warded by a red spear, making it pierce the ground instead.

Liza holds the red spear in one hand, and uses her other hand to push the left pincer into the ground.

That hand seemingly glow red.

"A mere centipede trying to fight Master and Zena-sama, you're a hundred years too early."

The moment after Liza's words, the left pincer is destroyed with a boom sound.

Was that magic just now?

"Liza, I leave the rest to you."

"Understood."

Liza's spear which is clad in red light emits even stronger red light--is that Magic Edge?

I wonder if her secret skill is [Magic Edge]?

She pulls back the spear to the limit, and then thrusts it toward the centipede in one go.

It's not a distance that a spear can reach no matter how long it is.

--Eh?

A lump of red light flies from the tip of the spear like a cannonball, hitting the centipede's head.

When the light disappear, the figure of the centipede with a large hole on its head remains.

Is that perhaps, the shooting [Magic Edge] technique that appears in the hero story I've read in my childhood.

I thought that was just a creation, I've never thought it actually exists.

However, there was no leeway for me to be perturbed from that miscellaneous matter.

The centipede that had lost its head split on its joints, and came attacking like different creatures.

"Magic Edge Cannon nanodesu!"

"Majin Cannon~, How many~?"

"More! Nanodesu!"

"Falcon Phalanx~"

Blasting with carefree voices, Pochi and Tama wreck the BlockPedes with countless red light bullets they shoot from their locations.

--Am I watching a dream I wonder.

I forget to support them with wind magic, as I can only watch the spectacle, dumbfounded.

◇

I was shocked when I checked my growth in the explorer guild.

My level has increased from 17 to 24 in just one day.

It's said that growths are fast in the labyrinth, but this is just too fast no matter how you look at it.

It shouldn't be strange for Liza and the two others who were powerless to turn into superior explorers in just several months.

Probably, Satou-san's guidances and commands are amazing.

Except in that one Gushing Hole case, I never felt that my life was in danger even after we did such continuous battles.

When I was in the labyrinth with everyone from the Selected Corps, I felt that every battle had my life on the line even though we only fought minor enemies.

We need knowledge and experience to cover this difference.

I will ask if I can enter the Training School that Satou-san manages next time.

◇

During the labyrinth exploration, I tried to converse with Karina-sama many times, but she only ever replied with, "Yes", or "You're right" short.

Once, we had a conversation that continued on for a bit with Satou-san as the topic, but her guards poked fun at her, getting it interrupted.

Even though she looks like a gaudy beauty, she seems to be surprisingly pure.

I think that I want to become friend with her for sure.

During that labyrinth exploration, I remember sympathizing with her who earnestly wished nothing but getting stronger, without complaining even once.

She might be my rival in love, but someday I want to have an all-night talk about Satou-san, accompanied with drink, with her.

And then, someday, together the two of us will arrive at the height where Satou-san and the others are!

11-15. Revisit

Satou's here. I wonder when did I begin bringing presents whenever I visit my friend's place?

It was normal to not bring anything when we were children, but when my friend became a family man, it became normal to bring something in order to relieve the guilty feeling of intruding a newly-wed household.

◇

Last night was tiring.

I went to the drinking party sponsored by the guildmaster after returning to the labyrinth city, it was quite a sabbath.

I had completely forgotten to make the appetizer due to the date that became a power-leveling endeavor, but thanks to the thoughtful Lulu who had cooked various things, I was able to somehow got out of the trouble.

The liquor that the guildmaster boasted was quite good. The scathing impact that came with a mouthful was quite a thing, yet the aftertaste was refreshing, so it made you keep wanting another cup.

I wasn't the only one who seemed to think so, the guildmaster emptied the bottle before I could ask for the second cup.

I had expected it to become like that, so I took out a barrel of wine that I had bought when I was buying the cheap wine for True Ancestor Ban.

Was it due to the Mithril Plate, I felt that there were plainly more female staffs and female explorers who approached me.

In a sense, the only people who didn't change their attitude were the brothel Onee-sans.

I guess either one of them was aiming for fame and money.

Eluding the younger female staffs were easy, but resisting the temptation of the sexy young women were painful.

Fighting demon lords or doing continuous battle is easier than this.

◇

"Hauu, it's too blissful it's scary nodesu."

"Full stomach~ full stomach~?"

"Supreme bliss."

As promised, I had made the meat feast for Pochi and the others who woke right up as the sun rose.

The three are lying down on the cushions in the living room with swelled stomach that looks like it comes out of a manga.

Their expression on their face is loose, looking blissful.

Mia and me exited in the first round, but the three beastkin girls fought the meat dishes to the bitter end.

"It sure was delicious, but that amount wasn't something that could be eaten in one sitting was it."

"Nn."

Arisa said it like it's not her business, but she, who participated until the third round, had just been moaning, "I'm dying from eating too much", until I gave her stomach medicine.

Erina and the other who participated to third round with Arisa have gone to bed after taking the stomach medicine.

Lulu and me who are exhausted from the cooking also become the dwellers of the bed.

Therefore, I've asked Ms. Miteruna in charge of dressing Lady Karina who's going to participate in the tea party today.

◇

I let Lady Karina, whose face looks stiff from being nervous, to sit on the sofa as recommended by the Marchioness. I sit beside her in order to cover her.

"Oh my, such wonderful clothing."

"Is it the fashion of the royal capital?"

"Isn't this cloth the green silk of Oyugock dukedom."

Not only the Marchioness, the noble wives who surround her also talk to Lady Karina, but they praise only her accessories, not Lady Karina herself.

I wonder if it's the tacit rule to not refer her by appearance during such time.

While fully displaying her shyness of strangers, Lady Karina replies the wives curtly with, "Yes", or "No", she's catching up with the conversation but not continuing it.

I tried to follow-up as much as I could, but the conversation became to be only with me.

There's no choice but for her to start by making friends of the same age.

"Is Karina-sama going to get married to Chevalier Satou?"

Baroness Larupott who likes stories about adultery and syrupy love stories brought that topic while smiling obscenely.

Since Lady Karina was in trouble without being able to either confirm or deny it, I eluded the talk by saying, "Lady Karina is more suited to someone who is of higher class than someone like me."

The Baroness tried to recommend her 30-year-old fifth son to Lady Karina, but I changed the topic to be about the rumor of relationship between that fifth son and a certain baron's daughter before Lady Karina made a verbal slip.

Although, I feel that Lady Karina wouldn't have responded anyway since she was sending displeased glance at me, but Baroness Larupott still got into the different topic I presented while looking satisfied.

The mood of the place has become slightly strange, so I have the maids to bring in the Shortcakes and Cheese Tarts I've handed them in advance to soften the mood.

The Marchioness's lady attendant whispers something to the Marchioness's ear, and then she looks at me while hiding half of her childish smile behind a folding fan.

--It's probably better for me to prepare myself to look surprised.

I've already known the prepared surprise guest with the marker reflected on my radar, but I won't be able to recompense her hardship if I react plainly.

"It seems the the preparation for the second guest has been completed. Enter."

Zena-san in dress enters the room while being escorted by the Marchioness's lady attendant.
I look surprised while taking care not to be exaggerated about it.

"My my, for Satou-dono who's usually calm to become that flustered."

It seems she was satisfied with my behavior, the Marchioness offhandedly muttered, "This one is really the favorite after all".

◇

After finishing the worrisome tea party and dinner, I escorted Zena-san back to her lodging, and Lady Karina to the detached building of the mansion.

I was somehow able to finish without displeasing the Marchioness community, but since my reaction should have been weak toward their effort to make fun of me, they probably won't invite these two girls again in the future.

The only fruit of all this is the fact that the two held conversations about hero story.

Lady Karina who was shy of strangers became talkative when it was about hero story although it was kind of unusual to be a topic between ladies.

They shouldn't be enough to be called 'friends' to each other, but at the very least they should be 'acquaintances' now.

If possible I wish Zena-san will become Lady Karina's girl friend.

Unexpectedly enough, I feel that she can get along well with Princess Mitia if the the topic about hero is brought up.

◇

The next morning, I visited the lower layer while bringing the presents for the true ancestor and the vampire princesses.

I've already installed a carved seal board on the large area beside theirs, so I can immediately go visit them with [(Return)].

"Ban-sama, please use this mithril to make katana as you like."

"Umu, it's a splendid ingot dearuna. I could make a good katana with this dearou."

I stopped my hand which was in the middle of distributing the presents when I heard the vampire princess, whom I gave the mithril ingot to, coaxing the true ancestor.

"Ban-dono, you can make katana?"

"Umu, it took me 300 years before I was finally able to temper a proper katana dearu."

"For future reference, is it alright if you let me see you create a katana?"

"OK dearu. I will need to prepare the smithy, so stop by after Semeri has finished guiding you on the tour."

I've tried to temper some Japanese katana before this, but I still can't make it well even now.

It did ended up looking like a Japanese katana from outside, but it broke easily, and its attack power couldn't be compared to the [Kotetsu] and [Muramasa] I had in my storage.

I finish distributing the presents while feeling slightly overjoyed.

I'm also giving sewing kits and books to the castle maids who seem happy about it.

"Um, is it fine?"

"Of course."

"I want this book."

"I'm taking this corral earrings!"

"You girls! You are before the guest and Ban-sama! Choose it later!"

"""Yes, Mrs. Fedraluca."""

The middle-aged head maid scolds the younger maids who were arguing over the presents.

She looks the oldest in this true ancestor castle, appearance-wise.

It seems she was invited to become a vampire princess countless times, but she firmly declined to stop being a human.

Mrs. Fedraluca carried some items to me and then I put them into my storage via Item Box.

These are the gift I've got from the true ancestor as thanks for my presents.

Some magic weapons that are clearly not common are mixed among them.

"I don't think I've brought items worthy enough to get such a magic sword?"

"They were items I acquired when I hunted the floormaster, you should accept them without worry dearu."

"By any chance, do you have the chant orb?"

I tried asking when I saw a ray of hope.

"Chant is it? We can try searching the treasure vault--"

"The orbs were all used by the maids, so there is nothing left of them."

It didn't remain in the true ancestor's memory, but Mrs. Fedraluca who managed the treasure vault's catalog denied it.

"Is that so dearuka. Do not worry Kuro-dono. You will be able to do it if you just train for 10 years."

"That's right, even the maids here learned it in five years except for the ones who gave up halfway through."

The true ancestor and the severed head that was on top of the tray consoled me.

"Does it take time to get revived from a neck?"

"There wasn't enough blood see. These girls would collapse if I took it from them."

It seems she needs to wait until the magic potion made from a medicinal plant called Blood Spray Herb is finished being made to replenish the deficit blood.

Looks like you can turn water into blood with the magic potion.

I can't imagine its mechanism, but if I consider the uncanny healing power of magic potions, changing water into blood sounds simple in comparison.

I can offer her my blood, but you usually ends up getting treated like ingredient in tales and such, so I won't say something more than necessary.

"Ban-sama! I've come to pick up Kuro!"

"Umu, very well dearu."

Vampire princess Semeri who's in high spirit like always has come.

She's bringing two raptor-type vampires that are fast on their feet.

"First, let's have some fun at Corpse and Armor's place!"

Corpse is probably the [King Mummy] Tetsuo, and Armor is the [Iron Stalker] Takeru.

By having fun, I wonder if they are exhibiting mummies and armors?

"Umu, you will surely have fun dearu."

"Are they doing some kind of tourist attraction?"

Semeri folds her arms and answers with a proud face.

"Yeah, it's war!"

11-16. War of the Underground Empire

Satou's here. One would imagine subterranean people if we're talking about underground empire, but thanks to a certain western movie that depicted Egypt, recently I couldn't shake the odd sense of linking it to undeads.

◇

--We came to a battlefield right after we left a cave.

"Looks like they've just started."

Steel frames advance on two carved trenches as their caterpillar tracks make distinctive sound.

Four big tanks that are lining up together stop moving, and then begin to rotate their gun turrets.

A moment later, black smoke begin to spout out of the muzzle brake at the tip of the turret.

--It's not smokeless gunpowder huh.

The four cannonballs shot from the muzzle flutter on the battlefield, piercing steel golem that has just climbed over the trenches.

The cannonballs penetrated through the golem's thick armor, blowing dust of cloud behind it and gouging the ground.

The body of the golem that has been destroyed by the blow is scattered to the surrounding.

"Oh, Corpse's victory shout is coming."

"Victory shout?"

As if covering my question, a loud voice that sounds like it's amplified by a megaphone echoes in the underground space.

『DROP DEAP! FANTASYYYYYY!』

--Oy, oy.

『That again! Show me your own words for your victory shout sometimes!』

His unseen opponent jeered him with synthetic-like voice.

That was probably the [Iron Stalker].

When I look closer, there's a red-and-white-colored thin steel tower standing on the battlefield with a speaker-like part installed on top of it.

The sound just before probably came from that.

Looking at the map, it seems the defending side is the [King Mummy].

The defending side have deployed the four big tanks from before, four armored vehicles, and 56 skeleton soldiers.

The attacking side seems to have seven steel golems and 56 mud soldiers.

Soldiers from both sides don't use swords and shields as their equipments, but rifles equipped with bayonets.

If we include the golem that has just been destroyed, it seems it's a firm 64 vs 64 battle.

This is more like a war game, rather than a war.

◇

Semeri guided me to the spectator tower to see the battle, and just as my first impression suggested, it was more a war game rather than a real war, or maybe it was better to call it a weapon-testing experiment.

The tank side which were devoted to ambush tactic remained superior until their victory.

Once, the golem got closer and successfully destroyed two tanks, but some ambush troops destroyed the golem's legs with disposable bazookas, and then, losing its mobility, the golem was destroyed by concentrated fire from afar.

The modern weapons win if we only look at this battle, but the golems movement were clearly slow.

They looked like the golems that guarded the gate to the true ancestor's Area, but they move [sluggishly] as if their output was lacking.

They should have been able to win against all the tanks if there were golems like the gatekeeper golems.

There might be some limitation, or rather, regulation about it.

"Alright, let's go to Corpse's place."

Following Semeri who has jumped down the tower energetically, I also go down.

Maybe it's because I've just seen some modern weapons in action, after all this time, I feel odd to jump down 50 meters high without a lifeline.

◇

There is a building with white wall that looks like a research facility on the other side of the battlefield.

Barbed wire are furnished on top of the two-meter high fence which would have prompted Arisa to say, "I'm losing the fantasy-feeling", if she were here.

It seemed Semeri had free pass, we greeted the mummies who were guarding the gate without being stopped and entered the building.

I thought the building was made from marble when I saw it from afar, but I see that it's made from concrete when I look close.

We go forward in the building while being guided by the skeleton who welcomed us.

I decided to act as if I never saw the skeleton who was wearing maid uniform.

We're led to an around-50-tatami wide room that's illuminated by fluorescent lamp-like light.

There's a big table in the center, and miniature tanks and golems have been placed on the diorama that's modeled after the battlefield earlier.

There are a mummy and a full-body armor doing some kind of verbal warfare between that table.

I understand that those two are the [King Mummy] Tetsuo, and the [Iron Stalker] Takeru from AR indicator.

"Muu, Semeri huh. Did you come here to ask for a tank to fight Ban?"

"I'll especially design a reinforced one if ya let me massage those lump of fat that aren't put to use for one hour, how bout it?"

"Y-you perverted gramps! How're you going to take responsibility if I get hated by Ban-sama for bringing such a boorish thing like a tank!"

Corpse and Armor are about to escape from Semeri who's raised her arms with a face reddened from their sexual-harassment remarks.

It's not my imagination, they look to be some fun people. However, their mind seem to be like a primary schooler.

After thoroughly playing around with Semeri, the two who finally noticed me asked my identity.

"By the way, who's the guy over there?"

"Is he Semeri's, this?"

Armor makes an indecent sign with his finger, and then his helmet falls down to the floor after getting hit by Semeri.

The inside really is hollow huh.

"Nice too meet you, my name is Kuro. Coming from the same place as Ban-dono--A『Japanese』, did that come through?"

"Nuu? A black haired『Japanese』despite not being a hero?"

"Did you come looking for immortal body at that age? Go enjoy your life for another 30 years first."

"That's right, don't be like this machine body of mine. With this metal armor body, even rubbing Semeri's breasts won't feel fun ya know?"

"My breasts belong to Ban-sama!"

They're even noisy while greeting people.

However, just like Ban, I don't feel any malice from them even though they look like they can become the last boss.

Particularly Corpse, I would have thought he was a monster and exterminated him if I didn't meet No Life King Zen before.

--But well, they would have long been defeated or became demon lords and killed by the hero if they were quick tempered or people who could easily make enemies.

"So, what's your business? Or do you really wish for immortal body?"

"No, I had asked Semeri to guide me in the lower-layer sightseeing tour, so I was brought here since this was the most interesting one."

"Ha? Tour?"

"Uhyo hyo hyo, first time I meet someone whimsical enough to come to this hell's pot for such reason."

They greatly laughed when I told them my business.

"Well alright. For the past thousand year here, there were only guys with dazzling wish like wanting an immortal body, or the lost knowledge."

"And the rest were 『Heroes』 who mistook us as demon lords, coming here to subjugate us but got killed themselves instead."

I can't read their expression at all, but I can feel that they're fed up.

For the time being, since they had welcomed me, I presented them powder-type cannons and muskets, that were only good as fertilizers for my storage.

I was worried whether the Item Box could take out the cannons, but the Item Box's entrance changed for an instant when I tried taking it out, and I was able to pull it out.

"Oh, that's rare."

"This one is a cannon I designed when I was at Furu empire. Slimes that could absorb magic were multiplying greatly, so I designed this to exterminate them."

So Armor-shi was an engineer of Furu empire huh.

It was the empire that the Wild Boar King destroyed if I'm not mistaken.

The souvenirs were more popular than I thought they'd be, so they're going to let me tour the museums that are located in the closed space.

◇

Corpse dive to a golden door that's floating in mid-air without any support.

It seems to be a teleport door, Corpse's luminous point in the map and radar has disappeared.

When I search for him in the marker list, his location is displayed as [UNKNOWN].

I try to use [Clairvoyance] magic, but there is no effect like when I tried to peek at True Ancestor's castle.

Following Armor and Semeri, I dive into the golden door.

When I check the map, it displays, [Area without Map].

I've seen this before--right, it was like this too when I was trapped inside Zen's shadow.

The inside is a vast white world that continues on forever.

Numerous cuboid-shaped 50-meter high buildings are standing at fixed intervals.

"Is this place created with space magic?"

"No, this space is created by Yuika's unique skill for me. We don't have to worry about gods peeking at us here you see."

I imagine god have the job of peeking at the lower world from above the cloud.

Oops, I have something else to confirm before that.

"By the way, is this person called Yuika a reincarnated person too?"

"Yea, that's right. However, unlike me, Yuika is not a human, but born as a『Little Oni-Kin (Goblin)』. Afraid of other people after having through some terrible things, Yuika stayed hidden indoor in the domain they created themselves."

<TLN: Using 'they' for 3rd person here since the raw doesn't specify gender.>

Goblin huh. This is the first Goblin without 'Demi' I've heard.

However, a woman reincarnating as a goblin.... It's too pitiful I feel like crying. This Yuika might be a man though.

"Yuika is docile but a good child you know? Even listening to my love consultation."

Semeri followed-up. Since she's stupid cute, she must have pressed on even after she was refused and then they became good friends.

I'll present her some magic sword for her to fight Ban later.

"Oy, I've gone and brought you here and all, tour properly won't ya!"

"Hyo hyo hyo, how patronizing. Even though you just want to show off."

Ignoring the two who have begun to quarrel peacefully, I tour various articles in the museum.

Pistols and rifles that I've seen somewhere before, submachine guns, mortars, and hand-grenades--they're all weapons, hey.

The successive buildings are decorated with aircrafts of both monoplane and biplane reciprocating engine, and tanks. Unlike the tank I've seen on the ground, as far as I can judge, it has enough power to make Semeri has a hard time in a battle between them.

While listening to Corpse who's happily doing an explanation in front of a 200-meter class battleship, I catch sight of something interesting outside the window.

"Is that perhaps a railroad?"

"Ou, that's right. It was the main cause that made me got pursued by the god."

It seems Corpse was reincarnated as a prince of a small country 3000 years ago. He built one of the great empire in the continent at the time with the unique skills and military knowledge that he had, but--

"For the sake of stable goods' circulation and information network in the empire, I created radio towers and railroad system but....It seems to have infuriated the god, you see."

Rice-producing regions were consumed by swarms of locust, drought happened, natural disasters like earthquake and volcano assailed like they were in bargain sales.

--There's a limit to even absurdness.

The empire endured for 10 years even with such states, but an oracle conveyed that the cause was the technologies that Corpse had made, so the empire was split and he was assassinated.

Although, he had surmised that before the assassin came, so he had prepared the ritual to become [King Mummy] beforehand.

"Even with this body, the apostles of gods kept persistently chased after me. They finally stopped, that was as long as I live a secluded life deep in the labyrinth as the condition."

When Armor heard that, he laughed like he was yawning.

"This guy held all of mankind hostages ya know? He made a mountain heap of nuclear weapons, 『Don't come after me if you don't want mankind destroyed』 he said."

I thought it was a joke, but since Corpse snorted like like he was cranky, without denying it, it's probably a true story.

Threatening the god sounds absurd. As expected of the man who built an empire in one generation.

According to him, the gods used their miracle to transform all radioactive materials that could become the main component into lead, so mining them is impossible in this world.

Since even his unique skill [Metal Creation] can't create Uranium nor Plutonium, there's no nuclear weapon that remains now.

Good, I wouldn't want a fantasy world to have nuclear winter.

I wanted to make nuclear reactor with magic tools, but it seems to be impossible.

Hydrogen exist, so I probably can emulate nuclear fusion by altering it into deuterium, but the god might chase me too if I make it.

I've got the proof of the Dog-head demon lord's story in an unexpected place.

It seems that interferes will come if someone is going to greatly advance the civilization.

That was dangerous since I had planned to make a railroad made of stone in order to improve the circulation of goods.

In exchange of giving Corpse all kinds of magic metal he wanted, I got several blueprints and books from him, and then we left his museums behind.

11-17. Desperate Struggle in the Subterranean Volcano?!

Satou's here. It's important to drive safely. Inspect the car before getting in, fasten your seatbelt, check the car's surrounding and then depart--there might be only a few people who know this much, but I think safe driving is important.

◇

"Ooh, so this vehicle can go this fast!"

"Uhyo hyo hyo, oy, you have a death wish? Semeri and me can restore ourselves even if we're cut to pieces or become minced meat, but it'll be all over for you, y'know?"

"--I'm driving safely you know?"

I'm safely driving a highly mobile vehicle--its tires and frame are that of a big military jeep--borrowed from Corpse.

I found it when we were visiting Armor's residence, and I got it to become the touring leg after asking him earnestly.

It's been awhile since I drove an automobile, there are some differences between driving it and a golem vehicle that imitates a carriage.

I make a sharp turn while feeling the roar of the engine with my whole body.

There's too much force, the rear wheels are slipping--the grip is worse than I thought. It can't be helped since the ground is hard rocks I guess?

I enjoy the driving while secretly supporting the running car's frame with [Magic Hand].

"Awesome! It's completely different than Armor's and Corpse's driving!"

Semeri who's in back seat is getting too excited, she's hugging my head from behind.

Unfortunately, the seat is obstructing, the blissful tactile is to be postponed.

"Don't lump me with this self-proclaimed 'safe-driving' guy! I'm a hardcore gold license!"

--Self-proclaimed he said.

I wanted to argue, but I'd likely bite my tongue if I did so, so I ignored Armor's impolite cry.

I've marked the course in the map anyway, and I'm driving while checking out the scenes of the underground, in a way it's safer than with a navigator.

I make a short work of obstacles and monsters with [Flexible Swords] and [Magic Hands] combo which have gone ahead while also putting them into Storage, so there's no problem on that front.

The speed feels a bit too fast, but since it shouldn't even be more than 100 KM/H, I'm slightly upset at being called a death wisher.

Compared to moving with Flash Drive, this speed is comparable to not moving.

Only Semeri and Armor ride with me, Corpse has started to work with the legendary-class magic metal I gave him.

Thanks to the high-mobility vehicle, the underground tour is going well.

Sightseeing a waterfall with one kilometer drop in a small area, sightseeing an enigmatic space where spherical water drops are floating around, burning down with laser the field of mustard flowers that were in full bloom in a small area, we toured attractions in the lower layer in short time despite such slightly harassing places.

◇

"Stop the car behind that rock."

I stop the car as instructed by Armor.

This is the big area where the Evil Dragon family live. Not only Evil Dragons, there are also such monsters as Basilisks and Flare Scorpions.

"It's always smelly here, I don't like it."

Semeri grumbles while getting off the car.

"Is this the smell of sulfur?"

"Yeah, that's right--I know you're expecting it, but sorry, there's no hot spring here."

To see through my mind, as expected of a Japanese person.

However, is the warm air around here not because of hot springs?

I follow Armor from behind while putting my overcoat into the Item Box.

The temperature goes up after we've passed through several rock gates.

The heat currently feels like in midsummer. The sexy Semeri who's wearing bikini-like clothing is the only gain.

"Nice ain't it?"

"Hot is nice sometimes indeed."

"You guys are strange."

I approve of Armor's words while advancing ahead.

Semeri is puzzled, but it'd be troubling if the salvation disappeared because she noticed, so I keep silent. Of course Armor is also not saying anything boorish.

After passing through the last door, we've finally arrived at the largest hall in this large Area.

"Dear me, what a superb view."

"Umu, it stimulates men's romance."

There, lavas are gushing out like geysers, red streams are flowing like rapid currents in a big river between the rocks.

Since there are lethal gas here, I deal with it using [Canopy] and [Air Control] magic.

The monsters that are emitting red light in the lava make for a good atmosphere.

Let's hunt some later and give it as souvenirs to Liza and the others.

"Now then, help me out a bit."

"Are we going to mine ores?"

"No, we're running out of sulfur, so we're replenishing it. Corpse can make normal ores from lump of clay, so ya don't need to mine them. Fire stones fall here sometimes, so look for it if there's one."

Fumu, fire stones huh.

There are a lot of demand for it since the military use it for fire wand and the like, maybe I should gather some.

I search the map for fire stones in the neighborhood to mark them. There are too many hits, my eyes hurt.

I search it again while limiting it to only ones that are bigger than a certain size--found a lot of huge human-sized fire stones in the bottom of a lava pit nearby.

Since it looks like my clothes and shoes would burn if I got too close, I protect them with magic power. I try imitating Liza's magic armor, but it's quite difficult.

I pick only one huge fire stone, and gather several dozens of fist-sized ones around it.

I used [Clairvoyance] and [Magic Hand] combo to pick them up since entering the lava seemed hot.

"Oy, Kuro. You'll fall if you lean so much."

"Don't die without permission! I will defeat and make you my servant after all!"

Armor and Semeri called me as it seemed to them that I was admiring the lava.

I apologize to the two and join them harvesting the sulfur.

These yellow materials are sticking around the crevices, so gathering them is easy. I collect them into a big bag by using metal tongs, and then give it to Armor after I've got certain amount.

"Shiiit."

"Is it the kid?"

"No, it's the parent."

It seems Armor and Semeri have noticed the Evil Dragon that's come nearby.

The Evil Dragon spreads its wing threateningly, but it's approaching here by walking on the lava.

"I wonder why is it not flying?

"Ah, that one's--"

"Because Corpse made it a target for his anti aircraft vehicle."

Semeri explained to me as if covering it. Her voice sounds not composed somehow.

However, it was attacked with an anti aircraft vehicle huh. Since it wasn't in the line up they showed me earlier, I'll ask him to show it after I've finished my business in the Royal Capital.

"Oy, let's scram, Semeri, Kuro."

"Yeah, Ban-sama and Corpse aren't here, we'll lose if we fight it seriously."

Semeri runs to the entrance with good speed. Armor is following her from behind while letting out noisy sound.

A dark red shadow jumped over me while pushing hot wind, and landed in front of the entrance.

It's not that big. It's about 80 meters long including the tail. Its smaller than the Black Dragon Heiron even though its level is high.

It's said that it was attacked with an anti-aircraft vehicle, but it's not like its wings are full of holes, seems it was just approaching us carefully.

"Semeri, buy me a bit of time. I'll change to Rock Golem."

"Geh, don't be unreasonable."

Semeri objected with trembling voice to Armor.

I'm slightly interested with [Lesser] dragons, so I'll take the charge of buying the time.

『Dragon, my name is Kuro. A friend of the Black True Dragon Heiron.』

I introduce myself so using dragon language.

The Evil Dragon did a roar that resembled Heiron's, but it seemed to be a mere cry, I couldn't understand its meaning. I didn't get any new language skill either of course.

Having a conversation really is not possible huh.

Semeri creates a one-handed sword with blood like White Princess did.

I heard something falling, and then saw Armor's armor crumbled down to the ground. In exchange, the rocks around it are gathering as if they have will.

I try to change my title to [Dragon Slayer].

I feel that the Evil Dragon's attention gets directed toward me. His atmosphere that seemed like a cat playing with a mouse until just now disappears, I feel a gaze full of hatred against one's enemy pricking me.

This one is like how monsters react to [Monster Slayer] huh.

Next, I changed my title to [Natural Enemy of Dragon Race]. I see fear in the dragon's eyes. The dragon looks at its surrounding in panic, trying to find a way to escape.

Semeri who jumped out to attract its attention got herself flown to the wall with a single casual swing of the dragon's arm.

The name of the Rock Golem that Armor had created became [Armor].

Apparently, he changed his possession to it.

In desperation, the Evil Dragon spitted flame breath toward me.

--Slow. The breath is coming at the speed of a flame thrower stage show. The arm of the Rock Golem that has just stood up is baked by the breath and broken down.

I use the Flexible Shield that's been deployed to block the breath--it stopped it.

The black dragon Heiron's breath destroyed two pieces of Flexible Shield in an instant, yet the Evil Dragon's breath seems to barely break through one Flexible Shield.

I pick one part of the Rock Golem that's been destroyed, and throw it to the Evil Dragon's forehead.

It was a clean hit because I aimed when it was stiff after the breath attack.

I guess checking the differences between True Dragon and Lesser Dragon is enough with this. It'd feel like bullying the weak if I did too much.

Oh right, let's try changing the title to [Friend of the Black Dragon] for the last one.

◇

"--What did you do Kuro."

"It's a trade secret."

I hadn't thought that the Evil Dragon would take a submissive pose like a dog. I've also acquired additional titles, [Dragon Tamer] and [Dragon Knight (Dragoon)].

I'm using the Dragon Knight title right now, and currently on a sightseeing flight in the hall while riding on the back the Evil Dragon.

Of course, I've taken photographs in this sightseeing flight.

When we're flying over its nest, Semeri waves her hand toward the Evil Dragon's family.

An Evil Dragon that seemed to be the eldest son came attacking us, but it seemed the parent was far stronger than him, the parent fell the son back to the nest with one blow of its tail after avoiding the eldest son's breath.

Apparently the dragon was going to present me with treasures on its nest, but it was not like I was troubled with gold after all this time, so I just picked a bit of rare materials called fire crystal and fire drop, which were of fire-stone kind. Of course I secretly collected fragments of scales and claws that had been dropped in the nest.

I felt bad only receiving things, so I processed the gold with [Forge] and [Mold] magic to make accessories that could be equipped by the dragons.

Dragons do seem to like glittering things after all, they look ecstatics when they've put on the accessories.

Since Semeri looked very envious, I make her a matching accessory from one part of gold received from the dragons.

We leave the hall with the evil dragon family seeing us off.

Now then, I'll miss the chance to see a katana smith in action if we don't get back to Ban's castle soon.

I step on the gas pedal of the high-mobility vehicle a teeny bit deeper under the guise of the word, 'safe-driving'.

11-18. Oni

Satou's here. Speaking of goblins, they're standard beings in fantasy works along with Orcs and Kobolds, but they're originally a normal fairy that likes to jest and do mischiefs.

Come to think of it, they're depicted as intellectual midgets in the story of the super famous magician boy.

◇

"Oops, stop the car here. Yuika would get angry if you damage the flower garden."

"Okay."

After finishing the sightseeing flight, we hurried the vehicle in order to make it in time for Ban's katana smith demonstration, but the course was changed with a few words from Semeri, "Stop by at Yuika's place."

There is no way I can refuse the person who's given me a feast for my eyes with the wonderful wild dance reflected on the back mirror.

Of course Armor didn't object too.

"I will wait here, you two go ahead."

"What? Armor won't go?"

"The young Yuika would cry again if I did."

What's this, is Goblin Yuika a Mrs with a child?

I had arbitrarily imagined that a female shut-in would be a shy unmarried woman.

"I should have prepared some sweets if I knew there was a child."

"Hm? Yuika isn't a child y'know? However, she does like sweet things, so you should bring her some if you come again."

Huh? Our conversation doesn't match.

"Doesn't she have a child?"

"She doesn't y'know? Ban-sama told me that Yuika has 『Multiplepersonality』."

"It's multiple personality. When Yuika experiences painful things, she will leave the memory in the old personality and then change into a newly created personality. It's a story that sounds like it comes from manga, but it's the truth."

It seems the old personality is like the spirit on your back, they can only be a spectator.

When the main Yuika personality sleeps, it seems they can posses her and resurface.

It's a setting that was often used in old manga and anime.

In a sense, it's like how high-elves like Aze-san use the world tree, but this Yuika can do it herself.

While leaving the Armor to house-sit, we advance through the flower garden.

Of course, since I don't want to trample the multicolored flowers that are in full bloom in this flower garden, I fly above the ground with Sky

Drive while carrying Semeri under my arm.

◇

"Kuro, the violet flowers over there are shaped in hexagram right? Please land on the center there."

In accordance to Semeri's instruction, I land on the ground.

There's probably an area that's similar to the Corpse's museums nearby here.

"So, where do we enter?"

"We don't. Wait a minute."

Since Semeri is greatly inhaling air, I quickly cover my ears.

As expected, she began to shout, "Yuika", in loud voice. Noisy.

The call seems to be a replacement for the intercom, the flowers that have shaped the hexagram begin to shine lightly, and then six semi-transparent doors appear floating in the light.

The doors are written in characters from Earth, five of them are written with, "A Miss", "Going to Hell", "It's a trap", "Don't enter", and "DEATH".

And then, the last one is "Welcome".

I personally think that all of them seem to be a trap.... But my [Crisis Perception] skill and [Trap Discovery] skill tell me that only the "Welcome" is safe.

"Err, I believe this one should be correct!"

Semeri pointed at "Going to Hell", full of confidence.

I catch the neck of Semeri who was going to dive straight to the hell's door with a bold face, stopping her.

"What're you doing!"

"That one's wrong."

"How do you know?!"

I didn't answer, and dived to the "Welcome" gate while bringing Semeri along.

◇

"Oh! It's really correct! You're amazing Kuro!"

When I asked the frolic Semeri how she usually did it, she answered that she would repeat until she got the correct one.

It seems she would turn into mist or bat when she fails to get away and then repeat it.

She was vexed since it usually took her four tries before she hit the correct one.

"Why won't the other party meet you instead?"

"Yuika is a 『Niit』, so she absolutely won't come out she said."

Shouldn't it be called a shut-in instead of Neet I wonder.

That aside, just as I've expected, this is an [Area without Map] like Corpse's museums.

When I check this are with All Map Exploration, there's no one here besides us.

"There's no one here?"

"Yeah, Yuika is timid, so we won't arrive until another eight of the same gate."

So it's ninth power of six in total--around 10.000.000s I guess?

How cautious.

After traveling through nine gates, we finally arrive at the space where Yuika is.

There are a Japanese house with with a small field and bamboo thicket nearby.

Chickens are pecking their fodder in the courtyard facing the veranda, onions and radishes are hung on the eaves.

I use [All Map Exploration] magic, and acquire the information about Yuika.

Just as Corpse's said, Yuika's race is [Little Oni-kin (Goblin)]. I had expected it to be written as 'High Goblin', but it was the normal one.

By the way, [Little Oni-kin (Goblin)] is not the [Youma] (ghost/apparition) kind that usually appears in fantasy stories, but a [Fairy Tribe] that's like the elves.

Her age is the same as Corpse, but I'm not insensitive enough to fuss over a woman's age.

Compared to Aze, there's no great difference between everyone.

Unexpectedly, her level is only 50.

She doesn't have any normal skill or gift, but her unique skills are ludicrous.

Starting with the [Create My Garden] skill that's created this space, there are 13 of them--almost twice as much even compared to the Dog-head Demon Lord.

Even if she's undergone inflations, this too much.

I cursed the gods that I hadn't even met yet.

◇

"I've come! Yuika!"

Semeri calls toward the Japanese residence with cheerfulness that break the atmosphere of this place.

"Semeri? I've made some delicious takuan. Take it back to Onii-chan Ban okay."

"Geh, takuan is a no no. Ban-sama's beauty would turn yellow."

Yuika who opened the sliding door and came out talked to Semeri with a refreshing voice that doesn't match her age.

Impossible--it's a beautiful girl?!

White transparent skin, silk-like lustrous straight violet hair that extends to the floor.

Although she's not at Lulu's level, she's beautiful enough to rival Arisa's and Mia's beauty.

She would have looked like a human if it were not for her slightly pointed ears that resembled an elf's, and two small horns on her forehead near the temples of her head.

Her slender delicate body lacks undulation like the elf's, but that point is whatever since I'm not into little girls.

"Mou, it's the taste of Japan--"

It seems Yuika has finally noticed me.

She didn't at first due to Semeri's impact, but Yuika's violet pupils have caught sight of me.

Her expression looks happy for an instant, but then her face freezes while still smiling.

Hmm? I didn't hear about her hating men or something.

I had a feeling that her mouth which was flapping slightly spoke "Ichirou".

However, the words that actually reach my ears are different.

"--Infinite Chain"

Purple ripples surround Yuika's body.

The crisis perception reacts like never before.

Countless small black dots appear around Yuika.

They became jet black bullets that assailed me all at once.

One of it is only as big as a bead ball, but AR indicator tells me that those jet black bullets are micro blackholes.

I surely would have been swallowed if I was late activating Flash Drive even a little.

I opened my mouth to ask for the reason, but the jet black bullets that are being endlessly created by Infinite Chain chase after me, puncturing huge hole on ground of the course where I was running away with Flash Drive.

I think Semeri who was late at escaping has been swallowed, but a vampire princess she is should be alright.

She likely would complain about it later, but she probably would forgive me if I gave her a magic sword.

I wanted to converse with Yuika, but my words don't reach as the jet black bullets swallowed it.

I'd like to talk with [Telephone] magic, but this magic won't connect if the other party reject it.

I want the advanced magic [Force Telephone].

I destroy the chasing jet black bullets with [Break Magic], but the other party isn't losing at creating more.

I could make the initiative with [Laser] and [Implosion] if the other party were a demon lord, but I can't do that to a beautiful girl.

Normally, she should have depleted her magic power by now, but her [Mana Loop] and [Mana Spring] unique skills have probably optimized and supplied her magic power.

Dang you cheat.

Just how many unique skills does she use in parallel.

Since three violet ripples are stroking Yuika's body, though I don't know their nature, she's probably using three kind of unique skills.

I wonder if she's alright doing such rashness?

In order to break the deadlock, I close in from her blind spot, and strike Yuika with my palm to make her faint

--that was the trigger of it all.

I should have escaped with all my power.

However, it's too late now.

My careless action becomes the impetus that brings forth [The Worst Demon Lord] who can use 13 kind of Unique Skills, surpassing the Dog-head Demon Lord who was fit to be called an Evil God.

The Goblin Demon Lord, [White Oni Sovereign], was born that day.

11-19. Oni (2)

Satou's here. I like this movie genre called disaster. Seeing the protagonists struggle through adversities coming one after another with their wisdom, bravery, luck and deliberation is the best.

However, I sure have never seen a disaster movie where all of the characters are saved.

◇

I should have noticed the fear reflected on Yuika's eyes.

My palm which was striking Yuika to faint her is stopped by a hard magic wall.

It's probably the unique skill [Automatic Defense (Guardian)].

I somewhat remember this sensation.

It's similar with the [Fortress] function on Nana's equipment.

--Then, it's the weak point.

While my palm is still lightly hitting the defensive wall, I twist my body further and strike with more power. At the moment of impact, I release a lump of pure magic power.

>[Armor Penetrate] Skill Acquired

>[Mana Strike] Skill Acquired

I shot it out since there was nothing to lose anyway, but it seems to be the right idea, I've successfully made Yuika faint.

--'kitt', I heard such sound.

I catch the delicate Yuika who's fallen with my hand.

--'bzzt' sound comes out. Where is it from?

I pull Yuika who's lost her consciousness, fallen like a doll and put her body on my other arm.

I heard the last sound of the fall (Trigger) right at this time.

--'pakin'.

I think it was a light sound such as that.

I should've noticed it at the first sound....

◇

--Crimson light is dancing in the sky.

Reflecting the pale light that fills the space.

--light clothing as if it's an angel robe feebly dances in the sky.

It regains its freedom after the wedge has disappeared.

--A pair of hills exposed in broad daylight.

A gentleman I am, I turn my eyes away from the meager undulation.

I heard the small sound of the broken clothing clasp falling to the ground.

The eyes of Yuika who should've fainted suddenly opens wide.

"You damn pervertttttttt!!"

I narrowly evade the fist that comes striking as she awakens.

Looks like her personality's changed.

Come to think of it, they said that she would change into [the other person] when she fainted was it.

"Don't evade itttttt!"

Violet ripples are swirling around Yuika's body, and a fist that's a world difference than the one just now is coming at me.

It's probably the [Peerless Strong Arm] unique skill, but please stop with the rapid strikes.

Good grief, what'd you do if you became a demon lord after using too much unique skill.

I evade the rain of literal certain-death fist attacks by using the skill [Foreseeing: Anti-Personnel Combat].

Yuika's level has changed from 50 to 55. Half of her skill composition has also changed to hand-to-hand combat-related skills.

I had thought that her personality would change, but I didn't think that her level and skill would too.

--However, please be aware of it soon.

When there was some distance between us, I made a gesture of striking my own chest with my finger.

With my action, It seems Yuika has finally remembered that her chest is exposed.

"Gununununu...."

Her face is distorted in shame, she pins the chest cloth with one of her hands and groans frustratingly.

Alright, she's stopped moving, let's try talking to her.

I take a mantle out of the Item Box and give it to Yuika with [Magic Hand].

"Use it."

The mantle that's opened in mid-air covers Yuika.

"Kukukukuku"

I can hear Yuika chuckling under the mantle.

She brushes away the mantle--and then jet-black dress that's different from just before appears. It's the so-called gothic dress. It matches well with her white skin and violet hair.

Her pupils which were lilac colored have also changed to scarlet and blue color of heterochromia.

Moreover, Yuika's level has changed once again. It's slightly fallen at level 52, and her hand-to-hand combat skills have also become that of magic warrior kind starting with darkness magic.

Yuika covers half of her face with one of her hand whose fingers spread, and then she continues to laugh while looking down.

--Don't tell me, it's the symptom of demon lord-fication?

"...Hahaha"

Her eyes that can be seen between her fingers glint, and then Yuika slowly raises her face while continuing to laugh and leaning backward.

Her sharp glance is fixed at me as if it's going to pierce me.

"Haaahhahhahahaha"

--Three steps of laughs?!

As if expecting my surprise, she points her hand that was covering her eyes with a bang and begins her introduction.

"I am the descendant of the oppressed darkness, the miko demon of the sixth heaven, the last noble of Oni-kin."

She changes her pose, and puts a moment pause.

"My name is Foilnis La Belle Fille! Those who fear and honor me call me as the『Jet Black Beauty Dark La Princesse』!"

Un, she's a chuunibyou.

Still, please stop mixing French and English. Judging from the nuance, there's also Germanic too I guess?

Denying her seems like it'll be annoying, guess I'll ride on it.

"Nice to meet you,『Jet Black Beauty』Foilnis La Belle Fille-dono. I am called Kuro, a friend of Ban and Corpse."

When I introduced myself, Yuika No.3 laughed scornfully.

"A friend of Ban and Corpse? Someone who holds the title of hero, pretending to be a friend of my fellow darkness brethren!"

Yuika is enraged while producing illusion of flame from her crimson eye.

She can see my hidden titles huh?

I don't see any unique skill that fits it, but the [Divine Sight] one seems suspicious.

I had thought that it was surely an attacking magic eye kind.

"I am the strongest magic warrior who have consigned numerous demon lords and heroes to oblivion! My level has become less than half of it was generations ago, but I will teach you that level difference is not the definitive difference in battle!"

No no, I think six times level difference is [Definitive] enough.

If I have to say from watching the growth of our girls, 10 level difference with the opponent is the limit in a fight. If the difference in level is 20, it can't even be called a fight, that is as long as you don't have equipment and skill composition with overwhelming advantage against the particular opponent.

Yuika No.3 still looks at my status and curses at it even now.

"Fuhn, a parade of fake names huh. Trismegistus, Michaelangelo, Echigoya, Ichirou, Nobunaga--how many famous people are you intending to pretend to be."

No, one of it is my real name. Though there's a celebrity with the same name indeed.

And, Yuika No.3 isn't one to say that of all people.

"You shouldn't be one saying that right? Yuika."

"T, that's the mana (true name) that should be kept secret from the world! The name, 『Yuiitsu (The Only) Kami (God) - (Yuika)』, that's cursed by the gods is not to be spoken out loud! My name is Folnis La Belle Fille!"

Oops, I inadvertently retorted even though I had admonished myself.

However, she doesn't have [Curse of the Gods] on her title or abnormal status looking at her stat, is this another [Self-proclaimed] one?

Yuika No.3 was enraged for a second, but she quickly regained her composure and questioned me.

"Let me ask you! The nameless hero who bears many names! What is your objective!"

--Objective?

In this case, my objective should be visiting Yuika's house.

"Escorting Vampire Princess Semeri, I just came to greet the woman who came from the same 『Former』 world as me."

"What? Even though you're a hero, you didn't come here to subjugate me?"

"As long as the other party won't cause harm to our girls, I won't subjugate without question even if it's a demon lord."

In fact, even with the Dog-head demon lord, I probably wouldn't be hostile toward him if he had no intention of harming Sera, Head-Miko and the others.

"--I can't believe it. My skill tells me that your are speaking the truth...."

Yuika No.3 is at a loss for words.

Looks like she judge whether it's the truth with [Fathom] skill.

◇

"Umu, I haven't had pizzas for a long while."

"What do you want me to bake next?"

"It's enough, I'm already full."

We reconciled after that somehow, and then, responding to the hungry Yuika No.3's request, I entertained her with pizzas and carbonated drink.

I had only one pizza that was reserved for midnight-snack remaining, but losing to Yuika No.3 who earnestly demanded for more, I baked more with impromptu furnace made with earth magic.

It seemed Semeri was just sent to a different locked space by Yuika, she appeared safely and then began to wrestle with the pizza in silence. I have to stop her soon since her exposed stomach has swelled.

"The newest Yuika is quite good at cooking, but Kuro's cooking is very dangerous."

"Yeah, he's better than the cooks at Ban-sama's place."

Yuika drinks the carbonated drink that's flavored with sugar and fruit juice while praising my cooking skill.

Since Semeri unexpectedly disliked carbonated drinks, I took out some Brownie Wine for her.

"I never thought that I would ever eat pizza in another world y'know. I want you to reproduce cola next time please."

"Let alone the recipe, I don't even know the ingredient for cola."

"Isn't it cola fruit?"

I've never heard of cola being a fruit.

Yuika No.3 ambiguously replies back, "Keep researching."

"I'm sorry for the newest Yuika earlier."

"It's fine already. You've just apologized now."

Yuika No.3 who can't move with full stomach speaks some meek words.

Of course she was talking about the matter with Yuika No.1 who attacked preemptively.

It seemed she was in panic since she had been taught by the pleasant reincarnated underground bunch that heroes were dangerous so she attacked first.

Heroes would have shout "You damn goblin demon lord!" and attacked if they met Yuika No.3 anyway, so there's no point blaming Corpse and the others about this.

Moreover, it's not only heroes, demon lords have also challenged Yuika No.3 in order to call themselves [The strongest demon lord]. Yuika No.3 was level 99 at that time, so she defeated them in her spare time.

I had thought that it was another made-up story from her chuunibyou, but Yuika has the titles of [True Hero] and [Goblin Demon Lord]. Apparently it's true.

Although, she hasn't actually become a [Demon Lord] even though she has the title. She was arbitrary called that by some opponent who came challenging her which resulted in her getting the title.

By the way, the title of Yuika and the others seen from appraisal skill is [Recluse]. She must have stayed indoors for a long time.

I thought that her level had decreased since she was slacking off, but she told me that her level decreases by 30 whenever she creates a new main personality. It seems her skills are lost along with it too.

Their skill and level can go back if they get hold of the main body from the main personality, but it seems the level can only go back by 20% of the main personality at most. Moreover, there's also some rule about affinity.

"By the way, 『Jet-black Beauty (Dark La Princesse)』 Folnis La Belle Fille. This place has turned into abysmal state, do you have any place to sleep today?"

"Uu, it's embarrassing when someone actually calls me that..."

She's happy when she's called in an exaggerated dramatic way, but chuuni name being plainly and seriously spoken out is embarrassing.

I understand well as someone who's contracted the disease once.

"Why don't you get a new name? If you had enough of Western-style name, why not Japanese style or Chinese?"

"You give me, Kuro."

"Right then--"

We came together with Yuika No.3 to Corpse's castle to order a new hermitage for Yuika, and then we went toward Ban's castle.

Yuika No.3's new chuuni name is [White Oni Sovereign].

I got it from her white skin.

Thus, the sightseeing tour of the labyrinth's lower layer ended peacefully like this despite the little trouble--.

11-20. The Pleasant Fellowship of the Underground Labyrinth

Satou's here. It's said that the grudge of food is terrifying, but I wonder just when it applies.

I wonder if it's to the guy who ignores the rule and cuts in line in a shop where you have to line up?

◇

"You've finally come. Good grief, it's very late dearu."

"Excuse me, there was a bit of trouble."

True Ancestor Ban rebuked me when I arrived at the workshop in the innermost part of the castle.

Coming late for something I've requested myself, there's no excuse for it.

It'd be problematic if the furnace got overheated, so he probably couldn't wait for more than two hours after the promised time.

The reason why he's begun re-heating the fire after it had cooled off must be because he couldn't bear the pressures from the vampire princesses who wanted a mithril katana.

It's like when I was before the barbecue set that had been cooled, enduring the line of sight from the beastkin girls who were waiting for the meat skewers that hadn't been grilled. You surely can't resist it.

"Take a good look dearu."

"Is it alright?"

Ban presents me the blade that's on the tongs.

The hue color looks like a Japanese sword that's just been taken from the bare heat, normal people will be scalded if they touch it.

I clad my body surface with magic power to deploy [Magic Armor]-like protection like when I did at the Evil Dragon's place. Managing it is quite difficult.

When I asked Liza the knack for [Magic Armor], she said, "Master has to softly squeeze it like, 'fuwatt', tightly. It'll be like, 'posatt', if master squeezes it too much, so please be careful not to make it become like 'gyuut'." such very hard to understand explanation came out.

I've become able to use it somehow from that explanation, but I'm only weaving magic power and the strength is weak, so it's not fit to be called [Magic Armor].

Getting back to the topic. I grab the Japanese Katana while I'm clad in magic power. Of course the grease on my hand doesn't transfer to it since my hand is covered in magic membrane.

I put the blade toward the lighting.

There, I noticed something that's not like a Japanese katana.

"Ban-dono, this blade has no ripple pattern you know?"

"Umu, the purity of the mithril that Kuro-dono had brought was very high, so there was no need for me to fold much dearu."

What's that got to do with the ripple?

The True Ancestor who saw me looking puzzled opened his mouth to explain about it.

"Essentially, forging by folding is--"

"Hear me! Young noble of darkness who is also my brethren, True Ancestor Ban!"

Yuika No.3 who came trotting from behind interrupted Ban's words with marvelous-looking face.

"To interrupt my words, even if you are the last princess of goblins--"

The True Ancestor criticizes Yuika No.3 impoliteness with a uselessly long speech.

However, Yuika No.3 swings a stick that looks like a short wand, and interrupts True Ancestor speech once again.

"I am going to talk about how I found one of the『Three Lost Treasures』, are you still going to assume that attitude?"

The True Ancestor's expression freezes in shock.

Yuika No.3 grins when she sees that.

However, since the thing on her hand is not a short wand, but a stick with starch syrup, she unfortunately ends up looking like a conspicuous idiot.

She was going to the kitchen with Armor earlier, that was probably when she snatched the starch syrup. Armor who was with Yuika No.3 isn't behind her.

"It cannot be!"

"Yes, it's precisely that!"

I take the spectator position without joining the conversation since I can somehow see the punchline.

"The aroma coming from that mouth, it's『Pizza』right?"

....So it's really about that.

I don't think it's something that needs to be discussed with such a serious face.

"Un, Kuro baked it for me."

"Kuro-dono what does this mean dearuka?"

It seems Yuika No.3 had gotten tired of it halfway through, she lightly left everything to me while licking the starch syrup.

True Ancestor draws closer to me with bloodshot eyes.

"D-did you find tomatoes dearuka?"

"Yeah, a remote village on the eastern side of Shiga Kingdom was cultivating it."

I push back the uselessly handsome face of True Ancestor that had come near me. Please pardon me from BL.

Don't demonstrate vampires' superhuman strength for things like this. You could have seriously injured someone if his level was low.

"I can't believe it! I had searched the land around there for years...."

It seems that people who had run away from the war between the eastern small countries and the weasel country came drifting to that particular area, so it probably didn't exist at his time.

I stop talking since I'm not into comforting men, and then the topic of conversation changes to Armor who's entered from the opened door.

The head maid, Mrs. Fedraluka and a plain woman who seems to be from the same generation as her follows behind Armor. The woman appears to be this castle's chef.

She probably came after hearing Armor's and Yuika No.3's talk about pizza.

"Ban-sama, please forgive me for entering your workplace."

"Fedraluka huh. I do not mind."

The chef who had followed behind Mrs. Fedraluka also talked, but it was just as I had expected.

Since I already have the written recipes for pizza and simple cheese in my storage from Puta town, I give it to her. Together with tomato seeds and a paper written with the way to raise them.

I actually wanted to give them the seedlings since raising it from seeds is going to be hard, but I didn't have any left since I had already used them all for experiments.

"--then, we will arrange it as such."

"Umu, I wait for the good news dearu."

After receiving various things, Mrs. Fedraluka and the woman left.

It seems the vampire princess who's good with earth magic will also cooperate to prepare all kinds of soil to grow the tomatoes.

Incidentally, I also told him that I would get fresh tomatoes in a few days since we're growing tomatoes at the experimental farm outside the labyrinth city.

"Then, in order to protect the experimental farm from pests such as thieves, I should dispatch my followers, the crimson bats, and burning-blood wolves to protect it..."

"Please be moderate about it okay."

Good grief, he seems to lose his restrain if it's about tomatoes.

I didn't expect him to be this kind of a glutton character.

◇

He has to endure with Sushi since I didn't have any ingredient left for pizza.

The fish were Piracucu-like fish that were swimming in the castle's canal. It had few bones, and tasted like sea bream. I've made the sushi with various kind of fish, since making only one is lonesome.

"Ho, you use some good wasabi."

"Umu, it's superb. Eating good sushi like this make me crave for some big tuna."

"Kuro, omit the wasabi for my shares."

It was popular among the reincarnated people, but--

"Even if this is Ban-sama's preference, I will excuse myself from partaking..."

"This is a bit."

"...."

--The vampire princesses on-site are keeping their distance.

"Eating food raw, that's like a beast it's disgusting."

"Semerii?"

"Are you implying that Ban-sama is like a beast?"

"....tearing limb from limb, final decision."

The other vampire princesses seemed to be infuriated from the criticism that escaped Semeri's mouth, they caught her body with blood-made whips and took her away from the dining room.

They probably used Semeri as a pretext to leave this room that's filled with vinegared rice's smell.

Even White Princess was covering her face with a handkerchief all the time.

"Is there no sushi roll?"

"I can make some cucumber roll if you want."

"I'd like to eat tuna sushi roll."

"I want to eat normal sushi roll."

What Yuika means by normal sushi roll seems to be dried gourd sushi roll.

Still, Armor has only been requesting tuna for a while.

"I can't do that since I don't have the freeze-dried tofus and the dried gourds."

"Ban's castle has those freeze-dried tofus."

Hou? I had seen firm tofus in the royal capital, so there were freeze-dried tofus too huh.

I could probably get it if I look in the royal capital.

The True Ancestor's chef whom I helped would teach me the freeze-dried tofu recipe, so there's no problem even if I don't acquire it there.

Right then, True Ancestor made an explosive statement.

"Moreover, I have found the gourds during my search for tomatoes dearu."

--what'd he said?!

I inch closer to True Ancestor and ask him the location for that.

Gentlemanly of course.

"Spit it out! Where did you find it!"

"Would you cease it Kuro! I am not into men."

It seems finding it was difficult, True Ancestor isn't quite willing to talk about it.

Pushing back with his hand the face of someone who's asking gentlemanly is rude though.

"Wait, I don't have the map for it, but finding them is easy."

"So, where did you find it?"

I should be able to find the place with the map search function if I can narrow it down to a certain extent.

I can finally eat the sushi roll that I usually ate during lunch break again!

"You know the great river in the eastern part of Shiga Kingdom right?"

--Of course.

There's probably no one in Shiga Kingdom who doesn't know the great river flowing beside the Duchy Capital.

"Go to the end of the upstream source of that river."

Further away from Gururian City huh.

"Across the mountain to the north-northeast of that--"

Hmm? North-Northeast?

"There's a vast forest where the giants live. The gourds are growing wildly near the village where those giants live."

Isn't that.

--Muno territory!

To think that it was in the vast forest to the northwest of Muno City!

"The giants are hard to please. They trampled many of my follower wolves and ghouls that I brought in my search."

"It's alright, I have a way to deal with them."

If I'm not mistaken Karina-sama should be acquainted with the elder of the Giants' village, I'll ask her to support me if I fail at negotiating alone.

I promised Yuika the best sushi roll there is.

◇

"Umm, I am very sorry for losing my composure at that time."

A beautiful girl doing dogeza is very violent. The one being apologized ends up looking like the bad one instead.

I lightly clap Yuika No.1's shoulder and raise her head.

"It's alright already, No.3 has already apologized enogh."

"...No.3 is it?"

Oops, that was bad of me.

"The White Oni Sovereign--Folnis La Belle Fille or the girl who calls herself Dark La Princesse."

"Aah! You mean founder-sama!"

That's the first generation huh.

"Founder-sama stopped it didn't she. I was afraid and couldn't stop attacking even though I had noticed that you never attacked back."

It seems the girls can meet together in their dream, so they can exchange information with each other to an extent.

By the way, according to Yuika No.3, the goblin demon lord that Aze talked about seems to be a different person from her. She looked a bit sad, so it might be her acquaintance or a relative.

Looks like Yuika is going to rent a room in True Ancestor's castle until her dwelling is restored. The reason why it's not Corpse's or Armor's castle seems to be because she's afraid of ghosts.

I think Vampires are categorized as ghost themselves, but this place has a lot of normal people working in it so it must be comfortable for her.

She's not treated as freeloader since it seems she's going to make a space that's most suitable to grow tomatoes with her unique skill in return for the expense.

I wonder if she'll share one cultivation space for me too.

She'll probably do it if I ask her, but asking now will make it look like I'm bullying her, let's ask for it later.

Semeri who hadn't showed her face after being dragged away for saying "Disgusting" seems to have gone to the kitchen and snatched various food into the large bag she's holding.

It seems she's going back to her territory by hitching a ride on Armor's car.

I haven't visited Semeri's territory, so I make a promise to go there after returning from the Royal Capital.

"Come anytime. I'll welcome you myself, so come bringing a lot of good food."

"Yeah, leave it to me."

Asking for good food to [Come] instead of [Wait] is so Semeri-like.

Now then, if I don't get back to the mansion above ground soon, I will miss the departure to the royal capital.

I left the labyrinth's lower layer while being sent off by Yuika, True Ancestor and the others.

11-21. To the Royal Capital (1)

Satou's here. It's said that kids are mischievous since a long time ago, but maybe the kids today are either smart or sly, I feel that they make sure that the other party won't scold them before doing the prank.

You're forgiven for your prank only until you graduate primary school....

◇

After teleporting back to the mansion's basement, I climb the narrow stair to the entrance hall.

For some reason, the little girl maids have gotten excited while pointing outside the windows.

One little girl maid who heard the familiar sound of the closing basement door noticed me and then she came running.

"Master!　It's an『Airship』!　『Airship』! It's flying!"

"Cause it's an airship."

"That's true isn't it! It's amazing isn't it!"

I think it won't be an airship if it's not flying.

I'm pulled by the little girl maid toward the window. A large airship is floating above the labyrinth army's garrison.

It's the ship that I've delivered as Nanashi to the kingdom.

The flag of Shiga Kingdom is drawn on the airship's armored side, a small crest flag that signifies the passengers is raised on the bridge above the bow. I understood that that crest is of [Duke Bishtal] since I had been drilled about heraldry by the civil official Yurina when I got my peerage in Muno city.

If I'm not mistaken that duke is the nephew of General Eltal who commands the labyrinth army here.

We and every members of [Lion's Roar] who has captured the middle layer floormaster is going to board that airship to the Royal Capital.

It'd be nice if Duke Bishtal who's in bad term with Duke Oyugock won't pick a quarrel with me during the travel...

Well, a high-ranking noble like a duke probably won't be eccentric enough to pick a fight with a honorary noble of the lowest rank.

"You girls, the morning work isn't over yet. Get back to work quick!"

Ms. Miteruna who has appeared in the entrance hall out of nowhere roars, the little girl maids go back to their works like a scattered cloud.

"Good morning, master."

"Yeah, morning."

"There were three people last night. I have contacted the guard station."

"Is that so, thank you for your hard work."

The three people whom Ms. Miteruna mentioned are thieves who had trespassed the mansion in the middle of the night. There have been eight people in total with them now huh. It's a bit many.

I've installed Scarecrow No.11 on the mansion's roof to detect thieves.

I've left Ms. Miteruna to take care of the thieves caught today.

Even though the explorers who are guarding the mansion are only paid with one big copper coin a night, there are a lot of applicants. The midnight snacks that the little girl maids prepare seems to be famous. I wonder if there are a lot of lolicon among the explorers?

Most of the equipments are in my storage, Arisa's item box, and inside the magic bags though, so the things in the new underground storehouse which the thieves are aiming are all dummy magic tools.

The majority of those magic tools are the ones I've bought from my merchant acquaintances in the labyrinth city, and the items I've bought from the craftsmen in the tenement houses to support them in the early days.

Of course I've also mixed some decoration items that look like the genuine ones.

All those items worth more than 100 gold coins though, so it's probably still attractive even for dummies.

Even just the other day, there was a thief who used earth magic to make a small passage underground in order to invade the mansion.

Since I had just returned at that time, I arrested him after discovering him on the radar and handed him over to the authorities.

Now he's working hard improving the soil on the experimental farm outside the city as a crime slave.

The actual desirable magic item isn't located in the underground storehouse, but in my basement laboratory.

I have put a great sword with blade taken from a [Soldier Mantis]'s sickle remodeled with mithril and hihiirogane there. It's something that an average Red Iron explorer would die for.

This great sword is too big to get taken out of the basement normally, only people who have Item Box or a magic bag can get it out.

In other word, people who can steal this are limited.

If a thief who has Item Box is caught in the trap, there would be many things I can use them for.

The fact that I have magic bags is already well-known in the labyrinth city, so there's probably no one who thinks strange of it.

Well, let's leave that matter.

Rather, I wonder if Arisa and the others are ready?

"Has everyone woken up?"

"Yes, everyone has already finished dressing."

I don't think she's waiting for Ms. Miteruna to finish talking, but Arisa shows up while leading everyone from the door that can be seen opening from here.

Everyone is in their top form today.

"Ja ja~n, what do you think, it's lovely right?"

Arisa spins on the spot.

"Lovely, you're a lady."

"Mou! Why was it in monotone!"

Arisa is wearing an orthodox party dress, but she ends up looking like [a child who tries too hard]. The person herself seems to intend to look like lady, so I'm not going to throw some needless retort.

The elegant silver tiara on her head is shining.

The tiara is not the same genuine one that Princess Noja and the pink-haired Princess Meana were wearing, but it's a small light tiara that brides usually wear together with their wedding dress in the modern Japan.

Arisa's tiara is of a normal arabesque design, but the design on Pochi's tiara is of a puppy playing, and Tama's tiara has the figure of a stretching cat and a cat that's sharpening its claw. Every other member also has the tiara design that matches them each, but making them unexpectedly took some time.

It wasn't the time to work on it, but the time for everyone to decide on the design.

I only need to melt several silver coins for a tiara though, so it's not that expensive.

Apparently, the price of handmade things changes as more people see it, right now one tiara is worth several gold coins even though it was only one gold coin originally.

I'm slightly worried at just how much it will become as daughters of the nobles who will be seeing us off today see the tiara.

"Next one is Pochi nanodesu!"

"Tama too~?"

"You two are cute too."

"Wa~i" "Nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama are wearing normal cute pink dresses.

The 'Shupi' and the 'Shutan' pose don't match their clothing.... It is cute though.

"Satou."

Mia is wearing an elf-like dress with a lot of bright green laces.

She was hesitating between the elf native dress and the miko-like clothes that Aze-san wore, but it looks like she's picked the dress.

"You also look like a princess Mia."

"Nn."

Mia answered short, but she looks happy with reddened cheeks.

"Master, declaring the getting up greeting."

"Yeah, good morning."

Huh? Nana's greeting is different than usual.

Nana is wearing a polite yellow dress that unfortunately covers her chest.

Even though the one that I made at first had the cleavage section with enough offensive power to sink a country, it changed to the current one due to Mia's protest and Arisa's supervision.

I think Arisa doesn't understand the fine arts of adults.... No, I guess it's men's romance.

"Lying in wait for master's praise, so I whisper."

"You're more beautiful than usual today."

It's hard to read Nana since her expression hardly changes, but that face is for when she's elated, or rather excited.

She's probably looking forward to the departure for the Royal Capital.

"Thank you for waiting, Master."

"Master, good morning."

The last two to appear are Liza and Lulu in combat clothes. Lulu is wearing maid-like clothes so she's still good, but Liza is in a costume that makes her look like a complete knight.

I tried recommending her to wear dress many times over, but she told me that she wanted to go with combat clothes since she's going as a Mithril explorer. I've let Liza do as she pleases since it's rare for her to insist on something herself.

"Masita, morning."

"Good morning. Masu, no, Masita."

"You don't have to force yourself, you can call me Masuta okay?"

"No, I am alright. Masita."

Shiro and Crow greet me while flying around.

Huh? These children are also wearing formal clothes.

They should be staying in the labyrinth city, I wonder why? Have they dressed up to see us off?

Nana is avoiding my eye contact, but I firmly object them from tagging along.

I won't be too sweet on this.

◇

Urged by Ms. Miteruna, I go to the dress room in the bedroom to change into the ceremonial noble clothes.

Shiga Kingdom has all kind of customs being an old kingdom it is.

It was loosely upheld in the Duchy Capital and Muno Barondom, but custom is important in the Royal Capital among distinguished nobles who dominate the city.

On top of that, there are different ceremonial clothes depending on your peerage, so I have to be careful not to wear the wrong clothes and get myself in trouble uselessly.

The duke is going on board today, so I'll be wearing some slightly formal clothes. I'm wearing necktie-like decoration cloth (cravat) on my neck, but it looks smug and unpleasant.

After I've finished getting dressed, I check with Arisa while taking light breakfast together with everyone before our departure.

"Arisa, is the preparation for the luggage complete?"

"Of course duh!"

She really is a showa person

The conspicuous luggage are only the two suitcases and the three armor bags.

Any other item beside those are stored in the magic bags, Arisa's Item Box, and the storage space created by Arisa's space magic [Garage].

We pass through the door that little girl maids have opene and go outside.

Little girl maids and the orphanage children are surrounding the path toward the two carriages that are in front of the gate to see us off.

One of the two carriage is something I've borrowed from Baronet Dyukeli's family.

Since Baronet Dyukeli was interested with our carriage, I had given him this carriage which had the same look as ours after we had gotten along to a certain extent.

Lady Karina and the others have already gone to the place where the airship is anchored earlier since not everyone can get on the two carriages.

"""Please take care, Chevalier-sama."""

The children bowed in chorus together all at once.

I reply to them while walking toward the carriage.

"■■■ Breeze"

When we were halfway through the pathway, one of the orphanage children swung the short wand on his hand to use magic.

The wind that he's produced flips up the skirt of Arisa and the others, and the little girl maids.

I reflexively hug Lulu's and Nana's thighs to protect their skirts. I probably look like a sexual harasser from other people's viewpoint.

However, the skirts of the girls that I didn't guard have flipped up.

The fact that most of those skirts are made of light cloth due to the hot temperature of the labyrinth city is probably another reason.

Mia and Arisa whom I didn't guard grandly raised their protest among the shrill screams.

Pochi and Tama seemed to find the flipped skirt amusing, they were, "Fluttering~", "Nanodesu!", delightedly.

The mischievous boys are pleased with their victory.

Far from scolding them, I was shocked instead.

There wasn't anyone who had the [Chanting], and [Magic] skills among the orphanage children at least.

Arisa and Mia did teach them words and magic during their break, but to think there are children who have become able to use it.... Damn you geniuses.

Shiro and Crow have also become able to use darkness and light magic, but these two children have the boost from power-leveling.

These orphanage children have reached the point where they can use magic and chanting without such cheat.

Putting aside the usage, I want to express my respect for their great effort and talent.

How enviable....

No, let's stop envying children.

It's not like I feel cheered up when I see Arisa scolded the kid and punches his head, dropping him to the ground, not at all.

After such cute happening, the carriage we're riding head toward the place where the Airship is anchored.

11-22. To the Royal Capital (2)

Satou's here. There's a scene where a lot of people are gathering to see moored airships in festive mood that remains in my memory, although I can't remember the reason.

The handmade ice cream in that memory was really delicious.

◇

"Biig~?"

"It's really really amazing nodesu!"

Pochi and Tama who are bending their bodies outside on both side windows look up at the floating airship in high spirit.

Tama is fine, but Pochi's tail is buzzing and hitting me.

"Mwu."

Mia who's dissatisfied with the occupied windows opens the small window for conversing with the coachman and peeks outside.

Arisa, Lulu and Nana are in the other carriage in front of ours after losing the rock, paper, scissor game.

For some reason, Liza is sitting on the coachman's seat while carrying her spear. She sure loves high places, unexpectedly enough.

Outside the window, I can see people crowding to see us off.

People who have noticed the identity of the ones in the carriages cheer for us one after another, reminding me of the parade.

It seems there are a lot of people who cheer for Liza due to her sitting on the coachman's seat.

◇

"Satou-san, please enjoy this in the airship."

"Thank you, Zena-san."

I receive the parcel that Zena-san gives me.

The warmth is transmitted to my hands. Wonder if this handmade by Zena-san?

"Did Zena-san make this?"

"...Umm, that's err...."

Zena-san has fallen into a predicament from my nonchalant question.

I have to change the topic before--

"Unfortunately, the one who made that were the aunty in charge of the soldier's barrack, and me."

"Wai, Lilio! Didn't I tell you to keep it a secret! Moreover, I also did arrange the placement!"

Lilio revealed the truth faster than my follow-up words.

I'll ask Zena-san to show me the result of her hard work later.

"That's right, arranging food to make it look good is quite hard."

"Y, yes... that's right isn't it... it is important."

Zena-san averts her gaze, and mutters in low voice.

Oops, I should have ignored this one instead of following it up.

What a blunder. I would have heard the sound of decreasing favorable rating if this were a galge.

"Sir Pendragon, On this occasion I would like to thank you for associating with magic soldier Zena--"

A female civil official who's together with Zena-san and Lilio expresses her thanks with some long lines.

She's probably thanking me for instating Zena-san as a temporary staff of the training school as Zena-san's asked.

She's a civil official who works under Earl Seryuu and has followed Zena-san and the others--the Selected Labyrinth Corps here.

It seems her works involve studying the know-how of Selbira explorers, and then applying that knowledge for Seryuu City Labyrinth management.

I've arranged four people that comprise of two magic soldiers including Zena-san, and two scouts including Lilio, to participate in the training school as I'm the owner.

Zena-san and the others are grateful for it, but fighting together with high level magicians and scouts with a lot of experience should be good for not only the teachers, but also the students. You can say that it's a WIN-WIN business.

As for the corps' knights and soldiers who are waiting for their equipments to be repaired, the Marchioness has approved them to mix with the guards and keep the explorers company to protect the city's public order.

--With this, Zena-san shouldn't be in danger during the time I'm away from the labyrinth city.

I feel slightly a bit overprotective, but it's normal to worry about a friend right.

"....Does Satou like Zena?"

"This is quite sudden, Karina-sama."

I was drained of my strength when I turned around to see Lady Karina behind me.

....I want to ask why is she wearing armor instead of the dress.

"What does that outfit mean? Didn't you ask me to prepare your dress since you said that you're going to be in the presence of the duke today?"

I edge up to Lady Karina with a smiling face.

I've prepared her a dress with offensive power that'll help her get a marriage proposal since she's going to meet an influential noble and all.

"....Because, the glances from the people around are scary when I wear a dress."

"It's not okay even if you say it cutely."

"Satou is mean desuwa! Even though you're so kind toward Zena..."

That's because Zena-san is a friend and she's helped me a lot.

Leaving the pouting Lady Karina for a bit, I wonder why are Zena-san and Arisa staring hard at me?

I understand the situation after seeing the grinning Lilio.

--It's due to Lady Karina's remarks earlier huh.

"She's--"

"It's a match desuwa!"

When I was going to say, "She's an important friend I respect", Lady Karina who seemed slightly flustered shouted out loud like she was covering my words.

I was only going to answer the question that she asked herself.

"Have a match with me! I will wear that embarrassing dress if you win against me."

H-hey, please don't say such misleading things.

The dress that I've prepared is the latest popular one in the Royal Capital fashion. The chest area is somewhat spacious, but the exposure level is not that high.

All the dresses that Lady Karina had worn up to now, including the one I had made in Gururian city, were of old conservative designs. She must be thinking like this due to that.

Well, since she's going to wear it if I win the match, let's end this quick.

"It cannot be helped, are you alright using the same rule as when you fight Pochi and Tama?"

"Of course, just as I've hoped desuwa!"

When Pochi and Tama are fighting with Lady Karina, the match is decided if either is pushed out of the battle ground, or their back touches the ground.

"And if I win--"

Come to think of it, I haven't heard Lady Karina's demand if she wins.

Lady Karina stares at me with reddened face.

Or rather, it feels like she's glaring at me.

While looking like she's in her wits' end, Lady Karina makes a shocking demand.

"--W, with me, ma--marry me desuwa!"

Ha? Marry?

Arisa who's repeatedly saying guilty around me is noisy.

I'm glad Mia is tagging along with Pochi and Tama eating around.

By the way, Lulu is with Nana and Liza loading our luggage from the container to the airship.

The peanut gallery are cheering and booing for Lady Karina.

"W-wrong."

Lady Karina is so confused her eyes are spinning, but no one listens to her excuse.

She was probably intending to say "Pretend to be my fiance" in order to stop people from proposing her in the Royal Capital, but she ended up saying, "Marry", since she was too flustered.

I think there's no mistake that this girl feels favorable of me, but I cannot help being puzzled as to whether she holds the feeling of love toward me as an opposite sex.

She might even think of me like a brother or a buddy.

I'm worried with Zena-san who's looping the word "Marry" like a broken record.

"Young master! We've prepared the stage!"

The peanut gallery have finished preparing the stage before I can say the follow-up.

We're going to the temporary borrowed arena space where Liza usually fights on.

◇

I'm standing at the opposite of Lady Karina.

She's wearing the equipments I've prepared and Raka today. She's not carrying her weapon. The usual bare hands.

I also match her and give the Fairy Sword that I usually wear on my waist to Arisa.

Even though I had made Lady Karina's equipment so that it wouldn't hinder the shaking while maintaining the defensive power, Arisa modified it with magic to make it unshakable.

"W-wait, you're not thinking of losing on purpose right?"

"I don't."

"Don't get tempted by the breasts okay? I'll let you touch mine as much as you want later."

"No, I don't need that."

Arisa said some stupid things in low voice, so I denied her immediately.

To begin with, what does touching a little girl's breasts gain me.

"Then I'll ask Lulu to let you touch her breasts later!"

I'm slightly attracted with the permission to touch Lulu's breasts that are growing nicely, but making an empty promise without the approval from the person herself like this is no good.

"Calm down Arisa. I will not lose."

"R, really? That is so isn't it. I mean, you have us after all."

I stroke the anxious Arisa's head, and then I step forward to the center of the temporary arena where Lady Karina is waiting.

I'd like to win the fight in an instant, but I cannot do that.

Lady Karina would be embarrassed if I win effortlessly, yet the people around would think that I want to marry her if they deem me cutting corners.

Let's go with fighting an equal match for a while, and then win narrowly in the end.

It sounds quite troublesome.

11-23. To the Royal Capital (3)

Satou's here. There are things you can't fight against even though you know. During overtimes late at night, I had eaten snacks with high calories even though I knew they were no good.

◇

"You'll lose instantly if you think I'm still what I used to be and let your guard down you know?"

"That is scary. Please don't be too hard on me."

"Fuhn, desuwa. I wonder how long can you keep looking calm?"

Raka is quiet today.

Looks like it's busy invoking physical reinforcement, spirit enhancement, and acceleration force artes in secret.

I set up my stance after making sure that Raka has finished casting the reinforcement magic.

--There's no start signal in a match between explorers.

Lady Karina who's approaching like she's crawling on the ground falls down in front of me--no, it only looks like she's fallen down.

She's begun spinning to do an ax kick before my eyes.

In most stories, this should be the time where I cross my arms to block the kick, but there's no point doing such consideration.

I shift half of my body, avoiding her heel.

--The heel that should've been evaded suddenly changes its direction diagonally mid-air.

Raka probably made a foothold in the air which allowed her to alter the kicking direction.

Even disregarding that, I think Lady Karina who could do such thing in that instant is amazing herself.

Tama is good at this kind of maneuver, so Lady Karina might've been taught by her.

I hit Lady Karina's foot in short range with palm strike.

While my palm is destroying many small shields that Raka's created, I parry another of Lady Karina's strike.

The peanut gallery cheer.

"Oh! He evaded that blow!"

"Rather, is that beauty-san's armor a magic item."

"Isn't that the same equipment as the ones『Pendragon』people have?"

"As expected of equipment belonging to the ones they call『Woundless』!"

I can't spare any time to listen to their commentaries.

While using the foot that's touching the ground as the axis, Lady Karina unleashes a roundhouse kick with her other leg.

I evade that with a back step while being careful not to get out of the arena.

It seems she's judged that using only big moves won't hit me, she's changed her tactic to using combinations of small moves.

Lady Karina is attacking with shrewdness that's clearly different than the time when she was in Muno city, such as the flurry of jabs to distract me on the upper part while trying to trip my leg.

Looks like the result of the accumulated training she's done with the beastkin girls ever since she arrived in the labyrinth city is surfacing.

The ebb and flow of Lady Karina's and my's offenses and defenses continue.

Unfolding left and right as if we're dancing.

I handle Lady Karina mid-air triple kicks with my hand and counterattack her with a roundhouse kick.

Of course I've held back on the kick quite a bit but no one will doubt it since the speed is not inferior to Lady Karina's.

Lady Karina uses the force field created with Raka's power as a foothold and changes her orbit mid-air, avoiding my kick.

Her movement is already expert enough.

"Oy, how the heck did she evade that kick!"

"Shut it, concentrate on the goddess's fight!"

"Ah, too bad! Karina-sama! Fight!"

"Aah, mou. Stop fighting dangerously and finish it already!"

"Mwu."

Lady Karina finally reveals her trump card while the spectators are giving their arbitrary explanation and encouragement in the background.

"Oy! That!"

"Is that Magic Edge?"

"But, it's blue?"

In accordance to my crisis perception, I jump back to evade Lady Karina who's slashing down a blade made of blue light from the air.

It's a 30 cm long blade of light embodied from the light released by Raka's main body.

It was an unexpected attack, it probably would have scared me if the light was a bit longer.

However, it won't hit me with this distance.

"Got youuu!"

Ah, Lady Karina, you shouldn't speak out that line.

The two layered trump card that was planned to take me by surprise was ruined by Lady Karina who shouted that out loud, believing she had won.

I twist my upper body to evade the light blade shot from Raka's main body.

The attack flies diagonally downward, so there's no one beyond the line of fire.

I was on guard when the light blade was passing through beside me, worrying whether it would explode, but it proved to be a needless worry.

The light blade pierces the ground, and disperses just like that.

"Not yett!"

Nevertheless Lady Karina hasn't given up, and continues to attack fiercely, but fatigue and impatience are floating on her face.

It seems she had put the stake on the attack just now, the blue light that's emitting from Raka's main body has clearly weakened too. Lady Karina is also running out of magic power.

Good grief, fighting Lady Karina whose breasts aren't swaying isn't fun, so let's put this to an end about now.

The peanut gallery are probably satisfied now anyway, and Lady Karina who has shown her trump card should have no regret too.

I have to think of a way to make it looks like I narrowly win after fiercely attacking her who can't evade.

--Arisa probably would scold me, "Don't let your guard down."

I strike with my left palm to break Lady Karina's posture.

My left palm destroy the weakened Raka's protection, and then pushes Lady Karina's shoulder--or how it should have been, Lady Karina who's become tired loses her strength and falls, accidentally avoiding my palm strike.

My nail slightly grazes her armor, but it's weak enough to not even scratches it.

I correct my missing attacks, and continue to corner Lady Karina.

I make her move to the verge of the arena.

The spectators hold their breath while watching Lady Karina being cornered.

I flick her guarding arms with multiple strikes, Lady Karina's body bends backward.

--Three more moves. I plan to lead Lady Karina to counterattack my attack, and then counter that to defeat her.

The peanut gallery become heated in the next moment.

The demons are dancing.

"Oooooh!"

"--Oh God!"

"W-what are those!"

"M-miracles do exist..."

The demonic breasts gain their freedom from Arisa's binding (curse), snatching my view and thought.

I've seen similar scene in the underground labyrinth, but this one is with proper clothes.

And yet, the volume difference is too great.

The gap between the rich and the poor is too cruel.

I, whose eyes have been robbed, cannot react to Lady Karina's kick that's coming from the blind spot.

Rejecting the crisis perception and space grasp complain, I freely chase after the track.

"Noooooo!"

"Satouu!!"

"Gooooo! Karina-samaaaaa!"

I could hear the voices of Arisa and Mia, and also Lady Karina maid group among the spectators' cheers.

The fated strike settled it, and the end of the match is decided with the off-arena rule.

◇

"Haven't I said times and times again not to let your guard down."

"Mwu, you can't be careless okay. You can't okay? You can be flexible but carelessness is no good okay. Absolutely, okay?"

In the end, I got pressed by Arisa and Mia.

Or rather, Mia. When did you come back.

After apologizing to the two, "Sorry for making you worry", I call out Lady Karina who's sitting on the ground without moving.

"Are you alright, Karina-sama?"

『I hope you would not mind leaving her alone until she's sorted her feeling.』

"Is that so? Then I'll leave it to Raka and Erina to console her."

It goes without saying that I was the winner of the match.

Right before Lady Karina's kick hit my head, I moved my head away from her beautiful leg while my line of sight was still fixed to those.

And then, during the opportunity when the demonic breasts were hidden by her body, I slightly pushed her back, who was still in the air, to make her fly.

The fated strike might just be a light one, but I probably shouldn't say that Lady Karina is exaggerating.

The spectators probably saw her being overenthusiastic and went out of the arena.

"Karina~?"

"Does it hurt nodesu?"

Since Pochi and Tama have also come to cheer Karina up, I get up to leave the place.

I feel the sensation of my robe's sleeve being pulled, when I look down, there are the white fingers of Lady Karina, whose face is wet from bitter tears, gripping my robe.

"I'll show you that I'll win next time."

"Please don't be too hard on me at that time."

I have a favorable impression of her in this regard. I would have supported her as much as she likes if the target weren't me.

I give my consent to reply the tearful voice of Lady Karina, and then change with Pochi and Tama.

"Karina did well nodesu."

"Together, more, and more training~?"

"Of course desuwa!"

Leaving the three who are heating up, I confirm with Liza the departure preparation. Lulu and Nana have already boarded the airship, they're not on this place anymore.

The battle was long, so there shouldn't be much time until the departure now.

I have to make Lady Karina change into her dress in the airship, and then go around greeting the people who have come to see me off.

After thanking Baronet Dyukeli for the carriage, I exchange greetings with his daughter Merian, and the Noja Princess, Mitia.

"Satou-sama, the match earlier was amazing."

"It really was ja! A martial artist as skilled as Satou might even be nominated into the Shiga Eight Swords!"

I would immediately decline if such an offer came up.

Please excuse me from a place where people who are of the same type as the third prince gather.

Iruna and Jenna of the [Beautiful Wings] have also come as the representative of the training school.

"Please leave the Pendora apprentices to us."

"Right right, we won't let girlfriend-san and her friends get any injury, please don't worry."

"Are you talking about Zena-san? She's an important friend of mine, but she's not my lover you know?"

"Eh? Is it like that?"

"Didn't I say so Jenna? Satou-sama's lover is the one with big breasts, Karina-sama."

I also deny that, and then greet the next guests.

The leader of mid-level explorers, Koshin-shi, and Miss Gina and Miss

Heriona of the [Moonlight] have also come. I couldn't talk for long with them, but I'm happy to receive their blessing.

Lastly, I greet Zena-san and the others for the last time before we depart.

"I'll be back in half a month, so please don't be rash during that time."

"Yes, I will study in the training school and get closer to the strength of Satou-san and the others even a little!"

"Leave Zena-cchi to me, I won't stop her being rash, but I won't let her be reckless."

I return Lilio's subtly un-relieving words with a bitter smile, and tell Zena-san to not do rash things once again.

We go toward the ramp where the airship is waiting.

We wave our hands toward Zena-san and the others while climbing the ramp.

We seem to be the last guests as they immediately take the ramp away as soon as I've boarded, and I can hear the hum from the activation of the airship's main engine.

We go toward the observatory room while being reminded of the the busy schedule in the Royal Capital.

SS1: Practice Scene

"Unn, dou, tro wa! Unn, dou--stop! Pochi! Your arms and legs are all over the places! The right leg from the heel, and the left leg from the toes! Tama too, be more focused on the fingertips! You two, when you land after jumping and see each other, don't forget to turn your body toward the audiences! Absolutely don't show your butt toward the audiences when you land okay."

I stop clapping my hands, and find faults on Pochi and Tama's dance.

It's quite watchable even right now, but we have to increase the quality if we want to show it on stage to the people after all.

"Fingers~?"

"Arisa, I can't understand if you talk too quick nodesu! Tell me a bit more slowly please nodesu."

Looks like my instructions were too packed, Pochi complained with teary eyes.

Tama keeps only playing with her fingers.

Not good, this could fail due to me getting fired up alone like what happened in my former life.

Calm down, Arisa.

I explain to Pochi and Tama slowly in an easy-to-understand manner.

However, it doesn't seem to be transmitted to the two well.

Aa, mou, teaching it with words is difficult.

Teaching skill seems to have little use, oh right! Let's use light magic.

I use the skill points, which I was unsure to use on during the level up, to raise light magic skill to level 1.

I feel that it's pointless to pick the same skill that I had before resetting, but from my experience in the labyrinth, even skill level 1 has many uses.

Is it just my imagination or is the needed skill points seems fewer. I don't know if it's because I had learned the skill before, or because my level has increased, but let's leave the check for later.

The stage training is more important right now.

"You two, look at this."

"Small Pochi~?"

"There's also tiny Tama too nodesu."

"Mwu, not there."

"I'll put Mia later okay."

Using light magic, I make the deformed Pochi and Tama illusions with 3:1 head-to-body ratio to dance.

"Look at this well, this one is the dance that Pochi and Tama did earlier, and this one is the one with the correct moves."

I arrange the two side-by-side to show the difference.

"I cancan~"

"Understood nodesu!"

Good.

It's worth using the skill points for--

"However, I don't know how to make it right nodesu."

--Or not....

Aa mou, just how should I do.

◇

The one who saved me who was at a loss was my beloved darling.

Oh! White robe! Isn't that white robe, Sensei!

Ua, ua~.

I take out glasses from Item Box and present it to him with both hands.

"Why the glasses?"

"Please, by all means, wear it."

"Arisa, you're talking funny you know?"

Ah, no, not on the pocket, please wear it on the ears!

But, discarding that style is also difficult.

I really really want a digital camera.

"Arisa, are you thinking some strange thing? You have a silly grin on your face you know."

"No way?!"

After being pointed so, I comb my cheeks in panic to return my expression.

"So, I only need to teach Pochi and Tama to dance like this image right?"

"Un, can you do it?"

"It's easy. If you do it like this, see."

Uwa, what feat of skill.

Who would've thought using [Magic Hand] magic to teach Pochi and Tama the dance steps by moving them like marionettes.... You normally can't think that.

"Marionette~"

"Pochi and Tama are at Master's mercy nanodesu!"

"Hey now, stop saying strange things and memorize the motions okay."

"Aye~"

"Yes, nanodesu!"

Still, even though he's skillful enough to make Pochi and Tama dance at the same time after just seeing it once, why can't he chant well, it's too strange.

I get fired up when I imagine him going into the labyrinth depth once in a~while to secretly practice.

Enough to make me want to push him down!

"Arisa. Drool."

I quickly wipe my lip after hearing his astonished words.

This young body is too honest with itself it's dangerous. Dangerous.

"What about the clothes? Do you want me to make new ones?"

"Right~, We can go with dresses, but Pochi and Tama are going to fly...."

"Ninja costume~?"

"That's a bit."

"Then the Pixie costume nodesu!"

Ah, the ones they wore when they were dancing in the air at the Elf Hometown huh.

It does seem like it'll go well.

"Alright, let's go with that! Master, please add gimmicks so that the wings emit light when they dance in the air!"

"Ah, that's going to be pretty. I'll see if I can use material that's not too particular for it."

The costumes should be fine with this.

"Now! Everyone! Let's do a rehearsal this time!"

"Nn."

"Aye~"

"Roger nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama have begin to dance, matching to the music, as Mia starts her performance, and the singing which I've put my whole soul into echoes in the studio.

◇

And then, the real performance has begun.

On the stage in front of mass of people.

I had thought that it would be more deserted, but everyone seems to be unexpectedly free.

I scream the starting words toward the audiences.

"Listen to my songggg!"

Ah, wonderful.

WIth this I can write off another entry from the list of things I want to do.

Next, I want to push down my beloved darling.

No! I will surely push him down!

SS2: Blue Mantle

"What'd you say! We're the『Pendora』ya know?! Quickly bring out the best liquor you have."

"Y-yes, at once!"

The guests nearby frown at the violent youngsters.

They seem to be under the Pendragon who have made their name in the Labyrinth City.

They've defeated a Floormaster and performed a parade the other day, so there's no one in the bar who doesn't know them.

However, according the rumor, Chevalier Pendragon should be a respectable person who has established an orphanage and fed the poor.

It might be because people like such gather when your organization becomes too big.

"Oy! The pretty nee-chan over there! Come here and pour us liquor."

"What is it? Are you intending me to pour you liquor?"

The drunk youngster stretches his hands toward the beauty's splendid pair of hills, but he's stopped by a scaly light shield that appears before the woman.

"Uo, oow.... The heck are you doing!"

『We are the ones who should be protesting. I cannot overlook your criminal act just now you know?』

A mysterious reverberating voice of a man comes from the woman.

Of course, it doesn't seem like there's a child who's hiding.

"Mou, please don't go ahead alone."

"Exactly! You're the Baron's daughter, so please use the carriage at least."

After hearing what the girls who seem to be her attendants are saying, the men who were clamoring just now flee from the back door.

This is a country with a long history of imperial rule, you will surely be charged guilty and dropped into a criminal slave if you're impolite toward nobles.

◇

"Yo, nee-chan, how 'bout playing with me?　We're the『Pendora』 y'know!"

"No, release me. Don't touch me!"

The fleeing men called out to a plain girl in one part of the slum away from the bar just now.

They forcefully catch and raise the girl's hands while pushing her to the wall, it doesn't look like they're picking her up at all.

There are few pedestrians on this road, but regardless, there aren't many people who are willing to against armed explorers.

They can only call the guards and and the vigilante corps at most.

However, it seems there's no shortage of brave people.

"You guys! Release her hands!"

"What? A little rabbit girl huh? We're the『Pendora』y'know! Scram if you don't want a world of hurt!"

"Pendora you said?"

The little rabbitkin girl who's wearing a neat one-piece dress stops moving after hearing the men said, [Pendora].

The men seem to think that she's daunted, they continue to speak abusively.

"That's right! We'll throw you to the monsters in the labyrinth if you're too noisy!"

"Don't even think of calling the guards okay? A Mithril Explorer-sama is behind us."

"Go away if you understand! Even if you're a woman, we don't have any business with your beastly smell."

The men who've got their conquest desire stimulated to see the trembling shoulders of the girl laugh and jeer vulgarly.

However, at the next moment, one of the men falls down with bubbles on his mouth.

The rabbitkin girl has disappeared before they knew it.

The man who pins the town girl releases her hands in panic and become wary of the surrounding.

The rabbitkin girl who's gotten close to the man's leg strikes the man's solar plexus with her sheathed short sword.

The man's eyes never caught the rabbitkin girl until right before he fainted.

"Huh? Rabibi, what are you doing?"

"Ah, Usasa! You've come at the right time. I've caught the rumored fake 『Pendora』."

"Eh? These old men?"

"Yeah, I followed them since they look suspicious with the deep blue mantles."

Since the men were still explorers, they only ended up having to pay the penalty without getting turned into slaves, but there is no need to ask as to whether they can pay the penalty for impersonating other people.

Afterward, there is no one who impersonates the [Pendora] in the labyrinth city ever again.

SS3: Loot

"So, have you decided which one will you pick?"

"I think the『Item Appraisal』one is nice after all, albeit classic. To think that all three of them have Orbs in them, that sure make you perplexed~"

Three treasure chests in varying sizes appeared after the floormaster had been defeated.

Arisa and me thought that the other two chests would disappear if we opened one of them, but then Tama quickly opened the three chests.

Tama was normally the one in charge of treasure chests when we found them in the labyrinth, she looked at the panicking Arisa while tilting her head.

In addition, the chests didn't have any trap set.

Leaving that aside, we continue sorting the spread loot in the Ivy Mansion's living room.

Even though they're going to the auction anyway, making the list of the items is important.

Furthermore, above all, checking out loot is fun.

There were three kinds of Orbs like in the middle layer inside the treasure chests, they were [Item Appraisal], [Water Magic], and [Paralyze Resistant].

I secretly hoped for one of them to be a [Chant] Orb, but it was in vain.

Every one of these three Orbs seems to be a hit, and the [Item

Appraisal] one seems to be a rarity among the rarity.

We had some big debate like whether Nana the shield bearer or Mia the recovery girl to have the [Paralyze Resistant], or either Nana the shield bearer or Lulu the rear guard to have the [Water Magic], or if Arisa the well-informed should have the [Item Appraisal].

In the end, we decided to choose the [Item Appraisal] for Lulu so that she could judge whether the foodstuff she had in hands to be safe.

Good grief, it's really like our gluttonous girls to pick it by food-related matter.

"The others are all questionable equipment aren't they~"

"Arisa, the basis for that conclusion is strange, so I urge you to reconsider."

Nana objected to Arisa's arbitrary decision.

Certainly, none of them is especially good, but I think it's a line up that's usable to some extent.

For the magic weapons, there are an adamantite war hammer, a mithril short sword, a Face-Tree bow, a mantis machette, a Lighting Crystal wand, and a paralyzing thorn spear, and for the normal weapons, there are four of them, including a black steel axe, and a silver dagger.

"Our usual cheat equipment sure are better aren't they~ and even though we have prepared the battle plan carefully, to win against an opponent 9 levels higher without getting hurt sure isn't normal."

"Like injury~?"

"Pain is no good nanodesu! It's painful desuyo?"

"A pervert?"

"Noo~o!"

Arisa was nearly treated like a masochist, but I think being unhurt is a good thing.

If I level them up for another 70, I won't be worried even if some demon-lord class enemy comes. Though according to Arisa, the Dog-head and the Wild Boar King were special cases, so it might be enough with just another 50 levels.

There were few armors among the loot, maybe it was geared more toward weapons this time.

Besides the Thunder Arm Armor that's made from mithril, and the Vajra Shell great shield, most of them are normal armors that are simply sturdy.

As you can expect from the squid drop item, the Lightning Arm Armor has 10 tentacles on it that will automatically defend against anyone who attack the wearer. The tip of the tentacle can stun with electricity like a stun gun.

It's a full body armor so I thought that only certain people can wear it, but according to Seoru-shi the shadowkin, it seems magic armors that come from the labyrinth can automatically adjust their size to accommodate the wearer.

I feel that it's been awhile since I see a fantasy-like item like this. Rather, 'game-like' is probably more appropriate.

Unlike in games, the automatic adjustment is limited to 20% range at most, so someone who's as small as Leriril for example wouldn't be able to equip it.

The Vajra Shell great shield is sturdy despite its light weight, and it can deploy anti-magic membrane if you fill it with magic power, so it might be useful for a shield-bearer who challenges the labyrinth's middle layer.

I've over-fished the Vajra Shellfish when I was leveling Mia back then, so I have a lot of them sleeping in my storage, maybe I should try creating one.

There are also a Scale Dinosaur scale armor, and an Armored Frog leather armor.

"Satou."

"Look at Pochi too please nodesu!"

"Tama too~?"

When I turn my head around, the three youth troupe have put rings, crowns, earrings, and necklaces to the point like it's, "Is that it!", while posing.

The three who who wore a smile on their whole face looked cute, and when I said some lip service, "You're all like princesses", they reacted shyly while fidgeting like Arisa, which was rare.

As for the jewelry and accessories, they're made from normal metal and the craftsmanship aren't too exquisite, but since the jewels are big, they probably can be sold for good money.

There are amulet type accessories too among them, but their effects are all questionable like +1% resistance against a particular element for example. I wonder if it'll be different if you equip multiple of them?

"Is this mantle made of the Mad Fang Tiger's fur? Magic isn't effective against that tiger, so I wonder if this mantle has the same effect?"

The mantle that Liza is holding is made from the fur of Mad Fang Tiger just as she's said. It has good performance against slash attacks, but it doesn't seem to have any magic resistance-up effect.

There are also several mantles of different kind, like a robe made from the Blood-colored Spider thread with the fur on its sleeve and collar.

Still, I wonder if the one who provided these loot was the Dungeon Master?

I tried asking Arisa and Seoru-shi, but the two didn't know.

I should ask the person themselves if I meet them later.

◇

The crowd that have been gathered in the venue is heating up whenever Arisa introduces the loot.

"Ta-da! This is the centerpiece this time! The『Thunder Arm Armor』! It's made from mithril which is common, but these tentacles are amazing!"

"""Ooooh!"""

No, you guys, can you stop making a stir before the [Amazing] part is explained?

"Now listen! They will automatically move and defend the wearer from their attacker!"

""Oooh!""

Huh? The voices had decreased, wonder if it didn't meet their expectation.

It's quite convenient, but since it seems to reduce your maximum MP by 100, it's likely an equipment that a magician finds hard to use.

In the end, the adamantite war hammer, and the Vajra Shell great shield were more popular than Arisa's declared centerpiece.

Later, when I came to the armor shop in the labyrinth city to sell the Vajra Shell great shield as Kuro, they didn't buy it, but it was to be auctioned instead.

After several days of advertising, the auction for the shield opened in front of the Explorer guild, and some Red Iron explorer bought it for some good money.

I still have around a hundred Vajra Shells, but I'll restrain myself as it'll collapse the price otherwise.

In addition, I blew the money from the Vajra Shell great shield sales to have a party with the captain-san and every member of the tenement house craftsmen.

There were some unfamiliar explorers who also participated for some reason, but I let it slide since it was fun.

Chapter 11 Intermission 1: Top Meat Skewers and Pendragon

"Uncle, give us five top meat skewers."

"Awright, you're quite the the boss ordering the top meat. Did you guys just hunt some big game?"

"Yeah, we got the Twin Head Lizard we were aiming!"

"That's quite something."

While admiring it, the shopkeeper begins to grill the top meat the boy has ordered.

The top meat skewers don't constantly get sold unlike the regular skewer, so he doesn't have any that's already grilled.

The shopkeeper is talking to a rabbitkin boy who's just come to age, though you won't know that he's an explorer from his appearance. His friends are boys and girls who are about the same age as him.

They're probably people overflowing with talent since they were able to defeat the Twin Head Lizard residing deep in the labyrinth. They might even become Red Iron explorers in the future.

"Haha, we're still inexperienced."

"The genuine Red Iron are all monsters y'know?"

"I'll tell Pochi-san and Tama-san."

"Ah, no, don't you dare Rabibi! I'd be killed by the other『Pendora』guys if you make those two cry."

The shopkeeper recalled the rumor about them when he heard their conversation.

Appearing like a comet in the labyrinth city, the people connected to [Pendragon] rose to among the top of the explorers in a blink of an eye.

They're the graduates of the training school that has been established by the charitable leader of the [Pendragon].

Those graduates are said to wear matching mantles drawn with a dragon holding a pen.

"So you guys are the rumored [Pendora] huh?"

"Ehe, that's right."

The rabbitkin boy looks embarrassed while scrubbing his nose.

His ears stand up proudly.

"Are those Pendragon guys as amazing as they say?"

"They're not just amazing!"

The shopkeeper who like to gossip give the [Pendora] kids some regular skewers to tide them over until the top meat skewers are done grilling.

These regular skewers are the compensation for the gossip. If he stock his gossip repertoire here, he could recover the cost from the drunken people who would treat him some drink in the bar.

"Pochi-san's strike can break through the plastron of a Soldier Mantis easily y'know?"

"Tama-san too, she exterminated Assassin Goblins like they were insects going astray to flame."

"Mia-sama's magic is also amazing. Her healing magic heals without leaving a scar."

The boys and girls don't stop boasting the [Pendragon] even after the smell of the grilling fat from the top meat has begin to spread.

"I think it's also thanks to Nana-san's defensive power you know? She's never got any injury even after being attacked that much. As as shield bearer myself, the difference is too great I don't even know where to start to become like her."

"It's the same as me who's in charge of attacking. Liza-san taught me spearmanship but I can't imagine ever catching up to her level."

"Yeah, that person is extraordinary...."

Even though he assumed the role of a listener pleasantly, the shopkeeper couldn't help becoming interested and asked them a question.

"How extraordinary do you mean?"

"You know Magic Edge?"

"It's a secret art used by people like the Shiga Eight Swords right? I was an explorer when I was young myself. I had trained for three years when I got myself an Ant Wing Silver Sword, but I didn't feel like I could do it at all."

"Hee, uncle was an explorer too huh."

"I stopped at Bronze plate though."

There are a lot of people who have given up and changed their profession from the dangerous job of explorers like the shopkeeper here.

It's hard to measure strength of explorers from their appearance alone, there are some shopkeepers in this labyrinth city who are as strong as a knight here and there.

Thus, there's rarely any vagrant who dares to steal from the food stalls.

Because the risk is too great.

"So, what about the Magic Edge?"

"Liza-san can use it."

"Magic Edge? So there's someone other than the Four Red Devas who can use it in this labyrinth city."

There are only four known users of Magic Edge in this labyrinth city.

[Crimson Young Noble], [Red Fang Lion] [Blood Sword Wolf], [Scarlet Flame Witch], the four people who have 'red' part in their second name are praisingly known as the [Four Red Devas] in the labyrinth city.

Black Spear Liza is famous as the fifth person who stands equal to them, but there are three more people in Pendragon that can use it, and all those girls can use the higher [Magic Edge Cannon], but that fact is not known.

The shopkeeper skilfully flips the top meat skewers that have changed color.

The boys and girls who should have their stomachs calmed down from the regular skewers can't wait any longer after smelling that aroma.

"Oh right, what kind of person is the『Young Master』?"

"Gentle!"

"He brought a lot of delicious cakes when he visited the training school!"

"He's popular among the girls."

"But he doesn't seem too happy even though he's popular."

"That's because Chevalier-sama likes big breasts..."

Their words match the rumor in the city.

People generally evaluate him as a [good natured debauchery noble], and [Young Master]. It's not a mockery, the rumor about him has slight amazement and praise mixed in.

"Isn't it done already?"

"Amateurs should shut up, let me show you my skill here."

The shopkeeper stares at the grills, and listens carefully to the grilling sounds.

This is the secret of [Grilling delicious skewers] that was taught by the [Young Master]'s maid he's acquainted with in the marketplace.

Teaching a secret method to someone she's just met, the shopkeeper thinks that it's really like someone who serves under the good-natured [Young Master].

The shopkeeper who's seized the best timing quickly pulls up the skewers from the wire mesh, and give them to the boys and girls who have been waiting for it.

"Eei, been waiting for this!"

"Looks really good."

"Kuh, I've waited for this!"

The boys and girls who're drooling on their mouth bite at the piping hot skewers.

Their fangs break through the fragrant grilled skewers.

Their tongues fully enjoy the meat juice that are loaded with flavor coming out between their fangs and the meat.

To the completely delicious flavor transmitting on their tongues, they nod at each other in silence.

"Delishhh"

"As you can expect from a single big copper coin worth of skewer."

The boys and girls praise it when they pause after one bite.

They lick the oil that's dropped on their hands from the skewers. Needless to say, they can't let this delicious taste goes to waste.

"Aah, it's too delicious."

"I wonder if we can eat this everyday when we become Red Iron explorers?"

"We surely will! I mean Pochi-san and Tama-san tell me that Chevalier-sama's home cooking is even more delicious."

"I can't imagine something more delicious than this."

The girls who have finally finished swallowing the meat in their mouths participate in praising the meat skewers.

Eating the meat skewers after it got cold would have been a waste though, so they didn't continue the praise for long and started to nibble at it again.

"Ara? It's Usasa and the others. You're eating something that look really delicious."

"Yo, Arisa. This is extremely tasty ya know!"

"Arisa-chan, hello. The skewers here are delicious."

"The stall whom Lulu recommends isn't it. There's still time before the dinner anyway, I'll be asking for one too please."

"Coming! It's one big copper coin though, alright with you?"

"I can afford that much."

In case of children who wear good clothing, they might be some noble children who's come wandering without their attendant, yearning to be an explorer. It often happens that they can't pay the money themselves, so it's important to ask ahead.

The shopkeeper never noticed that this little girl who was talking with the boys and girls was the last of the [Pendragon] they've been gossiping until just now.

SS4: Pochi's Pupils

"Pochi nee-san, please take this."

Usasa and the [Pendora] boys are presenting some very tasty-looking frog meat skewers on the plate nodesu.

When Pochi looks at everyone's serious face, Pochi can see through what they want nanodesu.

Pochi puts her hand in front of Usasa who's trying to say something to silently stop him, and then nods nodesu.

"Pochi understands even without anyone saying it nodesu. It'll take some time so wait here nodesu!"

"Yes!"

"Aexpected of Nee-san!"

"Straight to the point!"

"I'll keep waiting here even if sandstorm comes gau!"

--Gau?

Well it's alright nodesu. Pochi will just have to tell Gau-kun the merit and demerit of over-characterization later!

Pochi went to the second floor of the [Su-tro-m] to take the exceptional items and came back nodesu.

Pochi takes it out of the magic bag wrapped in oil paper, and after slightly enjoying the aroma coming from the tiny gap, Pochi runs back to where everyone is waiting.

"Pochi will give everyone a slice each nodesu! It feels nice to chew desuyo?"

Pochi treats everyone with the special [Smoked Basilisk].

"U, um, Nee-san?"

Huhuh? It's strange nodesu.

Usasa doesn't look too well nodesu.

"You don't like smoked foods nanodesu?"

"N, no, I love it very much."

You should eat it if you love it then nanodesu.

"Usasa, a~n nanodesu."

Pochi puts a slice of the smoked basilisk into Usasa's mouth.

He muttered, "It's delicious", while his ears were turning red, and then began to chew it.

Yes, that's good nodesu.

After feeling satisfied, Pochi joins the group while biting the frog meat skewer the reward nodesu.

◇

"--Magic Edge nanodesu?"

"Yes! We want to learn it too! Please!"

Pochi had misunderstood nodesu.

Pochi will teach them properly since Pochi's eaten the frog skewers too.

"You put magic power into the magic sword like, 'ZUGYAN', and then--"

"Nee-san, we don't have magic swords."

Oah?

Master might give a lot if Pochi asks.

Pochi asks Master who's taking a nap under the tree shadow in the courtyard.

"You can't."

"Pochi can't nanodesu?"

"Un, no."

Unfortunately nanodesu.

Master is mean nanodesu.

"Master said we can't nodesu."

Usasa and the others unanimously lamented and fell on the ground nodesu.

Ah, I'm in trouble nodesu.

Liza has just returned right after snacking, so Pochi goes to her to consult this nodesu.

"What's wrong Pochi."

"Liza! Pochi wants magic swords nodesu!"

"Don't you have one?"

"Pochi does have one, but it's different nodesu."

After Pochi explained it to Liza, she gave me a [Naisu Aidea].

"We have to put magic power into this wooden sword?"

"That's right nanodesu. Pochi also practiced with a wooden sword at first nodesu. Pochi had forgotten nodesu!"

Pochi really misses it.

Pochi wants to stick together with Master every day like in those days nodesu.

"Nee-san, I can't do it!"

"This is a secret technique nanodesu! You can't do it just by practicing a bit nodesu!"

Even Pochi took a month to do it nodesu.

Only geniuses like Master and Tama can do it immediately nanodesu!

"Train for it steadily nodesu! Put your magic power like, 'ZUGYAN', and then strike like, 'ZUDON', nodesu!"

Receiving Pochi's encouragement, Usasa and the others shout with their spirit put into it, and begin the practice nodesu.

Pochi took a nap on top of Master's stomach while watching over them nodesu.

It's Tama's ninja day today, so Pochi has the monopoly nodesu.

It'll be nice if Pochi is together with Master like this too tomorrow nodesu.

Chapter 11 Intermission 2: The Tale of Sir Pendragon

My ears caught the talk about him from the grumbles of some eternally Bronze explorers in the bar.

That young noble man became a Red Iron explorer after his first labyrinth exploration, it was of doubtful credibility but they told me that they heard it from guild staff when I treated them to some drink.

I decided to meet the guild staff member who told them the story in order to collect the increasingly more credible gossip.

Sorry for the late introduction, I'm someone who survives by reciting the tales of explorers and heroes in the labyrinth city, Barido the minstrel.

Whether this becomes a new heroic tale or a comedic show depends on his deeds. Now then, wonder how will this turn out....

◇Testimony from a certain guild staff member◇

"Yeah I know them, the『Pendragon』bunch right?"

An acquaintance guild staff member that I met in the staff bar easily told me the name of their party.

When I inquired him more, he asserted that the rumor saying that [Pendragon] acquired the Red Iron plates after exploring the labyrinth once was true.

Looks like the liquor makes the other staff members' lips loose, several of them start talking about it to me.

"The leader is a young nobleman."

"Yeah, he seemed to be rich; some beautiful women, girls and little girls were serving him."

"The main force seemed to be demi-human battle slaves, some beastkins and a scalekin."

"There was an unattractive maid too right?"

"They said the beautiful girl and little girl were magicians."

Having two magicians in a party is quite extravagant. In exchange they don't seem to have a priest, so it's probably a party that makes use of the demi-humans to be the disposable damage sponge.

The story about how they brought 100 Magic Cores back after their first labyrinth exploration supports that guess.

By the staff members' request, I play the lute to sing the [Great Exploit of Dozon-sama], and the [Crimson Young Noble's Hydra Extermination].

Still, [Pendragon] huh... to use the name of a fictional hero like this, they have some good taste.

◇First-hand account of certain beautiful explorers◇

"Yes I know him, he saved us in the labyrinth after all."

"Is he strong you ask? He was amazing, he sliced that hard Maze Ant right in two with a single swing of his sword."

"It was an expensive looking sword wasn't it."

"Yeah, it was a pretty sword."

Even if I only take half of their story about how Pendragon saved them when they were being chased by dozens of Maze Ants, it's quite enough to be a heroic tale.

The aforementioned sword the girls talked about seems to be an excellent mithril sword made by the dwarven master craftsman, Elder Dohar.

I see, it's no wonder he could slice the Maze Ants in half with such an excellent sword.

◇Testimony of certain baggage carriers◇

"Chevalier-sama? He gave me work! Cleaning and weeding!"

"He let me ate a lot of delicious meal!"

"I also ate! It was amazing!"

It seems he employed the baggage caarries who didn't get any work to clean and weed his newly bought mansion.

They spoke truly happily about how he treated the starving them until they were full.

They also told me about how he treated the children who were looking for works in front of the gate with good food.

It'd be nice if he's a charitable person like Dozon-shi, but.... I'm slightly worried since there's a rumor about him having little children who are not of age as his mistresses.

◇Testimony of certain maids◇

"Ehehe, it's nice isn't it? These are work clothes you know?"

"Un, Chevalier-sama gave it to us. It was a reward when we became full-fledged maids."

The young maids' smiles are dazzling.

However, looking at the sewing and the fabric, they must be quite expensive. Usually,, maids have to bring their own clothes each. It's very rare for the master to buy them the clothes like in this mansion.

I've heard that he's rich, but I'm interested just where does he gets his fortune from.

"Eh? Who introduced us?"

"There wasn't anything like introduction."

"We had been saved when we were dying in the mansion's stable."

What! Even if they're just honorary, nobles normally only employ people from fitting houses as live-in employees.

To hire uneducated baggage carriers, and even some dying children after healing them as his employees....

Many people who had heard this story gossiped that he had some ulterior motives to save the girls, but my intuition as a minstrel tells me that's not it.

The proof is these girls' smiles. There isn't anyone who will smile that brightly if they're abused.

◇First-hand account of certain middle-class explorers◇

"I think『Pendragon』will obtain the Mithril Plate sooner or later."

The ones speaking are the middle-class explorer who had gone to the labyrinth deep in an expedition, and his friends.

"It was amazing you know, we were in a desperate situation, being surrounded by the Maze Cockroaches all around us. Right at that time, his retainers appeared and killed the Maze Cockroaches one after another."

"That was really amazing huh. I say those girls must have used magic swords since they easily cut through the slippery crust of the Maze Cockroaches."

Fumu, not only the Chevalier-dono himself, his servants even have magic swords huh.

It's probably possible with his vast wealth, though...

"However, the real thing was after that."

"I thought I had died when a huge『Hunter Mantis』reared its ugly face from the Gushing Hole."

--What!

There are a lot of mantis monsters in the labyrinth, but if we're talking about [Hunter Mantis], it's a monster that only Red Iron explorers can handle.

Moreover, those explorers will surely escape if they encounter it unexpectedly.

Because it's an opponent that you challenge only after you're certain with the victory by investigating the terrain thoroughly and preparing various elaborate tools and traps beforehand.

"I understand your surprise. Far from stepping back, those little girls overwhelmed the『Hunter Mantis』from the beginning to end."

"I thought that was the last I gonna saw『Pendragon』bunch who chased after the『Hunter Mantis』that plunged into the Gushing Hole."

Entering a Gushing Hole willingly, unbelievable.

Since there's some rumor saying that Gushing Holes are places connected to the Underworld where the Demon God governs. There isn't actually anyone who's gone to the Underworld, but it's the 'Truth' that's been spoken since a long time ago.

Yet, according to their story, the [Pendragon]'s boys and girls returned safely.

I want to ask those girls just what kind of good luck were they blessed with, but during the creation of a heroic tale, it'd become rubbish if I don't save talking with the people themselves for the last.

--I have to be patience.

Unfortunately, the aforementioned Chevalier-dono didn't participate in the fight.

It's said that he and the maid who's accompanying him rarely ever enter the labyrinth, instead, only the girls beside them usually challenge the labyrinth.

I wonder what's he doing when he's not entering the labyrinth?

◇In a mansion of a certain noble◇

"What do think, it's wonderful right? I was given this when I went to the Marchioness's tea party."

The Baroness shows a ring with a small agate yet splendid design on her finger.

The minute craftsmanship enhances the beauty.

I don't know if this was the work of a master craftsman, but with such an achievement, it must be expensive.

"His maid is very good at cooking you know?"

"You can't eat other cakes anymore once you eat the castella."

"That soft gentle sweetness, it's truly a miracle."

I'm interested with this castella that has such high praises from these picky wives, but

it seems I know very well the person who makes the thing that the wives covet. Nevertheless, there sure are many talented people working under him.

He must've hired varying kind of people with his enormous wealth.

I was also able to hear the story from the Marchioness with Baroness's reference.

I seemed to be viewed as a suspicious person who was sniffing around her favorite Chevalier, so I was warned that I would be treated as an enemy if I had a malicious intent beforehand.

I don't know what kind of hands did he use to win her favor, but he seems to not only have the brute force, but also excels at politics to be able to make the one who's controlling the noble society in the labyrinth city become his supporter like this.

He should have sought marriage with the Marchioness's third or fourth daughter if he wished for rank, but it doesn't seem to be the case.

I can't simply swallow the story of a sly old fox like her though....

I was able to hear some stories from the employees when I was leaving the Marquis's mansion.

As one would expect from employees of the influential Marquis house, they're wearing coral accessories that are quite rare in labyrinth city.

"Do you mean this? We got it from the Madam."

She quietly whispered to my ear that they were given by the Marchioness, but they were originally presents from Chevalier Pendragon-sama for the Marchioness.

Also, whenever he comes for a tea party, it seems he never forgets to bring baked and honey cakes for the employees.

Someone usually does so in order--to hear bad rumor of their master--with it as the compensations, but it seems he only asked, "Please get along well with our maid."

His maid also only inquired impressions of the cakes from them, she never asked any rumor about the marquis family.

I wonder what is he aiming with his deeply laid plan...

◇In a mansion of a certain noble◇

"Fuhn, that black-haired brat will rouse rebellion to usurp this labyrinth city someday."

After ending up in the salon while looking for someone who didn't have good will toward Chevalier Pendragon, I heard such story from a noble who's at the prime of his life.

"He gathers the poor with money, gives them weapons, and then throws them into the labyrinth. He makes the survivors his soldiers, he must be gathering power to revolt against the kingdom!"

His words have no proof and substance but I feel some strange persuasive power in it.

The [poor who are thrown into the labyrinth] are probably the rumored organization of the Chevalier, [Pendora].

I'll try going to the training school he's established to get in touch with those [Pendora].

◇Pendora◇

I peek at the training school from the shadow, and just as the noble earlier has feared, they're practicing in a systematic order like an army would.

"Don't forget your role! The three spear users stab from the sides of the two shield-bearers! The scout doesn't need to participate in the battle. Devote yourself in checking the surrounding so that the other five can safely concentrate on the enemies!"

The instructors who are acting as the monsters are giving directions to the six trainee.

There are three groups of people who are doing the same kind of training in the courtyard. It seems there are also some instructors who aren't participating in the training, maybe they're for surprise attacks.

"Suspicious guy~?"

My heart had almost stopped from the sudden voice and cold sensation on my neck.

A catkin girl who's wearing some curious pink clothes that's appeared out of nowhere is holding a short sword against my neck.

I'm weak in battles, but good at sensing presences.

Yet I didn't notice her at all....

"Stop, he's just a minstrel."

I thought that my heart would really leap out of my mouth this time.

Before I knew it, a hand that's appeared from behind me pinches the short sword with its slender fingers.

When I timidly turned my head, there was the figure of the smiling Chevalier Pendragon.

He apologized for the catkin girl's impoliteness and told me to ask for permission from the office if I wanted to observe the training.

Still, just when did he appear?

--Perhaps, from the beginning?

I turned toward the direction he was walking, but no one was there.

Yet, his bottomless smile remained in my mind forever.

I wonder if the day when I sing his story will come.

As if scolding my timid heart, I pat the lute I hold in my chest.

Right now I understand the feeling of a knight who's facing off a dragon.

I am Barido, a reckless minstrel of the labyrinth city. Someday, I will surely spin a tale that'll be handed down to the future generations.

The name of that tale is--

SS5: The Person Aze's Waiting for

"Uu, even though he asked if I wanted to go together with him...."

Aze-sama grumbles with tearful voice while lightly hitting a big chick-shaped cushion.

"Are you still shocked about the matter yesterday?"

"I mean!"

"That was Mia's scheme at work wasn't it.

Satou-san didn't seem to be aware of our『Kiss of Vow』custom you know."

"I-cannot-hear-you--"

Aze-sama blocks her ears like a child would.

She's happy that Satou wasn't aware of the custom, yet on the other hand, it also means that the kiss Satou-san gave her on the forehead when they first met wasn't intended to be the『Kiss of Vow』.

That said, there is no way I can tell her, "You should've gone together with Satou-san then."

Because she's the last High Elf that remains in Boruenan Forest.

Aze-sama is the emotional support of the elves that live in the village, she is yearned by the elves, and an object of faith of other fairykins and demi-humans, revered like a living god.

"Uu...stupid Satou...."

There's no doubt their faith would vanish if they saw her figure now.

Or maybe, should we send an assassin aiming for Satou-san?

There's probably no one that can win against someone who defeated the Evil Jelly colony that contaminated the World Tree with a single strike though.

Since Aze-sama who's become tired from grumbling is finally asleep while holding the cushion, I quietly resume cleaning the tree house.

◇

"Aze, cheer up?"

"That's right Aze! Won't you give me honey cakes?"

The pixies are trying to console Aze-sama who's looking melancholic on the balcony of the tree house.

However, Aze-sama only reacts lightly.

Only two days have passed since Satou-san left, so this can't be helped....

An unexpected visitor came right at that time.

"Lua-san, it's been awhile. These are some souvenirs for you."

"Eh? Satou-san?"

Satou-san who's returned with teleport magic hands me the magic bag which was given to him as a parting gift.

When I look inside, there's a big lump of meat. It's probably from some beast. Nea probably knows how to turn this into a delicious dish.

Even without me saying anything, Satou-san briskly walks to the balcony where Aze-sama is sulking.

"I'm back Aze."

"Sa-Satou! W-why?"

"I wanted to see Aze's face so I've come back."

Ugeh, I'm going to vomit sugar.

Satou-san smoothly speaks some womanizer-like remark.

Aze-sama is, "Awawa"-ing, unable to speak clearly, but she looks really happy.

He's returned alone, Mia and the others aren't with him.

"Satou, didn't you get out?"

"Dumping Aze away, getting a new girl--"

"I've brought you souvenirs too."

"You know your stuff!"

"Wa~i, it's honey cakes!"

"Hyahho~! There's confetti candies too!"

Satou-san shrewdly gives the pixies with a bag containing some snacks, he's successfully neutralized the little intruders.

I think this reunion is too fast, but I'm glad that Aze-sama's gotten her energy back.

The two have begun to flirt with their conversations on the balcony, but those two probably won't do anything wrong even if I leave them alone.

Satou-san seems to have that in mind, but Aze-sama doesn't seem like she'd do the common mistake of young people.

I leave the rest to the pixies as I'm going to Nea's place to prepare the banquet tonight.

SS6: The Decision of Sir Trell

"Sir Trell, will you not consider?"

"Zeff-dono. I am regretful to leave you who joined at the same period as me, behind, but I do not think a [Wyvern Rider] who has lost his partner to be of any use to His Majesty."

Sir Julberg couldn't break the firm decision of Sir Trell either.

"I will whip this old bones and rush in haste if a demon lord appears in the Royal Capital."

"Do you have somewhere to go in mind?"

"There is a town of [Magic Hunter] called Puta to the east of the Royal Capital, you'll find a hidden village that gather wyvern eggs to the southeast of that town. I intend to rear the youngsters who aspire to become wyvern riders, and raise them to become the next Shiga Eight Swords members."

Sir Julberg had never heard Puta town, but he nonetheless nodded to Sir Trell while vaguely imagining the southeast direction of the Royal Capital.

The territory that's famous for its wyverns is Seryuu Earldom, but the place where the wyverns are nesting is on the border to the Dragon Valley. It's a place that's been designated as confinement place since the Ancient King Yamato's era, so Sir Julberg didn't bring it up.

Sir Julberg himself has been raising the next generations of Shiga Eight Swords since several years ago, he's given expensive magic swords to promising young talents.

"Sir Trell, this is a parting gift."

"Is this a magic weapon?"

"Umu, this has been granted to me by His Majesty, but contrary to its delicate appearance, it's an excellence spear with wonderful magic power conduction on par with the divine holy swords."

Sir Trell takes a noticeably long lance from the magic weapon rack in the corner of the room.

He streams it with my magic power, producing Magic Edge.

"Oh, how light."

Normally he would have needed to concentrate so much that it'd look like he'd pop his veins, but Sir Trell couldn't hide his surprise to see it happened after he only slightly concentrated.

Sir Julberg who's of the same opinion as him assents.

"Take whichever one to your liking. I do not mind if you give it to your future pupil."

"Is it fine? Giving me such a sword and a spear."

"I do not mind. It's an investment for someone who will protect Shiga Kingdom someday."

This is enough to be an embezzlement case in Shiga Kingdom, but it won't be a problem if he just reports it to the accounting head of Shiga Kingdom Holy Knight to process the account book.

◇

"Boss, there's no road that goes to that mountain you know?"

The one-armed boy answered in bewilderment.

"Then, is there no noble who has an airship or a flying-type monster?"

"I'm guessing that's only the Duke or some army men under the Duke."

A female magic hunter who was standing beside the boy answered Sir Trell haphazardly.

Surely, it is not possible for an airship to exist in such a small backwater town inhabited only by the magic hunters.

An indescribable atmosphere drifts to this rural town, increasing tension.

--That is, a black shadow.

"You do not seem to be a normal person. Who are you. Declare thy name."

Sir Trell asked for the person's identity in place of the other people who couldn't move.

However, the black mystery man only laughs.

"To be so insolent while being an ordinary man dearu. I only desire tomatoes. I do not give my name to rubbish dearu."

"What'd you say..."

Sir Trell pulls the sword on his waist.

The blade is charged with red light.

The three retainers who are following him also draw their swords toward the one who's being impolite to their master.

"Fuhn, looks like you're eager, however, since you've drawn your sword, I assume that you are prepared to be cut?"

"As someone who have a duty toward Shiga Kingdom, I cannot let a suspicious person like you roam free. Be at ease since I will not take your life."

The aforementioned one-armed boy jumps between the two sides of battle-honed people who are about to clash.

"P, please wait Boss Black. Boss needs the tomatoes right? I know about it so I'll guide you there."

After hearing the boy, the mystery man relaxes his posture and separates his hand from the rapier on his waist.

"Are you saying the truth dearuka?"

"Un, tomatoes are those red fruits right?"

Originally, it was called red fruits and not a popular vegetable substitute, but ever since the demand and price for it increased after being popularized by the [Tomato Noble]-sama, it had started being cultivated not only in deserted villages, but also the vacant lands in the Puta town.

The mystery man who has waterweed-like hair floats a smile that shows his wolf-like fangs when he hears the boy's explanation.

"That is the thing I seek. Cutting an old man with short remaining life is not my real intention. I will follow your wish if that means getting my hands on the tomatoes."

"Wait, the battle is--"

"Pull back, menials."

The mystery man's eyes emits red light, and then Sir Trell and his retainers stop moving like a stone.

Sir Trell is reminded of the time when he fought a life or death battle against a vampire during the prime of his life.

His movement got stopped at that time just like now. However, vampires shouldn't be able to move during broad daylight.

The man shouldn't be able to spellbind him, who's one of Shiga Eight Swords, in an instant, if he weren't a higher vampire or an ancestor vampire who appears in tales.

--That means, the identity of the mystery man is.

"What are you doing, guide me."

"Un, leave it to me. What kind of tomatoes are you looking for? The ripe soft one? Or the slightly green firm one? The inn old man can prepare you red sauce or white sauce if you need them."

"Hou, by red sauce, you mean ketchup huh? Leave that place for later. First, I need tomato seedlings."

The two leaves the gate while having a peaceful conversation.

Sir Trell and his retainers are finally able to move after the one-armed boy has returned from guiding the man to the tomato cultivation in the town.

"Boy. What happens to the black clothed man from earlier?"

"Eh? That boss flew in the sky to the direction of the duchy capital after buying a lot of tomatoes. Magic is really amazing."

Sir Trell is getting dizzy from the boy's words.

He cannot believe the mystery man who had that much power only wanted to buy vegetables.

"Oh? Kon, what's with that sword?"

"Eh? This? I got it from Boss Black. Nice isn't it?"

It's a single-edged sword that even the boy with his small build can lightly swing.

"Boy, give me that sword."

"Eeh~"

"I will not deprive it from you."

"Okay then."

Sir Trell puts magic power into the sword he's received.

Flash overflows on the sword at once.

"Uwah, what what?"

"That's dangerous!"

Besides Sir Trell who's expected it, people are in panic toward the spectacle.

"This is a magic sword. Moreover, it's a true magic sword that one can't get hold of unless they defeat the『Floormaster』or the『Roommaster』in the labyrinth's depth."

"Eh~, that's amazing."

The boy who doesn't understand the value laughs at his own sword.

"Boy, I'll teach you the way to use this sword."

"Alright, that's a promise."

Sir Trell has sent his retainers to the Duchy Capital in order to secure the way to cross the mountain range, during the wait, he's decided to teach the boy the way to use a sword to ease the boredom.

The boy who had accidentally earned a magic sword and tutored by a former Shiga Eight Swords member endeavored some extra hard trainings until he couldn't move.

The retainers have returned after getting some [Wing Lizards] in order to cross the mountain, and then Sir Trell and them embark toward the mountain range.

"And so, have you become able to use the Magic Edge that the former Shiga Eight Swords knight-sama taught you?"

"No way I can. Even I would've become a knight if I could. At most I can only put in my magic power after concentrating for a long time. Moreover, I can't move anymore after using it thrice, so it probably has no use against goblins."

The one-armed boy continues to see Sir Trell's party off while holding the magic sword that's making some small crackling sounds.

※The boy Kon doesn't know that the Black Dragon Heiron appears in the mountain where the wyverns live.

[Characters]

One-armed boy: The magic hunter Kon.

Middle-aged Woman: Kena. The leader of the magic hunter party Kon belongs to.

Mysterious Man: True Ancestor Ban. He's camouflaged his skin and hair color with magic. A vampire who doesn't lose to the sunlight.

Sir Trell: The former fourth place of Shiga Eight Swords. The person who challenged and lost to a lesser dragon.

SS7: Mia's Music Hall

"Mia-sama, your performance is wonderful today too."

"It really is, I can never get tired listening to Mia's music."

"Haven't I told you so many times to use 'sama'!"

"You two, don't make a fuss in front of Mia-sama."

After the performance is over, the fairykin children and long-earkin children are clamoring.

Even though I want to bask in the lingering memory of the performance, I can't,

What troubling children. I'm troubled--I really am you know?

I wish they would be like the grandpas and grandmas who have come to listen to the performance, smiling, laughing and clapping lightly.

Even the noisy pixies in Boruenan Forest became quiet like they had dozed off after my performance was over. They didn't sleep you know?

I mean, when I asked them, "How was the performance?", they replied "Today was the best!", or, "The melody was so enjoyable like I was in the country of dream".... They weren't sleeping right?

"Mia-chan, you must be thirsty right. Eat this melon that's been cooled in the well water."

"Nn, thank you."

I bite the melon that grandma's given me.

Sweet. Fresh sweet taste spreads in my mouth.

While leaving slight aftertaste, my throat is wet after only chewing several more.

The watermelons of Boruenan forest are delicious, but Selbira's labyrinth melons don't lost to it.

"Mia-chan, please teach me the leaf flute."

"Teacch."

The little children came asking with leaf flutes made of Fesheka grasses on their hands.

Humans don't care about grasses name. To them, all grasses, either it's Fesheka or Chemirana, are called weed.

It's kind of sad. A little bit, you know?

◇

"Listen to my songgg!"

Arisa cried so while strumming a strange lute.

I think it's just a noise, but this is a secret okay?

"What?"

"This is called a guitar. I've asked Master to make it."

"Mwuu."

I think it's unfair that it's always only Arisa.

"Satou."

"Does Mia want me to make something too?"

"Nn."

Satou will immediately make it if I ask him.

I mean, we're engaged. He's head over heels for me. Absolutely you know?

"What kind of instrument do you want?"

"Pipe organ."

"Pipe organ? That's a bit too big, maybe a piano or an electronic keyboard would be better?"

I wonder if a [Pipe Organ] is impossible even for Satou?

It's Satou that can create legendary equipments and strange magic items, he should be able to make a [Pipe Organ].

"You can't?"

I implore Satou with the [Uruuru] attack that Arisa's taught me.

Aze told me that the hero Daisaku said, "Pipe organ is the best musical instrument."

When I told that to Satou, he said, "Alright, leave it to me!"

--I'm happy, but I've a mixed feeling about it.

Affair is no good you know? Absolutely!

◇

"Now, Mia. Please play it."

"Amazing..."

A [Pipe Organ] has been put in a certain underground test site of the Ivy Mansion.

Many golden pipes are lined up, shining more brightly than the sunlight filtering through trees in a summer day.

The deep of the sound is different compared to the piano that Satou's made as a practice.

I've become absorbed with the [Pipe Organ], playing a song.

--Sounds fall from the sky.

I play the melody of [Gallg], [Wagnaa], and [Motsart] I've heard from Satou, and the symphony of Boruenan arranged for Piano.

<TLN: Wagner, Mozart, and, um, not sure.>

...Everyone looks strange.

They're crying even though music is a happy thing.

"Mia."

Satou wipes my cheek with a handkerchief.

Did I cry too? Truly?

"It was really beautiful."

"Nn."

I'll invite grandpas and grandmas to the Ivy Mansion and play for them next time.

I won't leave the fairykin children and the long-earkin children out in the cold too of course. Maybe?

SS8: Liza's Service?

Bath is a wonderful thing.

There are many things Master has bestowed me, but I don't think there is anything else that grants this luxurious supremely blissful warmth.

Meat is a special exception of course.

"Huh? Liza-san you're still in there? Isn't it about time for the water to become cool?"

"It's alright since it's still hotter than my body temperature. Mia should have been the one who will be cleaning the bath today, has it been changed to Arisa?"

"Tahaha, it's a bit you know, the turn for Master's punishment..."

...Again huh.

Arisa probably had tried to incorrigibly [sekuhara] Master and got punished for it.

I think it's natural for people to try to increase their descendants, but Master doesn't seem eager to leave behind offspring for the next era.

After all, he said that he would wait five years for Arisa and Lulu.

I stand up since I feel bad if I become a hindrance for her punishment duty.

Arisa apologized with some grown-up words, "This looks like I drive you out, sorry.", but it's a trivial matter.

Since I can enter the bath tomorrow, though it's a luxurious situation for a slave to be.

◇

"28-hour bath is it?"

"Yep, the teleportation point in the middle-layer is narrow, so I'm thinking of making a new villa with a bath that's ready to be filled with warm water anytime. I want to hear opinions from everyone. What do you think Liza?"

"I am in favor of course."

What a splendid thing!

To be able to submerge in warm water all day long!

On the next day, we've come to the area where great many aquatic monsters inhabited, it's the place where the villa is going to be built. Many monsters like Labyrinth Monstrous Fish, Bombardment Shellfish, Crayfish with wave-shaped claws, and Leaping Flounders attacked us, but they were no match against us who were dominated with appetite.

We had a bit of a hard fight against the Labyrinth Coral who spread paralyzing mist, but we were able to win due to Master's [Supoort], and Arisa's and Mia's magic aid.

After trampling the Sea Eels on the sandy beach area that scatter lightning spheres from the gem on their foreheads, and breaking through hard monsters like the Jewel Sea Cucumber and the Vajra Shellfish, we have finally arrived at the planned place for the villa.

"Are you going to build it here?"

"Yeah, there's a heat source from the magma pool underneath this area."

I listen to Arisa and Master's conversation with serious face.

I don't know what magma pool is, but it must be some kind of magic tool that can boil water.

My role is to build the villa in accordance to Master's instruction.

....Master made holes for the piping in an instant using earth magic.

He even made the ditch for drainage in a blink of an eye with earth magic.

I stand idly while waiting for Master's order, but there's no turn for me.

I wonder what should I do?

When I asked, Master kindly said, "You had been opening the road until we got here right? Having a good rest is also a part of the job you know."

However, I think Master who's ensured everyone's safety until now is the one most tired.

The only thing that I can do without hindering Master is helping Lulu preparing the lunch.

Let's do the thing I can do with my utmost rather than lamenting my incompetence.

◇

When I come to call Master after having finished preparing the lunch, what greets me is the villa building that has been finished before I knew it.

It's a building that's far more splendid than the villa in the Area 4 of the upper-layer.

"Ah, Liza! Come here. See this large communal bathroom I've finished."

Going to Master who's beckoning me, I arrive at the large communal bathroom.

There is a bathtub large enough for everyone to enter while still leaving some leeway.

"You can't enter it yet okay? It has to be poured with the hot water for awhile to wash away the rubbish and the sand."

I dip my finger in the bathtub water, the temperature is just right.

I'm driven with impulse to strip my clothes and jump on it right here and now, but the first bath belongs to Master.

Taking the first bath is something beyond a mere slave.

When Master enters the bath, I have to wash his back to heal his fatigue today.

Even Arisa screamed in delight when I washed her back, so Master will surely be content too.

For that sake, first, I have to fortify myself with a meal.

We went toward the sandy beach where Lulu was waiting with the seafood dishes.

SS9: Arisa-Sensei's Magic Classroom

"■■■Breeze"

"Kya"

"Noo"

Our skirts got flipped up with the voice of boy.

The children behind the boy are cheering for the multi-colored panties festival.

Geez, what lecherous kids.

"Geh, that Arisa is wearing trousers under her skirt!"

When I looked at the giggling group of boys beside the boy, there was no need for me to wonder the reason why the boy was frantically training [Breeze] spell.

I never had thought that he would be able to successfully chant the spell this quick, but it's only natural for a lady to prepare the minimum insurance.

Yet, the brats are booing.

"Sneaky!"

"I'm not."

Good grief, boys will be boys no matter the world.... I want you guys to follow our Master's example. He never did any prank despite sleeping together with such a beautiful girl like me.

My pillow with YES written on both sides is crying.

Oops, rather than that.

I drop my fist to the brats who are pointing at me while barking beside the boy.

And to the offender's head too of course.

"--Ouchh"

"Guha"

I fold my arms and glare at the two boys who have fainted.

The other boys are being tortured by the girls who got their skirts flipped.

Serves you right.

◇

"Now then, are you aware the reason why you're called here. Boy?"

"You beat us good back then, forgive me already."

The boy begs me with a pitiful face.

My sadistic heart is burning up after seeing that, but I endure it by thinking my beloved Master's smile in my mind.

Fuuh, good-looking boy is the best.

--Getting back to the subject.

"There are two roads you can choose now that you've become able to use life magic."

I speak to the boy earnestly.

First, become a life magic 'spell-user' and earn stable income.

Second, learn force magic and elemental magic to become a magician.

The boy answers with--

◇

"The first Arisa-sensei sponsored power-leveling rally~"

"O, oy, Arisa. You never said anything 'bout entering the labyrinth."

"I sure did~n't"

I take no notice of the flustered boy's words.

There's no way Area 11 can be any danger when you're with me and Nana.

"Carelessness is your greatest enemy~"

Haha, oh Tama, when did you get here.

Tama left a person-shaped spot of Shadow Stalker that had disguised itself as a rubbish below her.

Uwah, this one should have only appeared deeper in the labyrinth.

That was dangerous. We were saved thanks to the Ninja.

"Hey, would Tama also come with us?"

"Oukey"

"Thanks. I'll treat you to as many meat skewers you like when we get back."

"Wa~i"

I feel slightly guilty to see Tama who's innocently being happy.

Afterward, we continued the easy power-leveling with Tama's enemy-search and Nana's protection.

The boy became silent halfway through, but it shouldn't be because he had drank too many magic power recovery potion. It shouldn't be because he was forced to recover from the level up sickness by drinking magic potions.

And then, a water and earth magician is born during the time until the dusk.

Though the classroom above the ground should take time too, with this, the desired framework to make [Pendragon] bunch into magicians should be reached.

"Still, I understand why you want water magic, but why earth magic?"

Children probably would have chosen light or fire magic.

"I mean, Iruna-sensei said that the『Demand』was huge."

"You've sure gotten ahold of yourself despite being a child~"

"Well yeah. Moreover, Chevalier-sama wants earth magician right. I want to repay the favor to Chevalier-sama even for a bit."

How cheeky for a kid.

But, a boy is still a man even though he's young after all!

After fully patting and praising him, I treated him and Tama with a lot of meat skewers.

I couldn't compensate Nana who wanted [Arisa's collection of sayings], but I'll search some small accessories that she likes and present it to her.

Later, since I thought that giving only meat skewers was unsatisfactory, I presented him with short pants, but it was rejected.

Even though it should be short pants when you're talking about uniform for boys. Incomprehensible.

12-1. Journey to the Royal Capital

Satou's here. There was a time when I shut myself in my room after I had a fight with my parents during my middle-school days, but it only lasted for three days. I think you need serious resolution and aptitude in order to do that.

◇

"I am very honored to be in the presence of Lord Duke Bishtal."

"Umu, I'm glad to see Sir Jeril is in good health."

With the [Crimson Nobleman] Jeril first on the list, only the people who are of nobility are summoned to this royal suite.

Despite the fact that other people besides us who have received the Mithril plate cannot be called commoners even though they're going to be bestowed the peerage in the royal capital.

Although besides Sir Jeril who is a baronet, we're all either only honorary nobles or children of nobles.

Duke Bishtal who has summoned us is a middle-aged man with stern face and a hook nose like General Eltal, his uncle.

I stole a glance at his face while kneeling down like everyone else.

The other party is not a royalty so there should be no need to kneel down, but perhaps it was because his lineage as a cousin of the king, or due to his influence, everyone had kneeled down once they entered the room and waited for him, so I followed them out of courtesy like a

Japanese man would.

After he's done talking with Jeril, he begins to congratulate the children of nobles who have defeated the [Floormasters] in turns.

Then, he congratulates the honorary nobles somewhat more plainly than with the noble children before, and then it's my turn as the last one.

Judging from his glare, it feels like he's harboring ill will toward me.

"I enjoyed your acrobatic show earlier. Aren't you looking more like a street performer than an explorer today?"

Lady Karina would have gone into a rage if he heard him saying it an 'acrobatic'.

However, doing it with Mia's performance in the background while Pochi and Tama are dancing, touring around the country like that sounds very fun.

It's probably because I thought that--

"That sounds fun indeed. Allow us to hold a tour in Lord Duke's castle town if we cease the explorer business."

--that I involuntarily said so, making the Duke's face became sullen.

He might have perceived my honest thought as a snark since he most likely had said his words with sarcasm.

The cliche here should be him grandly sneering, "You low life upstart, blah, blah, blah", but...

"It seems Oyugock Dukedom intends to nominate you to be a Shiga Eight Swords, but they are not existences that should be taken lightly by someone without real ability to back him up."

The Duke glances to Sir Jeril and nods seriously.

I see, he's going to recommend Sir Jeril to become a Shiga Eight Swords to oppose Duke Oyugock huh.

If I were to become a Shiga Eight Swords by mistake, let alone tour, it would even hinder me from raising the girls' level.

And also, please stop treating me as a piece in your power struggle.

It'd be troubling if I say some careless remark and he deemed me as an enemy.

For the time being, in order to cover my remark earlier, I responded neutrally with, "Thank you very much for Lord Duke's warning."

If sparks seem like it's going to fly, it might be good to make a master swordsman called [Musashi] or maybe [Lancelot] appear and forcefully take the seat of Shiga Eight Swords.

If it goes well, I can just make the mysterious master swordsman go challenge a dragon and die tragically.

Then Jeril can take the seat peacefully afterward.

Still, even if he's saying it because I'm a piece of his political opponent, I think arbitrarily deciding a Mithril explorer to be [of without real ability] is a bit unreasonable....

◇

"Eh~, why don't you seriously become a Shiga Eight Swords?"

"Why should I."

I told the circumstances at the royal suite to Arisa.

Lulu is in the kitchen, Pochi and Tama have gone to Lady Karina's room, they're not here.

Just in case, I've instructed them to contact me if some strange guy approached them.

"What are you saying. You'd be treated as an Earl equaling prime ministers if you became a Shiga Eight Swords you know?"

"I'm not interested in such position."

If I really wanted the peerage, I could have asked the king as Nanashi, and, even though Duchy is impossible, he's probably going to easily grant Earldom at least.

In the first place, there's no merit for me even if I become an upper noble.

"Kah~~. Mou! Why are you so not-greedy like that! If you're a man, you should have aimed to become successful in life after coming to another world and obtaining cheat right? If you became an earl, you could make as many noble girls as you like become your brides you know?"

"Calm down, Arisa."

Arisa presses on me while insisting on something incomprehensible.

Arisa tends to run wild when it has to do with the [Promise]. She usually says that she likes me, but I wonder if she's fine with other girls becoming my brides?

It was Mia who got upset from that Arisa's remark.

"Affair is no good you know. Absolutely you know? There are already enough brides anyway. It's at full capacity you know?"

"Sorry Mia! I, I'm sorry okay, I'm reflecting on itt~~"

Arisa is getting flinched from Mia's menacing look.

I didn't ask who the brides are since it'd only be a boomerang for me.

By the way, Nana who was in the same room didn't hear my story since she was absorbed in playing [Ayatori] with Shiro and Crow.

When I entered the room, Shiro and Crow were already inside like it was natural.

I've decided to let them go with us since the Airship has embarked already.

Even though they have wings, it seems flying from an airship requires special training, so it was difficult for me to say [Return them].

In case of Nana, punishment should mean banning the once-in-a-week magic power supplement, but the loss is too big for me myself so I'll think about other ways.

Oops, my thought has deviated for a bit.

Liza didn't state any particular opinion, but it seems she wants me to become a Shiga Eight Swords like Arisa.

Rather, I think Liza is more suited to become a Shiga Eight Swords. She should be stronger than the third prince who was a Shiga Eight Swords at least.

Pochi and Tama have also become stronger than the third prince, but these two are still young, such position is probably too early for them.

◇

"I'mback~?"

"I'm back, nanoresu."

Pochi and Tama came back while looking tired.

"How was Karina-sama?"

"Shut-inin~"

"She doesn't want to get out of the room nodesu!"

I put the reserved whale jerky to Pochi and Tama who have plopped themselves on the sofa as thanks.

These are the last from the 100-kilo jerky I've made before, I should make sure to make more.

"T-this is!"

"Whale Jer~ ky~"

"Energy times 100 nanodesu!"

The two jump up while having the jerkies on their mouths, and then take the 'shupin' pose.

This kinda pose doesn't go well with the formal dresses they're wearing.

--It's cute though.

"Now, then--"

"Are you going to Oppai-san's place?"

--No, I don't intend to though?

I almost said so, but I wisely did not.

I guess leaving Lady Karina alone while she's being like that is cruel.

I had thought of socializing with the other Mithril explorers together with everyone on this occasion, but let's postpone that.

"You're right. After giving her a bit more time, I'll go see her condition."

Liza stood up when some guests knocked the door.

The two people who have come are Lady Karina's attendants, maid Erina and Newbie-chan.

For some reason, Newbie-chan is an unfortunate girl whom no one calls with her name, but since the person herself doesn't seem to mind, I'll call her so until Erina refers her with her name.

"Chevalier-sama, please help~"

"Please!"

The two bow their heads and beg me to do something about Lady Karina who's shut herself in her room. I don't think that we should be that worried, but according to these girls, this seems to be an abnormal situation.

"She didn't come out of her room even after we put the plate with Karages that Lulu-san had made in front of the room you know?"

Erina, you're the only one who would come out with that.

I ignore the presences of Pochi, Tama, and in addition, Liza, who are nodding.

By the way, Liza, and Pochi who were in chaos during the blimp travel are in their usual states, maybe they're not afraid because the airship doesn't shake that much.

Or it might be because they've experienced various acrobatic battles in the labyrinth.

Well, our current girls probably would come out alive even if they fell from the airship by utilizing Magic Edge Cannon or magic somehow.

"I mean, after getting scolded by Consul Nina, and soundly beaten by Captain Zotor, she became lively again from the smell of karages made by Head-chef Gelt! Yet now~"

Erina presses on me while looking desperate.

I understand that you're worried about Lady Karina, but please stop pressing your flat chest on my arm that you've been doing since awhile ago. Even Newbie-chan's ended up imitating you, see.

"Guilty."

"Hey now, there's no need to stick so much right."

Arisa and Mia tear the two from my arms.

We're going to Lady Karina's room as invited by the two, postponing the plan to listen to the interesting episodes of the other Mithril explorers.

◇

"Karina-sama, I have heard that you lie sick on your bed, how are you feeling?"

I knock on the door of the room where Lady Karina is shutting herself.

There's no answer of course.

Now then, what should I do.

"Let's go with the Amano-iwato operation!"

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amano-Iwato>

"Amano-iwato?"

"That's right! There's a myth about a shut-in Goddess in the world of Hero-sama! Let's perform the same operation that lured that Goddess out!"

Arisa took an imposing stance while breathing wildly on top of the table, but then she became small after Liza scolded her for bad manner.

In order to prepare the banquet, Arisa took everyone along to the kitchen where Lulu was.

However, doing a banquet in front of the room of someone who's seriously feeling down seems like it'll only make her become an obstinate shut-in...

I've gotten myself lost in thought in front of Lady Karina's bedroom door.

12-2. Journey to the Royal Capital (2)

Satou's here. The story of Amaterasu-Oomikami hiding in the cave behind a rock is famous. Though I think there aren't many people who know about the hidden reason as to why the goddess hid herself in the cave.

◇

Now then, I'd have liked to see it if Nana acted as the Ame-no-Uzume, but judging from the usual pattern, it's probably going to be Arisa or the other little girl member.

I stand up without hesitation and step forward before the closed door that separates us from Lady Karina.

I cut off sounds with wind magic, and then use [Clairvoyance] and [Magic Hand] magic at the same time to unlock the door with the key from the other side.

It's scary if this combo is used to do crime, but if someone can use [Wind Magic], [Space Magic], and [Force Magic], they should be able to succeed in life even without becoming a criminal.

I entered the bedroom while thinking such a trivial thing.

Raka is flickering blue light on the table.

It's quite rare for Lady Karina to not wear Raka. She usually even wears it during her sleep....

Judging from Raka's flickering state, it probably had noticed my intrusion, but since Lady Karina didn't warn him, it's guarding her silently.

Unfortunately--err, fortunately, Lady Karina is still wearing the clothes from before, lying her face down on the bed, sulking.

No, checking the map, she isn't in [Sleeping] state, so she's still awake.

"Karina-sama, I've heard that you weren't feeling well, how are you feeling now?"

I whisper to Lady Karina near the bedside.

Lady Karina who's surprised jumps out of the bed and puts her back on the board that's on the wide bed.

Oops, I approached her silently since I had used magic to erase sound when I unlocked the door....

Let's feign ignorance.

"Did I surprise you?"

Lady Karina's face has inconspicuously reddened while her mouth is opening and closing, the area around her eyes look red.

....She was really surprised huh.

Looks like she was frustrated about losing, her moist eyes are violently sexy.

I float Aze-san in my mind to hold back my desire.

"Please be still."

"...Yes...."

While pretending to wipe the area around her eyes with a handkerchief, I heal it with magic. It's good now.

Lady Karina has closed her eyes, and Raka shouldn't be able to see me invoking magic since my body is in the way, so it should be fine.

However, Lady Karina is still closing her eyes even after I've done wiping her eyes.

--She's too vulnerable.

I'm a carnivore-type man after all, so I could end up kissing and pushing you down you know?

"I've wiped your eyes. It's alright to open them now."

After opening and closing her mouth for a moment, Lady Karina looks at me, dumbfounded.

She matches eyes with mine and seems to be dissatisfied about something, and then she puffs her cheeks.

"Satou is mean desuwa!"

The pillow thrown by Lady Karina hits my face.

◇

"It's the arrival of the dish nodesu!"

"Karage mountains~?"

Pochi and Tama jumped into the room while saying so.

They're spreading sweet atmosphere while I'm being troubled as to how to handle the sullen Lady Karina, so they've honestly saved me.

"Un, it smells nice."

"Snatching food is no good nanodesu!"

Pochi scolded me when I was going to taste the dish.

"It's just food tasting, tasting."

"It can't be helped if it's tasting nodesu."

"Tama is tasting too~"

"Pochi will also not hesiteta to taste it nodesu."

Pochi, that should be [Hesitate].

I take the karage from the plate that Tama's holding and then put them into Pochi's and Tama's mouth.

Next, I put one into mine.

Lulu has become even more skilled. Isn't she already better than me with my maximum cooking skill?

Since Lady Karina beside me was looking enviously at Pochi and Tama, I also present one into her mouth that's opened slightly.

Maybe it's because I've put the karage into her mouth so suddenly, she's protesting while chewing it.

The reason why she doesn't yield, though, is probably because the karage that's in her mouth has no sin.

And then, Mia and Arisa who came a bit later returned here.

The two are wearing mantles that cover their whole bodies even though it's hot. I'm afraid to ask what are they wearing inside the mantle.

"Guilty."

Mia reacted by condemning guilty after looking at the atmosphere released by Lady Karina, but the ones that should be deemed guilty are you girls.

"Ara, you've already lured Oppa--Karina-sama out of her room?"

Arisa asked, although with slightly bad wording.

I wholeheartedly ignore the turbulent words from Arisa and Mia who are muttering in whispers, "Our bewitching clothes gone to waste", "Night", "Y, yeah you're right!"

Now then, I guess we might as well start the party?

◇

"Fumu, as expected of the works of the best labyrinth city chef."

"Delicious. I would have never thought that I'd be treated to the Phantom Chef's dishes in the airship."

The mithril explorers easily raised their voices of admiration once they tasted the party dishes Lulu had made.

We've invited the explorers who are in the dining hall and start a party since Lulu had made many dishes.

There were more people who participated that I had anticipated, so I had added more with the cooperation of the airship's kitchen staff.

Explorers who ride the airship are mostly males, but there are also 7-8 female explorers among them.

I thought that Lady Karina would make some friends with them since they were of the same female explorers, but my expectation was a miss.

Erina and Newbie-chan are forming a protective wall around her in one corner of the table, while she's continuing to eat.

The male explorers who are captivated by the demonic breasts and her beauty have just swarmed her just awhile ago, but since Lady Karina gets frightened when they approach her en masse, I've become stuck to be the one who ensure that no more than two people can approach her at a time, like a manager.

After some extent, it seems the male explorers perceived that Lady Karina was not interested, so they changed their target to the waitresses.

Nana is also surrounded by the male explorers, but she's handling it in "my pace" mode like usual. Looks like they're not experienced enough to break through Nana's impregnableness guard.

In exchange of the men who had disappeared, I introduced Lady Karina to the female explorers whom I had befriended during the party, but it didn't go well since they couldn't have a conversation for long.

I wanted to ask her why did she act so prickly even though the other parties had favorable impression about her during this occasion.

I was thankful that the female explorers didn't feel too offended even thought they had wry smiles.

◇

In one corner of the dining hall that's not too big, Mia begins her performance.

Looks like one of the explorers has asked her, she's playing the famous tune that's used for ballroom dancing in Shiga Kingdom.

The male and female explorers have begun dancing to the tune.

Everyone of them seems unused to it, maybe they never practice much.

"Please don't laugh at us. We are all commoners unlike Sir Pendragon and Jeril. Everyone wants to practice before we arrive at the Royal

Capital."

"I won't laugh. Everyone is a beginner at the beginning."

The thirty-year old female explorer who was talking with Lady Karina earlier covered for the explorers who were dancing awkwardly.

They should be invited to parties from various nobles once they arrive at the Royal Capital. They're probably practicing the social dancing in order not to embarrass themselves when that happens.

This is just right.

I might as well have Lady Karina practice during this time.

"Now, Karina-sama. Let me have this dance."

"I-I won't dance."

"That is not good. Furthermore, even if you step on my foot here, no one will scold, laugh or be disappointed at you."

"But...."

I take the hand of Lady Karina who's shrinking back.

"I shall exercise my right as the winner now."

I exercise the right and take Lady Karina to the space where we can dance.

Arisa and the others protested, but they consented after I said that they could change place with Lady Karina once her dance practice is over.

After Lady Karina, the next one is going to be Lulu who has worked the hardest for this party.

"Karina-sama, please lean your body a bit more."

"Uu, i-it's embarassing desuwa."

I'm getting a bit stimulated to see Lady Karina being shy, but I have to concentrate teaching her to dance now.

Concentrate Satou.

You must not concentrate on the pair of miracles that are touching chest.

You cannot.

I teach Lady Karina how to dance while evading Mia's sharp glances.

"That's right. You're pretty good."

"...N, no way."

I praise her every time she's become better even a bit to remove her doubt.

"Don't be preoccupied with the footsteps you can't see. Please remember your footworks during battles."

"L-like this?"

"Yes, like that."

Lady Karina can't check her footsteps during the dance because of her all-to-great breasts. Her worries seems to increase due to that.

She's getting better little by little after I informed her to mix the steps with close combat footworks.

The dance cannot be said to be elegant, but it's a speedy sharp dance.

She just has to accumulate experiences afterward.

After Lady Karina, I dance with Lulu and our other girls, and then going with the flow, with Erina, Newbie-chan, and even the female explorers.

For some reason, in the end, I ended up instructing the male explorers the way to dance.

It was slightly hard, but getting the explorers indebted to me with only this is a cheap price to pay.

Just that, I was dumbfounded to see Arisa began breathing roughly when I became the partner of the male explorers as a way to teach them the dance steps.

◇

The airship we're riding has passed through the last rough mountains before the Royal Capital without any particular flying monsters attacking.

Now then, soon it's the Royal Capital.

12-3. Journey to the Royal Capital (3)

Satou's here. I like the blooming field of milkvetch flower that happens before the rice-planting. My countryside grows green soybeans instead of milkvetch flowers though, so I've only ever seen such elegant scenery from the window of a train.

◇

"Haa, this is amazing."

"Beautiful."

"Field~?"

"Lots, lots of little blue flowers nanodesu!"

I've brought everyone to the observatory dome since I've been told that the scenery is amazing after the airship has passed the rough spot.

Sure enough, it was crowded, but our youth troupe slipped through the gaps between people and arrived before the window.

"Heya, Sir Pendragon. You can change with us since we've enjoyed it already."

"Do show it to the girls too. It's quite a rare spectacle y'know."

The male explorers whom I helped with the dancing practice yesterday open a spot for us.

I thank them and take Lulu and the others to the front.

"It's amazing."

"It's really beautiful. I wonder if that's a prairie?"

"It's probably a cultivated land, so I conjecture. The blue color on the surface are blue milkvetch flowers, so I report."

"Beautifll~"

"Haa"

Liza and Nana are calm, but the other members admire the scenery once they see it. Crow is rarely acting like their age.

All of the vast area that can be seen from the airship is covered in blue flowers.

There are some woods and hamlets here and there too of course, however they look like nothing but art objects that decorate the deep blue carpet.

This scene continues on until we reach the Royal Capital. I knew that this was the largest grain-producing area in the kingdom, but I wasn't even sure they would raise flowers and never thought that it would be this different than what I had expected.

This area was of the tawny color of the fallow when I passed through here with Flash Drive, so I had arbitrarily thought so.

Some band has started playing solemn music on the stage near the wall in the observatory dome, it seems they're doing a performance.

I yield my ears to the tune and enjoy the scene that can only be seen now.

Before I knew it, Lulu who's mesmerized has entrusted herself to my arm.

The two maids of Lady Karina are currently having a hard fight in order to dress Lady Karina up, so the three of them are not here.

This scenery will continue for a while, so they probably won't miss and regret it.

◇

"Sparkling~?"

Tama said so when we were quenching our throat on the drinking corner of the observatory dome.

"What's wrong?"

"It's『Sparkling』over there~"

I look at where Tama is pointing, but only the equilibrium wing and the large magic engine that extend from the hull are over there.

It might be just a reflection of something, but since the one who said it was Tama, I'm bothered.

I operate the map to check the place that Tama's pointed.

There are several magicians and engineers near the large magic engine, but that's as usual.

The one that's not usual is on the narrow interconnection of the equilibrium wing.

--For some reason, there's a retainer of Duke Bishtal over there.

"This time, it's sparkling over there nodesu!"

"Master, I saw it too. I feel some kind of agitating presence although it might be a coincidence."

This time it's not only Tama, Pochi and Liza seems to have seen it too.

The direction is completely different though.

The two are looking at the direction the airship is heading.

I operate the map and check on the place the beastkin girls indicate.

The beastkin girls don't seem able to see it, so I put my hand like a visor and look at the scenery outside the window.

The windows of this airship are transparent, but they were made with mysterious conductive material from monster, so even I don't know the composition myself.

Although it's not usable for armor, it's unexpectedly sturdy, and it doesn't become sharp pieces when broken, so I've made use of them during the airship construction.

There's a structure that looks like a combination of a French castle and a fort at the place the beastkin girls have pointed.

When I checked the detail, it was said to be the hunting mansion of

Marquis Lloyd. I remember about the tempura we ate together in the Duchy Capital when I see his name.

Whoops, rather than that, there's something strange.

A hunting mansion right in the middle of cultivated land is already quite strange, but the people inside the mansion are even stranger.

The low ranked servants like the maids and manservants are under Marquis Lloyd, but for some reaosn, there are also several retainers of Duke Bishtal.

There are even monsters in the mansion's basement.

Their title is [Tamed] so they're probably minions of the Tamer people nearby, but the line-up is strange, there are upper level 20s Lance Beetles, lower level 20s Canon Toads and Rocket Trees.

It's as if they've been prepared for anti-aircraft battles.

Moreover there are nearly 30 of them, they're probably able to besiege a small country that only has one city. It's not enough to cause coup d'etat in Shiga Kingdom, but it should be able to shoot down a mere airship.

However, there's something even more dangerous in another layer underground--

"Satou, Raka found some suspicious light desuwa."

『Umu, I hope it's just an unfounded fear, but the light reflection looks like it's used as signals.』

Lady Karina and Raka who are exposed to wind on the deck brought such information to me.

I already know it, but there's no need to point that out.

"I saw it too y'see. Lord Duke is riding this airship after all, something's stink of burn."

<TLN: He said 'Kinakusai'>

A Mithril explorer that's appeared from behind Lady Karina--a middle-aged man called Marmot the scout or something, says so.

I feel weird hearing the word, [Kinakusai] in a world that's abandoned gunpowder.

"Arisa, take everyone along to put on the equipment."

In order to prepare for the worst case scenario, I order everyone to put on their public equipment.

"Okkey. The B-type one is fine right?"

"Yeah, you can put on either the usual or the lovely one whichever you want."

"Aye aye sir. Let's go everyone!"

"Aye~" "Nanodesu!"

The B-type thing that Arisa's talked about is the finest one among the public equipment. Since this isn't the time to use the A-type equipment that were used during the fight with the floor master and the unused hidden equipment, I've given them permission to use the next best one.

By the way, the [Lovely] one is the showy equipment for the parade. Its performance is no different from the usual B-type equipment.

Marmot-shi ran to the bridge with his friends.

◇

Liza and I didn't go back to change our clothes.

If the mastermind behind the tamed monsters earlier aims to shoot down this airship, we're going to enter the firing range of the tamed monsters soon.

The Rocket Trees seem to be monsters that look like an anti-aircraft monster, so we can't be careless.

Although it's strange for the retainers of Duke Bishtal to shoot down the airship that the Duke himself is riding, there's a possibility that we've been rolled up in a family feud.

In that case, though it's not like I don't understand the reason why Marquis Lloyd who is his political opponent participates in the attack, that carefree person doesn't seem to be someone who will partake in an assassination.

Well, I better postpone thinking about this for later.

Right now I have to prioritize the way to cope with the crisis that might be drawing near. It'd end as a funny story if it was just an unfounded fear, but let's continue the preparation for now.

I start the [Signal] magic while sitting on the seat.

The luminous dots on the top of the Hunting Mansion I've locked one have started moving.

Looks like they're guilty as charged.

--Sending compact code.

This is an airship that I've made myself.

I have insurances in case of emergency.

--I secure the superlative right to operate the airship via the backdoor.

I wanted to end this without using it if possible, but it doesn't seem to be so.

I send information about the tamed monsters from my map to the Airship searching crystal. The radar of this ship shouldn't have found them yet.

Slightly later, the siren of the observatory dome begins resounding.

Our girls enter the room while being surprised with the loud sound of the siren.

My crisis perception reacts lightly right at that time.

On the ground, five luminous red dots have begun to move.

Judging from the speed, it's probably the Rocket Trees.

The airship seems to be turning in an effort to evade the monsters, but there's a high possibility that it can't.

Urgent broadcasts are coming from the speaking tube.

『Relaying to all members, please carry out the emergency maneuver--』

『--grab the nearest handrail if you don't want to die!』

The angry voice of a man who seems to be the captain buried the trembling voice of a woman.

The airship's hull has begun to skid at the same time as that angry voice.

With [Magic Hands], I support every powerless member starting from Arisa.

"Ukkyaa"

"Falling~?"

"It's critically dangerous nodesu!"

"Close your mouth. You'll bite your tongue."

Starting from Arisa, everyone unanimously started to make noise, but Liza quickly reined them.

Lulu and Mia have clung to my arms without letting any voice out. On our side, there's Nana who looks so happy hugging Shiro and Crow.

At first, people in the observatory dome could bear the skidding, but then several people have been separated from the handrail after a sudden acceleration accompanied with boom sound.

They probably have used the acceleration tube that I've prepared for making sudden evasion.

I select the commoners who seem likely to get injured if they hit the wall among the people who are flying like they are in zero gravity in the observatory room, and use [Magic Hand] close to the wall to kill their momentum.

The Mithril explorers would only feel some pain from this much, so I left them alone.

Five Rocket Trees are flying away outside the window.

Looks like the airship has successfully evaded, but the enemies' jet propulsion should only last for 30 seconds. The enemies will probably change their course and come attacking again.

I wish the gun turrets on both side of the warship do their roles, but it seems the starboard gunman has fainted from the sudden maneuver just now. He's probably hit his head somewhere.

The port gunman is still well, but he shouldn't be able to hit the Rocket Trees considering the location, the hull is obstructing them.

I use the superlative right that I've secured and rotate the starboard gun turret.

I'd like to attack them by linking the gun turrets with the map like with Aegis, but unfortunately I haven't constructed such system yet.

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegis_Combat_System>

I calculate the trajectory using the map and the cannon's angle and begin the remote bombardment.

The magic-powered artillery that can fire three shots every second chases after the five Rocket Trees, painting the sky red.

I was able to shoot down all five monsters before the gun barrel got burnt out.

I make the port gun turret to open fire toward the Rocket Trees that hadn't takeoff and the Lance Beetles.

It seems the distance is too far, they're all near-hit shots.

The birdkins who have taken off from the lower rank join together into a rank to intercept the enemies. They're all only upper level 10s people equipped with fire wands, so I'm unsure they can intercept the Lance Beetles.

The slanting airship has corrected its position, so I release Lulu and the others who were hugging me.

The voice of the man from before flowed out of the speaking tube.

『This is the Captain's speaking. I request the cooperation of magicians in this airship. Please intercept the monsters approaching this airship.』

Now then, looks like it's time for our turn.

12-4. Journey to the Royal Capital (4)

Satou's here. It seems stubborn people exist no matter the era of the world. I respect people who live dirtily when it's a matter of life and death, but please stop struggling in order to avoid responsibility.

◇

I release the spirit light that I have sealed.

That line sounds like something said from the mouth of a chuunibyou patient, but I can't help it since it's the truth. When I release the suppressed spirit light, spirits from the surrounding and the ground surface gather to me with dreadful speed.

There's no need for me to hold back since only Mia and me have the Spirit Seer skill in this airship.

"Satou?"

I nod at Mia who's asking me.

I hold Mia's arm that she's held up. Apparently, she's guessed my intention.

"H-hey!"

Arisa is going to ask us while panicking about something, but it seems she's understood what we're trying to do after hearing Mia who's started chanting a spell of spirit magic.

"Geh, that spell is very bad. Pochi, Tama, let's hurry! Mia will take all the spotlight if it keeps up!"

"I don't really understand, but let's hurry nodesu!"

"Agreement accepted~?"

Arisa dashes to the deck with Pochi and Tama on both flanks.

"Nana and Lulu, I'm sorry, but please stay here and keep Karina-sama and the others from going out to the deck."

"Yes, Master."

"U-um. D-do we not need the Accelerated Cannon?"

"Un, the monsters this time are all small fish, so it's going to end with Mia's magic."

Lulu's come asking, but the damage on the surface would be terrible if she uses the Accelerated Cannon.

I tell so to Lulu who looks anxious, and then I go to the deck while carrying Mia with princess carry.

I decided to pretend that I didn't hear Karina-sama who had her arms pinned behind her back by Lulu shouted "Release me".

◇

On the deck, the Mithril explorers who are strangely in high spirits are waiting for the Lance Beetles that are approaching from afar.

It seems the birdkins unit that have been deployed earlier isn't for intercepting the Lance Beetles, they're going to suppress the tamers at the castle fort.

That should be the correct decision considering the fighting force on the airship.

"Coming~?"

"They're small and fast nodesu."

"Aim well you two."

The beastkin girls intercept the three cannon balls shot by the Cannon Toads flying between the Lance Beetles with a shuriken, a long toothpick, and a javelin.

"Au, even though it hit..."

"Le~ave the rest to me!"

The long toothpick thrown by Pochi was broken by the cannon ball due to the difference in mass.

And then the fire balls shot by Arisa and several people with fire wands wrap the cannon ball up. The cannon ball that's been scratched by Pochi's toothpick is scattered away by the fire balls.

Fire wand can be shot just by supplying it with magic power, it's also faster than the normal spell since it doesn't need to be chant.

The attack power is also relatively good, so there are more demands for fire wands and lightning wands than scrolls from the military.

"Arisa. I need you to do something."

"Okkey~, doesn't seem like I'll get to show off, so you want me to encourage everyone with my beautiful voice?"

"No, let's leave that for when the next opportunity arises--"

I ask Arisa to do more important mission than dealing with the small fish. Incidentally, I also instructed Tama do a Ninja errand. Pochi and Liza are to protect us.

Mia who was chanting the spell with utmost effort during those conversations finally completes it.

"...■■■ Magic Wind King Creation (Create Garuda)"

An artificial spirit that looks like a birdman with half-transparent golden body, wearing a shining crown appears.

It's a being of the same rank as the one that Aze-san had summoned once, Behemoth.

I use [Magic Power Transfer] to recover Mia who has lost most of her magic power.

"Ooh, what is that?"

"Is it a new enemy?!"

"Shield! Protect our friends! ■■■ Diamond Shield Activate!"

The Mithril explorers who are surprised with the sudden appearance of the artificial spirit have changed their aim to Garuda, so I solve the misunderstanding and apologize in a hurry.

I nod to Mia who's looking at me and permit her to attack the Lance Beetles.

"Annihilate."

Abiding Mia's words, Garuda spreads its wings in stillness while ignoring the aerodynamic force, the tip of the feathers on its wings transform like it's CG-morphing and then they extend toward the Lance Beetles, attacking them.

Several golden feathers become long and thin like threads and extend, piercing the Lance Beetles like it's wrapping them, and then cut them into small pieces.

"Tremendous...."

"That's the summoning magic that defeated the floormaster huh."

Some questionable misunderstanding are mixed in among the comments.

Sorry but accompanying them is for later.

Right when the birdkin unit has arrived at the fort, an Anomalocaris-like monster called Flying Centipede breaks open the fort's gate from the inside, showing itself.

Unlike the tamed monsters earlier, this one isn't tamed.

It was just a sleeping monster that had [Sleeping] status. Just how did they bring it into the fort....

"Mia."

"Nn."

Garuda who's received Mia's order attacks the Flying Centiped as quick as a bird of prey.

The flying centipede that's preparing to attack the birdkins on the surrounding sway its wings and rise in the air in a swimming-like motion.

"I've fought that monster before, and it has a long-range attack called 『Mystic Ray』. We should be fine, but it can be dangerous for the airship, so keep it from getting close."

I've never actually fought the Flying Centipede. I've made it like that since the source of information is the map.

I'm fine with Mia, but we're in a situation where there are explorers around us.

"Use it?"

"No, just use the golden feathers to torment it."

"Nn."

Mia was talking about the trump card that greater artificial spirits posses.

In case of Garuda, it's a big-scale technique called [Tempest], but on top of having power, it's too showy so I refrained from doing it.

I'll leave the best part to the magicians who are chanting spells with all their might.

"Can you lift and make it stand still in the air higher than the airship."

"Will do."

Garuda that howls in accordance to Mia's instruction stitches the Flying Centipede, stopping its track dead in the air.

The Flying Centipede was shooting some suspicious serrated rays once in a while, but it never reached here even once since it was wrapped in Garuda's golden feathers.

And then the magicians have finished chanting.

In reality, the Flying Centipede has lost 60% of its health, and it's going to end in 2-3 minutes even if we leave it alone, but let's turn the last part over to them since it's conscious.

"Sir Pendragon. The preparation is complete. Please make that summon beast fall back."

"There's no problem. Shoot it along with the summon beast."

I answered so to the explorers guarding the magicians.

An artificial spirit will just turn back into small spirits even if its health becomes zero.

"....■■■ Long-range Flame Spears"

Several spears of swirling flame drill through the Flying Centipede.

Garuda seems to have resistance against fire, the flame disappears the moment it touches Garuda.

"....■■ Holy Pile"

"....■■■■ Divine Hammer"

Slightly later, a huge blue stake pierces the Flying Centipede, and then a shining hammer that appears beside it crushes the monster into pieces.

The deck is wrapped in shouts of joy.

Lady Karina who has finally been released jumps in, but there's already no enemy for her.

Seeing her stamping her feet in frustration is a sight for sore eyes, but I wish she stops since that's not mature.

I ask Nana who has appeared a bit later to do some business.

Mia beside me sends Garuda home.

Since the artificial spirit was created, I had thought that it should be called cancellation instead, but it was [Sending Home] since the non-elemental spirits that had been dissolved were returning to where they came from.

Aze-san was rarely talking about it passionately.

That kind of Aze-san was rare and nice.

Maybe because I'm thinking such thing, Mia's mood has slightly worsened.

"Mwu."

"Good work Mia."

I give Mia some appreciation and try to release her from the princess carry state, but it doesn't seem like she'll get down.

"Mia?"

"I'm tired."

It can't be helped then.

Arisa is also often like this after she's used unique skill, doing this once in a while is alright.

◇

I mislead other people into thinking that the Garuda summon is the secret skill of the elves.

The magicians who have heard the spirit magic chanting mentioned, "It's different from Sebelkea-dono's magic, but the phoneme is similar with the spell from the ancient document", which helped reinforced the story.

I make them promise to let me see that ancient document when we get back to the Labyrinth City of course.

The compensation for that is the Face Tree's branches that I have stocked a lot in the storage.

Apparently it seems to be a material for making wands.

Now then, leaving aside those trivial things, let's get back to our present situation.

One of the gun turret is dead, but there's no more obstacle for the sailing of the ship. The people inside the airship who have been injured are healed by Mia and the other healing magicians, and they've gone back to normal.

Several of the birdkins who searched the fort seemed to have died, but they were able to arrest the majority of the perpetrators.

Several people seems to have escaped, but there's no problem on that front.

Duke Bishtal who's in front of me is yelling toward me and the ship's captain while I'm doing such escapism.

Apparently, he cannot consent to the fact that his retainers have schemed to take his life.

He was playing dumb and said that he didn't know his retainers who were arrested by the birdkin unit, and claimed that it was a trap devised by Duke Oyugock, his political opponent, since they were in the hunting mansion of Marquis Lloyd, Duke Oyugock's subordinate.

"Masita, we're back~"

"Masuta, we have successfully accomplished your command."

Shiro and Crow entered the Royal Suite while flying around.

Nana entered the room with the evidence on her hand before Duke Bishtal could verbally abuse the two.

"Master, we have arrested the thief who was trying to escape."

Nana throws the man she's brought to the floor.

It's the person Shiro and Crow have arrested from my request to Nana earlier.

The two got their flight capability reinforced with Nana's force arte and then arrested the man with my guidance via [Telephone].

Of course, just these two alone would have been dangerous, so the one who actually arrested and restrained the man was Tama who was brought to the ground with Arisa's space magic.

"Ge-Gelf.... Who? That man is!"

The Duke was very surprised to see him he involuntarily muttered his name, but it seems the only one who's heard it was me with the Ear Straining skill.

This man's identity is of a considerably upper rank even among the Duke's subordinates. His title is [Advisor of Young Nobleman].

--That means the Duke's own child instigated this.

I really don't want to get involved in this kind of muddled story.

"This man seems to be the mastermind who was trying to escape from the crime site. Is he an acquaintance of Lord Duke?"

"I don't know this person."

Just as I've expected, he's feigning ignorance, so I push the man to the Captain.

"Is it alright to leave this man to you Captain?"

"Umu, you can entrust him to me."

I watch the duke's state while patting Shiro's and Crow's head.

He looks indignant, but he doesn't seem to be a fool who would take the direct action in this place.

He might try to get rid of the man during the brief time until we arrive at the Royal Capital, but I'll obstruct it stealthily.

The stake is too high for the Duke since that'd mean he has exposed the national airship, the Mithril explorers who are important fighting forces during emergency, and the direct descendant of a lord--Lady Karina--to danger in his family feud.

I'm not interested as to how he can recover from that, but please don't bear grudge toward us who don't have anything to do with it.

In the end, I ended up having to stealthily repulse the assassins hired by the Duke three times. Leaving it to Ninja Tama would be too conspicuous, so I made use of Magic Hands and Mia's artificial spirit, [Elemental Rats].

I feel like I can hear the grinding teeth of the Duke who received the failure report.

Without being concerned with such a human, the airship we're riding has finally entered the airport located in the Royal Capital's outskirt.

12-5. Reception

Satou's here. It seems there was a time when they sent telegram with [Sakurasaku (Exam Pass)] or [Sakurachiru (Exam Failure)] to notify the exam result, but since you can guess the result from the envelope's size nowadays, maybe it's become obsolete? It might be revived when they computerized the result's notification.

◇

"T-the Royal Capital is burning..."

Arisa holds her breath beside me.

"Burning~?"

"Where's the fire nodesu?"

"Mwu?"

It's natural for the little girls to be puzzled.

Arisa's cheeks are red. She must have tried to say something poetic and failed.

"Those are sakura, so I state the information."

"Those are sakura? They look just like in the picture book."

Just as Nana and Liza have said, Arisa was talking about the sakura trees that are in full bloom in the Royal Capital.

The highway that goes to the Royal Capital and the road inside the city itself have been colored in sakura color.

Although the blue milkvetch flowers were beautiful, the one over here is gorgeous.

"It's really pretty...."

Lulu was muttering in rapture while being fascinated with the sakura. She's so lovely I almost involuntarily said, "You are many times more beautiful."

Of course I won't say such playboy-like line.

And then the biggest sakura tree in Shiga Kingdom enters our view as the airship circles toward the airport.

"Ugeh, what's that."

"Big~?"

"It's pretty nodesu."

"Nn, pretty."

Arisa is surprised at a big blooming sakura tree that's situated quite close to the royal castle.

The sakura tree that's said to be given by the elves for the Ancient King Yamato is blooming in pink color, painting the white wall of the royal castle.

"It is pretty, but isn't it a bit too big?"

"Guessing from the window size, I report that its size is more than 100 meter big. It's unthinkable that it's 700 years old, so I reason."

Lulu's doubt is reasonable.

A tree that's as big as a royal castle is unthinkable even in my former world.

However--.

"What is strange about it? The world tree is even bigger isn't it?"

Liza is right, the impact from seeing this tree is weak when you've seen the world tree that reaches the sky.

"If you pray under that tree, any wish seems like it'll be fulfilled...."

Since I know the reference, I can only smile wryly to Arisa who's muttering so.

Unfortunately, it's not an un-withering sakura tree.

<TLN: Da Capo reference>

◇

"Satou, if you're going to sightsee when we've entered the port, invite me!"

Contrary to her words, Lady Karina is posing like she's showing her dressed-up self.

She's certainly beautiful enough to make you hold your breath.

She's spreading charm violent enough that it would have made me involuntarily propose to her if I didn't have Aze-san.

It's a bit vexing, so I first praise Erina and Newbie-chan beside Lady Karina for their effort instead.

"Thank you for your work, must've been hard."

"Yes, it really was.... It'd be nice if Karina-sama dressed up like that everyday."

"W-wait Senpai."

The all-too-serious Newbie-chan is fretting from Erina's disrespectful words.

Lady Karina herself seems like she's waiting for my words, it doesn't seem like she hears outside noise.

I feel slightly mischievous, but I've decided to normally praise Lady Karina who has gone with the trouble of dressing up.

"You are very beautiful, Karina-sama."

Yet, Lady Karina blushed instead, without being able to reply back.

It seems she's not used to praises since she usually wears unfashionable clothes even though the base is good.

I've got to enjoy the wonderful valley peeking from her dress until Lady Karina moves again.

Arisa and Mia are kicking my feet from behind, but please overlook this one since it's just a mere lip service.

◇

The airship has arrived at the airport on the outskirt of the Royal Capital.

We collect our cabin's luggage and gather in the observatory dome once again.

"Waa, there are a lot of people."

"The people are like garbage~?" <TLN: Castle in the Sky reference>

"Like ants nanodesu."

"Nn."

Liza reproves Tama for the slightly impolite thing she said.

There's a wide space in the airport, but it's overflowing with people and carriages.

I feel that there are a lot more people than carriages who have come to welcome Duke Bishtal.

The airship slowly lower its altitude, and then the suspension legs gently touch the ground, ending the landing.

『Everyone, please wait in your room or the observation dome. Guides will lead you to leave the ship.』

A female crew speaks via the speaking tube.

There's no need for us to hurry since the first one will be the party of Duke Bishtal anyway, we'll be leaving the last.

When I peek at the ramp from the deck, there's a blue carpet spread from the ramp to the luxurious carriages of the duke house.

--It's not a red carpet huh.

The elite soldier of the duke are on both sides of the carpet, keeping bad people from approaching the blue carpet.

The Duke leads the way with a depressed face, and then 11 ladies follow behind him.

Those women are all the wives of the Duke.

The three women right after the Duke are of the same age as him, but the age of the women continues getting younger behind them, the last one looks as young as Nana.

Checking on the map, she's 17 years old.

I almost reflexively quip, "How many years the gap is."

After the wives, there are seven children of the Duke house who are coming of age this year and the unmarried ones, and then dozens of retainers after them.

Quite a lot of people. Half of the passengers are people related to the Duke.

However, his guards are only the private knights even though someone is aiming for his life. Even though Jeril and his party would have immediately agreed if he asked them to guard his party.

I guess credible people are more important than their strength.

While I'm thinking of such thing, the carriages that carry the duke and his party form a line going toward the royal castle.

The nobles follow them, since it's going to be us explorers' turn soon, I decided to go to the airship door.

◇

When Jeril and his [Lion's Roar] party show up on the ramp, shrill voices break out from the people who're welcoming them. All of them are young good-looking beautiful women.

Most are calling for the [Crimson Young Noble] Jeril, but when the name of the other members got called, they wave back with a hand holding a handkerchief.

The cheer for the following parties are decreasing little by little, but when we show ourselves, it becomes loud again.

....Why are they all either old men who bring along little girls, or married couples.

When I look closer, they're nobles whom I've met in the Duchy Capital.

Looks like they didn't come to welcome us as Mithril explorers, but they're cordial people who meet us as acquaintances.

I wave my hand back while feeling a bit nostalgic.

There are also some noble and merchant friends from the labyrinth city among them of course.

A Mithril explorer--a middle-aged man called Marmot or something who's got to the tramp seems like he's found someone he knows among the crowd, and points at that someone, showing to his friends.

I ask him since I'm a bit interested.

"Did you see someone famous?"

"Yeah, if I'm not mistaken, that's the chief of Shiga Eight Swords y'see."

I search the map and mark him.

He's quite far, well done noticing him. As expected of the scout of a Mithril explorer party.

Other explorers seem to have noticed it too, noises begin to spread among them.

It's like when a star pro-player appears in Koushien stadium in front of high school baseball players I guess?

The noises change into baseless speculations.

The most numerous one is this--

"He must've come to to invite Jeril."

"I can't think of any other possibility. Maybe he's looking for a successor."

"As expected of Jeril, befitting of our leader!"

Even while being made fun of by the [Lion's Roar] members, Jeril looks full of confidence with a "not bad at all" face.

--It stinks a bit of a flag, so Arisa who's walking beside me is smiling a very bad smile.

The next most numerous speculations are that he's coming to scout me, and that he's coming to scout either of us.

As if he's walking in an uninhabited field, Chief-san is coming straight toward us.

Like when Moses splits the sea, the crowd of people make way for him.

Since Jeril has stopped moving, the other explorers who have descended to the ramp also stop and create a circle.

I personally want to greet the people who welcome us, but since the crowd are obstructing, there's no space to move even if we can move.

No, there's plenty of space in front of us, but I don't want to be someone who can't read the mood and thrust myself there.

The Chief and Jeril are on a straight line from my point of view, so I can only see Jeril's back.

The Chief seems to have appeared from the crowd.

The noise is spreading whenever the Chief come closer to Jeril.

I saw Jeril looking smug from the side for an instant.

The place freeze as the Chief comes one step away.

Like a pulling tide, the noise has disappeared.

The Chief passes Jeril from the side.

He's coming here.

"It can't be, the winner is Sir Pendragon?!"

"But, Young Master can't even use Magic Edge right?"

The noise begins to revive little by little.

And then, I can finally see the figure of the holy knight who's carrying a white pike following him from behind. I understand the Chief's intention when I see his face.

I make a way for the Chief who's come before me.

I'm sorry for Jeril, but I'll be refraining myself from being made a clown like him.

He stopped before us and stated this.

"I am the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords, Zeff Julberg the『Unfalling』. I desire a bout with Liza-dono the『Black Spear』!"

12-6. Liza's Strength

Satou's here. There's this term, "Muscle-brain", but I think it's better than human race who strangely surround themselves in intrigue.

...It's a bit sweltering though.

◇

"What is your answer!"

The chief of Shiga Eight Swords--Zeff Julberg beat the blunt end of his expensive-looking spear and asked Liza once again.

"Master, would you allow me to accept the match?"

Liza is staring at Julberg-shi while looking giddy like she's before an extraordinary feast.

It's as if the fight will begin immediately if I shift my line of sight.

For the time being, you two, please do something about the thirst of blood that's on contrary to your seemingly fun stares.

The peanut gallery around us have forgotten to breathe you know.

"Liza, I think you know already but"

"Please do not worry. I won't be excessive against an old man. I will make sure to hold back."

I wanted to say that you couldn't fight, but if you say something like that, the other party probably won't let it go.

Instead of Julberg-shi, the peanut gallery around us are brimming with jeers, or rather, shrieks.

Liza was probably doing just as the elf masters have taught her, a powerful enemy wouldn't be able to show their true strength if they lost their temper, but I'd have preferred for her to provoke him after we had changed place.

Julberg-shi spins his spear and sets it in low stance.

Please stop gritting your back teeth to the point as if it'll break.

"Hohou, to worry about this old body of mine, you're quite the heroine with respect for their elders."

"It is the result of Master's virtue."

That's not actually a praise.

Apparently, Liza perceived Julberg-shi's words at face value.

"I'm sorry, but let's change the place."

I cut myself between the two since it'll be dangerous if they fight here.

Julberg-shi shoots me a gaze like he's going to kill me, but it's nothing compared to the demon lords'.

"The nobles might get hurt if you fight here, and we cannot allow the new kingdom airship to be broken."

With my words, Julberg-shi pulls back his spear and agrees to it with a sour look on face.

I couldn't stop the duel, but the Liza now should be fine even if she shows off her true strength.

I've gotten the personal connections from nobles, apart from the ones who demanded something unreasonable, anyway.

I'm a bit worried as to whether Liza and the others can deal with demons and demon lords, but that can be solved by me doing things as Nanashi.

As for the state of things, the only country that looks like they're going to war with Shiga Kingdom is the Weaselkin Empire on the eastern end, if they do, I'll just fire laser to draw a line before the army as Nanashi, that'll probably make them turn back. If they still insist on marching forward, I can just make a great wall with earth magic so they can't continue.

While my mind is being full of such assumptions, Julberg-shi instructs his retainer, the man who's carrying the white pike, to prepare for the duel on the garrison nearby the airport.

He's the holy knight that's also known as the [White Pike Knight] who challenged Liza and lost instead, a bit after our Mithril plate parade.

The peanut gallery told me later that he's one of the people aiming for one of the three vacant seats of Shiga Eight Swords.

The people around cheer as if they're waiting for Julberg-shi to go out of the airport.

We're also going toward the duel stage while receiving words of encouragement from our friends and the other Mithril explorers.

Since there was a big incident, like the attempted assassination of the Duke, I don't think this is the time to play around with a duel though...

When I look around, it seems the people who think of that are in minority.

◇

"Now, come."

"Acknowledged."

--Which era do you guys come from.

No one answers that inner thought of mine, and the showdown begins.

Brilliant red traces are crossing in the daytime arena.

The two of them are using Magic Edge from the start since Julberg-shi said, "Do not hold back."

I've instructed Pochi and Tama not to use Magic Edge in the middle of the city since they tend to do it unconcernedly, but now that I think about it, I didn't tell so to Liza.

Still, I think using Magic Edge in a non-lethal match is questionable.

The spears have been outfitted so it won't injure them though.

Of course, the proof that this match is non-lethal are the high priest of

Garleon temple and the water court magicians sitting beside me in wait.

It seems they've made the water court magicians who were working in an engineering work in the suburb to stop their works and rush here.

The Knigth Order garrison's arena that's become the fight spot is 200-meter wide in radius, and there's a 2-meter firm wall surrounding it.

In addition, the members of Knight Order that can use magic are providing their magic power to the magic device that creates magic wall, so the peanut gallery are safe.

"As expected of the Shiga Eight Swords's top gentleman. His Magic Edge is more legit than Jeril's."

"Yeah, Liza-dono also coated her spear with Magic Edge as quick as Julberg-sama, but the light is clearly weaker."

I hear such conversations from the peanut gallery.

Liza has only put that much output since she coated the spear with Magic Edge with the intention of not hurting.

I wonder if they normally can't regulate the output?

I think the fuel consumption is bad if you thoughtlessly put out high power.

"Six consecutive strikes~?"

"Liza is amazing, but Oji-chan is also amazing nodesu."

"Eh, no way?! I could only see one strike just now though?"

"I saw two strikes."

"Arisa, Lulu, you can grasp the general movement if you look at the dust of cloud below, so I announce."

Just as Tama and Pochi have commented, the two have clashed with tremendous speed, exchanging blows in dizzying speed.

However, so this is the strength of Shiga Eight Swords huh.

I've mostly understood it with the Third Prince, but if this goes on, Liza will end the fight easily.

In any case, even though Liza's level is lower, Julberg-shi who's three level higher is being pushed.

Moreover, when I analyzed him with [Magic Perception] skill, Julberg-shi had already used physical reinforcement on himself. Has he gotten weak with age, or does Liza's basic strength simply surpass him, I don't know which is the reason since there's too little comparison.

The peanut gallery are getting excited with the offense of defense between two spearsmen of different styles. It's quite a high-speed battle.

However, if this ebb and flow fight continues to go on, Liza will probably win with her endurance.

Julberg-shi was observing her in preparation for when she moved, but Liza made her move ahead of him.

"Ah!? Just now, Liza's spear has disappeared!"

"Eh? Disappear?"

"Liza's vanishing spear~?"

"It hasn't disappeared desuyo?"

Lady Karina raises her voice as she's tricked by Liza's feint.

It seems Arisa couldn't see it too since it's a trick that can only be seen by martial artists past certain standard.

Pochi has excellent kinetic vision so Arisa can't keep up to her in another meaning.

What Liza has done is a feint technique that she only uses against expert opponents.

You can't evade an attack if you see it normally, you do it by sensing the opponent's line of sight and the movement of muscles to avoid the attack, and Liza makes use of that to set the feint.

This technique was taught to us by the elf masters, I had also fallen for it the first time they did it.

The type of people who evade the moment they see the attack like Pochi and me can deal with it fine, but for people like Tama who evade attacks by reading ahead, it's easy for them to be caught by this technique.

Julberg-shi also gets taken by the feint, a single blow hits his torso.

This would have been over without that magic armor, a white magic board like a simplified version of Raka's Lady Karina protection protected him, it only ended with the scattering of white fragments.

It seems Liza also didn't think that she would win with the blow just now, she doesn't seem particularly discouraged.

"I see, you do seem different than my artificially grown comrades who only raise their level and magic edge."

Julberg-shi took some distances away from Liza, and said so.

It's hard to say that Liza was level 3 just a few months ago in this mood.

"It is the result of Master's guidance."

Liza tries to raise my stock with a serious face.

Nana, and even Lulu, please stop nodding to it. Look, Pochi and Tama even imitate you.

Liza seems to seriously think so, but I've only been doing the power-leveling, and the [Cherish your life] policy.

She's become strong with her own effort, and the intensive training of the elf masters.

"In honor of you who has trained that far at such age, I will bestow you with this technique. The legendary technique that has been kept even more closely guarded than the secret technique Magic Edge."

Julberg-shi sets his spear on his waist and collect his magic power on the spear's tip.

Is it different than Magic Edge Cannon?

It looks like Magic Edge Cannon judging from the way the magic power is collecting.

Liza also sets up her spear and concentrate on Julberg-shi's movement, trying to steal the technique.

"Oh, huge magic power is collecting on Sir Julberg's spear!"

"It's the technique that's only used against a powerful enemy!"

The peanut gallery become unrest when they see the spear's Magic Edge swelling.

However, the convergence is loose.

With that state, won't it end up in cone shape instead of bullet?

I feel that it'll only work as a distraction against enemies that have powerful magic guard.

Julberg-shi who has finally finished the preparation shoots the magic power while shouting, "Nuoo".

The bombardment of red magic power that's as big as man's body assaults Liza.

"Wa, don't stand still--"

"Liza-san!"

Arisa and Lulu scream in worry.

Liza's hands finally move when the bombardment shot by Julberg-shi has reached the middle point between the two.

She quickly shoots a small red Magic Edge Cannon that's been formed in an instant.

The cannonballs collide in front of Liza, red flash dyes the entire arena.

The magic wall protecting the arena seems to be resonating with it, the wall is also emitting red light, the inside of the arena can't be seen well.

I saw that the Magic Edge Cannon shot by Liza crushed Julberg-shi's Magic Edge Cannon, and then the leftover hit his body hard.

The white protection magic from the magic armor Julberg-shi is wearing has been annihilated.

--Wait, Liza?

A second Magic Edge Cannon comes flying toward Julberg-shi.

Its power has been reduced to the minimum, but Julberg-shi can't avoid it with his posture.

However, the fact that he's reigning the Shiga Eight Swords' top for a long time doesn't seem to be just a show, he smashes the Magic Edge Cannon with the fist that's not holding the spear while shouting, "Nunn", with fighting spirit.

Of course, the compensation for that is his fist. It has been completely destroyed.

The elder warrior's mental doesn't seem to be broken with just this much.

He pours magic power into the spear with his remaining dominant arm, preparing for the final attack.

Right at that time, the last Magic Edge Cannon that Liza had shot hits the wrist of the arm that's holding the spear.

After Arisa talked about how assault guns could shoot in tri-burst, the beastkin girls ended up using three shots of Magic Edge Cannon to bring down powerful enemies.

It's probably become a habit due to that.

Liza quickly approaches and sweeps Julberg-shi's legs with her tail, he falls down on his back without the mean to fix his posture, and then Liza thrusts her spear toward his throat, stopping before.

The red light on the arena's magic wall finally fades, revealing the ending to the peanut gallery.

"Hey, what's the meaning of this?"

"Why is Julberg-shi who shot the Magic Edge Cannon fallen?"

I can hear such perplexed words escaping from the peanut gallery who are in confusion.

However, that was only until the judge declared Liza's victory.

"The winner is『Black Spear』Liza!"

The moment right after that words were declared in the arena, shouts of joy loud enough to shake the Royal Capital reverberate.

I can't grasp what each of them is saying, but one thing is clear, that they are congratulatory words toward Liza.

Liza takes some distance away from Julberg-shi and swings her spear toward me.

It's really like Liza to not let her guard down even after the conclusion.

I also shout congratulation with all my might and wave back with my hand.

Rather than being worried about troublesome things in the aftermath, right now I just want to congratulate her victory.

On this day, Liza became the most famous explorer in the Royal Capital.

12-7. Challengers

Satou's here. When fighting games were popular, I liked playing with a player whom I knew I couldn't win against. I was able to learn various things even though I was badly beaten one-sidedly.

◇

The priest rushes over to Julberg-shi and heals his hand.

The effect of high heal magic is terrific, the broken hand is restored in an instant.

"Liza-dono, your strength is genuine."

"I am honored."

Julberg-shi who's been healed talks to Liza.

Liza replies while looking composed, but her tail is swinging around. The tail is honest.

"Shiga Eight Swords is the pike that shields the kingdom."

Julberg-shi suddenly begins narrating a story to Liza.

"For that reason, I think one's race or lineage have nothing to do with it as long as one has the strength and the heart that thinks heavily of one's kingdom."

Apparently he's inviting Liza to become a Shiga Eight Swords even though he hasn't directly said it to her.

"Right now there are three vacant seats on Shiga Eight Swords, among them, two have become the means for factional disputes among the nobles. However, the last seat is for me to nominate."

Would you not glare at me when you were saying the "factional dispute" part?

"I want to commend that seat to you. --Would you receive it?"

He said to Liza with serious face.

The girls around me look at Liza while looking tense. Only Nana who's in 'my pace' is playing with Shiro's and Crow's feather.

"I refuse."

Liza declined Julberg-shi's invitation with powerful voice.

Arisa and Pochi lose their strength after feeling relieved. That's fine and all, but stop rubbing your face on my leg during the confusion, Arisa. You too Mia, stop imitating Arisa.

"Why. You might be Sir Pendragon's slave right now, but the royal family will release you if you become a Shiga Eight Swords and even grant you with honorary earldom you know? It's a status and honor that cannot normally be gotten by a demi-human, why do you refuse"

Liza stops Julberg-shi who's talking while looking like he can't believe it.

"Certainly, I think it is a great honor for me."

"Then--"

"However, my loyalty lies not to the Kingdom, but to Master. I do not have the qualification to become a Shiga Eight Swords who must submit their loyalty to the Kingdom."

Those are some delicately dangerous lines.

Right then, Arisa the mood maker breaks in.

"That's right! We're the『Pendragon Seven Braves』! Together with Master, we'll show you that we'll become the new world guardian that rivals the『Shiga Eight Swords』!"

What the heck is [Pendragon Seven Braves]. Do you have any respect to Sanada Ten Braves?

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanada_Ten_Braves>

Arisa is just probably saying it to soften the atmosphere in this place, but looking at her proud-looking face, I'm scared that she's serious.

"Ooh! They've declared they're equal Shiga Eight Swords y'hear?"

"However, they did defeat Julberg-shi the『Unfalling』. They do have the qualification."

"Yeah, using light spear attack, it's the birth of new Shiga Kingdom guardians!"

"『Black Spear』, no, it's the『Magic-destroying Light Spear』Liza!"

"Glory to『Pendragon Seven Braves』and Shiga Kingdom!"

Somehow, the name that Arisa declared is spreading among the peanut gallery like it's official.

The flow of event is as such that I begin to suspect that someone has prepared some hired applauders, but the peanut gallery's mood is strange.

Is Liza defeating Julberg-shi something that significant?

Looks like Liza has gotten a new nickname since there were some people among them who could see her using the Magic Edge Cannon.

I don't think that Arisa's declaration has stopped Liza from entering Shiga Eight Swords, but it's succeeded to postpone it, it seems. I'll consult Nina-san for the rest.

By the way, I only knew the [Pendragon Seven Braves] thing that Arisa talked about was in fact, a name that came out in the novel Pochi had written, a long time after this.

◇

It's about time for us to meet with Baron Muno who's waiting in the royal castle, but the peanut gallery's clamor doesn't seem like it'll stop soon.

I was able to greet the acquaintances who had come to welcome us, but I'm troubled with the endless line of people who're congratulating Liza.

The ones who break that are two figures of people.

"You the one who won against the old man?"

"Ryouna-dono, don't forget your manner. We are people who sit on Shiga Eight Swords' seats."

"You're too stiff Bauen."

A wild-like woman carrying a large scythe on her shoulder called Ryouna, and a man wearing a single-edged sword came.

They're the Shiga Eight Swords' 8th rank, Ms. Ryouna the『Mower』and 6th rank,『Wind Blade』Bauen-shi.

Both are level mid-40s, they're considerably weaker compared to Julberg-shi.

Bauen-shi who's around forty years old is wearing a normal knight outfit, but the latter half twenties year old Ms. Ryouna wears some wild-like attires with knee-high trousers, and a coat that looks like a vest. By the way, despite the high exposure, she relatively doesn't feel sexy due to her ripe abs.

The reason why I don't refer Bauen-shi's sword as katana is because it's made with western-style workmanship. I could've called it saber, but since Bauen-shi lets out samurai-like atmosphere, I refer it as such.

Pochi and Tama are excited with the appearance of the new warriors.

They've begun playing Look-that-way game, probably to decide who goes first. Their action must have looked nonsensical by the people around us.

"Fight with me."

"I refuse. The we--"

"Ryouna-sama, I'm very sorry, but Liza is exhausted from her fight with Julberg-shi. Please ask again another time if you wish to challenge her."

I interrupted them since Liza was seemingly going to say "the weak".

"Who are ya?"

"I am Chevalier Pendragon, her master."

"--Pendragon?"

"Have you forgotten, Ryouna-dono. He's a candidate for our new colleagues."

"Ah.... Then, you fight me?"

I shake my head toward Ryouna who looks like a cat that's just found a rat.

Or rather, first time I've heard about this [new colleague candidate] thing.

"Please ask the people there if you want a fight."

I turn my hand toward the muscle-brains--Mithril explorers who have been glancing here.

"Everyone is a warrior that'd not fall behind Liza. It surely will be a fun fight."

"Right.... Okay, the lady-killer man over there! Looks like you're the strongest. Fight me!"

"I, Jeril, won't hold back even against women you know?"

"That's what a warrior is! Now, make some room! It's the beginning of a fun fight!"

It went well.

I'm interested with the fight between Mithril explorers and Shiga Eight Swords, but let's disperse from here immediately.

I pull Lady Karina who's glued herself on the front row together with our girls and go to the carriage.

Pochi who won the Look-that-way game is dejected but since it seems Baron Muno is going to hold a reception for us today, she's probably going to forget about it soon.

◇

"Is that an airship?"

"Yeah, that's the shipyard adjoining the airport."

Arisa is pointing to an airship factory.

They're building the hull parts that are going to be connected to the aerodynamic engines I've brought as Nanashi. The airship design is from me, but since it's not the type that has magic furnace powered by the

Philosopher's Stone, it should be the traditional one that make use of the fuel rod made from magic-core-powder alchemy for the magic furnace.

Every country conceals the technology used in this type of magic furnace so I also don't know the way to make it.

I'm not really interested since its output is lower than the engines that use a Philosopher's Stone, and it seems to be theoretically impossible to be downsized.

I also already have the magic cylinders to power small airships aside with the Philosopher's stones, so I probably don't need it for now.

I've been given permission to access the forbidden library under the royal castle, and the royal academy's library, so I'll be checking them out when I have some free time.

Still, is it alright for the shipyard to be visible from outside?

I've heard that long ago nations went out of their way to hide the construction of warships, trains, or automobiles that run on national highway.

Leaving that worry of mine, the carriages keeps passing through the workshops area beside the shipyard to the noble street and then continue on the main street.

By the way, we're riding on four carriages since it wasn't enough with one.

The first one is for Lady Karina and the others, the second is for me, Arisa, and the beastkin girls, the third is for our luggage, and the last is for Lulu, Mia, Nana and the others. The division is decided fairly with rock-paper-scissor.

"Rattle-rattle~?"

"Pochi wants to rattle-rattle too nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi have found the people playing kickboards in the alley.

It's not popular in the labyrinth city since the city's roads have a lot of turns and twists, but I've let Pochi and the others test them on a straight passageway in the labyrinth once.

That kind of vehicle seemed to be first for them, everyone, including Liza and Lulu, were having fun riding it.

"It's spreading nicely huh."

Arisa mutters earnestly when she sees it.

Kickboard is a product that Arisa has devised, it's being produced in Echigoya firm's workshop in the Royal Capital.

The product is selling so well Porina the manager almost overworks herself to death.

I'll make some time and show up in the workshop before long.

The street is crowded and lively as one would expect from the capital of the whole kingdom.

The main street is wide enough to hold four carriages, but since there's no traffic signal, it's seldom get crowded in the intersections. It's a good thing that there are few traffic compared to the modern area.

--Red points light up in the radar.

"Enemy's attack"

"Their direction?"

"Oh no! Nanodesu!"

Tama warns everyone about it almost at the same time as the radar.

Tama tells Liza who's asking the direction with her glance while taking out the stick shurikens. Pochi also took out the long toothpick from her bag in haste.

The 12 shadows reflected on the radar seem to be party of a criminal guild [Gibbon].

A man on the later half of 20s who can use water and fire magic seems to be the leader. This guy is on the rooftop of a nearby three-story building.

The thieves attack when I have checked that much. We're in the middle of a junction.

Four covered wagons that move like they're going to crash surround the back carriage that has our luggage in front and back.

Some men come down from the covered wagons and throw several flare-like things to the ground, blocking the view. It's probably the same thing as the smoke ball often used in the labyrinth.

"Pochi and I will defeat the suspicious people. Tama you protect the carriage."

"Aye, nanodesu!"

"Roger~?"

Liza and Pochi assault into the white smoke, defeating the assailants. Tama who's climbed to the carriage's roof also throws a stick shuriken toward the the leader who's chanting a spell to support the thieves from the rooftop.

I use Magic Hand to pull the foot of the leader who's lost his balance from Tama's stick shuriken, dropping him to the ground. It seems the carriage on the back is being taken care of by Nana.

They're probably aiming for the third carriage.

It's normally the one where the expensive equipment of explorers are stored after all. In our case, it's no big deal even if they get stolen since it only houses dummy equipment, but if it becomes known among the criminal groups that stealing things from us is easy, touring the capital would be difficult, so we're handling this seriously.

It seems our reaction speed was beyond their expectation, they're working to steal the luggage carriage slower than I expected.

The criminal guild people board the luggage carriage, drag the coachman down, and try to quickly get away.

"I won't let you run!"

Liza shoots a short spear between the wheel of the carriage, overturning it.

I, who's running beside it while catching the coachman of the thief, have almost got rolled up in it too.

I also lightly push a man, who had almost been ran over by the toppled carriage, with my foot to make him fall down to the ground, and then embrace some girls wearing servant-like attires who were going to be hit too, on both arms, bringing them to the safe place.

I put the girls to the ground and trample the back of the thief who's trying to run away from me, arresting the thief.

I've been treating this thief roughly, but it seem it's a woman.

Well, I guess it's fine. She's a thief.

"Master, there~"

Tama who was in charge of guarding the carriage rushes over to me and points to a nearby roof.

Over there is a suspicious woman in black clothing. Unlike the thief I'm trampling, her breasts are big so I'm aware that she's woman even from a distance.

The woman who notices that she's been sensed suddenly turns around.

"Ran away~?"

I catch the nape of Tama who was going to use Flickering Movement to chase the woman, stopping her.

I hold Tama, who turns around with a wondering face, on my arm and pat her head.

The woman earlier doesn't seem to be in the same gang as these thieves, but since she's suspicious, I've put a map marker on her just in case.

It seems she's wearing equipment that inhibit recognition, so her information is displayed twice. She's probably aiming for treasures since her title is [Phantom Thief].

Phantom Thief-san has some unusual skills like [Disguise], so I leave the marker on her alone.

"What is this uproar!"

Someone forces his way through with arrogant voice.

It's a man riding a horse. He's not wearing an armor but judging from the painted crest, he seems to be a part of Royal Capital's guard.

"We were attacked by thieves. I'm Chevalier Pendragon. I was taking my master's daughter to the royal castle."

I make a gesture, and his line of sight shifts to Lady Karina who's showing her face to look outside.

Lady Karina is making a disappointed face since she didn't get to join the fray, but it probably looks like she's worried from the point of view of someone who doesn't know the circumstance.

The man's face is reddened and he's going toward Lady Karina, but I make him call his troop in order to take the thieves to the jail.

Repairing the carriage seems like it'll take some time, so I negotiate with a shop nearby to rent their carriage.

After a while, the foot soldiers that the cavalryman has brought take the thieves away.

According to the foot soldiers, an attack this showy is very rare even in the Royal Capital.

There are probably some people who heard about Mithril explorers coming here with an airship, and came up with a plan to steal their expensive magic tools.

The treasures gotten from the Floormasters have been delivered to the castle by officials who have Item Box skill and work directly under the royal family, so it's fine. The chant orb's marker is in the underground treasure room of the castle, so there's no mistake about it.

The thieves targeting us at the labyrinth city were increasing, so I'm going to assume that they will also come in droves during our stay in the Royal Capital's mansion.

After tearing off the cavalryman who persistently whispers words of love toward Lady Karina's carriage, our carriages continue to the royal castle.

It seems Baron Muno doesn't have any mansion in the Royal Capital, so they're borrowing a guest house of the royal castle.

Passing through the gatekeepers who are wearing dazzling full body armors (Plate Mail) and holding Halberds, we've finally arrived at the royal castle.

12-8. Under the Sakura Tree

Satou's here. There's the saying, "A corpse is buried underneath the Sakura tree", but I don't know whether it's from a novel or a fable, let alone the source's title.

◇

"It looks grand seen from below isn't it."

"It sure is. It's eerily beautiful."

I muttered while looking up at the Sakura tree.

Someone's pulling my sleeve. It's Mia.

The beastkin girls have moved to the borrowed luggage carriage as its guards, so Mia and Lulu have moved to the vacant seats of this carriage.

"Once again."

"--the『eerily beautiful』part?"

"Yes."

Mie ecstatically closes her eyes and pushes her mouth. When I shift my line of sight to the opposite side, Arisa is also taking the same pose.

Astonished, I seek help to Lulu who's sitting in front of me, but she quietly closes her eyes after blushing sakura-color for an instant.

--You girls, did you conspire for this beforehand?

The carriages arrives at the place Baron Muno is staying unaffected with the trifle inside.

We're missing one carriage.

Apparently, the luggage carriage that the beastkin rode had entered through the back entrance.

"Welcome to the Royal Capital."

Guided by the way that's formed from the maids who are standing in rows, we enter the mansion.

It seems these maids aren't Baron Muno's servants, but this mansion's.

As the proof, these maids aren't wearing the maid uniforms, but elegant one-piece-type uniforms.

Pina who's in maid uniform is waiting in the entrance hall.

"We have been waiting for you. Chevalier-sama, Karina-sama."

"It's been a long time. I'm glad to see you're healthy."

"News about Chevalier-sama's activities had also reached Muno territory."

We would obstruct the maids' job if we chat too long, so I cut it off appropriately.

Unlike the battle maids I've seen in Muno territory and the Duchy

Capital, Pina is acting gracefully like it's natural, "I've been a maid for a long time", while guiding me to the living room.

Checking on the map, Baron Muno and Consul Nina seem to be in the northern conference room of the royal castle. It seems to be quite an exhausting conference, the Baron's stamina has been greatly diminished.

This is the first time I saw the abnormal status, [Overworked].

"Baron-sama and Consul-sama are currently out for a prior engagement, so please relax in this room until they get back."

The maids are putting several tea sets and tea-cakes on the table. The tea cakes are of still-warm baked sweets and white-candy like things put on small bowls.

The bell on top of the table is probably for calling the maids. I let the maids who are waiting near the room entrance to fall back.

After a bit, the beastkin girls who have entered from the mansion's back entrance meet up with us.

"Mumwu~? Illegal occupation~?"

"First come, first served."

Tama is aiming to recapture the lap that Mia has taken.

Today, the positions of these two are reversed. But, I don't think it's something that need to be competed so much. Pochi tries to climb and sits beside me, she doesn't seem to be interested with my lap.

When my eyes meet with Pochi's who's sitting beside me, she smiles, "He".

That was too cute I involuntarily patted her head.

Now then, I want to talk about our policy from now on, but since Lady Karina is naturally in the room, it's hard to do it.

I guess I'll talk about it once we get to my own mansion I've prepared in the royal capital.

I had prepared a mansion for Chevalier Pendragon use while acting as someone called Akindou when I was delivering the airships and the magic swords here. I've announced that Akindou is the purveyor of Pendragon's house beforehand so it's quite convenient. Echigoya is for big things like airships when I act as Nanashi or Kuro, so I'm making use of Akindou for Satou's businesses.

"Still, even though I had thought that you were strong, I would've never guessed that you would even win against Julberg-shi of Shiga Eight Swords."

『It was truly splendid.』

"I'm honored."

Lady Karina and Raka are praising Liza.

Pochi and Tama look happy like they're talking about them.

Mia who's won my lap from Tama is humming in good mood, unrelated to it.

I don't think that place is that comfortable though....

"But you know, although we've dodged it with the Pendragon Seven Braves thing, won't Liza-san or Master get to become Shiga Eight Swords like this?"

While drinking the cup beside me, Arisa asked anxiously.

Oh good. That [Pendragon Seven Braves] thing wasn't serious. I was sure that she was when I looked at that proud-looking face.

"Pendragon Seven Braves nanodesu!"

"Seven braves~? Karina is included too~?"

Pochi and Tama said so without minding, are they not embarrassed with that name?

Lady Karina tilts her head after hearing Arisa.

"Liza will surely be, but they won't recommend Sa, Satou right? If it's swordsmanship, aren't Pochi and Tama stronger?"

"That's not true at all nodesu!"

"Master is stronger~"

Pochi and Tama deny that while shaking their heads.

"But", and so Lady Karina looks unconvinced.

She's been thoroughly beaten by Pochi and Tama in the Labyrinth City's mansion.

From Lady Karina's perspective, I probably am not comparable to the two.

"....I-is that so."

I wonder what?

My crisis perception kicks in when I see Lady Karina who has seemingly consented about something while looking down.

I can't see her face, but the corner of her lips feels like Arisa's when she's laughing "Guheguhe". Although there's some difference with hers looking slightly more refined.

"Satou! I understand well what you feel!"

She declares so while looking at me happily.

That must be a misunderstanding.

I couldn't said that since her whole face is smiling gleefully.

"H-hey. Isn't Oppai-san misunderstanding something?"

"Nn."

"That seems to be so."

Arisa whispers to my ear.

Looks like Mia and Lulu think the same.

I asked Nana who was feeding Shiro and Crow, and she gave her opinion, "Rather than misunderstanding, it's mis-recognition from maidenly revision, so I conjecture."

There's a high possibility that Lady Karina misunderstands that I will, "lose on purpose", in the fight to hide my true strength.

It looks like it'd become troublesome if I don't quickly dispel the misunderstanding.

◇

"This is the kingdom-style sakura salmon meuniere."

A person wearing butler-like clothes says so after putting some refined-looking salmon meuniere dish on the plates before us.

This salmon has pink scales like sea bream so people call it [Sakura Salmon].

It seems to be often eaten during the sakura blooming season as a good luck charm in the Royal Capital.

"Pochi-chan, don't start by stabbing it with the fork. Use the knife properly."

"I can eat this much in one bite nodesuyo?"

"It's awright even without a knife~?"

"It's not alright!"

Teaching Pochi and Tama manner seem difficult for Lulu and Arisa.

"Shiro, you hold it like this."

"Like this? Crow?"

"That's right."

Shiro is being taught the table manner by Crow, they master it without great difficulty.

The corners of Nana's eyes are coming loose as she sees the two. They look like a mother and her daughters, but age-wise, Nana is actually the younger one.

While giving a sidelong glance at them, I talk to Mia who's looking at the meuniere with a grim face.

"You too try eating it Mia."

"I hate fish."

"The bones are few, eat it while thinking you're being deceived."

"Mumwu."

Mia scowls at the meuniere.

Groaning while holding the fork on your mouth is a breach of manner, but it's hard to point that out since it looks cute.

"Mia, fork."

"Nn."

After appreciating it for a bit, I pointed it out to Mia.

◇

The Baron and the others haven't come back even after we've eaten the dinner and taken a bath.

The Baron's parameters shown on the map are looking dangerous. His stamina has become zero and alternating between fainted and awakened.

I want to give him nutrient and stamina recovery magic potions. Unfortunately, I can't readily show up there since only upper nobles and their associates are allowed to attend the conference.

I hand over some healing potions to Pina. I want her to give it during the conference's break.

At that time I conveyed to her that we would like to leave today, but she tearfully entreated me, saying that Consul Nina had instructed her to absolutely keep us here.

It couldn't be helped, so I was going to take everyone in a night tour of the sakura trees, but it was stopped too.

Because they don't have the mean to contact us.

"Satou."

"What is it Mia."

"Called."

I went to the balcony to enjoy the night sakura tree there instead, but

Mia who was already there said so to me.

Mia is looking at the huge sakura tree.

"Do you want to go to the base of the huge sakura tree?"

"Nn."

Mia is looking unusually serious.

"Arisa, sorry but could you contact me with Telephone when the Baron has returned."

"Okkey. I'll join Mia's sleeping together session once."

"....Okay."

I put a Carved Seal Board for [Return] magic in one corner of the room.

Sleep-sharing huh, Arisa is unselfish. Sexual harassments are forbidden of course.

Leaving Pochi and the others who look like they want to tag along, I go with Mia toward the base of the Sakura tree.

12-9. Under the Sakura Tree (2)

Satou's here. Similar with the tale about snow woman, they say Dryads charm men into tree's trunk while letting them see happy dreams.

It might have been dangerous if the Dryad I saw back then wasn't a little girl.

◇

I'm moving to base of the giant sakura tree while princess-carrying Mia and hiding using Spy skill with Ground Shrink skill.

We arrive under the sakura tree without anyone noticing.

There were some fences and barrier that protected the sakura tree in the middle of the way, but it couldn't become a hindrance.

There's a girl with ephemeral body sitting on the base of the sakura tree.

She has pink blonde hair.

This girl must be the sakura spirit who called Mia.

I carelessly showed myself up in front of that girl without even checking the AR reading.

"Who are you?!　You dare to approach the『Holy Sakura Tree』without permission from『Sakura Protector』!"

The girl completely changed from her ephemeral appearance that almost looked she was melting into the darkness and asked our identities with the force of raging fire.

Let's reply with some theatrical gesture.

"Pardon us, we have come as called by the sakura tree."

"What suspicious things are--"

A beautiful woman who appeared from the tree's trunk stopped the girl who was going to deny my word.

Geh, the sakura tree spirit really shows up....

"I'm sorry『Sakura Protector』-chan. Sleep for a while okay."

The woman who suddenly appeared from the trunk touches the girl, making her sleep in an instant.

The sakura spirit catches the listless falling girl and gently lies her down on the root of the sakura tree.

And then, after gently tidying the girl's hair, she lifts her head and faces us.

I feel like I've seen that face--

"Ara! Isn't it the bo~y. You've even come to visit the sakura me!"

As if affirming that, the AR reading even says [Dryad].

Although, this one is a sensually attractive beautiful woman that's unlike the little girl dryad I know.

The Dryad beauty tried to stretch her arms in order to embrace me, but Mia stopped it.

"Mwu, shameless."

"Ara? Boruenan Baby-chan was here too? To think you're being jealous, you're a woman after all despite being a baby."

Apparently, Mia wanted to meet this Dryad beauty.

The conversation continues while Mia is taking a posture that prevents Dryad getting closer to me. Dryad's given many reasons to persuade Mia, but her business is always the same.

"Satou."

"Boy, sorry for always asking you this. Can you give me magic power?"

--as I thought.

She puts Ban the vampire to shame.

But well, with such voluptuous beauty as the partner, one or two kisses are no trouble at all.

Dryad hugs my head and then kisses me.

It seems Mia is also clear that this is magic supplying, she's not saying [Guilty]. She seems dissatisfied though, her cheeks are inflated like balloons that are going to burst.

After sucking the largest amount of magic power she's done so far, around 2000 points, Dryad parts her lips from mine with a lewd sound.

Mia pulls Dryad away from me as soon as the magic supplying is over.

"Un, satisfying~. Ya~, I'm saved. The flow of mana in the royal capital has been strange for awhile now. I was really troubled since I couldn't absorb mana from the Royal Capital's Source. Baby-chan and Boy really saved me."

"Nn."

I inquired her since I heard some questionable words, but I couldn't obtain any other information besides the fact that the flow of mana became amiss only recently. 'Recently' is also seen from Dryad's out-of-order sensation of time, so just when was it is also questionable.

"Boy, this is a thank for the magic power. Ask Aialize-sama for the way to use it. She must know how."

After giving me a sakura-colored orb, Dryad disappears into the sakura's trunk.

According to AR appraisal, it's called Sakura Drop. It seems to be a crystallized power of spirits. I've been getting a lot of rare materials recently.

◇

I was going to leave the place after seeing off Dryad who disappeared into the sakura's trunk, but the [Sakura Protector] girl would probably catch a cold if we leave her alone like this, so I decided to wake her up.

Another reason is because leaving off just like that would make us be treated like a suspicious people. She saw our faces after all.

Oh right, as for the information about the Royal Capital's Earth's Vein getting strange, I'll go inform the king or the prime minster about it before long.

After using [Break Magic] on the girl and calling her, her eyes are opening.

"You'll catch a cold if you sleep at a place like this you know?"

"....Nn, the sakura spirit."

Did she see Sakura Dryad just before she went asleep?

It's still within my expectation. Let's play fools.

"The figure of you taking a nap on the sakura's root is as beautiful as the sakura spirit."

"....No way, someone like me--"

Even while sleeping, she wriggles from my praise and then she notices the situation halfway through and gets up.

She doesn't seem to have low blood pressure.

"--Who are you! This place is the prohibited『Holy Sakura Tree』 enclosure!"

"We stumbled here when we lost our way during a sakura night watching. I am sorry to bother you, but would yo please tell me the way to the state guesthouse?"

The girl become nervous in different direction from my word.

She probably knows that state guests in this season are all either lords or ambassadors of foreign nations.

"Would you be so kind as to tell me your name? I am called Athena the 『Sakura Protector』, one of the Shiga 33 Wands."

The girl introduces herself while showing the crest drawn on her robe.

The girl has the name taken from Greek myth, but there is nothing about her that indicates she's a reincarnated or a teleported person. The name is probably a coincidence.

Shiga 33 Wands should be the title of the royal court magicians.

"I am a retainer of Baron Muno, my name is Chevalier Pendragon."

"Mia."

Ms. Athena breaks off her courteous attitude once she hears our introductions.

"The heck, I thought you were some stupid son of upper noble, what a waste of effort."

Her polite speech has suddenly changed to be rough.

I thought she was a commoner, but it turns out she's a viscount's daughter. Daughters of upper nobles should have been more trained to keep their manner though....

She's become a royal court magician at her age after all, I guess she was studying magic too much?

"Normally, I'd have to bring people who broke the ban to the garrison but since it's annoying just go away--"

Ms. Athena who's speaking down on us stops halfway.

She's looking at Mia.

Mia who doesn't understand the reason why she's being stared tilts her head.

"Y-you're an elf right! Which clan are you?"

"Rude."

Mia sulks from the rude way she's questioning her.

It can't be helped, I tell her [Boruenan Clan] in Mia's place.

"Bo-Boruenan Clan, don't tell me, the Boruenan Clan where the Elf Sage Trazayuya from?"

"Nn."

Mia answered briefly to Ms. Athena who was asking with trembling voice.

"I knew it! Don't think you're great just because you're elf like the great Sage! My ancestor might lost, but I will absolutely leave behind achievements that surpass the Sage!"

The girl points her finger to Mia with a snap while declaring so. However, Mia looks perplexed since she can't follow the sudden story.

Apparently, her ancestor seemed to have some sort of discord with Trazayuya-shi.

"I hate elves who are acting arrogant just because of their birth. I won the status of royal court magician with my unrelenting effort and talent. I'm currently a Red Belt in Shiga 33 Wands. But I'll show you that I'll become the elite Silver Belt who leads the royal court magician!"

"Mwu?"

Ms. Athena keeps talking to Mia without catching a breath.

Mia seems slightly panicked from too many unknown words.

Still, there's Shiga Eight Swords and then this, the people of this kingdom really like to attach number on titles.

It's probably why there's the Four Devas too.

"Not."

"What is!"

Ms. Athena reflexively retorted to Mia, but then Mia shows her the Mithril Plate from her chest.

Mia is probably trying to say that she's acquired it with her own effort.

"T-that's a Mithril Plate! Come to think of it, they said the Mithril Plates this time defeated the upper and middle layer floormasters.... No, then I'll defeat the floormaster"

"Impossible."

"Why! I will absolutely defeat it!"

"It's impossible because it's impossible."

"We humans have progressed when you elves are shutting themselves in the forest! Come to the practice area of the royal court magician next time. We'll show you the real worth of us humans. Don't complain to me if you become weak at the knees after watching Synchronous Magic!"

"Mwu."

Mia was trying to say that magician alone won't be able to defeat the floormaster, but her words were too short, it couldn't get transmitted.

I don't want to intervene a quarrel between kids, but I guess I can at least be the interpreter.

"Calm down. Mia isn't looking down on you, she's saying that magicians alone can't defeat the floormaster."

"Is that so?"

"Nn."

Ms. Athena was dumbfounded from my explanation, and then Mia confirmed it.

It seems she's embarrassed for getting too excited, she's stumbling her next words while her white cheeks are turning sakura-colored.

"U-umm. For now, I apologize for my gaffe. I'm sorry. But, it's true that humans are amazing! Come see us once. You have to!"

"Nn."

After apologizing, Ms. Athena talked rapidly like she was fudging her embarrassment and then she ran away from the base of the sakura tree.

Oy, is it alright for you to leave the people who intruded on the prohibited place alone?

Even though the girl is only around a middle or high school student age, I think leaving her duty is not a good thing. It's convenient for us this time though.

We got to meet a strange girl, but let's consider it lucky since we got a connection with the royal court magician.

I'm interested with that Synchronous Magic thing too, I'll visit them with Mia when we get some free time.

Still, with a tree this big, cleaning the sakura petals seems like a pain.

Taking Mia whose head and shoulders have been piled with sakura petals like snow, I returned to the mansion with Teleport magic.

◇

The baron and the others didn't come back even when it became midnight.

I carry the children who look sleepy and lie them on the bed.

I've told Lulu to sleep early since she's going to the Duchy Capital with an airship tomorrow morning to enter the cooking contest. Liza and Nana are the guards, Arisa is the cheerleader, that's the plan.

Pochi, Tama, and Mia are staying in the Royal Capital with me.

It seems Mia has stayed in order to keep me from doing affairs, what a scandalous thing to say. Pochi and Tama seem to be the guards for Mia and me.

The two who were at a loss choosing between going to the cooking contest feast or being nearby me looked very cute.

Of course I'm planning to stealthily go with the three to cheer Lulu during the final.

Lady Karina has retreated to her room, seemingly tired with the leveling that she was doing every day.

However, the thing she said, "Don't lose your way okay", with disappearing voice as she went, I wonder if that was an invitation for yobai? If she's inviting me, I'd have liked if she whispered it sexily. I won't get on it though.

I drink some Shiga liquor while admiring the night sakura trees that have been lighted up with magic beyond the window.

Arisa begged, "One cup!", but I rejected it. In place of liquor, I pour handmade ginger ale to a glass for Arisa.

I talk a bit about our future plan while drinking and exchanging Shiga liquor with Liza.

About peerage, about getting ahead in life, and about releasing her from slavery. She's begun talking about her honest thought with the help of alcohol that she couldn't do when she was sober.

"My spear exists for Master's sake. If it's allowed, until the end of this life, my loyalty and soul to be beside Master--"

Liza who can't hold her liquor stops talking after that, and goes to sleep while still holding the cup without hearing my answer.

Good night Liza. Please take care of me from now on.

Of course, you too Arisa.

12-10. Complicating Negotiation

Satou's here. There are times when you're hit with an idea during unexpected time right. There's also the time when I thought of an algorithm that I couldn't think no matter how much before right when I entered a maid cafe and then I immediately dashed back to the office.

◇

I play with the hair of Arisa who's sleeping on my lap while sipping the Shiga liquor.

I'm hit with an idea for original magic circuit when I see the dancing sakura petals. In case of writing something that needs to be rewritten many times, doing it on the memo pad in the Menu's exchange column is nice.

It was quite a challenging circuit to make, but I've made it somehow. Let's try it with Arisa's and Mia's help tomorrow.

That was when the Baron and Nina-san returned.

I see from the window that the Baron is being carried on a male servant's back. His face looks very pale.

I drop Arisa who's pretending to be sleeping from my lap and go to the entrance hall to give a magic potion to the Baron.

Of course Arisa who's completely opened her eyes after giving up her pretend-sleep follows me along unashamedly.

"Welcome back Nina-san. Pina, give this nutritional supplement to

Baron-sama."

"Ou, I'm back. Damn it, you're letting off the smell of nice liquor on you. Give me some too."

Nina-san curses at the smell of alcohol in my breath.

The Baron who's already gasping is getting retired to his bedroom.

I tell them again to make sure that he drinks the supplement before he sleeps. He should be fit again next morning if he does.

"Oh Nina-san is sulking."

"Yeah, though if Arisa-dono assumes the consul-aide position, my workload will decrease by half."

"No~way. I won't be near Master if I do that."

Looks like Consul Nina is also fatigued, there's no strength on her quip to Arisa.

I take out a nutritional supplement from the storage through my pocket and hand it over to Nina-san. It's the special version with a lot of sugar added I've prepared for these two people.

"What's this? It smells really sweet."

"Please drink it in one gulp. It's good for fatigue."

Nina-san gulped the supplement in one go and muttered, "sweet", while looking like she really didn't like it.

Nina-san has recovered her vitality once we reach the living room. As expected of magic medicines.

"It sure is very effective."

"It's a product of an up-and-coming alchemist called Trismegistus."

"Feel like I've heard that name somewhere."

I pour some Shiga liquor that Arisa has fetched to Nina-san who answered haphazardly.

The side dish is some smoked lesser basilisk.

◇

"--That's why, do your things moderately."

"Please don't say something unreasonable."

Nina-san explains the situation mixed with complaints.

I'm told that Nina-san has made the arrangement to make me become a baronet.

There should be no problem with it considering my achievements so far, but a roadblock came from an unexpected direction. It was from the relatives of Duke Oyugock who should have been in the same faction as us.

"Geez, I seriously thought that the Duke had gone senile when he wanted to raise you to become an earl."

"....Earldom is surely absurd indeed."

Earldom is an upper noble rank, there are only 32 of them even in Shiga Kingdom. Of course, dissenting opinions came one after another from other factions, and that proposal was rejected.

--Normally it should have been over with that.

Apparently countless stars flowed in the western sky, and the tremor reached even the Royal Capital.

Looks like Nina-san and the Baron saw it too from the royal castle.

Furthermore, a report came from the temple about the appearance of an oracle informing the revival of the Dog-head Evil God in the western desert.

It seems the royal castle was in panic, things were horrible. Oracle has its good and bad too.

The break-down of the nobles from old lineage was particularly hilarious, so Nina-san laughed while drinking her liquor.

A lot of lives were sacrificed due to the riot and chaos from the panic until a communication from the labyrinth city conveyed that the demon lord--the Dog-head Evil God according to the temple--had been subjugated.

Sacrifices might not have appeared if I didn't use a flashy magic like Meteor Shower, but there's nothing I can do even if I worry about the what-if. Let's make this be a lesson for next time.

Specifically, I need to get the Chant Orb, and become able to use Advanced and Forbidden magic. I must be able to defeat powerful enemies without depending on the Meteor Shower.

Now then, let's get back to the topic.

The King announced that Hero Nanashi was the [Hero of Shiga Kingdom] in order to calm the populace, but the effect was weak.

It's natural since the hero never even did anything in front of the Royal Capital's populace.

It seems the populace even doubted the existence of this Hero Nanashi.

Then, a report about a group led by me as the Raid Leader that defeated the floormaster came to the Royal Capital that was in turbulent state.

Normally the story should have been a rehash of Jeril and the others' and be overshadowed, but due to such circumstance, it pointlessly attracted considerable attention.

The difference in power between a demon lord and a floormaster is completely unthinkable, but from the point of view of normal people, they're both mighty monsters.

And so, since an existence that could oppose such being appeared to be more reliable than a hero that may or may not exist, some strange request, claiming that I should be taken from the Baron and became the direct retainer of the royal family, began to spread among the Royal Capital's nobles.

It's nothing but grasping at straws, but it's really quite an annoying story.

Although in a way, I've had it coming....

And the decisive blow was when Liza won against a Shiga Eight Sword.

Looks like I was on the verge of being stupidly nominated to become an earl, but Nina-san and Baron Muno's fine-play successfully stopped it.

I can't say anything else but GJ (Good Job).

In the end, Nina-san said that I was to be either a honorary viscount or a permanent baron.

"By the way, is it true that the group you led to defeat the 『Floormaster』 was mainly consisted of fairykin mercenaries?"

"Yes, they were people whom I was introduced by an acquaintance during our way to the Labyrinth City."

I'm not telling any lie, most of them are introduced by Aze-san.

"Moreover, none of your retainers fell, that's quite an absurd achievement."

"It's better when there are few victims right."

In fact, there was zero victim and none suffered any great injury, it was a completely safe hunt.

"In addition, you even established a charity and an explorer training school in the Labryinth City was it?"

"Yes, it's just as I've written in the letter. We should make good use of human resources."

It sounds a bit cold, but if you want to effectively collect resources such as magic cores and materials from the labyrinth, it's better to raise the standard of beginner explorers so there will be more experienced ones.

If there are more people with room to move, there will be people who would raise the next generation.

"Frankly speaking, you're already not at the level of a honorary chevalier."

"You're overestimating me."

It's not humility, I really think so.

The charity and the training school were not because I had some noble ideal or something, it was just a course of events.

◇

"By the way, I've been meaning to ask you this since a little while ago...."

"What is it? Still, this fish sure is delicious. It's fleshy like eels and delicately tasty like Congers."

--Ah, that's the White Horn Snake.

I've added them because the smoked basilisk was gone, but since I carelessly took out meat from monsters, I dodge the question by saying, "Please guess it."

This kabayaki goes well with Shiga liquor.

Incidentally, Shiga Kingdom's Congers are as thick as a baseball bat.

Oops, the story wandered off again.

I forcibly steer the story back to the topic.

"I seem to recall that peerages higher than honorary baronet and permanent baronet can only be conferred by the King himself?"

"Of course it is."

"Then why were the nobles discussing as to whether someone be conferred peerage."

Before answering me, Nina-san waved the emptied liquor bottle demanding more, so I take out the Dragon Spring Liquor from behind the sofa. I choose the best liquor as the compensation for all the trouble.

"What we're doing is the prior negotiation for recommending people with achievements who deserve the peerage to the king. How many thousands nobles do you think are in this large kingdom? Recommending talented people from places that don't reach the King's eyes is the privilege and duty of the upper nobles."

I see, it's like a corporation huh.

It's like section managers or heads recommending their subordinates for promotion to the board of directors, just at nation-wide scale.

"Although, it's only about a half of the recommended people get to be conferred peerages. This time there are many people who are instated at low ranks like you."

I see, so she recommends [honorary viscount or permanent baron] because [honorary baron or permanent baronet] peerages are many.

"I'd like the honorary baronet one please. It looks like the marriage proposals would increase if I chose permanent one."

"Hmph, if you don't like marriage proposals, then just get a wife already. Nana-dono's age is close to yours right. I personally want you to take Karina-sama who's late for marriage for your bride though."

'That way there would be less nobles who scheme on transferring', so Nina-san muttered.

◇

Afterwards, she tells me the recent states of Muno Territory.

I've heard it from the letter too, it seems the reconstruction of Muno Barondom is doing well enough to be called too well.

It's thanks to the nobles from Duchy Capital who offered their technical support--in the name of Support and Technical Exchange.

She's scouted lady attendants and their attendants who come from Duchy Capital to learn manners to become personnel for internal administration, so they've secured enough for now.

Furthermore, as for the public order, on top of the improvement thanks to a mysterious person--it's probably me when I was searching the pickles--capturing large number of thieves, the bronze explorers coming from the labyrinth city and entering into government service also helped reinforcing the army.

Looks like Sir Zotor diligently trains with the former-explorer newcomers too. The ex-fake hero Hauto-kun has also become qualified enough to be an officer.

After the talk has mostly ended, we begin to talk about gossip.

Nina-san, tomorrow will be bad if you don't sleep soon you know?

"Oh right, the daughter of Viscount Emurin is also coming here. She's visiting her home at the Duchy Capital right now, but she should be coming here with the Viscount with an airship."

Who was it again--right, if I remember right, Viscount Emurin is the noble-san who runs [Lulu's fruit] orchard. I've met Rina-chan the daughter in several tea parties. She was a reliable child even though she's only around the age of a first year in middle school.

Oops, rather than that, I forgot to ask the most important thing.

"I have something important to talk with you--"

"What's with the serious face."

I question Nina-san who's pulled back, I'm finally able to ask about dried gourds.

Specifically, about the bottle gourd fruits that will become dried gourds.

"You have interest in some strange things. That thing is not flavorful, and the rind is tough, so no one eats it unless as substitute food."

"That's because you can't eat that as is. It's rich in dietary fiber, so it's good for stomach."

"Fu~hn, it's a kind of medical plant huh."

Nina-san folds her arms, maybe she's thinking that I'm going to commercialize them.

Nina-san found out about the bottle gourds when she was investigating it as to whether it could bear fruits that could be sold in order to finance Muno Barondom reconstruction.

Surprisingly, the plants aren't only in the great forest like True Ancestor Ban has said, they're growing wild everywhere in the northern part of Muno Barondom.

It seems there were even villages that went by with dried gourds when the demon was secretly acting behind the scene, and they suffered in poverty.

Nina-san who's guessed that I want the bottle gourd fruits makes a firm promise that she will send them to my mansion in the Labyrinth City.

If I'm able to make a good recipe out of it I'm going to send it to Gelt-san, the chief of Muno castle.

The drinking bout is over when the large bottle of the Dragon Spring Liquor has been emptied.

I carry Arisa who's asleep and made my arm to be her pillow to the bedroom.

There are only three hours left before morning, but I'll let her sleep even for a bit.

12-11. Royal Capital's Mansion

Satou's here. There was a time when I felt disappointed with the rain during sports day after practicing for many days.

Of course, I was disappointed about the wasted practices. It was not because I couldn't see the girls in their sportswear. Yes, not at all.

◇

"Then the cooking contest is postponed?"

"Yes, I'm really sorry. There's some complicated circumstance...."

When we were greeting Marquis Lloyd's butler whom we found in the airship boarding terminal, he told Lulu about the postponement of the cooking contest.

He's being evasive about the situation, but it's probably because Marquis Lloyd has been recalled to the Royal Capital for suspicion of attacking Duke Bishtal's airship.

The luxurious carriage that passed by us when we were coming here must be of Marquis Lloyd's.

I've also confirmed on the map that Marquis Lloyd is in the royal castle.

I'll visit him with some presents later. Meeting with someone who's under suspicion for attempted murder of the duke might be bad, but we, who are the ones who stopped the attempted murder, should be fine.

After saying farewell to the butler, we leave the bustling airship terminal.

◇

"Hey hey, are those uniforms?"

"Hm? Looks like it, probably the Royal Academy's uniform."

Arisa asked about the boys and girls who are walking down the road, wearing the same clothes. Even on the AR indicators, they're, [Affiliation: Shiga Royal Academy, Preschool].

Arisa could have probably checked it herself with [Status Check] even without purposely asking me.

Royal Academy is like the university in Japan, the school buildings are divided on several grounds.

First, the high class school with scholarly presentations' building like an auditorium and a library are located in front of the royal castle.

The Noble School and Maiden School are in the Noble Street. Nobles go to each of them. The Maiden School is the so-called Finishing School. Lilina, the daughter of Gururian's Viceroy attends the former.

The one with the uniform we've been seeing from a little while ago is the Preschool near the airport. The Preschool isn't only attended by the wealthy commoner's children, but also the children of honorary nobles.

Beside the Preschool, there are the Knight School and Magic School, both which require wide plot of land.

It seems there are artificial underground labyrinths inside the Magic

School's plot. It's not even as big as one Area of Selbira Labyrinth though, so it's probably completely for the students' training.

There are the [Labyrinth of Beginning] that's 50 square meters wide and has five floors, and the [Labyrinth of Trial] that's 100 square meters wide and has 10 floors.

Though it seems it's free for the Royal Capital's nobles to use, you have to pay some fee to enter and when you defeat a monster.

And then, monsters that have gotten stronger deep in the labyrinth are taken to the arena at the edge of the Royal Capital to fight against crime slaves as a show which also serves to cull their number.

I knew this information from the letter of Princess Menea who's attending the Magic Academy.

While explaining such, we pass by the Royal Capital's Preschool Academy.

It seems Arisa is remembering her former life, she's sending some nostalgic glances.

◇

Passing through a sturdy-looking inner wall, our carriage enters the Noble Street.

This Noble Street's area is extremely wide, it's as wide as the whole Muno City. By the way, the Royal Castle takes around 30% of the area.

Originally, the Royal Capital was only the Noble Street, but it became too crowded 300 years ago, and after getting repeatedly widened every

100 years, the Royal Capital has become like the present state with the concentric circles inner walls.

We leave the main street that goes to the royal castle, and enter the block that extends to the lower noble area.

"Hey, where is it?"

"It's right after this block, we're close."

After passing under the shadow of an aqueduct and advancing for a while, we got to the place where an entire mansion took the whole block.

"Wall~?"

"The entrance is taking a day off nanodesu!"

"H-hey! Don't tell me this luxurious mansion is our Royal Capital's mansion?"

No way.

This is the head office of Echigoya Firm.

This one is for nobles' use, there are two more shops in the downtown for the commoners.

"You're mistaken. Look, you can see it now. It's the mansion with blue roof over there."

"Small."

--How rude.

The lot area is narrower than the mansion in the Labyrinth City, but the floor space is the same you know?

By the way, the price was far and away higher. The price in the Royal Capital is high no matter the world eh.

◇

"Welcome back, Master."

"I'm back."

I greet back an elderly man who's wearing butler clothes.

This person and the five maids behind him are professional I've employed from the Royal Capital's temporary personnel agency.

This is the first time I meet them since I left the arrangement to Ms. Miteruna. I've asked her to choose people who don't discriminate against Demi-humans.

The maids-san are all normal people, but this elderly man is a level 27 former explorer.

He was a scout during his explorer day so he's weak in a direct fight, but he should be fine against some average thieves alone.

The elderly butler guides us to the living room, and then we enjoy the blue tea that he's prepared.

Lulu has immediately gone to see the kitchen while bringing Arisa along. The beastkin girls are checking the mansion's security. Shiro and Crow are helping the beastkin girls.

Thus, only Mia and Nana are here.

"Shall I bring some sweets for Madam and the Lady?"

"....Madam."

Mia mutters so looking happy, but he was referring to Nana without a doubt.

"That is wrong, correcting it. I am Master's serv--"

"Sorry, but I have two tasks for you."

"I understood--"

I covered the latter half of Nana's line and gave some tasks to the elderly butler.

I ask him to hire some gatekeepers and guards in the mansion plot at night, and remodeling of the basement.

I'm thinking of changing the wine and food cellar at the basement to become treasure warehouse to attract thieves. It's also convenient that it has other entrance beside on the mansion.

◇

I install a teleportation Carved Seal Board in the bedroom, change into Kuro figure and teleport to the Echigoya mansion next door.

The teleport destination is Tifaliza's office.

Only people related to Kuro are allowed to be here, so I've always teleported here whenever I have some business in the Royal Capital.

"Kuro-sama."

"Oh my, Kuro-sama! Your white hair is wonderful today too. This room is dirty as you can see, so please come to my room as the manager."

Tifaliza bowed and only spoke a few words, but the newly appointed manager girl seems to be burning with rivalry with Tifaliza, she's approaching me pro-actively.

It's truly the demonstration of [They're hitting]. I don't need to say what are.

She's one of the female explorers who were left in the Ivy Mansion.

They were people without aim, but since they were formerly nobles, they could read and write of course. I've employed them in Echigoya Firm, since there were educated people available.

Among them, this newly appointed manager girl was from lineage that extended to some Royal Capital's noble and unexpectedly well-known, so it was convenient.

"No need for greetings. Show me the sales list and the reservation list."

"Here--"

"Here it is. Kuro-sama."

The new manager girl took the document that Tifaliza had presented and gave it to me. There's no difference regardless of whoever gave it right?

Documents prepared by Tifaliza are easy to read like always.

"The hair growth medicine and the vitality medicine are selling better than anticipated huh."

"Yes, ever since we gave some samples to the baroness and the viscount who acted as loudspeakers, orders have been coming until we're about to run out of stock."

"Is that so, that's good."

I've prepared around 1000 sets for both, yet they're almost sold out.

The vitality medicine is a medicine for energizing one part of men. It has superior power than the existing medicines, it also lasts longer. The luster skin medicines for women are also selling well, but not as good as the vitality medicines.

The basic-skin products are not really popular.

"The hair-growth medicines are 10 gold coins per bottle, and the vitality medicines are one gold coin per bottle, but I think they would still sell even for twice those prices. How about raising their prices right now?"

"I'll leave that to you. I'll put twice the amount of them compared to the last time to the warehouse, do everything you can to get money in short term from the nobles, not in long term."

"Understood."

I bring the manager to the underground warehouse and take out medicines and built-to-order equipment from the Item Box to here.

Only me and the manager can go in-and-out of this underground warehouse.

Tifaliza and Nell are their seniors, but those two don't have fighting prowess, so they've been excluded for their safety.

It's like I'm ignoring the manager, but in her case, it's partly because she's volunteered for it, but she also has the influence of her parent's house, so something unreasonable probably won't befall her.

I've installed security facilities at the level of the Royal Capital in this underground warehouse.

Among them, there are an Orichalcum Golem that uses Philoshoper's Stone as its power source, and eight Bronze Golems that stand guard all-night long, so they could stop any intruder unless they have special ability that negate physical attack like Ban the True Ancestor.

They can't stop any intruder who can use space magic, but I'm not taking it into consideration since there are only few people who can use them.

As long as it's not Arisa, the Orichalcum Golem would probably knock that kind of intruder down before they could escape.

By the way, I've copied the beastkin girls fighting pattern into the Orichalcum Golem.

One Orichalcum Golem is about slightly weaker than Pochi. The eight

Bronze Golems are weaker than an Orichalcum Golem even if they band together, but I've installed an algorithm that make them disregard any damage on their body.

Even Tama would find it difficult to run away from the cooperation of eight Bronze Golems and the Orichalcum Golem. No, Tama in Ninja Mode probably could easygoingly run away from them....

I put the payment, the gold coins and some precious metal ingots, into my Item Box.

There's an unusual metal among them.

"What is this platinum ingot?"

"Yes, we received it from a weaselkin merchant we were acquainted during the merchant assembly. Usan-dono and--"

"The name doesn't matter. Buy three times this amount next time, you can use the money as long as it matches the market price."

I've been searching for platinum since it's needed for an indispensable magic tool. I've only gotten around 10 grams of it from the magic-mining, so I won't miss this chance to acquire kilograms worth of platinum.

Still, it's been a while since I heard that weaselkin's name.

◇

"There are many upper nobles who wish for credit transactions...."

"Reject it. My Master wishes to collect the nobles' money until the auction that's held after the Kingdom Conference. If there is anyone who threatens us, lodge a complaint to the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister knows the true owner of Echigoya Firm. He will surely give a hand."

The tiger has lent his leather, so I'll fully make use of it without reserve.

I've already defeated two demon lords that appeared in this kingdom, so there is no need for reservation.

Moreover, some secret agents of the Prime Minster are hiding nearby this mansion, if anything happened, they probably would intervene before I called him.

Knights who seem to be the Prime Minister's private army are regularly patrolling the area, looks like they're here as a deterrence for other nobles.

"Kuro-sama, this isn't directly related to Echigoya Firm, but I want you to hear this--"

When I'm confirming Tifaliza's stock letter, the Manager tells me the rumors she's gathered.

Last night, a monster appeared from the Royal Capital's underground, it went into hiding in the sewer after eating people who were present at the place. It seemed to be a Scarab Beetle-type of monster with red figure.

The place where the monster appeared was the jail, and there might be some criminals who had escaped by taking advantage of the disturbance.

It seems the guards have been searching criminal slaves called [Violet] in the sewer since this morning.

I've tried searching the map, but the only monsters in the Royal Capital are the tamed monsters accompanied by Tamers.

If I exclude the Royal Academy's labyrinths, there are only ghost-type monsters here and there in the underground tunnel and the slum quarter. The soul magician who dwells in the underground tunnel seems suspicious, but there's no insect-type monster anywhere to be seen.

There's a very small group of orcs in the underground tunnel, but they probably won't make a blunder that would get them caught by the searching guards.

There are a lot of groups with high levels and great fighting powers in the Royal Capital, so it should be no problem even if I don't butt in.

I think I should give some warning to the people I know when I get back to the mansion just in case.

"By the way, what happened to Nell?"

"Yes, there's not enough people who can use life magic in the factory, so she's currently helping over there."

I see, so that's why I didn't see her.

I don't feel like I've come back to the Royal Capital before hearing Nell's peculiar way of talk. Maybe I should go visit the factory where Porina is later.

"I forgot. Here's a souvenir."

I give a necklace made of True Silver with a small gem attached to Tifaliza. It's a reward for her who's supporting Echigoya Firm silently.

It's a magic tool that has the effect of relieving fatigue, so I don't doubt that she'll work even harder now. It also has a secret function as an insurance, but if possible, I hope it'll stay an insurance.

I'm going to give silver earrings for the other staff members, I'll leave it to the manager before going out.

The one at the managerial position probably need better vanity to show, so I've prepared a necklace with gold chains and a big ruby for the manager.

Since it seems like it's hard for Tifaliza to put the necklace on her neck, I do it for her.

Tifaliza's white skin is turning red, maybe because I'm putting it from the front.

"It suits you well."

"Thank you very much."

She's expressionless like usual, but her voice is a half octave higher than usual.

She must be pleased.

I lightly wave my hand to reply Tifaliza's thank, and then teleport to the factory at the edge of the Royal Capital.

12-12. Royal Capital's Mansion (2)

Satou's here. It's said that necessity is the mother of invention. I think there was a time when I endeavored greatly to devise a program to make things easier.

◇

"Igniter tool that doesn't use magic power?"

"Yes, a self-alleged inventor claimed that it could be lit easier than an Ignition Rod, and the trial-product that he brought was indeed comparatively easier to use when we tried it. One needs to learn a little bit of the knack, but it should be easier than using a flint."

Porina told me such story when I was visiting the workshop's office.

Some self-proclaimed inventors have been coming here while bringing various inventions, it seems they were inspired by the kickboard.

Although most of the tools are useless, I've told Porina to buy anything that's even a little bit usable.

We're buying an idea with the prototype blueprint in exchange of one silver coin. If Echigoya is going to sell the tool, the inventor will get 10% of the profit from the sales.

Porina brings a box written with "17" from the shelf.

Looks like she's divided them by number since distinguishing them will be hard otherwise.

The inside of the box is a lighter the size of a hair spray.

Leaving the prototype before establishing a contract like this, I think the inventor is quite careless.

It's the same kind as the oil lighter I know although this one is a bit rustic.

It's perfectly the same with the lighter structure written in the notebook that I've gotten in the dark auction back then.

There isn't anyone with cheat-like skills that reincarnated or teleported people would have so this someone must be a teleported person related to Princess Menea. It's probably a teleported person that should've been dead but is actually, [alive all along.]

"It may seem very convenient, but it has a fatal flaw."

Porina speaks about the problem hesitantly toward me who's looking at the lighter full of interest.

--It's the production cost.

Although it's an item that should be profitable in other cities, there's no meaning here in Royal Capital that's getting abundant supply of magic cores from the Labyrinth City.

The production cost for Ignition Rod is cheaper than the calculated cost of this Lighter even in Royal Capital, which isn't as cheap as in the Labyrinth City.

Of course, on top of being a business, the price we get from calculating the production cost and the profit margin is such that it won't be able to compete with the Ignition Rod.

Moreover, compared to the Ignition Rod that's the size of a long chopstick, the prototype lighter is heavier and bigger.

The Ignition Rod is superior even in the convenience aspect in kitchens.

It'll only end up as a collector item of eccentric people in its current state.

"Porina, do you have the contact information of the inventor?"

"Yes, I have inquired it. The other party said that, 『I can come anytime』, so I could contact him with date and time that Kuro-sama wants. Would the workshop's reception room be alright for the meeting place?"

"Yeah, please do."

She's really well prepared.

Porina was originally wise enough you wouldn't have thought that she was a former baggage carrier, but I think she's become refined ever since she became the workshop head.

She probably has accumulated various experiences too, her level has increased by three compared to the last time I met her.

After telling the date and time to Porina, she sends a messenger from the next room.

I didn't hear the name of the inventor I was going to meet.

Now that I've completed my business, I hand out the souvenirs. I guess I'll go back after seeing Nell after this.

It's lunchtime now, so she's probably in the lounge or the dining room.

◇

"Hyu, Hyuro-hama"

Who the heck is [Hyuro].

Nell who was slurping a mouthful of noodles ended up saying [Kuro-sama] strangely.

"You can speak after you finish swallowing the thing in your mouth."

"Fes."

Nell slurps the remaining noodles down.

Guessing from this aroma and the color of the noodles--

"Is that Soba?"

"U, ugu. Y, yes, it's Soba ssu."

Soba with soy-sauce soup huh.

I've heard that there's a custom of eating Soba in the Royal Capital, but I heard it was in Sobagaki (buckwheat dough) form.

When I told that to Nell--

"I got to eat various strange dishes once a wandering cook came to my favorite diner 'round a month ago ssuyo. Half of the dishes were extremely bad though, so you'll have to brace yourself when you challenge a new one."

I asked what kind of dishes were they, but apparently the recipes were similar to the dishes in my former world. It probably ended up tasting strange since the cook tried to forcefully reproduce the ingredients and the flavoring using local products.

I was thinking of visiting the diner since it was lunch time anyway, but since the possibility is high that the cook is the same as the inventor who brought the lighter, I've decided not to.

I'm going to meet him anyway, and the girls would break their stomach waiting for me if I don't get back soon.

I asked Nell about the recent situation and affairs at the workshop a bit.

I've already handed her the souvenir of course. Looks like she rarely receives an accessory, her unusual tension when she was receiving it was impressive.

It's an earring that has philosopher's stone that's smaller than a grain of sand embedded, it also has magic recovery effect.

Please take care of it.

--The workshop's efficiency must be going to be increased with this.

After telling Arisa that I would go back now with [Telephone], I teleported back to the mansion.

◇

I could smell the aroma of Soba and Tempura when I got back to the mansion.

"Satou."

Mia who's come to greet me leads me by hand to the dining room.

Tama and Pochi run from the kitchen and join us halfway through.

When we arrive at the dining room, Nana and the others are currently preparing the plates.

I feel sorry for the maids who don't have anything to do, so I urge everyone to sit down and leave the job to the maids.

"Welcome back~, you're coming too fast after the『Kaeru Call』earlier. You should've contacted me earlier."

....A, Arisa. [Kaeru (come home) Call], what era are you from.

Well, no use retorting that after all this time.

The Tempura Soba on the table is more important right now.

Everyone starts eating with the signal of [Itadakimasu]. Pochi and Tama have become able to use chopsticks recently, but it seems they can't hold all the Soba with them, they've exchanged them with forks.

I quickly dip the noodle on the soup and gulp it one go.

When I chew it, the aroma of Soba and the salty-sweet taste of the soup spread in my mouth.

A Japanese person should be eating this with slurping sounds, but since it seems to be a breach of etiquette in Shiga Kingdom, I refrain myself.

In fact, Lulu is scolding Arisa who's eating the Soba messily.

"Like I said, eating Soba like this is the right thing to do!"

"You can't do that even with such excuse. Master would dislike you if you eat vulgarly like that you know?"

"That's impossib~le. Right, Darling."

Who the heck is Darling.

After biting a shrimp tempura called Shiga Sakura Shrimp, I continue eating the Soba in Shiga manners like before.

They call it Sakura Shrimp, but the size is of normal shrimp. It probably got the name from its sakura-colored shell.

"Look, even Master eats elegantly."

"You traitor~~~~"

I'm enjoying the Soba that I haven't had for a long time with Arisa's scream as the BGM.

By the way, Tempura Soba was selected because Lulu consulted Arisa when she found the buckwheat flour in the food warehouse.

"It was delicious, Lulu."

"Thank you very much, Master."

Lulu's voice sounds happy enough to make you think like there was a music note attached at the end.

It sounds nice no matter how many times I hear it.

"Hey~, since it was my idea, praise me too."

"Right, I felt like having Soba today, so good job Arisa."

'Praise me', Arisa asks for more praise upfront.

"Don't say that with only words, show it with actions too."

I would have praised her more if she didn't assume the posture of wanting to kiss.

"Arisa is a spoiled child nanodesu."

"Spoiled child~?"

Pochi shoves a Tempura into the mouth of Arisa who's closing her eyes. Tama also thrusts a Tempura from the other side.

"Mogaga. Wait,yougyys. Nn-gu. Hey why were they Perilla Tempura. There are the shrimps and octopuses ones right!"

"I mean, Lulu said that Perilla is good for your health~?"

"Shrimp-san wants Pochi to eat it, it said nodesu."

Ignoring the heartwarming children's bickering, I talk to Lulu.

Liza should be onto them after a bit more.

"Where did you get the Perilla?"

"Mia-chan found it in the garden."

"Happened during a stroll."

"That's amazing, Mia."

"Nn."

I'm impressed she could find it even though it could be easily mistaken with weeds.

I quite like Perilla Tempura.

◇

After the lunch, I go to tour the Royal Capital with everyone.

We're riding two separate carriages. Both are rentals from Noble Transportation Guild.

Of course, that's including the coachmen. We're going to depend on them during our stay in the Royal Capital.

I have two big carriages in my storage, but it's hard to use them in the Royal Capital where there are a lot of people with appraisal skills gathered considering the technology in them.

Although my own carriage that has floating function feels better, the carriages we're riding right now are high-class among the rentals themselves, we don't feel much vibrations in the cabin.

"So, where are we going?"

"Right--"

The tourist attractions of Royal Capital are the royal castle's sakura tree and the hanging garden behind the royal castle, but I've fully enjoyed the former yesterday, and I'm going to attend the garden party at the latter after the peerage ceremony.

The best tourist attraction that commoners and lower nobles can visit means the Great Water Fountain at the Royal Capital's Eight Passages. There are various sculptures on the water fountain, many themed statues are standing there. In addition, it has moving mechanism that changes depending on the bell that rings on timetable, I'm planning to see them in turns.

"It's blowing like pyuu, nodesu!"

"Just like Mia's magic~?"

"Really?"

"Nana-sama, it's amazing, look."

"Shiro, you'll fall to the fountain if you lean so much."

The youth trope are in high spirits after seeing the fountain.

There were fountains in the dwarf and elf villages too, but it seems that's irrelevant for these children.

I think this is the first for Shiro and Crow.

"It's pretty, but the water spray is cold. It'd have been pleasing if this was in the Labyrinth City."

"You're right. But water is precious there, so it's not possible isn't it?"

"You can put limitation on specific time, and anytime beside that it's going to only collect water, that works right."

Fumu, if we make it as a tourist attraction in front of the guild or in the guild's courtyard, it could become a nice healing spot.

--Bells that signify timetable begin to resound on various place in the Royal Capital.

"Waa, amazing! Look look Arisa! Master, please look at that, it's really pretty"

My thought comes back with the voice of Lulu that's one-tone higher than usual, calling me.

My eyes are unconsciously captivated with the scene before me.

I don't know if it uses water magic or force magic, but water rise from the springs around the fountain while ignoring gravity, forming many rings in the air.

And then the fountain blows water through those rings.

The rings rise while following the stream, and then disappear while leaving rainbow light.

Slightly afterward, nozzles under the water simultaneously blow water as if coloring the sky, and then the center fountain creates large flower-shaped pattern.

The falling water sprays create multiple layers of flower petals, falling sakura petals dance together with it in the square's sky.

--It's truly a fantasy spectacle.

Nevertheless, this wasn't just a mechanical device, but also magical huh.

Lulu admires that scene without speaking a word while grabbing my sleeve.

It's not only Lulu, everyone is gazing at the ever-altering shapes of the water festival.

....Mia, and also Pochi. I know your feelings, but would you close those gaping mouths.

I silently pushed and closed these two's mouths.

12-13. Inventor Boy

Satou's here. Recently people tend to shirk effort, but I think you will never get masterful insight without piling up efforts. It is said that your everyday effort will never betray you after all.

◇

The next morning after the Royal Capital sightseeing tour, I change into Kuro and teleport to the workshop where Porina is waiting.

I'm going to meet the inventor mentioned before.

"Porina, has he come?"

"Yes, Kuro-sama."

Porina who welcomed me guides me to the reception room.

The one waiting beyond the door Porina has opened is an unexpected person.

"Nice to meet you! My name is Aoi Haruka. I am not a noble despite having family name, so please do not misunderstand."

A 10-year-old boy who looks exactly like a girl introduces himself with polite language unbefitting of his age.

Aoi is a Japanese person that Princess Menea's Kingdom has summoned. It might be more correct to call him a person of Land of Rich

Autumn Harvest Empire Japan, but let's not mind the detail.

"Nice too meet you, I'm Echigoya. I'm the chairman of Echigoya Firm."

Despite using the figure and clothes of Echigoya, my name in exchange column is still Kuro. Echigoya is a plain fake name of Kuro.

"I'd like to ask forgiveness for my rudeness, but is Echigoya-san a Japanese?"

"It's probably a different Japan than yours though."

"As I thought! I knew that there were other Japanese people who came to this world beside me!"

I make Aoi Boy to control his excitement with my hand.

I feel that his personality differs from when I met him as Satou, but this one might be the base one. He was with Princess Menea at that time, he might have denied the fact that he was a Japanese.

"Calm down. First, let's talk about our business."

"Yes! That Lighter is my masterpiece--"

Aoi Boy gleefully begins to talk about his hardships and the point for improvements.

It seems like he'll go on forever if left alone, so I tell him the cruel hard fact.

"We will not sell that Lighter as our product."

"B-but why? The mechanism is simple, and oil is common--"

I tell the shaken Aoi Boy about the problem with the Lighter as Porina has told me.

Yet the Aoi Boy still persisted, and only finally relented after I showed him the Ignition Rod.

"So, what kind of『Invention』are you going to make next?"

"Unfortunately, there is no next time if I can't sell the Lighter.... I have no more fund."

It seems he got the lighter money this time from pawning the ring that Princess Menea had lent him.

Shiga Kingdom doesn't have any bank that you can ask for financing after all.

There are firms and the merchant guild that can do that, but you'll become a slave if you can't pay back the money.

"Then, I have a suggestion for you--"

I offer Aoi Boy to become an inventor & advisor of Echigoya Firm, and to give him a laboratory in our Royal Capital's mansion and the research fund.

And just to make sure, I also offer him one gold coin as the initial salary, and to lend him the money needed to take Princess Menea's ring from the pawnshop.

Thus, Aoi Boy becomes a member of Echigoya Firm.

I have many reasons as to why I take him under me, but the biggest one is in order to avoid him developing something that will incur the [Gods' Wrath].

I tell Aoi Boy about the story I've heard from Corpse and Armor after forewarning him that it should remain a secret.

I especially warn him about the radio tower and train ahead of time since they're convenient and easy to come up. It won't be funny if the Royal Capital turns into ashes because of my funding.

My business with Aoi Boy is over, so I ask him about the present state of the other Japanese who was with him, Yui Akasaki.

It seems she was proposed by a high-ranking nobleman whom she was acquainted with from an evening party she attended with Princess Menea.

Looks like the other party was the one who fell for Yui. Falling in love to a 13-year old girl, he must be a lolicon.

It seems Yui didn't feel the same, but she was moved by intense attack from the other party and made a promise to marry him. They couldn't get married right away due to the difference in their social positions, so the guy has asked a noble related to him to adopt Yui as their daughter in order to secure her social position, allowing them to marry.

Aoi Boy is deeply moved as he tells me about how she's currently seriously studying etiquette in a class referred by that related noble.

"Echigoya-san, I want to introduce you to my Sensei--"

◇

Aoi Boy has led me to a downtown with some small workshops. You can reach the slum quarter after going through several streets from here.

"Sensei! Are you inside, Sensei"

"Maybe he's sleeping?"

The radar shows me that there's a luminous spot of a person inside.

Since the door seems to be shut with only bolt, I smoothly open it with [Magic Hand].

"It's open."

"Huh? You're right--. Sensei! It's me Aoi. I'm going in"

Aoi Boy skillfully evades the scattered written memos on the floor and goes in further.

I knit my brows when I look at the scattered memos on the floor. The double-inversion disk-type aerodynamic engine that I've made with a different theory and a circuit with different layout is drawn there.

"Echigoya-san, this person is Professor Jahad."

"I often heard about your name in the past."

"Hmph, I don't need some lip service."

Aoi Boy introduces me to a white-haired old man with bedhair wearing glasses that look like bottom of bottles. He has no special features besides his small stature despite being a human.

He's the rumored magician who's crazy for spinning things, and the person who wrote the books I saw in Seryuu city whom I had wanted to meet once.

I take out his works and the spinning top that he's created from Item Box to show him that it wasn't some lip service.

After seeing his works, he returned them back to me while hmph-ing, but his attitudes softened somewhat afterwards.

It seems he was a member of both the Royal Academy and the Royal Research Institute, but he fell into the trap of some researchers with noble lineage and was snatched both titles.

Now he's living a poor life by repairing magic tools in the downtown without any financial supporter.

I invited Prof. Jahad to be a researcher of Echigoya Firm, but his reply wasn't favorable.

"Hmph, I don't care with money. If you want to hire me, bring me the new type aerodynamic engine! I would even sell my soul to demon lords if I could see the artistic splendor of that double disk engine up close."

"You won't backpedal on it right."

"Not."

I clear some space in the room with [Magic Hand] and take out a spare double-inversion disk-type aerodynamic engine from Storage. It couldn't fit into Item Box since it was too big.

I smile at Prof. Jahad whose eyeballs look like they'll fly out, and then we establish the contract.

This man will surely able to increase the performance of the aerodynamic engine even further.

◇

I leave arranging their rooms in the mansion, the laboratory, and all miscellaneous things to the new manager and Tifaliza.

The new manager seems to be happy about something, she's started taking actions gleefully.

Tifaliza is preparing documents about machinery indifferently.

The new type of aerodynamic engine is a national defense secret, so I've taken the one in Prof. Jahad's lodging and moved it to the new laboratory.

I've left him with the disassembly manual and the rough configuration.

The detailed blueprint only exist in the map of my memo column, so I'll be giving him the document about it later.

◇

After I've finished the minor business in Echigoya Firm, I take everyone to the second sightseeing tour of the fountain.

There's still some time until the fountain moves, so we're watching the street performers in the square in front of the fountain.

"Uhha! Nostalg!"

"Nyoronyoro~?"

"Kabayaki-san nanodesu!"

Arisa's tension is running high when she sees a street performer who's manipulating a snake with a soundless flute.

--Nostalgic?

Were such street performers popular in Arisa's hometown?

Pochi associated the snake with Kabayaki when she saw it.

She's just had a lunch a while ago, looks like Pochi's appetite never wanes.

Maybe I'll go with White Horn Snake and Eel Donburi for today's dinner.

When I was racking my brain about the side dishes, sounds of building collapsing and screams entered my ears.

"Master, I've found a monster at two o'clock direction. Going in for removal. Please the permission."

A gigantic level 30 cricket monster broke through a two-story building and jumped to the street.

Snake-like patterns are emitting red light on its black body.

"Nana, you stay here to guard Arisa and the others. Liza, go defeat the monster quickly. Pochi and Tama, help anyone who's injured. Mia, prepare the healing. The rest stay here with me."

"Yes, my Master."

"Understood."

"Aye!"

"Roger nanodesu!"

I'm checking the surrounding map while giving instructions to everyone.

The monster wasn't reflected in my radar just before this. Is it teleportation or summoning, I need to find out what kind of way monsters can be called in the middle of Royal Capital.

--Liza's spear was stopped for an instant by the red barrier that appeared before the cricket monster's body.

The spear tore its rind and armor, giving damage, but it couldn't defeat it in one blow.

Even though she didn't use any big technique, it's unbelievable that the defense of a level 30 monster could stop Liza's spear.

"Liza-san! That thing has『Magic Body Bestowal』state! I've never heard that kind of buff before, so go use some serious technique!"

"Understood!"

In accordance to Arisa's advice, Liza fills magic power into the spear enough to produce Magic Edge.

--Magic Body Bestowal?

It's Fiend Drug's effect!

As I took a sidelong glance at Liza's Spiral Spear Strike pulverizing the cricket monster, I searched for people who carried Fiend Drug in the Royal Capital, but I couldn't find anyone.

There shouldn't be many people who would carry fiend drug since it was thoroughly hunted.

Right then, an unpleasant thought flashes in my mind.

....They couldn't have thrown the fiend drug into the drainage to destroy evidence and ended up producing monsters right?

There should be books pertaining fiend drug in the forbidden library of the royal castle.

I'll go see the king as Nanashi and ask permission to enter the forbidden library tonight.

I receive a whitish magic core that Liza's collected and instruct everyone to rescue the people who've been buried under the collapsed building.

Fortunately, there was no casualty, the injured ones could all be cured with low level healing magic.

I left the settlement to the dispatched soldier, and then we went home after enjoying the water fountain.

Lady Karina who should be receiving special training in the royal castle for her debut in high society was in the mansion, but I hardened my heart and sent her back to the royal castle.

Crying while shouting, "Traitor", is making me look bad, please stop it.

I should go visit her during the special training while bringing some delicious things tomorrow.

12-14. The King and Nanashi

Satou's here. Looks like there's a genre [Misunderstanding] in manga. The powerless protagonist is mistaken for another powerful famous person, and then he gets rolled up in the maelstrom of trouble, there's a lot of story like that.

◇

I'm having an audience with the king in the evening of the day the monster showed up in the Royal Capital.

They exaggeratedly praised me for subjugating the Dog-head demon lord, and tried to force me a peerage called Duke Mitsukuni or something.

Duke Mitsukuni house seems to be a house that was established after the Ancient King Yamato had handed the throne to the second generation, at that time it was the state councilor who was famous for making social reform.

Looks like Duke Mitsukuni peerage was still conferred until after the fourth generation King had retired, but there was some circumstance, and afterwards, no one was given the peerage anymore.

I ended up hearing some interesting anecdote thanks to this, but since I wasn't interested with peerage and whatnot, I appropriately declined it.

The king seemed to think that I was dissatisfied with just the peerage, this time he suggested me the [Blue Territory] in the southwest region of the kingdom.

Blue Territory seems to be the place where seven cities were sacrificed in order for the Wild-boar King to destroy Furu Empire.

At the west of the Trade City and the South of Labyrinth City, there's the sea of trees where the cities are sleeping, it has become the den of monsters now.

In the past they managed to recapture the cities by sending armies many times over, but they couldn't hold against the overflowing monsters from the sea of tree and had to evacuated as the result.

Nanashi should be able to easily drive off the monsters in the cities, but keeping them off permanently seems quite laborious.

I'm not really interested in territory management and administration.

I often played city-building games, but in real world there are too many troublesome affairs, so I'm going to refrain from it.

Thus, I declined lightly, but the King and the Prime Minister openly looked disappointed.

They probably wanted me, who have the power to defeat demon lords, to recapture the cities with that power.

◇

After a little bit of idle talk, I get to the primary objective.

"Your Majesty, I received some report from Echigoya people about monsters appearing in the Royal Capital see."

I actually encountered one myself, but let's make this a second-hand story.

"As expected of Nanashi-sama. You're quick to know. Prime Minister."

"Yes. Please let me explain from here. We have received reports of gigantic monsters appearances in the metropolis area for the past several days now. Every monster suddenly appeared from underground, and after destroying the buildings and people on the area they appeared, they disappeared into underground."

So it really came from underground.

"There have been seven sighting reports up until now, but there are only two cases where the monsters were able to be killed before they could escape; one was when a Shiga Eight Sword, Lord Ryouna made it in time, and the other was when some Mithril explorers happened to meet one by chance."

Ryouna was that six-packs amazon right. The explorers should be about us.

I tried checking the map, but there was no sign of the monsters underground.

According to the report, all seven monsters had red rope-like pattern. It wasn't only insect-type monsters, there were also rat-type monsters.

"Did you try to pursue the fleeing monsters?"

"Yes, when we dispatched the Royal Capital soldiers to search underground, they found the remains of the aforementioned monsters. There were three monsters that had died from debilitation, one from decomposition, and one from some kind of blade and magic."

"Decomposition and debilitation?"

Leaving aside the killed monster, were the four others died by themselves?

Ga Hou the orc from Duchy Capital did say to me that there were other orcs in the Royal Capital, so they might have exterminated the underground monsters.

"We had the Royal Research Institute to study the monsters, but we didn't get any useful information."

"Then I'll tell you one. I have an acquaintance with appraisal skill in the Royal Capital, and that acquaintance confirmed that the monster had 『Magic Body Bestowal』 state when they saw the monster."

"『Magic Body Bestowal』 is it?--It cannot be."

Prime Minister-san seems to remember about the existence of Fiend Drug too, he's at a loss of words while looking bitter.

He probably recalled the illicit manufacturing incident in the Labyrinth City from before.

Marquis Kelton who was the prime offender at that time avoided punishment by using the influence of his faction if I'm not mistaken.

Afterwards, I found out about a demon lord-worshiping group called [Light of Liberty] that was trying to smuggle the fiend drug outside the kingdom.

"Prime Minister, how was the disposal of Fiend Drug?"

"Yes, the Royal Research Institute was responsible for the disposal."

"Did you hear what kind of method they use to dispose the drug?"

"No, I had instructed them to make it so that it couldn't be used again, but I did not hear about the detail."

Well, that's normal.

The Prime Minister probably doesn't have much free time.

"Perhaps they dissolved the fiend drug with some appropriate drug or acid and then flush it down the drainage?"

Or maybe they did without even processing it.

Prime Minister-san's eyebrows twitched when he heard me.

His face looks slightly pale but he's controlling himself quite good.

"I will summon the institute director and the one in charge immediately."

Prime Minister-san excuses himself to arrange the summoning.

"Hey, Your Majesty. Is there any document detailing fiend drug?"

"There is. The Royal Research Institute borrowed it once, but besides that time, it is stored in the Forbidden Library below royal castle."

Is it alright to lend a book outside from the forbidden library?

Well, it probably has low secret content.

"There's something I want to look up you see, won't you permit me to enter that forbidden library please?"

"What cold things are Nanashi-sama is saying. This castle is Nanashi-sama's castle too. You may go in and out any place you want."

No no, that rule is too sloppy.

The King guides me further through the private area of the royalties, to the forbidden library.

The forbidden library is located besides the treasure room, and a massive gate with powerful anti-intruder magic is installed on the place that leads to both.

The gatekeeper knights are level late 30s imperial guard knights, they seem diligent and steadfast.

Even though I'm with the king, they ask me my purpose and demand me to take off my mask, following the rule.

I show the face mask under the mask and then we pass through the gate.

The corridor splits to the treasure room and the forbidden library halfway through, we continue the corridor that goes to the library.

The King is a good walker since he was a holy knight in his youth, but I feel bad letting an old man walks too far, so I take out a chair from my storage, make him sit on it, and carry it with Magic Hand.

We passed through 13 gates before we got to the forbidden library, but the gatekeepers of the third gate and beyond were not humans, but magic-flaw creatures <<Constructors>> like golems and living armors.

The gates were placed at fixed intervals in the corridor, showing the importance of the forbidden library beyond this.

After passing a double-layered door that seemed to be a barrier, we finally entered the forbidden library.

It smells of papers. The inside is dark, and it seems they've set the temperature and humidity at the level that are best for preserving books.

When the King holds up a medallion that's used as a pass, the light in the building is lit.

We get pass the entrance hall, and come to a room with lines of bookshelves that are as high as the ceiling.

I check the map, there's only one reader, the others aren't librarians, but around twenty work golems and living dolls.

"I was wondering who it was, so it's Your Majesty."

"Umu, are you in good health? You're a bookworm like always, never going to an evening party."

"Yes, luckily, the marriage proposal to Earl Lesseu returned with a blank paper."

The one talking to the King is the Sixth Princess. She's 18 years old, a year younger than Lady Karina.

Her hair is a bit brownish and black up, she's wearing a neat tiara.

Earl Lesseu is probably the young lord-san that came out as a topic about his crushing in the idle talk before.

The Sixth Princess turns her strong-willed blue eyes that are behind the silver-trimmed glasses toward me.

"Who is this person in suspicious clothing? A new guard?"

"Be careful with your tongue. This one is the hero Nanashi-dono."

"Pleased to meet you, Ojou-sama."

The matter about Nanashi being mistaken as the Ancient King Yamato seems to be a secret for only the King and the Prime Minister.

I greeted the Sixth Princess in friendly manner, she greeted back out of courtesy after showing displeased expression, and then she gets back to her own study.

Afterwards, the King guides me to an eight-armed Golem deep inside.

"Nanashi-sama, this is the『Librarian』of this forbidden library."

"Your Majesty, Today, What kind of, Book?"

The librarian Golem asks in disconnected synthetic voice.

"O『Librarian』, with my authority as the King of Shiga Kingdom, I grant Nanashi-sama here the permission until the third layer of the archive.

Process it."

"Yes, Performing, Processing."

There are four layers in this forbidden library.

That means the last layer is not allowed huh. Well, I can find out the title of the books with map item search anyway, I can just intrude my own if there's something I want to read.

"Nanashi-sama, I think you might know this already, but the last layer can only be entered by the current king of the kingdom. 『Librarian』 has memorized the list of the books, so I would go fetch it for you if there is any book you need, please pardon me."

No no, no way I can let the king be a gofer.

I couldn't say that I would intrude it on my own, so I lightly replied, "I'm counting on you when that happens."

After sending the King back to the surface, I hurriedly got back to the library, and began the research of fiend drug with the help of the 『Librarian』 and the living doll helpers.

◇

After I've finished researching the matter, I teleport back to the workshop in Kuro disguise.

There's an entrance to the sewer nearby.

Entering the door that's locked with a padlock, I descend into the sewer.

Swarms of bats and rats attacked me, but I haphazardly scattered them away with [Light Stun].

It's been a long time since I used this magic.

I fly through the sewer by relying on the map to collect filthy water with [Magic Hand] from 128 points including the places where the incidents happened.

I saw the remains of two monsters with red rope pattern.

Both are eaten by rats and insects, but there's a magic core in one of the remains. It's a magic core that's whiter than vermilion.

I collect both remains just in case.

I'll deliver them to the Royal Research Institute later.

Since I'm already close to it, I change into Nanashi like when I met Ga Hou, and intrude upon the place where the orcs dwell.

"Heya, nice to meet you. I'm not your enemy, so could you please put away that dangerous spear?"

"You do not have any choice but to die now that you've seen this place. Prepare yourself."

A young male orc wearing a hood over one of his eyes and holding a magic spear informs me so.

I grab the thrust spear that has left red traces behind.

It's a sharp thrust, though not at Liza's and Shiga Eight Sword First Seat's level. The magic edge is quite resolute too, some half-assed magic shield won't be able to block this.

"Impossible! Even Ga Hou could barely able to dodge my spear! Who the heck are you!"

I wish you asked that first.

"I'm Nanashi, a friend of Ga Hou who lives under Duchy Capital."

"S-so you're Nanashi-dono! I've heard about you from Ga Hou. Please forgive my rudeness earlier."

"Yeah, I don't mind."

Ri Fuu is an orc who's 200 years younger than Ga Hou.

He guides me into the village of orcs. There are a bit less than 20 orcs inside. Most are from the same generation as Ri Fuu, but there are three small orcs too.

It's late at night now, but for the orcs who live underground, the time when the surface people sleep is the time for them to be active.

"We only produce the next generation orcs when our members decrease. In truth, they are newborns after 150 years, everyone has been spoiling them, embarrassingly."

"That's not true! Ri Fuu is mean!"

Besides a bit of physical differences, the orc children look the same as human children.

"Thanks for waiting. They're feast brought by Nanashi-san. Everyone, you can eat after giving your thanks."

"""Okay!"""

I gave them ingredients I had bought in the Duchy Capital, though there were also a lot of different kind of meat and seafood from the labyrinth. They were most pleased with the Japanese Radishes from Kuhanou Earldom.

I ask the orc wives who are cooking orc dishes if there's anything strange in the underpass.

"Umu, the rat monster that we fought back then was an unusually tough monster. There were even injured people even among us."

So the underground monsters were really defeated by the orcs.

"Yeah, it'd have been dangerous if Ri Fuu wasn't there."

"This guy even mistook it as a demon."

"I mean, there's no monster that can deploy that kind of defensive wall."

The defensive wall that the young orcs mentioned is probably the thing that stopped Liza's spear for an instant.

It wouldn't have been strange if there were casualties with their levels indeed.

"Strange huh, I guess it's that underground creatures have been increasing for the past month?"

"Even the rats become nice and plump, they're tasty."

Fumu, there must be some kind of nutrient source--hey, I hope it's not the fiend drug.

I tell Ri Fuu and several other village leaders about the possibility of dangerous drug mixed in the drainage, and ask them not to eat creatures living in the underground for a while.

Of course, I give them the share of food needed for that. I have a large amount of uneatable ingredients in the storage, so I give them one month worth of food that can be preserved.

"Nanashi-dono, why do you go this far for our sake?"

Ri Fuu asked such question, I guess I was too meddlesome.

--I wonder for what sake?

"U~n, I guess I'm just meddlesome. And also, I'm Ga Hou's friend."

If I leave my friend's relatives alone, and someone falls victim among them because of it, I'd feel remorse.

In addition, if I'm being meddlesome here, they might be willing to patrol the underpass or something.

"Oh right, since I'm being meddlesome and all, take these too. It's not like the holy sword that I gave to Ga Hou though."

"I-is this a magic sword?"

"There's a magic spear too!"

"Both are just weapons that can be easily filled with magic power, but I think they will be useful against monsters."

Sorry for them being mass products, I present the orcs with a magic sword, and a magic spear made by Echigoya Firm. Their battle power should be increased now.

After receiving words of gratitude from the orcs, I leave their dwelling.

--Now then, it's the Royal Research Institute tomorrow.

I'd hate it if the shops we're going to tour get temporary closed or broken from monster disturbance since I didn't deal with it early.

Now, for the sake of playing happily, let's put an extra effort!

While basking in the sunlight with my whole body, I fired myself up.

12-15. Carelessness of the Royal Research Institute

Satou's here. Unlawful dumping is a problem in Japan, and it's also a problem in another world. There's a seriously bad unlawful dumping among many....

◇

"T-then, you're saying that you left the disposal of the fiend drug to the associate contractor!"

The Prime Minister's subordinate roared at the Royal Research Institute's director.

I'm also speechless beside him.

The morning of the next day, as Kuro I joined the Prime Minister's subordinate who went to the Royal Research Institute to watch the state of things.

"N, no. From what I understood, it should have been fighting spirit medicines that were expired. I never thought that it was such a dangerous medicine like Fiend Drug..."

The director who's sweeping his sweat really seems like he didn't know that it was Fiend Drug.

On the other hand, the woman who appears to be a secretary, standing behind him, looks pale. I direct the Prime Minister's subordinate's attention to the secretary.

"The woman over there, you seem to know something. If you speak honestly, I'll talk to Prime Minister-dono so that it won't become a case of treason."

"....Ha, treason?! S-such thing, I never"

The pale secretary falls on her knees to the floor.

We succeeded getting the circumstances from the director and the secretary with the help of an Inquisitor the Prime Minister subordinate had brought.

Foolishly, due to the secretary's mistake, the disposal document for [Fiend Drug] had been misplaced with the one for [Fighting Spirit Medicine].

Normally, the drug would have been destroyed by mixing it with acid first before dumping it to the sewage, but since it was mistaken as [Fighting Spirit Medicine], it was only dissolved in water before being dumped into the sewage.

"--H-however, even though it was dumped to the sewage, it shouldn't be enough to make monster transformation happen. Even if you orally take the『Fiend Drug』, you would need to do it dozens of times before the symptom for monster transformation surfaces. In my humble opinion, the cause of the monster disturbance might be something different...."

"Nonsense. --Take them."

The director insisted, but the PM's subordinate curtly cut his talk, and ordered the Prime Minister's soldiers to take the two away. Looks like they're going to entrust them to the examination specialist.

Since the PM's Subordinate had ordered a low-class official to inspect the actual disposal site, I took that opportunity to tag along.

◇

"Garbage disposal huuh? That's not something great official-sama and noble-sama need to care."

"Just answer the question."

The low-class official pressed a question on a manservant clothed in rag.

This man isn't a staff member, but someone taken from the slump quarter to dispose lab animals and filth.

The manservant guides us to the dumping ground.

It's a cylindrical room made of flat concrete-like substance.

There's a 5-meter big hole in the center of the room, and it's 10-meter long down below until the water surface.

"Don't ya got too close to it. A while ago, a newcomer fell and became the prey of slimes...."

--Slimes?

There are some in the underground tunnel nearby, but there doesn't seem any directly below us.

"Huuh? Visitors? Can I throw this garbages now?"

"Official-sama, do you allow?"

"Leave it for la--"

"Wait, we don't mind, throw it."

I interrupt the low-class official, and let another man who came to the room later to throw the garbage.

....It's the dissected corpse of the monster yesterday huh.

Hm? The rat-type monster corpse doesn't have its hind legs. I think the back meat and the breast meat are also taken a bit too much if it's for samples.

I watch the corpse being dumped while only taking a sidelong glance at the low-class official who's grimacing from the putrid smell.

The moment the monsters' blood touch the water surface, the slimes in the underground tunnel gather.

"W-wait, Sir!"

I jump to the water surface while hearing the flustered voice of the manservant behind me. I activate Sky Drive just before I hit the water, and take care not to touch the corpses and the slimes.

I illuminate the water surface with a Light Drop.

There are no red rope-like pattern like on the monster's corpses on the slimes. Instead, many black bugs are stickied to them. It seems the slimes here only feed on carrion.

I gather tissue samples from several slimes and put it into organized test tubes.

I'll have the Royal Research Institute to check these and see if they have the fiend drug's residue and effect.

Before leaving, I'll confirm something with the manservant earlier.

He'll probably feign ignorance or lie even if we cross-examine him, so I ask him after I've made sure that the low-class official has gone back ahead.

"I won't fault you since monster meat are also eaten in Labyrinth City, but there are many that are rotten or toxic. There are also some that can spread illness, so be careful okay."

"Yeah, we know."

So they really take meat from lab animal's corpse and sell it in the back channel huh.

....It seems the slum quarter was hit with epidemics several years ago, I wonder if the cause was the meat brought by these guys.

It might be good to create epidemic prevention manual.

"We let the neighboring rats and strays to eat the meat going bad y'see. If they die, the slimes will eat them if we just throw them to the Clean Water Facility pond y'see."

Maybe I should check the slimes that are in the Clean Water Facility located near the edge of the Royal Capital.

Right, if they take the meat out, they might even take the drug that should have been disposed out too.

I've already checked on the map that the fiend drug doesn't exist in the Royal Capital, but just in case.

"If there's any drug that's hard to dispose, I'll buy it from you--"

I tell so to the man in low voice, and tell him one of the bars in the downtown managed by secret agents of the Prime Mainister.

With this, it should be easy to retrieve the drugs that have leaked outside. I'll leave the rest to the Prime Minister.

I go to the Water Purification Plant in the downtown, and collect the slimes that are attracted to the monster corpse I've thrown from storage.

I'll have the Royal Research Institute staff to analyze the rest.

I think I can analyze it myself with the facility in the Ivy Mansion, but doing everything myself is annoying right.

◇

Let's sort out the information for a bit.

In the end, the things I know are--

- The fiend drug was dumped to the sewage without proper processing.

- There's a possibility that it has been spread to the creatures living underground through the slimes.

- The Fiend Drug was mistaken with [Fighting Spirit Medicine].

This medicine has some similarity with the fiend drug, so it might be sold illegally in the downtown.

- People of the slum might have taken the fiend drug.

- The fiend drug isn't present in the Royal Capital.

Is that all?

No, there's one more.

- The monster disturbance might have nothing to do with the fiend drug.

Just when I thought I had seized the cause of the monster disturbance, the mystery got deeper instead.

I wonder if the case would be quickly settled were a great detective conveniently appear.

The phantom thief exists after all, wish the great detective too.

◇

"You're late desuwa!"

"Excuse me, I had some businesses to attend."

Lady Karina rebuked me as soon as I entered the state guest house's hall where she was doing special training.

The ones in this room are Lady Karina's maids, the dance instructor, and our girls.

Arisa is accompanying Nina-san in her work, so she's not here.

"Karina-sama, please concentrate."

"Satou will be my practice partner. You watch and instruct from there."

Lady Karina tells the instructor, and then she extends her hand to me.

Her cheeks blush a little, but her face looks somewhat sullen.

Well, I am late, guess I can be her dance partner.

I'll dance with our girls too once Lady Karina's practice is over.

"Then, I'll be keeping you company."

I take Lady Karina's hand and go toward the center of the hall the size of a classroom.

I lead Lady Karina while matching the dance music that Mia is playing.

When I dance with Lady Karina, my chest is too happy my consciousness feels like it'll soar, but I weather the storm with the help of prime number and pi.

Her dance is straightforward and manly like usual.

However, it seems she's been working hard, she's improved leap and bound better compared to the dance before.

"You've worked hard. You're quite better than before."

"--T-that's obvious! Because I endured it even while the knight order were watching the practice. Sa-Satou will dance with me in the real thing too!"

--U~n, isn't it impossible in the real thing.

During the dance party the night before the Kingdom Conference, the party where upper nobles higher than and including viscounts gather is separated with the party where lower nobles lower than and including baron gather.

There is no such rule, but like an unspoken agreement, it seems nobles that don't have much rank don't mingle with them.

To be more specific, the upper nobles side are the dukes, marquises, earls, and viscounts, but there are some cases where baron and baronet can also participate. A chevalier like me is prohibited from participating.

Lower nobles side are barons, baronets, and chevaliers, but viscounts can also participate. Nobles higher than and including earls never participate in this side.

Of course, Lady Karina is going to escort Baron Muno who's treated like an earl as a territory lord, she's going to attend the upper noble dance party, so it's impossible for us to dance together.

It's probably going to be another story if I were her fiance, but that's exactly why doing that means announcing we're engaged, so I'll be refraining.

"I cannot participate in the dance party of upper nobles so--"

"You can't desuwa!"

From her line of sight that was a bit higher than mine due to her heels, she interrupted my denial with a child-like anxious voice.

--Even if you said that.

"Excuse me. Karina-sama, some visitors have come for you."

Pina appeared right then, telling us about visitors. Good timing.

"They are waiting in the parlor, please come with Chevalier-sama."

"Visitors? Not for Father?"

"Yes, they are Sera-sama and Toruma Shimen-sama."

They're quite fast even though I was told that they were coming yesterday evening with an airship.

The two's blue luminous dots are in the parlor of the guest house alright.

I postpone the problem and go to the parlor where the two are waiting.

12-16. Invitation to Breakfast Gathering

Satou's here. Maybe due to the fact that we could frequently send mails even to a far away place, unlike in the past, I feel that I rarely felt distant.

But, it sure is mysterious when you directly meet and various things come to be talked about.

◇

"Grandfather asked if you'd like to have a breakfast with him."

After greeting each other, Sera cut to the chase.

It'd have been a tempting invitation if the other party were a young woman, but since the it's an old man, and an authority of a nation at that, 'breakfast' probably means more like a meeting.

Now then? The duke probably invites me to a breakfast in order to solicit me to come under his wings.

We're not only explorers who hold Mithril Plate, but there's the matter of Liza defeating the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords too, so the possibility is high.

"I am honored, but is it alright for a low ranking noble like me to be summoned to Duke-sama's breakfast?"

I can't imagine those carefree Duchy Capital nobles ostracizing me, but not all of them should think favorably of me.

People from Marquis Lloyd's and Earl Haku's faction are probably alright, but people from Earl Bobi's faction who are related with Wings of Liberty seem like they'll bear a grudge.

"It's fine you know. Because even Ane-sama approves Satou-san." <TLN: Big sister>

"--I feel honored."

By Ane-sama, she's talking about Ringrande, Hero Hayate's attendant right?

I don't remember doing anything that would make her approve me, but perhaps, she did because I won against Hero?

It's not like I can decline anyway, I tell Sera that I'll be attending the duke's breakfast gathering, and get Toruma and Karina who have been treated like air up until now to join the conversation, telling each other's situation.

"Then, you're saying that Head Miko-dono isn't feeling well?"

"No, it's not that she has fallen ill, however, she doesn't seem energetic. She rarely ever comes out of the consecration inner room, let alone the temple."

I wonder why?

Did she receive a new oracle or something?

"No the only new oracle was the one about the destruction of the newly appeared demon lord in the Labyrinth City."

Come to think of it, it should be near the time for Hero Hayato's call.

I have to ask what's happened to the demon lord that was prophesied to appear in the Weasel Kingdom.

....The are only five of them remaining isn't it?

Please don't appear all at once in the world.

I throw away that ominous thought far beyond the beyond, and add the plan [Visit Head Miko] on the Memo Pad in the Exchange Column.

I'll go visit her once the business in the Royal Capital are all over.

Toruma then speaks some strange thing, probably to change back the flow of conversation.

"According to my brother, Satou-dono is also popular in the Labyrinth City."

What's with the [Also].

Since when was I popular--No, I guess I'm relatively popular with younger girls.

"Elderly and children seem to be fond of me since a long time ago."

"My, oh Satou-san."

Sera gracefully laughs to me who replied jokingly, but Lady Karina reacts questionably.

"....It's not only little girls."

Lady Karina muttered so, it was a voice so small only me who had [Attentive Ear] skill could hear.

I see, they all looked younger from my point of view, but with this body, there were girls who were the same age and older.

"However, I heard that you were close with some foreign princess and a daughter of a noble your age?"

Toruma who couldn't read the mood like always stated such remark while ignoring Lady Karina's mood.

Even Sera waited for my reply with a serious face.

By princess, did he mean the Noja Princess, Mitia?

A same-age noble daughter, I guess it's either Zena-san or the daughter of Baronet Dyukeli?

"Both are just acquaintances I knew from a little incident. We don't have special relationships."

When I asserted so, the girls let out relieved sighs.

Lady Karina has met those girls before, so she should have known our relationship anyway.

"What, is that it. Since Satou-dono is still young, why don't you become famous as a philanderer in the high society."

""Toruma Oji-sama!""

Sera and Lady Karina reprimanded Toruma's crude remark.

....Say something like that only between men.

◇

Even though we often exchanged letters, conversing like this complement subtle nuances that can't be conveyed through letters.

While Sera is telling me the state of each of the Duchy Capital's orphanage people, I also tell her about the Labyrinth City's orphanage and training school for explorers.

I tell my activities in the Labyrinth City as plainly as possible.

She's also told me the present state of the sealkin children whom Nana cared, I'll tell Nana about it later.

Still, Lady Karina is shy with strangers like always.

Even though she could talk normally with me and Toruma, she only replied with brief words like "Yes", or "That's right", when Sera talked to her, the conversation couldn't continue.

It's like she's reserved toward Sera.

Since Toruma followed up with, "Karina is shy with strangers like always huh" when that happened, Sera didn't seem offended.

After we've told each other our situations, Toruma asks about the airship incident.

As begged, I tell him about the details of the raid against Duke Bishtal, in exchange I ask about the suspicion toward Marquis Lloyd.

It seems Marquis Lloyd had willingly agreed to be inquisition-ed and proved his innocence.

I'm glad that his suspicion has been cleared, but in the end, I don't get to give him prison-present.

And then, I understood that Toruma was going to talk about Lady Karina's confession-like match just before we departed Labyrinth City, but I stopped him from condemning other's people fault, especially in front of Sera.

Instead, Toruma, who knows the Royal Capital well, is going to guide me to the hidden tourist attractions and stores in the night pleasure quarter. Of course gay bars are prohibited.

I said it implicitly, "Guiding to various kind of shops", so Lady Karina and Sera didn't notice it.

Since Sera and Toruma were invited to a diner with Duke Oyugock and the king, the enjoyable conversation was cut short, and we saw the two off.

◇

When the two have disappeared, Lady Karina asks a puzzling question.

"Sa-Satou, do you want to take Sera-sama as your wife?"

"No, Sera-san is my friend. In the first place, a Miko can't marry unless she returns to secular life you know?"

An Oracle Miko like Sera is probably not allowed to return to secular life.

"I-is that so..."

She leaks out sexy sigh beside me.

Perhaps, she's really fallen for me?

My heart slightly thumped when I saw Lady Karina's face that looked like a maiden in love.

--This is not good.

If I don't firmly draw the line with Lady Karina, I'm afraid that I'd cross it since I'm fond of her outward appearance.

If that happens, marriage surely awaits. I have to make a restraint.

"Besides--"

The flow of conversation is just right, I guess I'll say it.

"--The person I love is in a far away foreign country. I would never ask Sera-sama to be my wife."

Saying that Aze-san is my lover or wife would make it a lie, but [The person I love] should be barely safe.

I've been dumped many times already, but I want to love Aze-san as long as she does not dislike it. At the very least, I don't feel like getting discouraged in one or two years.

"....L, lie."

Lady Karina reflexively denied it.

I saw large drop of tears spilling from her eyes.

....Apparently, her marriage proposal when we were leaving Labyrinth City was serious.

I feel slightly guilty, my chest hurts, but giving the final words just before she enters the high society is probably good for her courtship.

While deceiving my sense of guilt with that excuse, I speak more.

"It's true you know? She's a bit older than me, but she's cute."

After hearing my utmost sweet words, Lady Karina turned her heels and ran toward her own room.

Sorry, but I cannot run after Lady Karina. I'll ask maid-head Pina or Arisa to care for her.

....Ah, it's been a while, I want to see Aze-san.

The last time we talked with Telephone was about [Sakura Dryad] and [Sakura Drop], so it feels like I haven't talked to her for a long time.

--Good grief, I'm usually the one being dumped, so I never thought that being the dumping one was this hard.

◇

"Chevalier-sama! The situation at the castle seems strange somewhat."

As if mowing down my melancholy, combat maid Erina who rushed to the entrance hall was being noisy.

"What kind of strange?"

"There's a lot of knights-sama going in and out. Moreover, it's strange that they are galloping horses even though it's inside the castle walls."

Fumu, I open the map to see if there's a large outbreak of monsters in the Royal Capital, but nothing like that is happening.

After looking at the flow of the knights at the garrison, there are only people from three knight orders that are frequently going in and out.

I wonder what's happened.

There are a lot of people who seem to know about it, but there are only a few who would tell military matter to Satou.

The king and the prime minister seem busy too, I guess curious Nanashi will go visit them later at midnight.

I asked Erina to tell me if she learned what happened, and then I went to the kitchen alone.

I've decided to prepare a mountain of whale karages and various cakes so Lady Karina can binge eat and divert her attention at least.

This mansion has heat-retaining warehouse and refrigerator magic tools, so she can just take them out whenever she wants to eat.

◇

An unexpected guest waited for us who had gone back to our mansion.

"I'm sorry that I kept you waiting."

"What, do not mind it. It was I who came without announcing first."

Julberg-shi who's wearing the white armor of holy knights composedly replies.

The people in the parlor are me, Liza, Julberg-shi, and the third seat of Shiga Eight Swords, Heim-shi the [Weed] whom I've just met for the first time.

Heim-shi is investigating Liza's strength, he's been sending probing glances toward her since awhile ago. If Liza were of the same race, she would have won sekuhara appeal.

By the way, Heim-shi's armor is also the white armor of holy knights, but it's been devilishly remodeled to the point that you wouldn't believe they're the same model. At least please stop adding those meaningless horns on the shoulders.

"Let's get to the point, what kind of business do you have?"

"Umu, there's going to be a banquet where Shiga Eight Swords gather tomorrow night in my mansion. His Majesty has granted me the good Oumi beef, so I'm thinking of treating everyone."

--The beef from the official farm we ate back then were delicious.

Besides me, Liza's face looks composed, but her presence feels like her heart has been captivated with the meat.

"I have invited other candidates of Shiga Eight Swords too. I want you two to come by all means."

It seems the candidates are Jeril who's a Mithril explorer like us, and five other people.

We couldn't exactly decline an invitation from the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords after all, so we accepted too.

There's a simple arena at Julberg-shi's mansion, so we have to make sure not to equip weapons in visible places in order to avoid fight.

I brought up the matter of the knights from Erina during our idle talk, but they only told me that it was a national defense secret.

--In other words, there's a situation that affects the safety of the nation huh?

12-17. Someone who Squirms Behind the Incident

Satou's here. I've read in some book that when two people meet, dispute will happen. If the dispute can't be avoided, I hope they'll choose the way that won't cause casualty.

◇

"Good evening, Your Majesty. Royal Capital seems busy, has anything happened?"

When the night has grown darker, I visit the royal castle as Nanashi.

"If it isn't Nanashi-sama, so you have noticed it already. It's an embarrassing thing, a rebellion has occured in Duke Bishtal's territory--"

Ah, I forgot about that matter.

Come to think of it, the one who attacked the airship was the relative of the duke.

According to the king, they immediately contacted Bishtal Dukedom in emergency once the airship was attacked, but they never got any reply at all.

And so, when the neighboring nobles went to the dukedom to investigate, the eldest son of Duke Bishtal declared that he had established Bishtal Kingdom, and sent away the investigating nobles.

It's quite quick considering it hasn't even been several days.

They probably used birdkin people or flying-type tamed monsters to investigate.

And so, Duke Bishtal who was told that appealed to the king to deploy the national military, and then among the standing army, the three knight orders that had been scheduled for practice were deployed.

It seems the third knight regiment of the knight order that are famous for their swift marching speed are going to depart tomorrow, while the second and the sixth regiments will depart five days later.

The advance units, birdkins and wyvern riders, have already departed ahead of time.

"Fuhn, sounds rough."

I replied indifferently.

I'm sorry but, I don't intend to participate in a dispute between humans.

"Having conflict between humans during the『Demon Lord Season』like this is due to my lack of virtue."

That reminds me, it's said that conflict between humans during this season mostly don't exist.

The western part of the continent seems to be going to war too, looks like other world humans love war too.

The king lowers his head apologetically for his failure.

There's no need for him to apologize to me, but I guess it can't be helped since he's mistaken me for the ancient king.

I saw the blue marker of the prime minister on my radar, so I made the king raise his head.

◇

I receive the analysis report of the slimes' parts I gathered from before from the prime minister.

The result is already out even though it hasn't even been half a day huh.

--The Royal Research Institute people are capable.

I take a look at the document lightly.

According to the summary, the slimes seem to act as the concentrate and the carrier of the fiend drug.

However, just as the director had said, they concluded that even though normal creatures that eat these slimes might die under the influence of the fiend drug, the possibility is low for them to change into monsters.

For the sake of proving test, it looks like they will catch some slimes and rats from the underground tunnel nearby and let them predate each other like kodoku in the suburb experiment building. <TLN: Kodoku https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kodoku>

Several holy knights will be standing guard during the experiment, so it should be safe.

Since the investigation report about the director and the secretary has been put together with the analysis report, I peek at it out of curiosity.

...This is?

I was dumbfounded with the secretary's carelessness when she said that she got the document wrong, but apparently, there was something behind it.

The prime minister added the thing that isn't in the document.

"It seems there are demon lord believers behind the case."

Looks like the boyfriend of the secretary, a knight, is related to the organization that's similar to the [Wings of Liberty] from before, he has manipulated the documents in order to earn money by selling them through the illegal channel.

Quite a large amount of the fiend drug were taken away from the Royal Research Institute before they were disposed, falling to the organization's hand.

There's a high possibility that the fiend drug that was discovered in the trade city were taken from the Royal Research Institute.

From the story I've heard in the Labyrinth City back then, the [Wind of Liberty] that's hiding in the Royal Capital differs from the [Wings of Liberty] from the Duchy Capital, rather than demon lord worshipers, they should be a [carefree occult association].

Then, the suspicious one is either the remnant of the [Wings of Liberty] that have come from the Duchy Capital, or the operatives of the [Light of Liberty] which holds influence in the western part of the continent.

I check both of their location on the map and tell it to the prime minister.

"....Locations, is it?"

"Yeah, I had my subordinates check on it you see."

He probably wouldn't believe it if I said that I had just checked it now, so I made it like so.

The king and the prime minister are praising, "As expected of--", but I ignore them since I'm in the middle of concentrating, looking for additional information.

The remnants aren't a big deal judging from their levels, but there's a level later-half-of-40s magician with scouting skill among the [Light of Liberty] people, so we need to be cautious.

The [Light of Liberty] also has a magician with [Summoning Magic] and a tamer with taming skill who are all around level 30s.

Looking from their skills, they likely know the truth behind the case.

"--You need to be careful with these three people okay. Especially against the scout, you'd better not sending only common soldiers, but someone with high combat prowess on par with a Shiga Eight Sword I think."

"As you wish."

The prime minister deeply thanks me for my advice.

I can arrest them as Kuro, but the noble mansion they're hiding seems like it has guests staying in it, it looks like it could be troublesome. Let's leave it to the prime minister.

The scout person seems like they'll escape, so I mark them.

The topic was diverted due to the talk about demon lord believers, but there's a little something that piqued me regarding the origin of the knight who smuggled the fiend drug.

He seems to be a distant relative of the supposed mastermind behind the [Illicit Manufacture of the Fiend Drug in Labyrinth City] back then, Marquis Kelten.

According to the prime minister, Marquis Kelten was cross-examined by an inquisitor in order to deny the suspicion of [Rebellion] from the fiend drug illicit manufacturing incident, and was declared innocent, so they didn't pay attention to this piece of info.

The fact that the inquisitor at that time is someone from a house that's involved with the rebellion in Bishtal Dukedom this time worries me a bit, but this isn't a conspiracy theory, not every incident must be related.

◇

When I teleported to Echigoya mansion, I got the regular contact from Hero Hayato in the weasel empire, but the one who did was a woman called Nono who's house-sitting.

"--Then, Hayato and the others have gone deep into the labyrinth chasing after the demon lord?"

"That's right. Hayato will defeat the demon lord this time."

A fleeing demon lord, that's rare.

So far, the demon lords were all battle maniac who revived themselves even after dying after all.

"Is that so, if he has the upper hand then it's okay. I'll install the communication device, so you can get in touch should anything happen to Hayato."

"Thank you, Hero Nanashi."

"Un, later then."

It seems Hayato has a good affinity with this demon lord, Hayato and his companions probably won't let their guard down, so they should be able to subjugate it for sure.

If they still can't defeat the demon lord after the auction after the kingdom conference is over, I'll go help their demon lord search under the pretext of experimenting new magic.

I put the antenna that improves reception of the communication magic device on the roof of Echigoya with [Magic Hand], and install the main part of the communication magic device in the bookshelves of Tifaliza's office.

There's not enough power to keep it operating all day, so I've put an ultra-compact magic furnace powered with a Philosopher's Stone behind the main part.

Tifaliza who's raised her face away from the documents asks me with an unreadable transparent expression.

"Kuro-sama, what is that device?"

"Ah, I'll explain it now. This device is--"

I explain to Tifaliza that it's a magic device for getting in contact with Hero Hayato, and instruct her not to tell it to anyone besides the manager.

I lock the transmission function, and make it so that it can only receive.

"If any communication comes from the other side, push number three on the magic tool for emergency use that I've given you."

"Certainly."

The magic tool for emergency use [Signal Rod] is a tool for transmitting short distance signal by making use of Signal magic.

The transmission distance is short unlike the large-type model that I've installed in the labyrinth mansion.

On top of being unable to reach me when I'm not in the Royal Capital, the signal probably won't reach the underground and the forbidden library.

Echigoya mansion has the large-type model like the one in the labyrinth mansion, but recharging it will be troublesome once you use it, so I instruct them to use the phone-sized [Signal Rod] normally.

◇

The next morning, I went to attend breakfast invitation by Duke Oyugock, but for some reason, the location wasn't in the duke's mansion, but in a dining hall in a corner of the royal castle.

I have a bad feeling about this, so I check the duke's current position on the map.

--Just as I thought.

After a short while, a castle's attendant informed me that the duke would be arriving, so I waited near the door to welcome him.

"Sorry for making you waiting, Sir Pendragon."

"No, I have just arrived too."

Is this a conversation between lovers! So I wanted to retort, but I turn my awareness to the person behind the duke.

"So you're Sir Pendragon, really young."

I fall down to my knees in accordance to the etiquette for meeting a king.

I just met the king as Nanashi last night, so it feels strange meeting him normally as a king.

That reminds me, the duke also said [young] when we first met.

The chamberlains who entered after the king put a white box on top of the table and left.

The people left in this room are only me, the king and the duke.

"Open that box."

I follow the king's order, open the box and take out the [Fake Holy Sword Claiomh Solais].

I inactivate [Poker Face] skill and put out a normal shocked expression.

"T-this is, perhaps--"

He probably doesn't think that me and Nanashi are the same person, but since he's bringing this, that means...

"Sir Pendragon, don't you want to use this holy sword?"

Toward the king's words that I've anticipated, I reply after a short pause.

"Th-this sword, to me..... No, it's a sword that is way over me."

I make a regretting expression and shake my head.

There's probably no one that can see through it as a fake if I use it indeed, but I'll end up automatically getting entered into Shiga Eight Swords for sure.

"It is presumptuous of me, but I am sure that Heim-sama or Bauen-sama of Shiga Eight Swords can perfectly wield this holy sword's power."

The king shifts his gaze toward the duke after my reply.

"How boring, a reply that's just as you've predicted huh."

"Youths these days lack ambition, but it should be appropriate in this matter."

"Umu, even Nina and Leon recommended him after all."

Leon, it's Baron Muno's first name isn't it.

Good grief, I wish they told me ahead of time if they schemed something.

When the breakfast starts, the talk finally touches the [This matter].

"Does Shiga Eight Swords not sound fascinating to you?"

"No, that is not the case--"

I can't exactly answer yes to that question.

"Nina said that your purpose is sightseeing around the world is it?"

"Yes, the world is vast after all."

Unlike the earth, there are a lot of unknown places, and there's no [Coogle Map] or Road View which could make you feel like you've explored the world.

Above all, thanks to being level 311, I can have a safe trip.

The king and the duke nod seriously after staring at me dazzlingly somehow.

"I've understood that you do not wish to become a Shiga Eight Sword. I will tell them to take you off the candidate list."

I don't really understand, but since it seems I've escaped from troublesome things, I'm glad.

He asks an even stranger question in the end.

"Did you enjoy the air travel from the labyrinth city?"

"Yes, it was a bit stormy and dramatic, but I was able to enjoy various scenery that wasn't possible from the ground."

The king seems to be satisfied with my answer, he nods deeply and permit me to leave.

In the end, they never said anything about [this matter], and only said, "Enjoy the kingdom conference" that made me anxious.

Judging from the flow of the conversation, it doesn't seem to be anything bad, I guess I'll wait until the kingdom conference....

If it's something that doesn't bode well with me, I guess I can make use of Satou's personal connections or Nanashi's influence.

By the way, the breakfast menu were fluffy bread rolls, half-cooked sunny-side-up fried eggs, fresh salad, and a thick grilled bacon. There wasn't any soup, but there were some fresh juice from citrus-type fruits.

Every dish was superb even though they looked plain like they were from some hotel. As expected of the king's chefs.

I'll reproduce them and let everyone have them when I get back.

◇

After the breakfast, I heard from Echigoya that the smuggling knight had died from poisoning in the jail.

Still, I can't grasp the purpose of the people who cause these series of events.

If they're trying to overturn the kingdom, they're doing a poor job, if they're doing terror, the places they're aiming for are incomprehensible.

In the prison, at the water fountain, in the downtown, and in the noble street.

I wonder if there's something I've overlooked....

12-18. Tea Party's Intruder

Satou's here. It seems uninvited guest exist no matter what world. It'd be okay if there were a way to indirectly tell them to leave like the joke story from Edo era, Kyoto's Bubuzuke though.

◇

"Welcome Chevalier Pendragon-sama."

I shift my gaze from the wyvern riders formation flying in the sky to an elderly gentleman who has come to greet me.

Here is the mansion of the noble who invited me to a tea party.

The noble is a friend of Marchioness Ashinen, her house has been a distinguished Earl house since the founding of the nation it seems.

With a house this distinguished, even the employees should look down on an upstart honorary chevalier like me, but at the very least, this elderly gentleman doesn't seem to be like that at all.

I let the servants to carry the sweets and gifts for the countess.

I'm in debt with her for gathering information about the nobles who are interested with orbs in the auction, so I've brought some stylish handmade accessory made from fur from labyrinth and labyrinth spider thread that's prized in the Royal Capital.

I used the big brand Nifati from the former world as the reference for the accessory, and its price went up from 3 gold coins to ten times that, adjusted due to Arisa's opinion.

Of course I used one among many names I had as the maker.

The elderly gentleman guides me out of the main building toward the tea party venue in the garden.

There are a level 35 male knight leader and 12 upper level 20s female knights guarding the venue.

Everyone is equipped with shiny ornamental-use armors.

The male knight is a handsome man, and together with the beautiful female knights, they look more suitable to be on a stage rather than in a training hall.

There are many tables put in the venue, and there are around thirty noblewomen enjoying the tea party. There are some noblemen too, but they're few.

It's a bigger gathering than I thought.

"Welcome, Sir Pendragon. I've heard from Retel already, but you really are young."

"Please allow me to take part in your invitation--"

After exchanging the standard greeting, I'm guided by the Countess to my chair in the tea party.

She calls Marchioness Ashinen by her name since they're close friends.

By looking at the women in their forties gathered on this table who are all wearing expensive-looking accessories and clothes, I understand that they are all wives of upper ranking nobles.

"Everyone, this year Retel cannot come due to her obligation as a viceroy, but instead, her friend has come in her place."

I give my name with the Countess's introduction, and as a gift for being acquainted with them, I distribute small boxes for them that I've brought separately from the one for the Countess.

Of course, the presents are inferior by one grade compared to the Countess's.

"Oh my, are these presents for us? You're tactful as expected of Retel's favorite aren't you."

"Ara ara, my my, how wonderful."

"What is this gem I wonder? The redness is deeper than ruby, is this perhaps a fragment of Blood Bead?"

I affirm the Viscountess who saw through it so while looking like I'm surprised.

It was one of materials True Ancestor Ban had given me, but Blood Bead has little use compared to Blood Sphere, so I've made them into earring-shaped magic tools that have an effect of preserving healthy body.

According to the referral document, it seems to also have the effect of easing stiff shoulders for women.

--Huh?

The presented items' market prices are increasing.

They were only 10 gold coins worth when I made it in the Labyrinth City, but the prices rise whenever the wives show each other's earring with different design, right now its price has become different by one digit.

Come to think of it, the price of the accessories that I gave to the Ashinen Couple had also strangely risen.

Their values have become too high as presents for a tea party, but let's overlook it as being the first time.

"As one expects of a Mithril Explorer doesn't it. Even in our salon, these kind of items can only be seen when someone asks for an engagement you know?

"As a bumpkin I am, I seem to have overstretched myself."

I honestly apologized for my youthful error toward the Countess who showed her concern about me bringing presents that didn't fit the TPO.

Thanks to that failure and support from the sweets (castellas), the tea party continues without problem, and I've successfully blended myself in the idle talk.

"--My, you have sharp ears. You already knew about the duchy rebellion didn't you."

I didn't know about it as Satou, but even I'm surprised with the

Countess who knows the thing that has just happened yesterday despite not having any relation with the military.

You really can't make light of women's information network.

"Speaking of Duke Bishtal, there's this story too--"

The women's talk flies around so it's hard to follow it though.

Summarizing the long talk of the women, it seems the mother of the princess whom I met in the Forbidden Library back then is the daughter of Duke Bishtal.

I went to the Forbidden Library again after meeting the king last night, but I didn't meet the princess. She probably doesn't stay in the Forbidden Library every day.

"Kyaa, amazing desuwa!"

"Ufufufu, it moves cutely kashira."

Young noblewomen several tables away leak out shrill screams.

When I look there, a gem-like snake and a snake covered in long white fur are moving funnily while matching the snake charmer's flute, entertaining the girls.

It's probably an entertainer called for entertainment.

I've seen it before at the water fountain, but the snake charmer who's called here seems more competent, what's with the snakes I've never seen before and all.

"How vulgar."

The wives who are on the same table as me knit their eyebrows toward the girls who leak out loud voices.

The Countess changes the topic toward me in order to change that mood.

"Is this the first time you see a snake charmer Satou-sama?"

"Yes, it's splendid."

The Countess's aim goes well, the other wives forget the girls and ride on the topic.

"I think Marquis Kelten began inviting foreign entertainers since last year?"

"That's right. It was rare for that person to have any interest to anything other than military, even the salon talked about it a lot."

Come to think of it, during the fiend drug incident, Sir Sokel also testified that, "He holds tremendous influence in the military" didn't he.

"Now that you mention it, speaking of Marquis Kelten, last month was surprising."

"To think that the patriotic Marquis Kelten was suspected of treason...."

"I wonder if it was the scheme of Duke Oyugock who wanted to own the military after all?"

"My, you can't do that. Saying such things for a speculation--"

Hmmm, so he's known as patriotic huh.

"He gave a rare songbird to the princess as a present back then didn't he?"

"Yeah, he said that since he had troubled Duke Bishtal, he gave a present to the Duke's beloved grandchild."

Duke Bishtal's grandchild, they mean that Forbidden Library princess huh?

That girl seems like she'll like a rare book more than a rare bird.

When I asked it to the women engrossed in rumor, "Is it the princess who loves books?", they said not that one.

According to them, it seems to be for that Forbidden Library's biological little sister.

"It was a kingfisher-like bird."

"I wonder if it was sent from Yowok Kingdom, where the younger brother of Marquis Kelten was invited as the prince consort?"

Yowok, I feel like I've heard it somewhere.

--Where was it?

"That's not right. It seems to be a rare kind of bird that only exist in the eastern part of the continent."

"My, I wonder if he obtained it from the Weasel Kingdom."

An impertinent intruder came in the middle of such trivial talks.

◇

A red luminous point is reflected on the radar.

It's been rowdy in the town ever since I came to the Royal Capital. This city is more dangerous than the Labyrinth City.

With a roar, a monster with red rope-like pattern appeared while smashing through a pond in the corner of venue.

It looks like a giant toad. For some reason, its tail is like a tadpole's.

--It's strange.

I pass the voluminous wife who's screaming and hugging me to a nearby servant, and stand up.

The knights who quickly rushed in are hit with the giant toad monster's spitted [Acid Breath], the female knights are falling to the ground with scald wounds.

--The luminous point appeared as if it had been teleported in.

The giant toad's hand is going to strike a girl who's sitting nearby.

The guard captain bravely volunteered his body to rescue the girl as I was going to.

--I tried searching the underground tunnel, but no one is there.

Looks like he couldn't save her completely, both of them were thrown to the edge of the garden.

--How did it appear?

I postpone my doubt for later, and take the female knight's sword that's been fallen to the ground to help.

I catch a female knight that's been thrown from the tail's attack and put her down.

Catching a beauty really isn't nice when she wears metal armor.

"I'll earn some time until Captain-san comes."

I call out so, and casually walk toward the toad.

Its huge eyes rotates like chameleon's, and then the toad's elongated tongue attacks.

I avert the tongue's orbit horizontally with the steel sword.

The sword that blocked the tongue is gouged, probably because I can't clad it with magic power.

"Looks like there's acid on its tongue too. Shield bearers shouldn't block it, ward it off instead."

"""YES"""

I order the female knights who are awfully obedient to take out spears or axes if they have them, and concentrate in parrying the toad's attacks.

I'd likely defeat it in single blow if I'm careless, so I concentrate to hold back as much as possible.

"All members, retreat! The tail is coming!"

"""OUU"""

The female knights evade the toad's tail with my instruction.

There's a lone girl who twisted her legs during the retreat and fell to the ground in unladylike manner, but I act as if I didn't see it.

The sword broke when I blocked the tongue for the fourth time. What a fragile sword.

"Chevalier-sama, please take this."

"Ah, thanks.

I cut half of the tongue with the two-handed axe I've received.

The gushing blood changes before it touches the ground, it changes the lawn color like acid.

--Damn you fantasy creature.

I take a short spear to replace the axe and then use it to stitch the tongue on the ground.

"You've done well to preserve here! Chevalier-dono, I thank you for your cooperation."

I let the guard captain who finally participate to take the credit, while I'm putting effort to distract the toad from injuring the female knights.

Thanks to that, we were finally able to defeat the toad even though it took time without any dead toll.

For some reason, sometimes after the battle started, the toad's state became [Weakened], and the magic defense that protected the toad's body disappeared.

I told this information to the guards who had came after hearing the disturbance.

◇

As expected, the tea party had to be closed, but I was thanked by the nobles who participated, and the noble daughters whom I didn't have any chance to talk to during the tea party invited me to dance with them in the dance.

Most of the noble daughters here were of viscount and higher, so I probably could only do it with several of the baron's and baronet's daughters, but as a lip service, I replied, "It is my honor to."

When I'm in the carriage returning from the tea party, I catch a sight of a red rope-like pattern monster's body in another place.

The children are innocently throwing stones at the body, but most people's eyes look worried.

When you don't know where they will appear, common people would surely be frightened indeed--

I see, I forgot that point of view.

I see, fear huh.

The purpose of the unseen mastermind might be to plant fear in the people of the Royal Capital.

What if another demon lord's uproar happens again.

What if hordes of monsters attack.

I wonder if there will be more casualties than the time with the Dog-head demon lord if the Royal Capital's people are dominated with fear.

However, yet I don't know what comes after that.

If they just want to kill people, there's no meaning in doing such roundabout and mysterious ways like this.

[Who] and [What for] are they planting fear in the Royal Capital's people I wonder.

--What is the last piece.

12-19. The Gathering of Shiga Eight Swords

Satou's here. It's quiet before a big incident happen. And I feel that often the situation has become unrepairable once you've noticed it.

Still, I think it's rare for it to really become unrepairable as long as you don't give up.

◇

After returning from the tea party, I heard about Lady Karina's condition from Arisa.

It seems Arisa's blasting worked, and she's going to attend the dance party while still ghastly.

"What did you say to her?"

"Fufuhn, you want to hear? But, I won't tell yo~u. It's a girl's s-e-c-r-e-t."

After waving her finger, 'chichichi', in front of her face, Arisa winks.

Her attitude is slightly irritating, but since it's thanks to Arisa that Lady Karina would attend the dance party, I'll forgive her by just pulling her cheeks.

"Leave the dance to me~?"

"Pochi also wants Master to look at the result of Pochi's special training nodesu."

"Nn, dance."

The youth trope are asking me to be their dance partner with sparkling faces, but I can't do that right now.

"I'm really sorry, I have to go with Liza now."

I feel slightly guilty from seeing the dejected children, but since tomorrow I'll be free until evening, I promise to accompany them as much as they like.

Since Arisa said some unnecessary remark, "That sounds like a line from a father who won't keep his promise", this time for sure, I'm pulling her cheeks as a punishment.

I'm going to keep my promise. Absolutely!

"--Master, the preparation is complete."

"Un, clothes like those also suit you well."

I praise Liza who's unusually wearing a skirt, and escort her like a lady to the carriage going to Julberg-shi's mansion.

◇

"What the hell kind a warrior doesn't have their own weapon!"

In the meeting place at the top floor of Julberg-shi's mansion the servant had guided us to, an unfamiliar middle-aged swordsman suddenly chastised me.

--Who is this person?

"Excuse me. Nice to meet you for the first time. I'm Satou Pendragon, a retainer of Baron Muno."

"Hmph, it's impossible for an upstart worthless noble like you to become a Shiga Eight Sword, keep that in mind!"

No no, I'm aware that you're angry, but at least do the greeting.

I look at the man who's raging by himself once again.

He's a rather high level warrior at level 42. His age is also 42 matching the level, but it's probably a coincidence.

I think he's also a candidate of Shiga Eight Sword, but his affiliation is with Parion Temple, his place of origin is also written as Parion Holy Kingdom.

Apparently he's recommended by the temple, and not a holy knight or a Mithril explorer.

Matching that, his title is also [Temple Knight].... But the titles seen even just on the AR are dangerous ones like [Murderer], [Assassin].

He certainly has this somewhat edgy feeling that matches those titles.

Matching those titles, his magic sword also has [Energy Drain] and [Strength Drain] effects.

I'm slightly cautious about him due to his exceedingly suspicious origin and information, but he doesn't seem to be someone related to the demon lord believers [Light of Liberty].

Liza who's standing beside me seemed like she wanted to complain while I was checking those information, but help comes before she could snap.

"Jizon-dono, stop being impolite to the guests I've invited."

"Hmph, you were beaten by something like a demi-human cause you're saying such things."

The one who interceded is the host, Julberg-shi.

However, this middle-aged man called Juzon changed his aim from me to Julberg-shi, and provoked him.

--He's like a mad dog.

He's forties already, I wish he's a bit more composed.

I wonder if the word, 'fuwaku', does not exist in this world. <TLN: Can mean 'past forty', or 'following the right course'.>

"Are you mocking me, brat."

There's anger on Julberg-shi's words.

It seems most of the people here are hot-blooded, far from stopping the two, they look excited waiting for what'll happen next.

--These damn muscle brains.

Now then, since the mood has become threatening, I'll follow up.

If these two fight, we won't get to feast on the Oumi beef, spare me from that. The chef of this house is famous as the best in term of meat dishes in the Royal Capital, so I don't want to miss this chance.

I'll up my skill further here and treat our girls too.

"Fuhn, if you're a warrior, sooner than words--"

Using Ground Shrink, I approach the middle-aged man who's going to pull his swords together with his words, and hold down the pommel of the sword with the open palm of my hand.

These two were looking at each other, so my Ground Shrink shouldn't have been found out. They probably will interpret it as Flickering Movement or something along the line.

The middle-aged man still tries to pull the sword without minding me, but I suppress it with the overwhelming STR difference.

"This is a place for having pleasant chat you know. We can have the side show after the meal okay?"

The middle-aged man desperately tries to pull the sword, exerting his strength until his face is flushed, but the sword's pommel is unmoving.

"....That's a good idea--"

The middle-aged man looks like he's given up trying to pull the sword and then relaxes himself.

Even though Crisis Perception doesn't kick in, I stop the middle-aged man who's trying to pull a short sword behind his body by stopping his other elbow.

That's obvious indeed.

"--Have I passed the exam with this?"

I ask while smiling at the middle-aged man who's groaning gununu.

Even though I've dropped the [exam] thing as a joke with much effort, the middle-aged man kicks at my foot. There's a hidden knife on the tip of his shoe.

I kinda expected it since I often dealt against surprise attacks from monsters I had seen for the first time, I trample the middle-aged man's toes to the ground, preventing the attack.

I held back, but I felt dull sensation from the sole of my foot. The bones of his instep might have cracked.

"An explorer's body is a weapon as you see. Have you understood?"

While relaxing the power on the place where I trample his foot, I smile at him.

Of course, with the help of [Poker Face] skill, I make it so my emotion isn't reflected on my eyes.

"Hmph, I withdraw what I said earlier. I'll have you fight with me after the dinner."

"That sounds fun."

I did not make a promise.

After the dinner, I'll leave the other candidates or Julberg-shi to be this battle maniac's partner and leave.

◇

There was a slight trouble, but this much shouldn't be enough to call off the dinner.

I'm glad that Julberg-shi is someone with a big heart.

Looks like we're the last ones who arrive at the meeting place.

In the meeting place, there are five Shiga Eight Swords, and the candidates: three holy knights, Jeril the Mithril explorer, and lastly, the middle-aged man earlier.

For some reason everyone is armed.

I tried confirming to Julberg-shi if we were really going to have a dinner, but there's no mistake about it. I'm relieved that it's not a battle tournament or something.

I'm afraid that this will become a tournament for Shiga Eight Swords selection.

We sit on our seats for the dinner, everyone besides us wears armor, subtly inviting some funny laughs.

Really, it'd have been dangerous if I didn't have [Poker Face] skill.

In addition, thanks to Julberg-shi's consideration, he made the middle-aged man from earlier sit far away from us.

I thought that there would be Hors D'oeuvre first, but the meat dishes enters the dinner from the start.

It seems each part will be cooked and taken out in turns.

"It's delicious. I feel it's a bit too soft, but this rich flavor tastes somewhat different from other meat."

Liza speaks her impression with clear voice.

I'm aware of the presence of her tail behind the chair that's swinging happily.

"Even more than the meat, this sauce is superb. Julberg-shi employs some good chef."

Jeril who's sitting in front of us expresses his impression to Sir Julberg the host.

On the other hand, other members only say "tasty", and concentrate eating the dish in silent.

Half of the people here are noble born, yet, the taste of the beef from royal farm is probably special.

I also enjoy the Oumi beef menu delightfully.

The grilling calculation is exquisite, but analyzing the pre-cooking sauce is difficult. I can't understand one of the ingredient used to bring up the subtle flavor no matter what. It's quite a difficult problem.

However, my Crisis Perception kicks in as if pouring cold water on this wonderful dinner.

I thought it was from the middle-aged man, but unexpectedly, it comes from diagonally upward. This room is on the top floor, so I wonder if it's from the rooftop?

At the same time with that, some luminous points that are quickly approaching here are reflected on the radar.

Looking at the movement speed, they're going to arrive in about 10 seconds. Judging from their trajectories and speed, they must be flying.

I choose the luminous points and open the information window.

The ones approaching are five flying monsters. All of them are Tamed monsters, but the people riding on them have the affiliation [Light of Liberty].

Judging from their movement and the Crisis Perception, this mansion seems to be the aim.

Their method is a bit forceful, but I wonder if they're coming to erase Shiga Eight Swords and the candidates who are obstacles for their plan?

Or perhaps, since [Light of Liberty]'s base of operation is in Parion Holy Kingdom, they have some grudges against the middle-aged man from earlier, and so we're getting involved in it. He seems to be the type that makes many enemies after all.

Putting that aside, the monsters coming here are upper level 20s, so even if there are five of them, it'll be over in an instant with the people here.

--Five seconds until they come.

"Something is coming!"

Before I could speak, Heim-shi of Shiga Eight Swords spoke urgently.

He probably has Crisis Perception skill too.

Hearing the warning, the warriors pick their own arms.

Liza who doesn't have a weapon holds the silver knife she was using in the dinner earlier and stands up.

However, what are the anti-air defense of Royal Capital doing.

I wonder if it can only function to stop monsters that are trying to break through the outer wall?

--Estimated time of arrival, 0 seconds.

Huh? They're not coming?

When I chase the movement of the luminous points reflected on the radar, they pass through this mansion and make a turn in the sky.

Hyuru hyuru, so the sounds of cutting wind--

Damn, bombing huh.

I never would've thought that there would be aerial bombing in a fantasy world.

"Liza, upward. Magic Edge Cannon, maximum."

"Understood."

Liza moves without delay from my order.

--Perhaps it's due to the rush of adrenaline, I see the surrounding in slow motion.

Julberg-shi and katana-user Bauen-shi who take their weapons on their hands and be vigilant toward the things beyond the roof.

Heim-shi who gave the warning earlier, and the scythe-user Ms Ryouna are currently kicking the door, going to the balcony.

The old holy knight who went to the Duchy Capital with the third prince is attaching a shield on his arm.

As expected of Shiga Eight Swords, they're quick to act.

It seems the three holy knights still can't follow the situation, they're currently surveying the surrounding while standing up.

On the other hand, Jeril the explorer who's used with emergency situations is calmly eating some magic medicines. Those medicines have acceleration and physical reinforcement effects. They're expensive medicines, but your life is more important really.

And the last one, the middle-aged man looks strange.

He has drawn his sword, but for some reason his line of sights wander around the inside of the room.

His behavior is like there's an assassin who's aiming for him inside the room.

That thought stops with the sounds of collisions between heavy things beyond the roof.

Liza shoots the red light spheres on her hand almost at the same time the rock balls thrown by the tamed monsters destroy the roof.

The magic edge cannon smash the rock balls together with the roof.

The convergence was slightly worse due to her using a silver knife, but the magic edge cannon scatters red light, illuminating the room red.

--Thus, the long long night of the attack on the year-end Royal Capital begins.

12-20. A Long Royal Capital Night

Satou's here. I heard that mass weapons are strong, but I wonder why I heard that catapults are weak. If it just throws at least head-sized rocks, I think it would be quite dangerous.

◇

Dropping from the roof, jet of dust and splinters from the rock balls destroyed by Liza's magic edge cannon fly about to the room that's filled with the red afterglow.

Slightly later, debris from the destroyed roof also fall.

From the side, I quickly snatch maids who are about to be crushed by the debris, saving them.

The surrounding view was obstructed by the dust so I had used Ground Shrink freely.

Two holy knights seem to be injured by the collapsing debris and the rock balls, their health gauges have been reduced by half.

On the other hand, a sommelier-like male waiter escaped by himself with difficulty. Men have to be like that after all.

Then, heavy vibrations that shakes your abdomen intermittently assail.

Surprised by the shaking foothold, the maids whom I've just rescued hug me from both sides.

I endure my cheeks not to melt with the help of [Poker Face], and open the map to check on the situation.

With the 3D map, I see that the mansion has begun collapsing.

There's no mistake, it's the fault of the four volleys of rock balls from just now.

Aside from one volley that Liza intercepted, this mansion was attacked by rock balls that are normally used for castle siege, so it's understandable.

I quickly check the positions of the servants inside the mansion.

Unexpectedly, there are only 23 of them in all. I invoke the usual [Magic Hands] to catch them and then put them outside the mansion.

Fortunately, there wasn't anyone who got directly hit by the rock ball and died.

There are several people who are in critical conditions, but I can just deal with them after we've escaped outside.

During the several seconds when I was desperately arranging the escape plan, an incident happened in the room.

"--Guh, wh, what are you doing."

I heard muffled scream from beyond the dust cloud.

Accoding to AR, Bauen-shi the katana-user is dying, and beside him, Julberg-shi has been injured to the point of half-dying too.

Next to them is the middle-aged man colored in red in the radar--Jizon the temple knight.

--The bombing earlier was in order to assist this guy's assassination huh.

Relying on the Radar, I kick the debris below toward him.

Jizon the temple knight raises a muffled scream with a heavy thud sound on the other side of the cloud.

The cloud of dust is cleared for an instant from the debris's track.

Jizon who was stabbing his magic sword on Julberg-shi's back pulled it and retreated back while looking annoyed.

The debris earlier seems to have broken one of his shoulder, his arm hangs listlessly.

"Tsk, unarmed bastard being a nuisance--『Wicked Magic Peerless』"

Jizon's magic sword that received the [Command Word] at the end of his cursing turns black.

And then, the blackness moves to his body from his hand, turning his whole body black.

--Well, no one would wait till it ends though.

In defiance of the floor that's begun collapsing, the great sword of Heim-shi the [Weed] and the scythe of Ms. Ryouna the [Mower] attack him from both side.

Jizon kicks Bauen-shi the katana-user toward Heim-shi, stopping his attack.

The scythe of Ms. Ryouna that comes next grazes his shoulder, but then the scythe flows upward as if slipping from his blackened body.

Jizon swings his largish magic sword toward Ms. Ryouna who's full of opening after missing a large attack, forcing her to retreat, and then he slips away from there.

The blackened Jizon who runs off in low posture like a cockroach heads toward me and Liza for some reason.

I might look like an easy target since I'm hugging two female servants on both sides like this.

Certainly, coping with him might be difficult for me who's concentrating on getting the servants out of the mansion.

--However, I have a reliable bodyguard on my side.

"Liza."

"Understood."

With a bastard sword-sized magic sword, the approaching Jizon stabs Liza who's standing in front of me.

Liza parries it with a silver knife covered in Magic Edge.

"Impossible, Magic Edge on a tableware?!"

Did he not see Liza intercepting the rock on the roof just now?

Certainly, Liza had used up most of her magic power with the attack just now, but I've already re-charged her with [Magic Power Transfer].

"Still have remaining magic power--『Assasin's Dagger』"

Receiving Jizon's [Command Word], the surface of his magic sword emits dark red light.

"Your flesh will fall off just by touching this『Rotting Poison』. Come at me if you think your scales can block this."

He probably said that to scare us, but it was a bad move.

Liza has completed her preparation during his unnecessary remark.

There's a red glowing spear on Liza's hand.

It's a spear knitted from Magic Edge with the silver knife as the core. It consumes large amount of magic power, so she normally doesn't use it, but its attack power rivals that of a normal magic spear.

Liza's red spear flicks Jizon's poisonous magic sword, and then gouges his arm.

Liza blocks the slight poison scattered by the magic sword with a red membrane produced on her body--[Magic Armor] that's deployed partly.

Jizon is still trying to attack even though his shoulder is pierced, but that never manifested.

Faster than Jizon swinging his sword, Liza's spear pierced Jizon's shoulders, and the wrist that held the sword, at a speed eyes couldn't track.

--Oh dear, she's merciless.

"A spear made from Magic Edge!"

Jizon who's been neutralized by Liza artlessly, collapses to the floor.

I saw Jizon taking out something behind his body.

Three black lumps the size of fists--magic bombs for suicide bombing!

Fortunately, I'm the only one who notice it.

The moment the activated magic bombs are separated from his hand, I touch them with [Magic Hands] that aren't being used to get the servants, and put them into my storage.

Jizon probably saw it as if the bombs suddenly disappeared.

Before Jizon could leak out surprised words, Liza attacked him by swinging her tail once, robbing the man's consciousness.

--Good grief, leave suicide bombs to robot in research lab.

During these chains of incidents, I've somehow successfully completed evacuating people in the building besides the ones in this room.

There's not much time until the mansion collapses, so we have to quickly get out of here too.

Of course, it seems I'm not the only one who think so.

"It's dangerous here, everyone escapes!"

In place of Julberg-shi who couldn't move due to the effect of the magic sword's [Energy Drain] and [Strength Drain], Heim-shi gave instructions to everyone.

Two floors of the mansion's have already been crushed, there's around 10 meters down to the ground from this fifth floor.

The people here should be able to escape from only that much height.

I lift the backs of the two female servants who are embracing me from both sides, and jump from the collapsed wall.

My ears hurt from the stereo screams.

While defending myself from the falling the mansion's debris with Flexible Shield, I'm going down to the ground with poor visibility due to the cloud of dust.

The foothold is bad due to the large amount of debris, so I'm actually secretly using Sky Drive near the ground to move, with the dust as the cover.

The men who ride the tamed monsters shoot bolts from crossbows toward us who are escaping.

It seems their aim is Jizon Liza is carrying on her shoulder.

Making use of the remaining cover, I use [Remote Stun] to alter the course of the bolts.

I had also shot at the eight tamed monsters' heads while I was at it, but it seemed they had countermeasures, the Remote Stuns were blocked by magic shields that appeared before the tamed monsters, not reaching the bodies.

The enemies who have lost the opportunity to attack fly over the mansion's sky.

--Maybe I shouldn't have restrained myself and attacked with 120 shots.

I make a landing while regretting it, and take some distance away as to not get squashed by the mansion.

I catch the holy knights who failed their landing and stopped moving with [Magic Hands] and forcefully hurl them away from the danger zone.

They might get hurt a bit, but it should be better than getting crushed to death.

"Please treat these two."

"Y-yes."

I entrust the two maids-san I've carried on my shoulders to the servants who've escaped earlier.

I thought the two had stopped screaming, turn out they're fainted.

Four of the enemies who failed their attack earlier come attacking again in order to get rid of Jizon.

However, the interceptions have already been prepared.

"....■■■■■■ Multiple Light Javelins"

"""....■■■■ Light Javelin"""

The light javelins invoked by Shiga Eight Swords members and Jeril assault the tamed monsters.

The dying tamed monsters plunge with their inertia, but the old knight with a great shield cuts in.

"<<Protect>> Holy Shield Plitwen"

The blue light that spread from around the shield block more than 1 ton bodies of the tamed monsters.

He had no presence up until now, but this old knight, Leiras is also one of Shiga Eight Swords.

I don't know his nature since we mostly didn't converse when he was in the Duchy Capital with the third prince, but it seems his defensive power is quite a thing as expected of someone who lives on after fighting the yellow-body demon.

The members of [Light of Liberty] who have got off the tamed monsters are trying to escape, but Ms. Ryouna and Heim-shi gleefully chase them.

◇

While glancing at it, I open the map and check the surrounding.

A monster appeared in the earl's tea party this noon, so there are three times the knights and soldiers who are patrolling than usual.

The knights and soldiers are masked, but they don't look to be in any tense situation like surrounding a specific mansion or something.

I thought that the [Light of Liberty]'s nobles hiding in the mansion would do something during the incident, but they're not moving in their own mansion that's being guarded by their private army that's more than 100 people strong.

Though, the mansions of other upper nobles also have their own varied situations, so there's no need to especially mention them.

I had also thought that the three elites of the [Light of Liberty] mentioned back then would come as an insurance for the Shiga Eight Swords' assassination, but they're not moving from their hiding mansion.

They're people who are bold enough to attack like this in the capital of the whole kingdom. It should not be over with just this.

If the attack just now was a diversion, then is their true aim the royal castle?

I stare at the map once again in order to understand the people's movements.

Right at that time, I saw something moving in the corner of my view.

"Master, the patrolling knights have come."

"...Let them in."

A butler with dirtied formal dress reported to Julberg-shi.

With that much disturbance, the patrolling knights closest by would have come.

I see their details on the map.

The 12th knight order huh, the commanding knight is level 34. His level is high for a commander of a patrolling unit.

It's a unit with 30 knights, there are six people who use great shields unbecoming of a patrolling unit, 10 people equipped with long spears that have fire stones on their tips, four magicians, and other 10 knights.

Those are some excessive forces, like they're going to a war, but these equipments and number of knights are probably for dealing with giant monsters that appear frequently in the Royal Capital.

Liza who's standing by beside me becomes tense when she sees the man who's going here.

"What's the matter?"

"Master, please be cautious. That's the man who was the boss of Lost Thieves."

As pointed by Liza, I re-check him with AR readings.

The man's name is Rudaman--the guy who illegally manufactured Fiend Drugs in the underground Labyrinth.

However, after negotiating with the guildmaster when he was in the guild's jail after getting arrested by us, he should have become a member of [Crime Slave Unit (Violet)] in the Royal Capital.

What kind of connection that made him transfer to become a normal knight....

Looks like tonight's disturbance will still continue.

12-21. A Long Royal Capital Night (2)

Satou's here. There are many quiet things the moment before a dammed up river that's about to produce flash flood exceeds it limit. However, in hindsight, I noticed that there were many omens.

◇

I get past Julberg-shi and step forward in front of the knight leader who has visited, the former lost thieves king, Rudaman.

"Heya, Rudaman. Did you change your job from crime slave?"

"--Tsk, Pendragon the『Woundless』huh. So you were a candidate of Shiga Eight Swords too.... No wonder I can't see any injured person in this catastrophe."

Even though I approached him sociably, Rudaman clicked his tongue with a warped face.

By the way, the reason why there's no one injured is because there were people who can use healing magic among the servants, and I distributed some magic potions.

Rudaman casually raises his hand above his head, and then swings it forward.

At the same time, every member of the 12th knight order begins to take battle actions.

Men who have great shields make a wall, the fire spears that peek among the gaps between them shoot out [Fire Bolts].

I can even hear spell-chanting behind them.

Rudaman lowered his posture and then tried to run past me, but I trip his leg, making him fall.

However, Rudaman skillfully does forward roll and swings his axe toward the empty-handed Julberg-shi.

Julberg-shi is taking an evasive action to evade the axe, but it seems there's still some lingering effect of the magic sword, his movements is way duller than usual.

However, the frenzied edge never reaches him.

Liza breaks in while holding a red magic edge spear.

I nimbly throw the debris below my feet toward the [Fire Bolts] that come flying, grasping them by only reading the movement on the radar.

Looking at the trajectories of the fire bolts, looks like they're aiming for Jizon to seal his mouth.

They're probably also trying to exterminate the holy knights who have unequipped their armors for healing, and the samurai-san of Shiga Eight Swords together.

"…… ■■■ 『Light Boost』"

Jeril who has used light magic for physical reinforcement rushes toward the rebels to deal with them.

He seemed to have seen Rudaman in the Labyrinth City too, he started to chant the spell in the report of when Liza arrested Rudaman.

Jeril jumps over the shield-users on the frontline, and tramples down the wand-users who have fire wands.

At the same time, the spell-chanting of the rebels on the back stopped too. Apparently, the two Shiga Eight Swords who were chasing after the tamed monsters attacked from behind them.

The two are high level warriors, they dispose the rebels who assumed to be the 12th knight order unit.

Of course, Rudaman whose limbs are pierced by Liza's magic edge spear has also been captured.

It seems holding back with the magic edge spear really is difficult for her, one of Rudaman's arm is about to torn off.

"Impossible, we were equal back then...."

"It is the result of Master's education and training."

Liza indifferently warded Rudaman who was saying so in vexation.

During that occasion, suspicious movements of some luminous points are reflected on the radar.

They're in the garden of the neighboring mansion bordering this mansion.

Apparently, there are five criminal guild people standing by. They were probably laying low in order to assassinate people during the chaos.

Looks like they've missed the opportunity to come out since the fight here ended too quick.

I'll leave other people to deal with these guys.

I look around, since Ms. Ryouna the [Mower] of Shiga Eight Swords looks bored, I decide to cast it onto her.

"Ryouna-sama, I'd like you to hear something--"

After telling her that I felt some suspicious presences on the border of the neighboring mansion, she quickly agreed to go investigate while smiling ferociously.

Looks like Julberg-shi and Heim-shi of Shiga Eight Swords are going to interrogate the captured rebels.

I'll leave that to them, I'll do the thing that only I can do.

I leave only the rebels who assumed to be the 12th knight order, and the people of [Light of Liberty] to be shown on the map, and check them.

Among the [Light of Liberty] people, the three high-leveled ones are hiding in the mansion together in the noble mansion, but the people who are less than level 10s are acting together with the 12th knight order.

--No, they're not together.

I enlarge the map and see that the members of [Light of Liberty] are in the underground tunnel. All members of the 12th knight order are standing by on the entrance of the tunnel.

I tell the surrounding that I'm going for nature's call and go into the shadow of the garden, and look the members in turn with [Clairvoyance].

It seems the members are quickly moving toward an exit of the underground tunnel.

I check the direction they're going, but there's no particular magic tool facility or something.

The slimes are wriggling on top of the sewage, but they're not changing or anything.

When I turn my view forward the underground tunnel, I see a new corpse.

I tried searching for corpses in the tunnel and found many. Every corpse has been stabbed excessively with sharp things, and died with an anguished expression.

Attracted by the smell of the blood, slimes, insects, and rats have gathered, those are cruel scenes.

Every corpse is wearing shabby clothes like they're either people of the slum or slaves.

Their ages and genders are all over the place, there's no distinctive similarity between them. It seems they were beaten beforehand, there are many with black bruises.

Right at then, a [Telephone] from Arisa comes.

"What's wrong, did something happen there too?"

『T-there too you said, did anything happen? Are you injured?』

I tell Arisa whom I've carelessly made worried to don't worry, and urge her to continue.

"The two of us are fine, leaving that aside, what's happened."

『There's a letter from Sera in the castle. The Chamberlain who brought it said『ASAP』, what do you want to do?』

--From Sera-san?

"Arisa, immediately open it and read it."

『Eh? Is it alright? Wait a minute. Okay, I'm reading it--"Nightmare visits the Royal Capital, Black Calamity alight from the heaven."』

This is why prophecies are....

Please make it easier to understand.

There shouldn't be a prophecy of a demon lord appearing in the Royal Capital, so I guess it's probably a greater demon or something along the line.

However, it's not from underground. It's from the sky huh.

--Please let the development be not like a troublesome inflation battle manga, like "This time the enemy is a God."

I could have fallen behind if I didn't hear the oracle. I have to thank Sera somehow after this matter is over.

It wasn't written that it would be today, but the sign seems quite dangerous. I don't want to make this become something that I'd regret later because I'm being too carefree.

We should be prepared enough so that we can cope with anything that might happen.

"Arisa, tell everyone to arm themselves. I don't know what's going to appear today, so use the best equipment."

『By best equipment, you mean you permit the use of hidden equipment?』

"Yeah, please. Be sure to equip masks or something to hide your identity okay."

『Okkey!』

Alright, now it should be fine as long as multiple demon lords don't attack.

◇

I tell Julberg-shi that I'm going back to the mansion to fetch my equipment and leave the place.

The maids I saved were thanking me with sparkling eyes, but it wasn't the time to ogle them, so I only greeted them back plainly and left.

After returning to the mansion, I changed into Kuro and headed to Echigoya to finish my business there.

Liza had gone to the room where everyone was to put on her equipment.

"Tifaliza, please get the command room in the top floor ready to use. Is the manager here?"

"Certainly. I think the manager is in her own office."

I take the manager and go to the underground vault.

"It should be fine with this much space."

I collect all the goods besides the ones for battle inside the underground vault into my Storage through Item Box.

I also gathered battle-use goods in one corner of the room.

"U-um, Kuro-sama, just what is?"

"In case of emergency, shelter the neighboring citizens in this underground vault. I'll entrust you with the right to command the golems in this room."

After saying that to the manager, I give her the [Command Rod] for giving order to the Orichalcum Golem.

This place should hold even against advanced magic, as long as it's only one volley.

◇

I change into Nanashi and teleport to the royal castle in order to report, though I think they knew already.

This time I'm not teleporting to the Forbidden Library, but to an arbor of the royal garden nearby the king's office.

The king has offered me to exclusively use this place for teleporting in.

I go to the king's office, and see the king and the prime minister having a meeting about something.

"Your Majesty, sorry for coming without warning, is it alright?"

"If it isn't Nanashi-sama."

So he already knows. It's good since the talk advances fast though.

The prime minister who's standing beside the king gets the other civil officials to withdraw.

"Is it by any chance, about the incident at Julberg-shi's mansion?"

"Heya, Prime Minister. There's that matter too, but I have another info--"

I tell them that the 12th knight order is acting together with the demon lord believers, [Light of Liberty], and the ones who attacked Julberg-shi's mansion from the sky are [Light of Liberty]'s members.

Since it seems that the captured tamers killed themselves before they could be interrogated, the prime minister is surprised when he hears this info.

Furthermore, I tell them that the [Light of Liberty]'s members were killing the poor in the Royal Capita's underground tunnel, they were possibly doing some kind of ritual.

"As expected of Nanashi-sama. We also have something we wish to tell you--"

The thing Prime Minister said was largely the same as Sera's oracle.

It wasn't only from Sera, many temples in the Royal Capital reported something similar too it seems.

However, a slightly different prophecy came from just Parion temple's elder miko; "The calamity exists under the sakura tree."

Fumu, by under the sakura tree it means the royal castle's one I guess?

"Then, if the Royal Capital is attacked by greater demons or a giant monster that can't be handled by the royal army, please announce to the people to quickly protect themselves by taking shelter or the like okay. I'll defeat it as quick as possible so there will be no victim. There might be casualties if they carelessly got themselves involved."

"At your will. Prime Minister, how much is the remaining magic power of the『City Core』."

"The declining mana supply from Source has been getting better for the past several days, so, leaving aside the wide area ritual magic, there should be no problem if it's only for the Royal Capital's protection."

After I told so to the king, he confirmed some information to the prime minister.

...Or rather, what's [City Core]?

Is it something like [Dungeon Core]?

Well, I guess I can ask that later.

"Then, please act in a way that would keep victims from appearing okay."

I tell them so and leave the royal castle.

◇

Even though it's not even 30 minutes after the attack on Julberg-shi's mansion, three monsters with red rope-like patterns like from before have appeared in the Royal Capital.

The difference is that every monster is weak at only level 10-20s.

Due to that, the patrolling knights exterminate them efficiently.

After getting back to my mansion, I change my tone to Kuro and tell [Porina] in the workshop with [Telephone] magic to evacuate to the underground shelter.

"Yes, I understand. What should I do with the workshop's facilities?"

"Leave the facilities. Evacuate the workshop's workers together with their family to the shelter. If there's still room in the shelter, I don't mind if Porina accepts the neighboring people too by your judgment."

I forgot to contact Nell, but Porina would probably tell her.

Aoi boy and Prof. Rotation are in Echigoya's laboratory together, so they probably would evacuate with the other employees.

Continuing on, I also contact the orcs underground with [Telephone] magic.

This time I've changed my tone to Nanashi. Switching it during emergency is annoying.

"Ri Fuu, demons might come attacking Royal Capital. Evacuate to a safe place if there's one. If the teleport gate is usable, that one is better."

『Don't be unreasonable. It takes three days for the teleport gate to activate.』

So teleport gates have that kind of restriction.

『Moreover, there's no place safer than where we are now y'know. Otherwise, we couldn't have brought up the children.』

"Then can you put barricade on the entrance to the village? For about three days at the longest."

『Okay. We can't refuse Nanashi. Is there anything we can help?』

I look at the map, and check the places where the sacrifice-like corpses are located.

There are two places like that nearby Ri Fuu. I guess I'll ask them to help me.

"--Can I?"

『Leave it to us. There's a Heraruon priest too, so we can perform purification ritual.』

I thanked the reliable Ri Fuu and cut the telephone.

When the incident has been settled, I'll treat him to some liquor and dishes.

◇

Right when I cut the call--

Some odd discomforting sense welled up from below my feet.

"Nyu!"

Tama who feels the same odd sense raises her tails up, and run up my body.

It's ticklishly painful when you're wearing armor like this, so please stop it.

"Something feels icky nodesu."

"Satou."

It seems Pochi and Mia feel the odd sense too.

I quickly open the map.

Red luminous points appear one after another in the Royal Capital.

Looking at their statuses, every one of them is probably the red rope-pattern monster.

"Look! Outside the window!"

"Master, a magic circle-like thing has appeared in the sky, so I report."

Arisa and Nana report, I look out the window.

A gigantic magic circle that covers the whole Royal Capital has appeared.

Apparently, the incident has gone into full swing.

--I guess I'll become Nanashi and go crush it quickly.

12-22. Royal Capital Chaos

Author's note:

※It's in third person view this time.

In the chaos of the year-end Royal Capital that's like pandemonium hell.

"Dammit, my steel sword got chipped."

"Tsk, my spear too."

The unfortunate soldiers who've encountered one of the monsters in the Royal Capital are having a hard fight.

They're the first people who got in contact with the elephant-sized cricket monster that broke through the stone pavements.

Even though they're more heavily armed than usual, the burden is too heavy for soldiers who usually fight against criminals, the tide of battle is in favor of the monster.

However, their saviors come when they've been cornered.

A group of around 30 people from the other end of the street engage the monster.

"We've come to assist you! Leave the monster to us."

"Oh! Knight-sama, thank you very much."

The knight captain is holding a mithril alloy lance on one hand which he thrusts to the monster's face.

Red membrane that appeared from the monster's body stopped that attack, but it didn't chip the lance like it did to the soldiers' swords.

After a brief clash, the red membrane cracks like a glass.

However the lance that's been resisted by the red membrane glides through the monster's head, missing its target.

"So this is red rope."

The knight rides the force and runs past through the monster.

The remaining knights began to charge following their captain.

However, the monster isn't simply waiting around to be defeated.

The monster who was fighting with its forelegs and antennas before, began to ram the knights with its body.

Like an arrow shot from its bow, the monster sends the knights flying.

Half of the knights were sent flying, and several fell from their horses, but protected by their bulky armors and tempered muscles, no one dies.

In the bloodied views of the fallen knights, a town girl stands before the monster.

"Nuoo, you monster! Your opponent is me, you damn toilet insect!"

A knight mustered his strength to stand up, and threw provoking words toward the monster at the limit of his soul.

The monster turns its attention from the town girl who's right in front of it toward the knight.

"Good kid, you really are a boy. I'll lend a hand so rest for a bit now."

The town girl tells so as if she's explaining things to a kid, and spins the broom on her hand.

Apparently the town girl intends to fight the monster.

The monster's antennas are attacking like whips, but the town girl skillfully parry to the right and left.

The monster attacks again with its forelegs but the town girl nimbly jumps, avoiding them.

"R-run. It's not an opponent that can be fought with a broom."

"It's al~right, leave it to~ me."

There's a recognition inhibition veil like a traveling noble would wear on the face of the town girl who's sending a v sign toward the knight.

The town girl hits the monster's head from below with the tip of the broom on her hand.

As if stroke by a hammer swung by a giant, the monster's head bends backward vigorously.

"Wha, impossible."

Words to escape from reality leaked from the mouth of the knight who saw an unreal scene like it was from a comedy show such as hero stories.

The town girl strikes continuously for three times more to the monster's chin.

The monster crashes to a house on the side of the road, the building turns into debris and dust cloud.

"Achaa, wonder if someone will demand compensation for this."

While the town girl is worrying such an out-of-place thing, the knights have begun to raise their bodies one after another, setting up their weapons toward the monster.

They have wounds all over their bodies, but their knights' honor won't allow them to let women and children fight.

"The knights of Shiga Kingdom are in good health even when the era has changed huh."

The town girl crosses her arms and nods proudly.

Even while being buried under the debris, the monster's antennas attack the knights skilfully. Sparks come flying every time the knights block the antennas with their swords and shields.

"Yo~sh, here's a present from Onee-san! I rarely do this kind of service okay."

When the town girl waves her hand with the broom, the knights' swords are wrapped in light.

If there were someone with Appraisal skill, they would see that it was the advanced force magic spell, [Divine Blade].

The knight captain receives the attacking antennas of the monster that's under the debris.

The antenna was flicked and sparks would fly just before, but now, the antenna is cut the moment the sword touches it.

"I can't believe it!"

After seeing that, another knight stabs the monster's body with a lance.

The lance easily pierces through the monster's body like a tofu.

"Mito, what are you playing at. Our enemy has appeared y'know."

"Ah, Ten-chan. If it's enemy, it's skewered over there see?"

<TLN: 'Ten' can mean heaven.>

A woman with long silver hair and wise gaze gets down from the roof to beside the town girl.

Her face is hidden with recognition inhibition veil like the town girl, but all the knights in this place are convinced that the face hidden behind the veil is beautiful.

"...Look at that."

The silver haired points at the sky with her shirauo-like finger. <TLN: google 白魚>

Lured by that, people who look at the sky see the magic circle that's spread in the sky of the Royal Capital.

"Uwah, that's dangerous."

"The floating violet hair over there is probably the mastermind behind this disturbance. Let's get rid of it quickly."

The silver-haired woman points at the center of the magic circle, but the knights aren't seeing anyone there.

However, it seems the town girl called Mito is able to see it.

"Floating in the air huh. I guess it's really a demon lord candidate?"

"Dunno, we'll know if it's a friend or foe if we just fight. If it's a demon or a demon lord, simply destroy it."

The silver haired woman who said some dangerous words holds a brusque great sword with one hand, and then jumped to the roof from the road, going away.

"W-wait a minute~"

The town girl puts her broom on her armpit, holds the hem of her long skirts with both hands and chases after the woman.

◇

"Your Majesty, tonight the monsters are reported to appear on more than seven locations."

The Prime Minister tells the report from the messenger.

Considering the most was two monsters up until now, it's probably okay to deem this abnormal.

"Is that so...."

After a rock-like silent elapses for a moment, the king declares his decision.

"Generals, notify every knight order to prepare for sortie. Put them in stand by without exception, do not let them sortie in a hurry because of their desire for meritorious deeds."

"""At your will."""

The generals send messengers to the transmission towers.

The transmission towers are used to contact the knight garrison outside the outer wall by using light magic.

"Leader of Royal Court Magicians, let Shiga 33 Wands to search for enemies in the whole Royal Capital. See that they know it comes from me, and to every transmission towers, without exception."

"At your will. ...However, as I understand, our duty as Shiga 33 Wands is to be the greatest weapon of the kingdom. His Majesty--"

In a serious tone, the king interrupts the royal court magician leader who's protesting.

"Leader of Royal Court Magicians, this is a royal order."

"....We will undertake the royal order."

The royal court magician falls prostrate with an unpleasant face, he looks to be the very picture of someone who's going to disobey.

The prime minister who has sharply seen through it, follows up.

"Leader of Royal Court Magicians, the enemy befitting of your role as the weapon has yet to appear. The one that lurks behind this matter is most likely--"

The prime minister is leading Royal Court Magician Leader who's holding his breath, and then he continues with a clear face.

"A greater demon, or perhaps...."

Royal Court Magician Leader lifts his head and mutters as if he's delirious.

"I will carry out Your Majesty's order with utmost importance!"

Royal Court Magician Leader raises the national treasure handed down by the Ancient King [Holy Wand Ophalian] overhead and then leaves gallantly.

He never notices the cold gazes from the surrounding.

When the messenger reports the 10th appearance of the monster, the king stands up from his throne.

"Prime Minister, I'm going to use『Communique Space』to order the citizens to evacuate."

"At your will."

The prime minister orders the chamberlains and the maids to start activating the [Communique Space] made by Ancient King Yamato, and the preparation for the king's ritual.

◇

『My dear people--』

The figure of the king is projected in the royal capital's air, overlapping the eerie magic circle. His voice comes from every transmission towers in the royal capital.

As far as the royal capital's people can remember, this function has never been used except for new year congratulatory and coronation ceremonies.

『Demons, to our Royal Capital--』

However, there are only a few people who look up at the figure of the king projected in the sky.

The people of the royal capital are desperately running away from the monsters that appeared on every place in the royal capital right before this broadcast.

It seems the king's broadcast for evacuating is slightly too late....

◇

"Oy, how many are alive?"

"Dunno, any potion left? Can't feel my left hand since awhile ago."

"Used all those things up already."

The half-killed knights behind the debris are exchanging words without vigor. The arm of the knight with pale face is seriously injured to the point like it'll torn off.

Their shields are broken, their swords' blades are too chipped, they're no difference than blunt weapons.

Five pill bug monsters on the other side of the street are swinging their antennas around, looking for the knights.

"I'll take at least one of them with me--"

"Don't be impatient. Raiss, aren't you marrying your childhood friend next week?"

"Yeah, I'd like to look at her face at least one more time..."

The knight stopped talking halfway.

A different pill bug has appeared from the opposite side of a collapsed house.

"Tsk."

The knights hold their dull swords and stand.

However as if ridiculing their determinations, the same kind of monsters roll from behind that pill bug toward them, one after another.

"You're kidding me...."

"Hah, come at me."

The rock-like monsters roll toward the bluffing knight--

However, before they could reach the knights, the monsters are struck by invisible hammers from overhead accompanied with roaring sound.

Red membranes appeared on the monsters' surface for an moment, but they were blown away in a flash, and then concentric circle-shaped cracks appeared on their hard shells.

Strong wind from the after-effect of that shock waves pushed the wall near the knights.

It seems the impacts reached deep inside the monsters, every monster has fallen and rolled sideway, they don't seem like they'll get up.

"Uwoo"

"W-was that『Air Hammer』just now?"

"....No, it should be a higher class of magic. Rather than that, let's escape during this chance."

"Sorry but run away by yourself, don't think I can get up."

"Shut up, I'll carry you on my shoulder."

The user of this magic doesn't seem concerned with the hot friendship of these knights either.

Next, transparent [Javelins]-like magic come flying toward a monster--it seems the aim is to finish it, the magic hits on the center of the crack on the shell made by the shock waves earlier.

While making 'Zofuri' sound, the transparent javelin slips through the monster body.

The next moment, muffled plosive sound echoes from inside the monster's body, then its body swells like the internal pressures pushing outside for an instant, and then red light leaks out from the gaps of the monster's shell.

And then, such inhumanly accurate attack befalls on every monster in this place.

The monsters are reduced to corpses with just that one attack, joining the objects such as debris in that place.

"....In just two strikes?!"

"Just, what the heck's this?"

A speck that flew from one of the monsters body together with the red light falls to the floor where one of the knight's forehead lays.

The knight picks that up, it's a red stone that's like a fragment of a magic core.

The knights never know--

The first magic was a non-lethal elementary force magic called [Remote Stun].

And the second magic was an elementary force magic, [Remote Arrow].

Above all, the second strike sniped the magic cores that were inside the monsters, rupturing the magic cores from the inside by overloading it.

--The knights never know.

There are things better left unknown in this world for the peace of your mind.

◇

"Oy, we've witnessed a miracle and all. Let's live on until we can thank the magician who saved us."

"....You're right."

The knight encouraged his co-worker as brightly as possible, but his partner knight's face has gone past pale, the darkish color of the death are floating on it.

Right at then, someone sprinkles cold water.

"What are you doing!"

What the knight, who reflexively shouted at such a miscreant conduct, sees is a small knight who's wearing golden armor under its pink mantle.

It doesn't seem to understand why the knight is exasperated, the golden knight who sits while holding its small knees inclines its head in puzzlement.

The knight who was going to catch the golden knight is stopped by his partner knight who was dying just now.

And that's with the arm that was going to be torn off just now.

"Calm down.... It was a magic potion."

The golden knight peers at the knight who's sitting on the ground from below.

"Your hand alright?"

"Thank you. It's really an amazing medicine."

"You can have this~?"

The golden knight hands a small bag with three magic medicines inside.

"Is it alright?"

"Supply support~?"

The golden knight nodded to the questioning knight.

"I am indebted."

"Don't worry be happy~?"

The golden knight looks restless for a bit, and then it disappears only to appear on the other side of the street.

Apparently, the golden knight is doing the same thing over there.

Pink mantles and bandannas become popular items as good luck charm among the soldiers and the knights who were saved by the golden knight's medicines at this day.

◇

"Has the hell's lid been opened?"

"What do we do Yasaku. That one's dangerous. My body is tingling all over."

"Yeah, according to Rin Jou-chan who saw it ahead of time, it's『Floor Master』class."

Some explorers are peeking from behind the remain of a wall toward the big frame of the giant tree-like monster that has turned a section of the city into debris during the little time since it appeared. There are citizens they're protecting behind them.

"Can we win if the Mithril explorers gather here?"

"Baro, you know that it's impossible."

A man with stubble shook his head toward his witch companion's words.

"All the people who were present when those guys defeated the『Floor Master』aren't all here. Even the preparation is far off. Besides--"

He cuts his words and points at the two same-class monsters that have appeared. A pink dango-like monster, and a silver monster with a human body, six arms, and a crocodile head.

There are also several small bipedal monsters around them.

"Oh--N--o--"

The big-breasted explorer who's wearing priestess uniform points her bishop wand to one of the monsters that have appeared with a carefree voice like it's not a grave situation.

"That's--a deemon--,moreover--at the very least--a middle clas demon--. The ones--around it--seem to be--lesser demons too."

"Demons huh, leaving aside the small fry lesser ones, the middle class is bad news."

One of the explorers, a magic warrior with handsome face raises his eyebrows looking at the demon.

He can says that the lesser demons are small fry since his level is high, they're formidable enemies for normal army.

"It looks strong nanodesu!"

"Don't be careless so I advise."

"Let's go you two."

When the explorers look at the out-of-place voices, three people wrapped in golden armors are standing before the big monster that's been classified as [Floor Master] class.

One of them has small build, either a dwarf or a child.

"When did they...."

Featherkin children wearing masks suddenly appear in the air in front of the muttering explorers.

"Please evacuate before it's too late, we will guide you."

"Lead~"

The featherkin children with silver armors called the explorers.

They've decided to trust the words of these beckoning children and leave the place.

Behind them--

There are the figures of the golden knights who fell the giant tree monster like felling a decayed tree, while leaving blue tracks of light.

The knight who chantlessly uses advanced magic like the hero, the spear knight who freely uses the concealed secret art (hi-ougi) of the

Shiga Eight Swords' Chief, [Magic Edge Cannon], in rapid fire to restraint it, and the small knight who uses a great sword with blue light assaulting the giant tree and making big holes on it while moving erratically.

They escape from the peril while looking with sidelong glances at the unreal anomalous knight like it's a daydream tale.

On later days a rumor has begun circulating, 'aren't the real identities of the golden knights who saved the royal capital the Pendragon Seven Braves headed by the lizardkin spear user who smashed the shiga eight sword...'

The king announces the identities of the golden knights during the new-year congratulatory broadcast.

Their true identities are--

Author's note:

It's Satou's point of view in the next chapter.

●Profiles

【Mito】A woman who appeared on Zena's intermissions. Fought against a lesser dragon, and won.

【Ten-chan】A person who appeared only in name on Zena's intermissions. It seems she lives at Fujisan Mountains.

【Yasaku】An unfortunate explorer who's linked by fate with greater demons one way or another.

【Shiga 33 Wands】Royal Court Magician people.

【Golden Armors】Identities unknown. There are witnesses who saw it in Labyrinth City.

12-23. The Royal Capital's Magic Circle

Satou's here. The sakuramochis eaten during flower viewing are extraordinary. And it's perfect if there are hot teas.

However, it seems there's a sakuramochi that would make you hesitate to reach your hand on it in the other world....

◇

"Arisa! Please activate 『Tactic Talk』 magic."

"Okayy!"

Arisa activates the Tactic Talk magic chantlessly.

Without waiting for her, I flew toward the magic circle with Sky Drive.

I don't know what's coming out today, so I'm wearing the same golden orichalcum armor like Nana's. I can equip it together with the silver mask, but since its clattering sound is noisy, I've taken it off.

"I'm going to destroy that magic circle, I'd like to ask everyone to eliminate the monsters in the royal capital."

Through [Tactic Talk], everyone replies to my request unanimously.

While listening them, I observe the monsters in the royal capital with the map that occupies half of my view.

--There are many that need to be defeated.

I'll purge all the small fish myself.

Using ranged magic or Laser would damage the underground tunnel and the buildings.

I guess I really should use pinpoint-attack magic here.

I was going to use force magic [Remote Arrow], but stopped.

I've seen those red rope pattern monsters blocked Liza's spear, even though it was only for an instant. It's probably better to crush that protective membrane first.

I star invoking [Remote Stun].

I check the lock-on marks that appear one after another on the map, and fire the [Remote Stun] simultaneously.

Next, I fire [Remote Arrow] the same way.

The plan seems to be going well, around 100 luminous points of the red rope pattern monsters have disappeared.

When I'm about 10 seconds away from reaching the magic circle, most of the small fish on the streets have been eliminated after repeating the same set 20 times.

I've also split Claiomh Solais to 13 parts and made it to diligently eliminate the monsters.

However, I can't defeat the monsters that are located indoor with the same method.

Moreover, the monsters keep appearing in the royal capital, their number is added whenever it's decreased.

I really have to cut off the ringleader to stop the chaos.

I talk to Arisa with [Tactic Talk].

"Arisa, look at the map in the command room. From the northwest upper left, the length and width are divided by 10 right?"

『Wait a minute.』

While waiting for Arisa's reply, I begin to decipher the magic circle's constitution.

Evilish magic circles often have traps that are triggered by their destruction, so I can't abruptly break it with brute force.

『Yes, I can see it.』

"Put A to J on the horizontal axis, and 0 to 9 on the vertical axis."

I can hear the sound of Arisa doing her best with a pen from the other side.

『....OK, it's done.』

"Then dispatch Tama to point D3. Large swarms of lizard-type monsters are invading the noble mansion. I'm counting on you Tama."

『Aye aye Sir~』

I continue analyzing the magic circle as I hear Tama's casual reply on my ears.

"This time it's B1. A giant monster has appeared. The knights are fighting it, but the battle area would expand if left alone, and the orphanage would--"

『Arisa, the transfer. Master, the permission.』

"I authorize it."

I let Nana whose flat voice is oozing with impatience to dispatch to the downtown.

--Alright, analyze complete.

Apparently, it's forcefully absorbing magic power from the Royal Capital's Source and then it releases it to the royal capital.

Its function is simple despite its large scale.

I invoke [Break Magic], destroying the magic circle.

The magic circle is broken while leaving white glass-like splinters.

However, it's a gigantic magic circle that covers the whole capital.

I've merely destroyed a part of it. It's been broken several hundred meters wide due to chain reaction, but it seems the magic circle has repair function, it has begun repairing the broken part.

--How troublesome.

I could've destroyed it in one go if I had the advanced magic [<<Chain Break Magic>>] and [Neutralize Magic].

◇

I instruct our girls to dispatch while I'm cleaning up the small fish myself.

Thanks to the hard work of everyone, although there are some injured people, there is no casualty.

In order to quickly settle this chaos even a little bit faster, I try to destroy the magic circle once again.

This time I try invoking both [Mana Drain] and [Break Magic] together.

Just as I've thought, when I break its structure while draining its mana, the magic circle's repair function won't work.

Next I just have to go around breaking the magic circle with all my might.

If there's no hindrance, I can do it faster than making a cup ramen--

--As if that thought was a flag, my Crisis Perception kicked in.

I evade the white light that comes attacking from the ground with Flash Drive.

Despite the speed of Flash Drive, the white light reached one Flexible Shield, smashing it.

The Flexible Shield that could even stand the beastkin girls certain-kill technique was destroyed in an instant.

I feel like I've seen that white light before.

It looks exactly the same as the Dragon Breath that the Black Dragon Heiron used.

I block another troublesome white light with two Flexible Shields.

It seems like I could somehow block it with one Flexible Shield if I just work out the angle right to avert the white light.

I was able to pinpoint the one who fired the white light from the luminous point that appeared on the map because the opponent shot the second one.

The distance is around 400 meters. I approach the ground at high speed.

Surprisingly enough, the opponent's level is only 30 even though it used white light with that much power.

The name is [Ten-chan]. It's like the name of a shady Chinese that appeared in an old manga.

The gender is female, her race is [Homonculus] like Nana. Her title is [Familiar].

It seems she uses a recognition inhibition item, the info from Appraisal and AR readings differ with each other.

And then the one who appeared from behind the debris is a silver-haired beautiful woman with bat-like wings on her back.

Half of her face is covered by a black veil, but there's no mistake that she's beauty.

She's holding a great sword with white blade on her hand.

"I know not whether you're a demon or a demon lord, but you're the mastermind behind the royal capital chaos right. Get torn by my Dragon Claw Sword and disappear."

"You misunderst--"

I block the great sword, that attacked before I could finish talking, with Durandal taken out of my Storage.

She seems to be someone who's just mistaking me as a demon, so I evade with Flash Drive, and attempt to talk to her without doing the usual fainting-palm strike combo.

I'd like her to help eliminating the small fish monsters if possible.

We exchange two-three blows of swords while moving in the sky like gliding. Shining sparks that appear between blue trails are coloring the Royal Capital's sky.

Apparently, the silver-haired beauty is insensitive.

It seems she's still mistaking me as a demon even though I'm clearly using a holy sword.

"Ten-cha~n, wait for me~"

A black haired woman who's jumping around on the streets and the rooftops is coming toward us.

The thing on her hand looks like a broom, I wonder what kind of joke is this.

--Am I imagining things, I feel like I've heard her voice somewhere before.

"Mito! This guy is powerful. He hasn't hatched yet, but it's only a matter of time before he becomes a demon lord. Get rid of him with Forbidden Magic while I keep him busy."

"Eh~, how many victims would appear if I use Forbidden Magic in the middle of Royal Capital."

"You're too naive! Did you forget how many orcs were sacrificed due to that naivety?"

"Uuu, you promised not to mention that."

Since they seem to be busy about something, I order Arisa the next dispatch location.

Claiomh Solais seems to be working hard, but the monsters are appearing too quick. I'd like for our girls to go around defeating the small fish too, but if Arisa uses too much space magic to teleport them, she would drink too much magic potion and fall.

The rear guards, that are Arisa and the others are equipped with Divine Dresses that have Philosopher's Stones attached for recovering magic power, but nevertheless, it can't catch up with the consumption of the space magic that uses too much magic power.

It seems their private talk is over, the woman called Mito uses [Cube] magic to create footholds and ascends to before me.

"You there! You'll become a Demon Lord if you use your unique skills too much you know. So--"

--I recognize her finger pointing pose.

"....Hikaru?"

"He?"

I approach the person called Mito who reacted to my mutter with Flash Drive, and brandish Durandal.

Ten-chan tried to cover Mito from the side, but I drive her away with [Remote Stun] barrage.

I stare at Mito who screamed 'Kya' while covering her breasts with her both hands.

The thing that I cut was only the Recognition Inhibition veil that covered her face. I wouldn't cut it along with the clothes like some eroge villain.

The face that appears is the same as Nanashi's.

It's exactly the same face as the person whom Nanashi is modeled after--No, it has aged a bit huh.

After looking at her stat shown on the AR, I'm convinced and so I talk to her.

"Ancient King Yamato--"

"Wha"

"--Receive it."

I pass the Claiomh Solais that's just got back to the shocked Mito--Ancient King Yamato.

Of course, it was after I had taken my magic power from Claiomh Solais so that it would be easier for her to re-contract it.

"Claiomh Solais?! Why?"

"I'll talk about it after we've defeated the enemy."

I say so to Mito and then glare below.

It's the direction where my Crisis Perception, that has been gradually getting stronger since a while ago, is reacting.

Three demons appeared from the collapsing noble mansion where I'm looking at. One of it has intimidating air that's clearly different from the rest. It's probably a greater demon.

Contrary to its intimidating air, the pink sakuramochi-like round demon is shaking.

While overlooking it, I talk to Mito who's concentrating in pouring her magic power into Claiomh Solais.

"Ancient King Yamato, between canceling a magic circle and fighting a greater demon, which one you're good at."

"U~n, I don't have both the Holy Wand, and the Holy Shell Motion Armor, so my fighting power is only at half."

Then there's no need to consider it.

I don't know how much the legend about Ancient King Yamato is true, but I can probably believe that she's a master of force magic. I'll have you show me the power of level 89.

"Then please cancel the magic circle. I tried many times, but I couldn't destroy it with intermediate magic."

"Hoi, leave it to me."

"Mito! Are you going to obey this suspicious person?"

"Un. I mean, Ten-chan and I wouldn't be alive now if this person had just felt like it you know?"

Perhaps, she could see my hidden level like Yuika?

I guess it's as one would expect from the maker of Yamato Stone.

The sakuramochi-like thing is rising while wriggling.

If this were a manga, this type of enemy is powerful and can usually nullify physical attack, and reflect attacks, but I wonder how it is in real world.

I'd like to ask it the reason why it did such roundabout things, but we don't have any room to prioritize my curiosity now.

Sorry but, I'll instantly kill it with the technique that was used to clean-up the whales--

12-24. Sakura-colored Greater Demon

Satou's here. Diverse boss enemies appear in home console RPGs. I enjoyed them without getting tired during my game day, but I think doing a no-miss clear without a strategy guide is just a burden.

◇

"Stop! Even among the oldest greater demons that guy specializes in defense. Even forbidden magic will only damage it a little. Advanced magic casted chantlessly will be nothing more than a distraction to it."

Ten-chan the silver-haired beauty stands on my way and rattles on when she saw me invoking [Condense].

I have to redo my aim now even though I had a good one just now.

....I'll forcefully remove her if she obstructs me again.

Communicating with [Tactic Talk], I instruct Arisa the plan for anti-greater demon measure.

At the same time, I receive the report about Liza and the others who exterminated a big-tree type monster that had appeared a short while before the greater demon.

While re-commencing my attack, I'm going to see how capable its magic defense is.

I invoke the [Implosion] magic that doesn't need a line of fire toward the sakuramochi-like greater demon.

Countless explosions appear as if wrapping the sakuramochi demon's all at once.

The explosive blaze and shock wave rush toward the inside, but the after-effect sweeps over to the surrounding.

"Wha--"

Ten-chan is surprised and turns around toward the sound of explosions behind her.

Immediately after, she got rolled up in the shock wave from the [Implosion], and got sent flying somewhere. It should be quiet for a while now.

Buildings and garden trees around the area of impact have been flown away by the blast.

This [Implosion] magic gives the least collateral damage to the surrounding area among the intermediate magics that I can use, yet I probably shouldn't use it in the middle of a city again.

--Hm?

Three pink-colored feeler-like things pop out from the other side of the explosion blaze.

It seems the magic earlier didn't manage to eliminate the sakuramochi demon.

Apparently, the information that Ten-chan said, [The guy that specializes in defense], is correct.

While evading the attacking feelers, I cut them with the holy sword Durandal.

They were cut easily without any problem despite its defend-specialist thing.

I burn the cut feelers that have been separated from the main body with [Furnace Flame (Forge)].

If the separated body parts of a greater demon are left alone, they will change into lesser demons, and it'll be bothersome if they revive back into its original state, so it's important to clean them up.

The sakuramochi demon shows itself while the smoke from the explosion is fading.

Polyhedron-shaped transparent defensive membrane of force magic is covering the sakuramochi demon's surrounding.

It seems to have been badly damaged, it's full of holes, and I see that it's crumbling down and disappearing.

Moreover, the AR reading tells me that the main body has sustained around 10% damage.

"--What, it's working well isn't it."

Apparently, it doesn't seem to be a perfect defense.

Its defense is probably around the same level as the demon lord I fought in the Duchy Capital's underground.

『Attacking before giving your name, the hero these days is a coward poyo.』

--Poyo?

Have you guys run out of the material for the ending word, greater demons!

While mocking it in my mind, I listen to Arisa who reports that the preparation is complete, using [Tactic Talk].

I tell her to wait for orders for now, and I confront the sakuramochi demon.

"After launching a surprise attack on the royal capital and putting it into state of chaos, you're calling me a coward, what a laugh."

『What are you saying poyo. We demons are evil poyo. Evil is coward, unfair, terrible, and cruel, such things are decided poyo. Our emperor has decided so poyo."

...Poyopoyo, noisy.

All the greater demons I had met so far had heads for chanting, but it seems the pink lump body of this sakuramochi demon is its head.

Even while talking with me, I could hear the chanting roar from the lump, and then the protective membrane re-appears around the sakuramochi demon.

"Fuhn, you're fighting back huh--"

Oh right, let's get the truth of the matter out of this guy.

It might talk fluently if it's a template evil.

"--What are you plotting in this Royal Capital? Are you manifesting a demon lord?"

『Poyo? Violet hair poyo? An egg who imitates a hero poyo. Looks like you could hatch as the real one if we get the fake king help hatching you poyo.』

...Wait, what is this guy saying?

'Egg' is probably a jargon for calling a reincarnated person.

It probably misunderstood me as a reincarnated person when it saw my violet hair wig hanging out of my golden armor's helmet.

And, if the jargon for turning reincarnated people into demon lords is 'hatch', then....

『It was worth responding to the demon lord believer humans' summon poyo. As long as there's the mana collected from the Royal Capital's Source in the Chalice, hatching you is easy poyo. There are also a lot of wave of negative emotions used to convert the collected mana in the Chalice into Miasma, it's difficult for this to fail poyo.』

<TLN: I think I translated Chalice as 'Holy Grail' once, they're both the same in the raw, but I'm not sure which one the author is intending to use. Using Chalice for the time being.>

So they turn Royal Capital into chaos in order to mass-produce the so-called miasma in it huh.

I couldn't think of their objective, but it's natural when the chaos itself is the objective.

I have to remember to tell the king the whole story later.

『Now come, I'll show you the technique of an expert that has turned many poyo.』

"--Fuhn, I don't have any intention of turning into demon lord or something."

Of course I don't want Arisa to turn into one either.

『Everyone said the same thing at first poyo. But, when they fought with all their power, they exceeded their limit, and hatched into one poyo.』

I see, so it's not like it has a technique that turn them into demon lords, but the defense specialist sakuramochi demon made use of its trait to make them overuse their unique skills, turning them into demon lords.

Then there's no need to hesitate.

There's this chance and all, so I'll let it be the guinea pig for my experimental prototype.

"--Lulu, shoot."

I give an order to Lulu who's arrived on the sniping point as I've instructed with [Tactic Talk].

I've had Tama to be her guard just in case there's a surprise attack.

Blue light bullet hits the sakuramochi's protective membrane like a laser, creating blue sparks.

It didn't reach the sakuramochi demon, but its protective membrane that had just been restored broke like a glass.

It's a new armor-piercing round that's also called Holy Bullet I've created luxuriously using adamantite and [Blue Liquid].

I thought of using adamantite for its hardness, but it didn't seem all that different with the mithril-made magic bullet that was used on the floormaster when it was against magic defensive barrier.

『You make your friends attack poyo? You're really a cowardly egg poyo.』

The sakuramochi demon shakes its body and disparages me.

『Its power was something considering it destroyed the defensive barrier that could defend against the hero's holy sword poyo, but it seems even the certain-kill blow was useless poyo.』

Sakuramochi demon muttered so and began laughing.

This laughter seems to be spell chant, its protective membrane is restored, moreover, twofold threefold of it are wrapping the sakuramochi demon.

--However.

『Aim Bullet, hit!』

Lulu's refreshing voice reaches my ears through the [Tactic Talk].

『Floating Fortresses linkage』

『Yes, my Lady. Floating Fortresses, Link Connection.』

『Gun Turret aim.』

『Aye aye Ma'am. Phalanx System, target in sight.』

『Fire!』

『IT'S, SHOW TIME!』

....I want to hit myself who recorded that voice in high spirit.

Let's avoid recording things after having a drinking bout from now on.

No one responds to such conflicts in my mind, an enormous magic power is coming from the direction where Lulu is.

I saw the sakuramochi demon who noticed it turned around in a hurry, but it's too late.

A flare bomb-like red light bullet bursts open the protective membrane.

Next, red and blue bullets come flying and hit it one after another, before long, they rain incessantly like a squall.

Every time one of the light bullets hits, the protective membrane is smashed like a glass, and before long, the projectiles have begun to impact the sakuramochi's body.

The protective membrane is smashed.

The demon's body is gouged.

Its granular chanting organ is pulverized.

Every time the sakuramochi demon is hit, its body quivers.

Each of every shoot packs the same amount of power that pierced the floormaster.

The sakuramochi demon is being tossed around left and right like a sandbag getting hit by a boxer's barrage.

In a flash, the sakuramochi demon is gouged like a decayed tooth, its body pieces are scattered to the surrounding.

While observing it, I incinerate its body pieces in the air with [Furnace Flame (Forge)], disposing them.

Yet, it's really a defend-specialist type, it has enough leeway to scream poyopoyo.

--That leeway ends now.

『Plasma Cannon, standby...』

The continuous fire from before was just an opening act for breaking its defense.

『Main Armament Fire!』

A plasma sphere big enough to swallow a tower blasts the sakuramochi demon.

"Arisa!"

『Okayy! Leave processing the blast to me!』

A barrier wall created by Arisa guides the enormous heat, from the plasma blasting the sakuramochi demon, to the sky.

The slight heat that escaped made several dozens of the mansions behind the sakuramochi demon to disappear, but please overlook it since there's no human damage.

The king probably would compensate it.

A red flame pillar burns the royal capital's sky.

Inside of Arisa's barrier wall, overwhelming heat changes the ground into glass form, hollowing it into earthenware mortar shape.

The figure of the sakuramochi demon is no more there.

It's a disappointing end for a greater demon.

The flame is temporary extinguished on the other side of the barrier wall since the oxygen has disappeared, but after the explosion has gone to the sky, fresh air fills it and small conflagrations occur in various places once again.

I see Mia creating a water giant on a far away reservoir at the corner of my view.

『Situation end--』

I interrupt Lulu's report, and Call Tama's attention, who's guarding Lulu.

"--Tama!"

『Dangeris~?』

I see the water tower where Lulu is, falls down.

Of course, the two are safe. I see the two landing on the nearby building's roof.

--I'm glad that Tama was there.

It seems one of the two demons that appeared together with the sakuramochi demon attacked Lulu.

The other one seems to be disturbing Mito, I see it fighting against automatically moving Claiomh Solais and Ten-chan.

『I've collected Lulu and Tama.』

"Roger."

Report from Arisa who used teleport magic came.

I invoke [Laser] magic and quickly round slice the two demons, eliminating them.

Adjusting it so that Ten-chan wouldn't be carelessly burned was a bit bothersome.

I want to burn the remains of the sliced demons, but they're too far away.

I'd like to use Flash Drive to do the clean up, but I can't afford to leave this place.

Because--

"Why don't you stop pretending to be death right around now."

『You did well to notice poyo. Normally you'd be off guard, and then it'd end when I shot you from behind poyo.』

As if rising to the surface of the air, the translucent sakuramochi demon materializes.

....Apparently, its 'defend-specialist type' isn't just for show.

12-25. Sakura-colored Greater Demon (2)

Satou's here. Enemies in games that can't be defeated unless you follow the required steps were popular once. Maybe because their bad reputation from the feeling of absurdity, it gradually got off the mainstream, nowadays enemies that could be defeated "quickly" by following the required steps seemed to become popular.

◇

『Now then, what are you going to do poyo? Normal attacks don't work on me poyo. Resign and attack me using your unique skills poyo.』

--Fumu. Unique skills huh

By using the light magic [Illusion], I create images that resemble the violet special effect like when Arisa uses her unique skill.

『Looks like you've finally felt like it poyone.』

"S-stop! Do you want to become a demon lord!"

While guarding Mito who's continuing to cast the forbidden magic spell in order to destroy the magic circle, Ten-chan screams in fluster.

--Chanting?

So she still needs to chant to use the forbidden magic even though she's a hero...

I strike the demon with [Condense] and [Laser] magic combo.

Unlike the time with the whales, I don't have the bad taste to make the sakuramochi demon into ingredient, so I freely operate the laser to turn it into small pieces and then burn it with [Furnace Flame (Forge)].

I showed the effect earlier so that the demon would not evade this attack.

It was an insurance since it'd be annoying if it used a magic like reflection.

The sakuramochi demon was defeated soon after it screamed poyo, but it seems this really won't end so easily, the demon is reviving with translucent body like earlier.

"You violet hair! Don't use advanced magic, use forbidden one!"

『Only that degree is useless poyo. Magic power is overflowing today so I can revive as many as I want--』

Without waiting for it to finish talking, I repeat the same magic combo from before.

Ten-chan is throwing me advices in jumble, but I can't do the impossible.

Good grief, if I had known that it would turn out like this, I would have made Arisa and Mia get to be able to use forbidden magic from the forbidden library.

『Kyokyokyokyo, I'll revive no matter how many times--』

At the same time the sakuramochi demon is revived, I strike it with the same combo again.

"Wha--"

I could hear voice of surprise from Ten-chan's direction, but I don't have time to mind it so I ignore her.

The attack just now passed through the demon that had just appeared.

It's like the invincibility time when your characters revive in retro games, the demon can't be damaged even though its body can be seen during the moment when it's reviving.

It was saying something about magic power earlier, so I tried defeating it by using [Mana Drain] on the surrounding area, and tried using [Break Magic] when it was reviving and when it was about to be killed, but there was no difference.

I tried repeating it for about 10 times, but the demon doesn't stop getting revived.

--If magic is no use, then I'll try using holy swords next.

I take a casted holy sword from my Storage, and put the collected magic power in Durandal to it, to the point where it's about to be overloaded.

Dazzling blue light begins to emit from the casted holy sword.

Of course, I've put on the show with the violet special effect like before.

『Hou? Dual wielding holy swords poyo?』

I move to below the sakuramochi demon with Flash Drive, strike it with full-power [Remote Stun], launching the demon several meters above.

While ignoring the grating poyopoyo sound, I get to the ground right below the sakuramochi demon with Ground Shrink and then throw the casted holy sword straight above.

--A dazzling flash lights the surrounding blue.

The thing that was a casted holy sword penetrates the sakuramochi demon, tears the magic circle 100 meters above, and disappears into the sky.

The sword was already crumbling when I threw it, so it probably has truly disappeared.

The sakuramochi demon that had been penetrated by the casted holy sword keeps its form for an instant, but in the next moment, it changes into several pink ring-shaped mist, after that, it disappears in the air along with an explosion.

I see Ten-chan's jaw dropping like it's going to fall on the edge of my view.

Her beauty look has been ruined.

◇

『That just now surprised me poyo. As expected of the egg given the god's power poyo.』

So it's really revived again huh--

One thing, that just now was my normal power. I didn't use any unique skill.

Ten-chan who was being dumbfounded until now pulls herself together after seeing the sakuramochi demon and vigorously recovers.

"It's useless no matter what you do! If you use such unreasonable power that much, you'll really turn into a demon lord y'know!"

I look above Ten-chan's voice, but Mito is still chanting the spell.

The forbidden magic takes too long...

--Huh?

If you need to chant to use a forbidden magic, then that means the Meteor Shower that can be used chantlessly is an advanced magic?

There are magics with higher power than that huh.... Truly forbidden magic, the world could break.

As a result of thinking such a needless thing, the sakuramochi demon attacks with its feelers.

While fleeing to the sky, I cut the feelers with Durandal.

I cut all the advanced force magic attacks that the sakuramochi demon casted to rush after me. It's a magic for besieging a castle with its pillar-sized magic arrows.

Compared to other magic element, force magic doesn't have any magic that has wide-area effect, so there might have been no need for me to escape to the sky in fear of collateral damage.

"Crush the space around that guy if you want to defeat it! Otherwise, you'd only be exhausted."

『It is as that fly has said poyo. With this much overflowing magic power in this space, I can revive infinitely poyo.』

The sakuramochi demon replies to Ten-chan's shout by putting on airs like it has a leeway.

However, there's a hint in what it just said.

I talk with [Tactic Talk].

"--Arisa, did you hear it just now?"

『Off course!』

<TLN: Impossible to tl, she made a lame joke.>

I feel my strength drained after hearing Arisa, but now isn't the time to make a retort.

"Come, Arisa."

『Okkay!』

Arisa who teleported comes beside me.

"You called I jump out, jan bara jan jan jan--" <TLN: A reference of an old obscure show, Yobarete Tobidete Akubi-chan.>

"Build a barrier first."

"Hoi sir!"

I stopped her stupid entrance line and made her act.

Arisa takes out a wand that's like it's made from emerald. It was a wand made from a branch of the world tree I collected in the void sky.

Arisa's magic encloses the sakuramochi demon in a cylinder-shaped barrier.

『This is.... Poyo?』

This isn't the time to mind the sakuramochi demon's surprise.

I replenish Arisa's magic power that has been used up with [Magic Power Transfer].

"I forbid the use of unique skill."

"Eh? But Arisa-chan's highlight..."

"Use normal space destruction."

"Hooi."

The moment Arisa's wand shines, the advanced space magic [Space Destruction (Smasher)] strikes the sakuramochi demon--

◇

--Return Teleport, urgent activation.

I reacted to the crisis perception instantly and took Arisa back to the mansion with teleport.

I didn't know the detail since it happened instantly, but I perceived that at the moment Arisa's [Space Destruction (Smasher)] destroyed the sakuramochi demon's defensive barrier, some kind of reflection skill or magic activated.

It's probably the sakuramochi demon's trump card for when it's about to be truly defeated.

--How troublesome.

"Wh-what did just happen?"

"It's probably magic reflection. We were almost done in by our own magic."

While doing Magic Power Transfer to Arisa, I told her my opinion.

A greater demon who was a close aid of the [Golden Wild Boar King] used the same thing too during our fight back then, so there's probably no mistake about it.

An advanced force magic [Magic Reflection] exists, so it's probably that.

It seems that it can't reflect higher-ranked magic, so I think my magic is fine, but the fact that Arisa's and Mia's magic can't get through it is painful.

『Master, we have completed evacuation of the inhabitants on the adjourning points where the greater demon appeared, so I report.』

『Completed~?』

『Here is completed too nanodesu.』

Alright, with this I can use attacks that are a little bit more powerful.

After thanking everyone, I tell them to withdraw and then I get back to the battlefield with Flash Drive.

During the slight time I was away, the sakuramochi demon has changed its target to Mito.

Several pink feelers are attacking Mito.

The automatically-moving Claiomh Solais and Ten-chan are barely preventing the feelers from reaching Mito.

It seems Claiomh Solais's attack power is weak when it's moving automatically, it's barely able to deflect the feelers.

I draw close with Flash Drive, clear away the feelers, and bear the full brunt of the sakuramochi demon's attacks.

◇

--Now then, let's use the next hand.

If I can't crush it together with the space, I'll prioritize cutting off its mana supply.

Mito's spell chanting isn't going to end for a while.

While defending from the sakuramochi demon's attacks above him, I open the map and search for the objective.

Even while doing that, I'm not forgetting to continuously fire [Remote Stun] and [Remote Arrow] to defeat the small fry appearing in the royal capital.

I finally discovered it 17 seconds later.

The objective's position is 300 meters below the place where the sakuramochi demon appeared, in a hollow cave-like place.

It seems several dozens of Light of Liberty members are there.

The thing I'm looking for is in the center of those guys.

--Holy Grail. Its state is [Chaos].

<TLN: I translated it as 'Chalice' in the previous chapter. 'Holy Grail' is the official one with this.>

I thought of destroying it with [Condense] and [Laser] magic combo, but I got a hunch that the filled-up Holy Grail has become a barrier on its own, so I canceled it.

....Of course, another reason was because it would hit the people around it too.

After meditating a bit, I make a decision.

"Liza, do you want to try fighting a greater demon?"

『If Master orders, I will fight it fully even if I cannot win.』

Liza replied me immediately.

"Everyone, how about it?"

『Ofu couse.』

『O-of course, I'll fight nodesu!』

『Accepting Master's order.』

『A silly question isn't it~』

『Nn.』

『I-I'll work hard.』

After confirming everyone's reply, I tell them the strategy.

Their objective is purely buying time until I destroy the Holy Grail.

By using Behemoth the artificial spirit as a shield, I order the vanguards to attack with Hit-and-Run strategy.

"Lulu, are the Fortresses usable?"

『They can't. They've become "Hung-up".』

"Then I ask Lulu to guard Arisa and Mia. There might be demons lurking about, so you have to be quite careful."

『Yes!』

Even while having these conversations, I incessantly hit the sakuramochi demon with [Remote Stun] down to the ground, denting the surrounding ground.

I do this so that the damage would flow to the sky even if the demon used advanced magic.

"Arisa, devote yourself to isolate the battle area. If possible, use barrier magic to block the demon when it's about to use advanced magic."

『You say some difficult things. But, leave it to me! I will surely undertake Master's request (order).』

The strategy starts with Arisa's manly remark.

I hit the sakuramochi demon with [Explosion] once again, and change place with everyone after defeating it once.

"....■■ Magic Beast King Creation (Create Behemoth)"

Mia who's on the edge of the battlefield summons a creature that looks like a mix of an elephant and a hippo.

I finally understand its large size in this place where there are other objects around.

"PUWAOOOOWWNNN!!"

Behemoth roared and assaulted the sakuramochi demon, locking with each other.

"Magic Edge Spiral Strike (Vorpal Strike) nanodesu!"

Pochi who has been shot from the catapult through the [Acceleration Gate] on Echigoya's roof does the first hit to the sakuramochi demon.

The attack breaks through sakuramochi demon's protective barrier like it's a thin glass, and stops on the demon's body.

Then it's followed by Tama who's shot from the [Acceleration Gate].

--It's alright, they can fight against it quite evenly.

The sakuramochi demon excels at defensive power and revival, but its attack power is the lowest among all the greater demons I've fought so far.

It can't harm our girls who are protected by the golden armors made from orichalcum.

The demon has a trump card, but I'd be back from destroying the Holy Grail before he could use it.

Let's quickly destroy the Holy Grail and put and end to this fight.

I have to clean this up before the end of the day, for the sake of everyone's big performance, and the celebration for Lulu's coming of age!

12-26. The Holy Grail under the Royal Capital

Satou's here. Using a polluted holy thing for a heretic ritual seems to be surprisingly major in fiction. Why don't the competent people of the heretics just make an evil container from the start anyway, I suspect that they have some strange obsession.

◇

I leave the sakuramochi demon to everyone, move to above the underground cave with Flash Drive, and make a passage that goes straight to the underground cave with earth magic.

After descending the passage in an instant, I come to the cave.

It's a considerably large cave. It has elliptical shape with enough space that could hold a whole stadium inside.

And, the heartbreaking thing is how the ground is littered with several hundreds mummified corpses.

Judging from the shabby clothes, they're corpses of laborers, prostitutes, beggars, orphans, and beastkin people. I understand that they weren't killed all at once looking at the piled up dust above the corpses.

--I'll bury them properly after this incident is over.

There's a lit bonfire on the opposite side of where I descended in the interior part of this cave, and a golden cup on top of a violet pedestal.

That's probably the Holy Grail.

Several men wearing violet robes around that Holy Grail are chanting something.

Comparing it with the men, it seems the Holy Grail is about five meter wide.

I sometimes feel unpleasant waves of magic power from the Holy Grail.

I'll stop the ritual before stranger things happen.

◇

I jump with Flash Drive to the place where the men are doing their ritual.

"Who are you! Are you obstructing the ritual! Foolish pretend hero!"

The man who shouts while scattering bubbles from his mouth is wearing a violet overcoat that cover his head and has water buffalo's horns on it.

This man seems to be the second son of the noble who was sheltering the Light of Liberty's members.

This noble's second son is the only one who doesn't participate in the ritual.

He probably can't chant like me.

"Sakura-colored ally--"

The noble's second son was going to say something, but I didn't wait until the end, prioritizing stopping their ritual.

I quickly strike every Light of Liberty member with 2-3 [Short Stun].

White sparks flew when the magic hit the members' bodies, but they couldn't actually stop it, and it succeeded crushing them.

The members are falling to the ground while vomiting blood.

Of course I'm not killing them.

Some relatively high level people were mixed among them, so I just shot them enough to make them faint.

"Th-the ritual!"

The noble's second son falls down and can't stand up when he saw the members suddenly getting knocked down.

This man is the only very low leveled one with his level 3, so I didn't shoot him with the [Short Stun].

He'd probably die if I did.

I hit him with my palm while holding back quite a bit, fainting the noble second son.

I can question the detail later.

The Holy Grail is more important right now.

I move next to the Holy Grail using Ground Shrink.

The holy grail is filled with transparent amber-colored liquid inside.

This amber-colored liquid is most probably substance created from magic power.

Just by getting closer to the Holy Grail, I can feel the pressure from the Magic Essence (Mana). It feels similar with the pressure coming from holy sword Excalibur when it's fully filled.

However, unlike with the holy sword, I feel sinister dread, or rather something similar when you listen to discords, such feeling of rejection coming from this Holy Grail.

Well, putting personal impression aside, I'll have to quickly do something to the Holy Grail.

First, I tried putting it into my storage just as is, but it wasn't possible.

It can't be helped, so I'm thinking of neutralizing it by extracting its magic power.

I slowly touch the Holy Grail and extract its magic power.

There's some strange resistance, it's quite difficult. It feels like the extracted magic power would be absorbed back if stop focusing.

I extract the magic power as if forcefully pulling it apart.

I put the extracted magic power into holy sword Durandal of course.

>[Curse Resistance] Acquired

>[Chaos Resistance] Acquired

--Oh, it's been awhile since the last resistance skill I got.

I allot both resistance skills with maximum points.

Now I should be fine even if chaos comes crawling in.

"You foolish hero! Be cursed by the Holy Grail and attain demon lordhod! Be reborn as an apostle of Evil God and become our brethren!"

The noble's second son who sees me touching the Holy Grail laughs loudly while still groveling on the ground.

--He woke up already huh. It seems I held back too much.

I'm currently concentrating draining magic power from the Holy Grail rather than neutralizing the noble's second son.

The magic power that I had absorbed went back when I was just allocating points earlier.

The magic power inside the Holy Grail is a lot as expected, there's still half of it even though Durandal is at full capacity.

How long did this thing accumulate magic power....

While being astonished, I exchange Durandal with a prototype holy sword made of legendary metal from my storage, and drain the Grail's magic power into it.

"It can't be.... It took several months to drain those magic power from Royal Capital's Source y'know? Just a single person shouldn't have been possibly able to do anything...."

The noble's second son who was laughing loudly up till now changes to half smile, and furthermore he begins to talk in delirium.

I've extracted the Holy Grail's magic power until it's around 10% left.

I can just arrest and bring them to the king after this is over.

Looking at the map, it seems our girls are fighting evenly with the sakuramochi demon, I want to quickly settle this and join them.

◇

"....The plan to hatch His Highness into a new king is. Daamnnn you Herooo"

The noble's second son repeatedly curses me like he's gone mad while glaring at me.

However, it doesn't seem like he's going to actually do anything.

When the remaining magic power of the Holy Grail is at around 5%, the Grail begins to strangely vibrate and making strange sound.

Before I knew it, jet black tar-like liquid is accumulated on the bottom of the Holy Grail. It seems this tar-like liquid is the reason why there are resistances when I'm extracting the Grail's magic power.

The tar-like liquid on the bottom of the Holy Grail is moving like an indeterminate life form.

"....■ Tusk Fly Swarm Summon (Summon Moskoff)"

One of the fallen members has finished chanting unnoticed, and summoned swarms of fist-sized fly.

"....■ Faith Death Soldiers (Animate Undead)"

This time another member used soul magic, changing the mummified corpses into attacking undeads.

Other members have also shot all kinds of elemental magic.

--I might have made light of them as just normal humans.

I'll reflect on it later.

I have to prioritize disposing these guys for now.

I stop trying to neutralize the Holy Grail temporarily, and deal with the current situation.

I destroy the magic coming at me with [Break Magic] in packs.

It seems [Break Magic] works for the undeads created with soul magic, the ones that are hit by my [Break Magic] return to become corpses once again.

I burn down the flying tusk fly swarms with [Fire Shot].

On the other side, the members take out white rod-shaped things, hold them up in the air, and shout suicidal things like they're praying.

"""O Long Horn, feed on our despair in exchange of tyrannical power"""

That [Long Horn] should be an item that can change someone into a mid-class demon. I remember the battle maniac boy who was hanging around the third prince using that in the Duchy Capital.

The members are swinging their arms to push the [Long Horns] into their foreheads.

--Like I'll let you

I use [Magic Hand] to take the [Long Horns] from the members' hands and put them into my Storage.
Taking things from people who are recovering from stun states is trivial.

I neutralize the members by using [Remote Stun] once again, and then bind them with magic-sealing ropes made from Thorn Foot ivies after thoroughly snatching away their equipment.

◇

After I've finished dealing with the members, I get back to the Holy Grail, and the moving jet black liquid has turned into oval-shaped crystal the size of a softball.

The items looks like it'll curse you if you do as much as touching it.

According to AR reading, it's [Evil Thought Crystal (Evil Philosophy)].

Since the Holy Grail's state was 'chaos', I'm glad that it didn't bring forth Nyarlathotep or something. I've got enough evil god with the [Dog-head Demon Lord] from before. I'd like to decline another helping for the time being.

Geometric violet lines of flashes sometimes appear and disappear on the jet black sphere. Its color and shape are different, but it looks similar to the Crimson Treasure of Furu Empire.

I steel myself and put the [Evil Philosophy] into my storage.

I was on guard for a bit, but I didn't get cursed or something.

I'd like to relinquish it if possible, but carelessly throwing it away could create unnecessary incidents, so I can't.

I can just throw it to the sun when I've become able to chant.

The [Evil Philosophy] seemed to act as a weight earlier as the Holy Grail is now movable, so I put it into my Storage.

It seems that it can collect and absorb magic power, so I'm going to make use of it when I'm making a Moving Fortress and a Flying Continent someday.

With this, the sakuramochi demon's reviving power should have weakened.

Next, if that Mito person can just do something about the magic circle on the Royal Capital's sky, I should be able to finish off the sakuramochi demon.

Lastly I'll have to watch out about any strange situation happening behind the scene I guess.

It seems there are perpetrators of the incident, maybe I should check it for a bit.

I make the summoning magician who's the highest leveled among the members to drink some smelling salt, getting him to forcefully recover from stun state.

"I'll be hearing you guys' objective."

"Objective? Our objective is but one. Destroying the Source through demon lord--"

The summoning magician strangely answers my question obediently.

So they're really just ideologists who have been caught on the idea of ruin.

"--And then, we will someday release Demon God-sama from the moon prison, destroy the pantheon of the gods and take the world back to the hands of men."

--What? They're not just merely ruin-seeking ideologists, do they also intend to spread science to the world?

"With Demon God-sama at the top, humans and only humans will build the correct world. At the dawn of that day, we『Light of Liberty』will bring prosperity to the world as its leader--"

....They're not.

The idea is similar to a dictator who envisions world conquest with weapons of mass destruction.

Perhaps, the person who created this guys' organization intends to fight against the gods who stagnated civilization like Corpse did.

The organization's name is [Light of Liberty] and all, I think maybe it originally had been furnished with a slightly nobler idea.

However, as a result of long years, the original ideal seems to have become a mere shell of its past.

I interrupt the summoning magician who's still continuing his speech, and change the question.

"I'll listen to you guys' ramble later. Speak the things you're scheming in this Royal Capital."

"Hmph, you watchdog of the foolish god who can't comprehend ideal."

The summoning magician keeps his mouth shut like his talkativeness from earlier was a lie.

I don't want to resort to torturing even though it won't take much time.

With Map Search I pick up the [Light of Liberty] and organizations that are linked to it.

Before I knew it, the members of [Light of Liberty] who are in the Royal

Capital are only the ones here, and the high level scout who has infiltrated the royal castle.

I wonder if the other members have gone away from the Royal Capital, they've abruptly vanished.

Or perhaps, they've become demons using [Short Horns] or [Long Horns] like these guys trying to do earlier--come to think of it, there were several demons who were with the sakuramochi demon.

Then, the other members who had become demons were annihilated by my magic huh.

....Well, with demons, there's no other choice but to exterminate them, so worrying about it is futile.

The purpose of the scout who has infiltrated the royal castle doesn't seem to be assassinations of important people.

He's infiltrated the castle's underground, either going to the Forbidden Library or the Treasure Room.

--Alright, I'll use this info.

One second after the summoning magician shut his mouth, I stop thinking and resume the questioning.

"It's fine if you refuse to talk, but 『Mirage』 Polporo who's infiltrating the royal castle has been arrested in the underpass you know?"

"Wh-why do you know Sir Polporo. Did the Earl betray us?"

"The Earl is our piece that we have snuck to you bastards' rank from the start."

It's been awhile since my deception skill going wild.

By the way, Polporo is the name of the scout. His second name seems to be [Mirage].

"Then, Earl Bobi must also instigated for the Orbs to be carried into the royal castle too!"

--Huh? That's the name that appeared?

I was sure that it would be the name of the noble who was sheltering them instead....

If I remember right, it was the previous Earl Bobi who was collaborating with the [Wings of Liberty] that revived the Orc Demon Lord in the Duchy Capital.

Perchance, it's not just the previous earl, but each generation is also behind the [Wings of Liberty]?

This guy might be just misleading me, but I'll take a note of it for the time being.

More importantly, the orbs.

I search in my memory whether there's any orb that these guys need.

The [Gift Orbs] that Jeril and the others got were, [Chant], [Light Magic], and [Poison Resistance].

As for us, we found [Item Appraisal], [Water Magic], and [Paralyze Resistance].

There's no orb that should compel them to create this much confusion.

[Chant] has that much value from my point of view, but I understand that my sense of value is not commonplace.

Let's try to shake him up for a bit.

"So the objective is the orb after all."

"Kuh, if we couldn't get our hands on the orb, we have no choice but to give up on His Highness's hatching..."

--Necessary for hatching?

If I'm not mistaken it's a jargon about demon lord.

There's nothing like that among the six orbs I thought earlier.

Maybe there are other orbs in the Royal Capital?

I search [Gift Orb] on the map.

--There are. The other four are in the Treasure Room in the royal capital's underground.

I found [Diamond Body], [Meditation], [Succession God], and [Demon Summoning].

The [Demon Summoning] is the most likely one. [Succession God] is the second possibility I guess.

I'll have the king destroy the former.

I think the prophecy from Parion temple [The calamity is under the sakura tree] is referring to this orb.

"You watchdog, you can kill us. There is no need to be fixated with this land now that our wish for hatching has fallen apart. Even though this life ends due to our powerlessness against you, we will carry out our revenge on the next life after getting reincarnated as demons!"

The summoning magician shouts while grinding his teeth with uncontrollable rage.

The summoning magician's body is shaking like he's having a spasm, the sound of his grinding teeth echoes in the cave.

It's noisy, I guess I'll make him faint and bring him to the royal castle...

--The teeth's sound seems somewhat rhythmic.

The summoning magician's shoulders swell up with a sound.

The AR displays that the magician's state has changed to [Demonic Possession].

--The teeth rhythm from earlier was a spell huh?

"BAROROROW"

Demon with cicada-like face appears as if it tears out the summoning magician's body.

He used his body as the summoning cost huh...

It was probably a desperate counterattack, but you only died a dog's death you know.

I take holy sword Durandal from Storage, and cut the cicada demon.

The blue afterglow leaves black dust in its place, I carry the members with [Magic Hand], and teleport to the royal castle.

◇

"I've arrested the perperators who summoned the greater demon see~"

"Nanashi-sama! T-then, the ones fighting over there are?"

"Those are our knights you see. I'll leave these guys to you, please take care of them."

I hand over the [Light of Liberty] members and the noble's second son to the prime minister and the imperial knights, and teleport to the next location.

After teleporting in front of the Forbidden Library, I retrace the path with Ground Shrink, heading to the Treasure Room.

Arriving at the treasure room, the door has been left opened, there are around 10 corpses of the knights who were guarding the room.

Strange.... The [Demon Summoning] and [Succession God] orbs are untouched.

Yet, the scout has escaped from the royal castle.

Did it run away after knowing that the plan had failed?

Or did he mistake it with another orb?

--Right on. My [Chant] orb has been stolen.

The other five [Gift Orbs] have disappeared too. They don't appear even after I search the map.

The scout has [Item Box] skill, so he probably hides it inside.

--I won't forgive it.

I close the Treasure Room's door, and tell the prime minister the situation of the treasure room and the scout.

Then I connect with the king with [Telephone], unilaterally tell him that I'll take care of the [Demon Summoning] and [Succession God] orbs, and then I put the two orbs into my Storage.

Whether they're going to be destroyed or returned, putting them inside my Storage is probably safer until the incident is over.

"Arisa, can you hear me."

『Uy, uy, it's clear. How is it there?』

"I've dealt with the Holy Grail underground. Is it alright if I leave you girls to be the sakuramochi demon's opponent for a while?"

『Course of.』<TLN: She cut 'mochiron' short to become... 'mochi'>

"Then, I'm counting on you to buy some time."

『Fufuhn. You don't really mind if we defeat it right?』

"Yeah, if you can, then do it. But, don't push yourself since it can revive itself."

『Kufuu, having my joke ignored is becoming a habit.』

....Good grief, she's really someone who can't feel tension.

I tell everyone, "Be careful not to get hurt", and then teleport to the garden in the royal castle.

Now then, after catching the thief and retrieving the orbs, I'll give the persistent sakuramochi demon the final word, and go toward a happy new year.

With that determination in my heart, I flutter in the dancing-sakura night sky of the royal capital.

12-27. The Whereabouts of the Prophecy

Satou's here. I feel that the accuracy rate of the thing called prophecy increases the fuzzier it is. I feel that it can reveal any kind of answer later depending on its allowances and the people interpreting it.

Then, the prophecy in a world where gods exist is--

◇

While drawing blue afterglow, I go through the Royal Capital's sky fast with Flash Drive.

--Found him.

I land before the man in black clothing who's jumping through roofs--the high level scout belonging to [Light of Liberty].

Landing while crossing my arms and with both legs straight, I want to retort myself who do you think you are.

I call out to the scout who turns around going to run away after seeing me.

"Where do you think you're going?"

Arisa retorted me, "You should've said『Where are you going huh』there!" through [Tactic Talk], but I'm not interested in making a joke now, so I ignore her. <TLN: Apparently it's a Castle in the Sky's reference?>

"Would you return the things you've stolen in the royal castle, thief-kun?"

"■ Item Box"

The scout obediently opens his Item Box and takes out a small bag out of it.

I thought he was just faking it, but since the marker I've put on my [Chant] orb reappears, it seems to be the real thing.

"Good prudence. I'll stop myself from tearing you limb from limb."

While still being silent, the scout throws the small bag with my [Chant] orb inside, high in the air. It's probably for making a chance.

I fire around 10 [Short Stun] toward the scout, and approach the small bag with Flash Drive.

Yosh, got it--

『Return』

--the small bag disappears just before I'm about to catch it.

The scout who's using shadow as his shield below me is currently entering his own shadow while holding the small bag on his hand.

--Tsk, shadow magic huh.

No, this guy should only have light magic and holy magic.

Then, this must be an ability of his item.

"I won't let you!"

I dive into the indefinite shadow that the scout has made.

I intrude the subspace created by the shadow vigorously.

I can't see anything since there's no light, but the AR reading and the radar are different.

The markers I've put on the scout and the [Chant] orb tell me his location.

I couldn't do anything when I went into the shadow created by the [No-Life King] during Mia's kidnapping, but it's different now.

I fly with Flash Drive in the shadow space, snatch the small bag from the scout and put it into my Storage.

And then, I immediately put all the orbs inside in a special folder.

Safe. I feel relieved now.

Next, I just have to escape.

I was able to go out before by yelling fiercely.

I can probably do the same now.

"Retrieval complete!"

The black space is broken, and I'm back at the Royal Capital.

"I-impossible. Who are you bastard! It's too nonsensical. Interfering the space not with magic but yell....

--LWEEENN.

I heard a sound like someone's strumming glass.

What is that sound?

"D-don't tell me, you're not a hero? Y-you bastard, are you god, no, that kind of stupid thing shouldn't be."

Red rope-like patterns appear on the skin of the scout who's begun talking in slur.

His back is transforming.

Apparently, this guy is a fiend drug habitual user.

I don't know the cause, but perhaps, his monster element is stimulated when his mind gets disturbed, it's probably the same reason as a reincarnated person changing into demon lord.

I don't have any duty to save him, but I'll be sparing myself from seeing splatter film-like scene before my eyes.

The fiend transformation probably stops if his magic power is drained.

As if obstructing me from invoking [Mana Drain], several sakura-colored feelers fall from the sky.

I invoke the magic as is, create Holy Edge on my hand and cut away the feelers.

The scout's marker disappears after he was swallowed by the sakuramochi demon.

I open the map to check, but the scout hasn't died yet.

His current location is in a place where map doesn't exist.

--I might have misunderstood something.

I move to the sky above the sakuramochi demon with Flash Drive.

Its remaining health is only at 20%.

"Liza, beat it."

"Understood."

While leaving blue light tracks, Liza charges at the sakuramochi demon.

Behemoth that's controlled by Mia blocks the feelers that are trying to attack her, while Arisa uses space magic to reflect the advanced magic shot by the demon's chanting head.

And then Liza who's approached the sakuramochi demon by combining the golden armor's Aerial Step and Flickering Movement pierces the sakura-colored body with her white spear.

Defensive magic walls repeatedly stack in front of the sakuramochi demon to block Liza's white spear.

However, those are meaningless.

Liza's white spear penetrates the sakuramochi demon's defensive walls as if ripping a thin film.

--Dragon fang penetrates all that exist.

The fang is effective even when it's separated from the dragon's body.

--Dragon fang ruins even demon lords, it's the ultimate blade.

In that case, no matter what defensive walls, there is no way that it won't penetrate the defense of a mere greater demon.

Liza's dragon spear, Heiron, pierces the sakuramochi demon's body, shaving its remaining health completely.

"That spear is unfair poyoooo"

While leaving that scream, the sakuramochi demon disappears into sakura-colored mist.

◇

So it's really like that--

I'm not looking at the sakuramochi demon, but the marker I've put on it.

During the time before it's revived, the demon's location is like with the scout, [Space without map].

Looks like I misunderstood what Ten-chan said.

The way to defeat the sakuramochi demon is not by [Using forbidden magic that has enough power to destroy the surrounding space], but using forbidden magic that can [destroy the surrounding space], otherwise the demon can't be defeated.

Right about then, the shout of Mito whom I've almost forgotten echoes.

"....■■■■■■ Divine Destruction!!!"

The sound of rain like it's from countless wind-bells reverberate in the royal capital sky.

The next moment, Mito's magic destroys the magic circle that was covering the whole Royal Capital.

"You did well Mito. I'll leave this body to you, just leave him to me."

Ten-chan who had even less presence shouts out joyfully, and loses her strength as if her battery's been cut off.

--What is this guy doing?

"....Connection Lost. Confirming the user's log-out. Restoring the right for avatar's control. Shifting to autonomous mode. Mito, please order me."

"Acchaa, victims would likely appear if Ten-chan's real body comes."

If I'm to believe Ten-chan's robotic words, until just now, the real Ten-chan was controlling this homonculus from some place away.

And, judging from what Mito has just said, Ten-chan's identity is--

"Alrightt! Defeated it for the seventh time!"

Arisa's energetic words interrupt my train of thought.

Just like earlier, the sakuramochi demon is disappearing into sakura-colored mist.

If the secret to its revival is just as I've guessed, then--

I turn off all the AR readings and sharpen my mind.

--There!

The slight odd sensation when the demon is appearing in the normal space--I've caught the gap.

That gap might be as small as a single molecule.

--However, a gap is a gap.

If I can break the shadow subspace, then there's no reason for it to not work on the same subspace.

"Woooooo!"

With a loud scream that doesn't sound like me, I wrench open the gap in space with both my hands.

"Outrageous poyo! If it isn't Origin Magic--"

I heard some interesting words, but destroying the demon takes precedence now.

I strike the 90 small sakuramochi demons lurking in the subspace with [Condense] and [Laser] combo, infringing them.

--The poyo poyo is noisy, but I won't leave even one of them remain.

After destroying the last one, the log displays that I've defeated a greater demon.

The jet black mist disappears into the sky together with the crumbling space.

◇

The radar displays the scout man once again.

I thought that he was killed together with the sakuramochi demon, but he seems to be fine.

The scout who's sitting on the ground with his back facing me is muttering something like he's delirious.

The stimulation of the pattern on his body has stopped, it's blackened, so it seems the worst case scenario has been avoided.

It'd be troubling if his muttering is a spell, so I strike him with three [Short Stun].

I move next to the scout with Sky Drive while carrying the [Thorn Foot] ivy for binding him on one hand.

--Something is bothering me.

When I rotate my thought to grasp whether I've overlooked something, the real nature of the odd feeling is revealed.

--That's right. It's the feeler of the sakuramochi demon.

Why did the sakuramochi demon save the scout?

From the demon's point of view, men are nothing more than toys.

The [Short Stun] magic is blocked by the scout's body.

The sakuramochi demon's parting gift huh!

Then--.

".....■ Invoke Deity"

The scout who's holding a huge magic core on his stomach, holds it up to the sky, and then the next moment, intense white light engulfs.

It might be too late, but I immediately invokes [Laser] and bisect the core that the scout is holding.

--It was for the sake of buying time for chanting this spell huh.

But there's nothing happening even after I've readied myself.

The scout who's finished the spell has become mummy-like and falls to the ground.

I wonder if the core he was holding evaporated at the last moment, I don't see it anywhere.

....Maybe, the chanting failed?

"Hey? What was that just now?"

"It seems he was trying to make god descend..."

Arisa absentmindedly asked.

"Satou! It's dangerous, the spirits are clamoring, they seem like they'll cry. Every child is trying to dive into the ground. The above seems to be scary, the above you know."

In accordance to Mia's warning in unusually long sentences, I look up to the sky.

--I see three black lines with the moon on their back.

The instant I saw those lines, I was caught in chilly fear as if icicles had gouged out my body from inside.

Even though my Fear Resistance is at maximum, it's no use.

The fear cannot be completely removed.

Tama slips behind my mantle and holds onto my leg while trembling.

Mia is holding tightly on my other leg.

At present, it seems only me, and these two can perceive the dreadfulness of those black lines.

"Nana, activate 『Castle』! I allow the release of the limiter so use it!"

"Yes, Master. 『Castle』 Mode Start."

"Everyone gathers near Nana! Lulu, activate 『Fortress』 too."

"Y-yes!"

I also catch Mito and Ten-chan's cast-off with [Magic Hand], and gather them with everyone together.

Following Nana, I also activate [Castle] mode like hers.

This is the superior version of the [Fortress] that was used in the fight against the floormaster, it has more than three times the defensive power.

"Eh? What's this magic? It's the same level as the Holy Shield and the Holy Armor, but the magic power is knitted strangely. It's too precise. Humans shouldn't be able to knit magic power like this...."

Mito who sees the defensive wall of [Castle] that our golden armor created mutters such things like she in delirium.

However, I don't have the leeway to keep her company right now.

Even though it should have been fine with this, my Crisis Perception doesn't stop.

--Right, I've forgotten.

"Arisa, please get ready with your space magic."

--The prophecy that Sera told me was [Nightmare visits the Royal Capital, Black Calamity alight from the heaven].

"Eh? It'll interfere with Nana's defense you know?"

"Use it when the defense created by the three of us are broken through. When the time comes, escape from the Royal Capital."

--The former was probably about the sakuramochi demon. Then what about the later?

Everyone is surprised at my words and turns around.

Arisa asks on behalf of everyone.

"Are those three lines falling from the sky that dangerous?"

"Ah, if my guess is correct then--"

I take out the Divine Sword from the my Storage.

--The enemy this time is god.

<TLN: The author doesn't specify quantity, so I'll leave it ambiguous.>

12-28. God

Satou's here. I wonder why are the protagonists of fictional worlds go against enemies they absolutely can't win?

I think it's good to run away when you need to, making another attempt with redoubled efforts.

◇

"--If your guess is correct, what?"

"They're powerful you see."

While looking at the Black Lines that look as if they've split the moon into four parts, I do my best to answer her question lightly.

It might be overly hasty of me to judge them as enemies, but something whispers deep in my heart, "They are something that cannot coexist with us."

It seem they've finally arrived in the range of Shiga Kingdom, AR readings appear beside the Black Lines.

--UNKNOWN.

It's the same reading as the mysterious existence that appeared as a little girl during my fight with the dog-head demon lord in the desert.

They're 10 meter wide, and 9 kilometer long, I thought they were person-shaped, but it's bizarrely slim....

I feel they're thicker, but I probably see that because the Black Lines are sucking in light.

They come falling relaxedly, and stay in the air about 100 meters above the royal capital.

"What are those? Hair?"

"But, I can feel amazzing magic power from them."

Mito replied to Arisa who muttered when she saw the three Black Lines above.

....Hair?

Now that you mention it, they certainly look like one.

--God's hair? <TLN: Pronounced, "Kami no Kaminoke" in Japanese>

What is this anger that I've never felt before.

I wonder if this is how Office Ladies feel when they hear old men's gag.

....However, my fear has disappeared.

When I think about it, it's been proven that god can die.

Moreover, I don't know what kind of body part are those, but it's certain that those aren't the god's real body.

I'll destroy these, which are at best parts of summoned god, with the Divine Sword.

"Master, you're not angry like usual?"

"--You're not angry?"

Dang you Arisa, she's quite sharp.

How'd she know under this golden helmet.

"I'll go take care of it for a bit."

"Eh? Weren't they dangerous?"

"I'll do something with this somehow."

I hold out the sheathed Divine Blade, and let out a smile inside the golden helmet unseen from outside.

"Master, I'll accompany you."

"Pochi too, Pochi will accompany too."

"Master, hoping to follow you."

Liza, Pochi, and Nana express their wishes to follow me, but I can't nod to that.

Before, the holy sword couldn't even interfere with the god's fragments that came out of [No-life King] Zen, let alone destroy it.

The dragon spear that Liza holds might be able to get pass it but the gamble is too disadvantageous.

"No. I'm sorry but I can't take you girls along. The opponent is too dangerous."

I persuade them, and the three obediently understand.

When I look at the direction my mantle was pulled, there are Mia with pale face, and Tama who looks like she's going to cry.

"Not good, that's not good nano. Absolutely, nano."

"Letsgo home~?"

I feel sorry to let go of the two who look really worried, but I have a hunch that the royal capital would be destroyed if those things move.

I gently pull the two away from me and give them to Liza.

"Everyone stay here. It's my job from here on."

The defense of these girls will be abated if I move, but there's no time to change equipment.

I entrust Nana to judge when to pull back, and tell Arisa and Liza to not hesitate when they retreat.

◇

Crimson blaze came flying from the royal castle toward the three Black

Lines.

I don't know whether it was an advanced magic or forbidden magic, but that blaze disappeared the moment it hit the Black Line.

One of the Black Lines turns around from its base and changes into spiral form--.

Using Flash Drive, I place myself between the Black Lines and the royal castle.

I was barely in time to change my title to [God Slayer].

--I block the whip-like Black Line that's trying to trash the royal capital with the Divine Sword I've hold in front of my body.

The Black Line that touches the Divine Sword split into two after scattering black-colored sparks.

When the scattered sparks were fading, I saw the true color of those sparks. That was a very deep violet color.

--Kuh, heavy.

I resisted the inertia with Flash Drive, yet I was still pushed enough to almost make me crash to the royal castle in an instant.

When I look below to the royal castle, there are Sera, and the people from Muno Barondom. Even the king and Prime Minister, I've interacted with them too much to abandon them.

The Shiga 33 Wands who foolishly attacked would have only reaped what they sowed, but I don't intend to abandon the other people.

The torn Black Lines take some distances away from the royal castle at once.

The Black Line that has been split into two are merely split, they get back to its original shape while moving like swimming.

I separate myself from the royal castle with Sky Drive, approaching the Black Lines in the sky.

I extract the magic power of Durandal I've taken from Storage and then pour that magic power into the Divine Sword.

The jet black blade lengthens little by little everytime magic power is poured.

The blade has lengthened to more than 10 meter long when I've poured all the magic power of the holy sword.

There's only one thing left until the preparation is complete now.

I knew that word after pouring a certain amount of magic power into it.

That word was conveyed to me from the Divine Sword.

I declare the last word--

"Divine Sword. Let it <<PERISH>>.

I probably shouldn't have done that.

--True darkness befalls the moon.

Light that comes in contact with the Divine Sword perish.

--Stillness befalls the night sky.

Space that comes in contact with the Divine Sword perish.

--And then, the part of the Black Line that comes in contact with the Divine Sword exfoliates and becomes mist, and then disappears like it's sucked by the Divine Sword's blade.

I run up the Black Line with Flash Drive, and concentrate letting the whole nine kilometer long body perish until the top.

There are two remaining.

◇

"What, it's easier than I thought--"

I speak to myself as such after feeling disappointed with how fragile the Black Line is.

However, my flighty heart cools down as if it's been poured with cold water when I see the scene under my eyes.

One part of the royal castle I see below has completely disappeared.

Fortunately the main building where the people of royal castle are gathering seem to be fine, however, if the place I used the Divine Sword's [Scripture] were the main building, I would have never got back the things that would be lost.

--Must reflect on it.

Postponing the deep reflection for now, I'll prioritize settling the situation now.

I understand from AR reading that the sword's ruination range is about several hundreds meters long.

I should take the Black Lines up high in altitude so there would be no victims on the ground.

I attack the Black Lines with the long range [Laser], I've erased the <<PERISH>> state of the Divine Sword during the attack.

It feels painful since the air has disappeared, but looking at my endurance and stamina gauge, I'm probably fine for one or two hours. What a cheat body if I do say so myself.

When I've erased the second Black Line, I'm bothered with Black Line's individuality, or rather its skeleton-like intelligence.

Like the non-active monsters in MMO, it won't react even if the other Black Lines are attacked as long as it's not being attacked itself.

Whether the scout's deity summoning failed, or due to the Black Line having its own role, it's too enigmatic.

My thought wandered for merely several seconds like that, however, those several seconds seem to be problematic--

◇

Faraway on the northeast, white light appears as if rising morning sun.

That light converges and becomes one bundle of white light, and then it bisects the last Black Line into two.

Even after bisecting the Black Line, the light powerfully went straight ahead, and changed the grain-producing region over the royal capital into ashes and fissure.

The light was shot from the northeast direction where the sacred mountain lies, the Fujisan mountains.

Coming here flying with speed that's not inferior to my Flash Drive, a platinum arrowhead--huge Heavenly Dragon that's over 180 meters in length.

....So Ten-chan is really a Heavenly Dragon (Tenryu).

It's probably the Heavenly Dragon that appeared in the legend of Ancient King Yamato.

The Heavenly Dragon's fangs that's said to [Pierce all that exist] crunch the Black Line, and the horn and claws that aren't inferior to the fangs also cut off the Black Line.

While observing that, and erasing the upper part of the Black Line that was bisected by the [Dragon Breath] shot by the Heavenly Dragon, I descend.

The Black Line that's become short coil around the Heavenly Dragon's body even while being torn.

Moreover, it seems part of it have assimilated with the Heavenly Dragon, her platinum scales are turning black.

When I'm about one kilometer above the ground, I absorb all the magic power in the Divine Sword and put it into the holy sword Durandal.

The Divine Sword's <<PERISH>> state is canceled once its magic power is below a certain amount just like how it works with holy sword's scripture, so the Divine Sword is back to its original state.

Cracking sounds like breaking boards echoes in the sky of the royal capital.

It's from the Heavenly Dragon.

『KUROOOUUUUNN!!』

The Heavenly Dragon that's been encroached by the Black Line screams.

Since I, who could speak dragon language, couldn't understand its meaning, it must have been a scream.

I grab the tail of the suffering Heavenly Dragon in order to drop her to the ground, I make giant swings in the air and throw her outside the royal capital.

I myself think that I'm treating her cruelly, but this is a necessary measure.

There's no telling how many people would fall victim if such a huge body fell on the royal capital.

The Heavenly Dragon made a deep valley on the royal capital's grain-producing region that's been changed into a wasteland.

To the farmers, I'm sorry. Please forgive me for now, I'll restore them when I've become able to chant.

◇

I mark the fragments of the Black Line that ate the Heavenly Dragon on the map, and erase them one by one with the Divine Sword.

I don't know what'd happen if such things remain.

Before long, an unfortunate mole monster that appeared touched one.

--At the next moment.

The mole's body is turned inside out, and it becomes moving slime-like thing with exposed magic core.

It takes the surrounding debris and monster's corpses, and becomes gigantic.

The mole that should have been level 20 becomes level 50 when it has finished turning big.

Apparently, this doping is the reason why the scout summoned the Black Lines.

I launch the mole slime up in the air with [Remote Stun], strike it with [Condense] and [Laser] combo from directly below, and turn its magic defense and body into small pieces.

It seems normal attack works for it besides the Black Lines itself.

I glare at the falling magic core.

The Black Line has slipped into the exposed magic core.

I jump up from the ground, and cut the magic core along with the Black Line with the Divine Sword, annihilating it.

◇

Using Flash Drive, I head toward the destroyed hill where the Heavenly Dragon is rampaging.

Apparently after parting with me, she was going toward the nearby town after destroying the hill.

I go to the direction the Heavenly Dragon is tumbling with Flash Drive, and then kicks her solid scale.

『GYURORORORONN』

Oops. Her health gauge has been decreased by 20%.

Heavenly Dragons are unexpectedly fragile huh?

Her unfocused eyes like she's lost her mind turn toward me, I evade the shot [Dragon Breath] with Flash Drive.

She was going to move her head while firing the breath, changing the firing line, but I move next to her head with Flash Drive, and kick her face from the side to turn the breath toward the sky so there'll be no victim.

According to AR reading, the Heavenly Dragon's state is [Frenzy], and [Encroachment: Demon God].

--Those Black Lines were parts of the [Demon God] huh!

The identity of the Black Line that was UNKNOWN becomes clear after it encroached the Heavenly Dragon.

There are 27 Black Lines that are encroaching the Heavenly Dragon. The majority are gathering on three places, the head, the reverse scale, and the tail.

--Then.

It'll be a rough handling, but please forgive me.

With the Divine Sword in hand, I approach the Heavenly Dragon.

The Heavenly Dragon who's lost her mind attacks me with her tail that's moving faster than the speed of sound.

It was written in the Ancient King Yamato's picture book that the Heavenly Dragon's scales repel holy swords.

It's said that the scale even blocks the magic swords of the [Golden Wild Boar King].

However, it is no different than a scrap of paper before the Divine Sword.

After cutting the Heavenly Dragon's tail, I annihilate the Black Lines that coil the tail.

I run on the Heavenly Dragon's back, and blast away the Black Lines, gouging the body together with them.

It's slightly rough, but If I do it leisurely and result in complete encroachment of her whole body, it'll be no joke. The damage that'd appear would probably be higher than demon lords'.

It's not like I'm not treating her like a lady, but I feel only little sense of guilt when it's in her dragon form.

Besides, the endurance strength of a Heavenly Dragon should be durable enough.

I harden my heart and erase the Black Lines from the Heavenly Dragon.

Even while being dyed in dragon's blood, I was able to erase most of the Black Lines in just 10 seconds.

--The only remaining ones are on the reverse scale and the head.

I can't gouge them together with the body with these.

I guess there's no choice but to grab the Black Lines and tear it off. But I could be encroached myself if carelessly touch it.

I form magic armor on the hand that doesn't hold the Divine Sword.

And then, when I'm about to grab them just like that, my thought stop.

--The opponent is a god, even though it's just the part. Careless actions lead to ruin.

I admonish myself for my conceit, and alter the magic armor.

If magic swords can be changed into holy swords by altering their composition.

And if magic edge has sub-type like holy edge.

God's power is like that too, I should be able to reproduce it, right.

I borrow the power of the Divine Sword, and dye the magic armor with divinity.

The red color of the magic armor gradually changes into jet-black like the Divine Sword's.

--It's just like the color of the Black Line.

Don't think about unnecessary things, Satou.

Right now is--.

I grab the Black Line sprouting on the Heavenly Dragon's head like an ahoge with the hand that's coated in divinity, and uproot it.

I heard an especially loud scream from the Heavenly Dragon, but now is not the time to pay attention to it.

I annihilate the pulled Black Line with the Divine Sword in my right hand.

And then, when I was pulling the Black Line coiling on the reverse scale, I inadvertently pulled the reverse scale together with it.

It seemed to be quite painful, the Heavenly Dragon let out a heartbreaking howl and then fainted.

While annihilating the Black Line pulled from the reverse scale, I apologize to the Heavenly Dragon in my mind.

>Defeated [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God]

>Defeated [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God]

>Defeated [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God]

>Skill [] Acquired

>Title [God Spirit] Acquired

>Title [One who Violated the Taboo] Acquired

>Title [Torture King] Acquired

>Title [Sadistic] Acquired

＞Title [Natural Enemy of Heavenly Dragon] Acquired

There are some disagreeable titles, but it's too late to retort to the one who governs the system after all this time.

My level has become 312, whether it was because I overhunted greater demons, or because I defeated the [Fallen Offshoot of Demon God].

Was the skill without a name just a bug of the acquisition indicator, it's not in the skill list.

Even while feeling like I'd faint from the mental fatigue, I heal the Heavenly Dragon's wounds with treasured high grade recovery medicines and healing magic.

The cut tail connected itself as anticipated, but the pulled reverse scale, and the fangs, horn, and claws that were broken during the fight weren't able to be restored.

Her claws grow back after I gave her the high grade recovery medicine that had been charged with magic power to the limit, so the fang and the horn should regrow if persist.

My thought is neglectful, I wonder if it's because I'm tired.

It might be the first time I've ever been this tired ever since I came to the different world.

Moreover.... My left hand can't feel anything since a while ago.

I take off the golden armor's gauntlet in order to check the condition of my left hand.

I was at a loss for words when I saw the left hand that appeared from the gauntlet.

That hand has lost the color of skin, dyed jet black....

12-29. The Black Left Arm

Satou's here. "The main character who wields the forbidden power has lost one of his body part as the compensation."

It's a situation that happens often in shounen manga and novels with hot-blooded protagonists, but when it's happening to me in reality, it's not really something to joke around.

◇

I overlook the left hand dyed in non-lustrous jet black color.

I probably would be excited and welcomed this while saying, "Quiet down! O my left arm!" if I were still suffering from Chuunibyou, but now I simply feel completely perplexed.

I can move my fingers without problem, but I can't feel anything with my arm.

Like this, supplying magic power to Nana won't be fun, and I won't be able to enjoy various things with the beautiful onee-sans when I visit the shop.

--Wonder if a new arm will regrow if I cut it?

A stupid idea floats in my mind, probably because I'm tired.

Normally I would have never chosen this, but at this time I felt like it was a good idea as if I had received a divine revelation.

I put the Divine Sword that has served its purpose into Storage, and take out holy sword Durandal.

Holding Durandal with my right hand, I lightly tap-tap it on my left dark hand.

I feel hard metal-like sensation from it.

The darkened part is until the part between the wrist and the elbow.

I avoid that part and aim at the flesh-colored part.

I make up my mind and swing down Durandal to my left arm.

Clank, there was a light sound, and then it's split into two.

--The holy sword Durandal is.

Breaking the holy sword of divine gift, Durandal, just how hard it is.

My tired mind silently retort.

Magic power is leaking from the broken part of the holy sword, becoming violent wind that rages the surrounding.

I catch the flown blade with the usual [Magic Hand] and control the sword in my hand so that the magic power won't leak out.

I put the broken blade in its sheath and then I also put the other remaining part of Durandal into the sheath.

When I tried its scripture before, some small scratches from the fight with the [Golden Wild Boar King] were restored.

I decide to recite the scripture since there's nothing to lose in doing it.

"<<HANG ETERNALLY>> Durandal"

Blue light overflows from the sheath.

After the light subsides, I took it out of the sheath, and Durandal had returned to its original form before it was broken.

I'd be lying if I didn't expect this, but I really can't believe that it'd recover from being broken.

As expected of the stable opening performer. I'll keep relying on it from now on.

Now then, let's try cutting my hand once more.

When I tried touching the part I cut earlier, it felt the same as the darkened part even though it's flesh-colored.

I put the golden armor's arm part to the storage, and after checking that it's the soft part with my right hand on the upper arm, I cut the part between the shoulder and the elbow with Durandal.

Red blood spills, and the arm is falling to the ground.

There's no pain thanks to Pain Resistance, but it's not something that's pleasant to see.

I put the arm into the Storage when it's falling, and block the cut with [Magic Hand].

Blood drip little by little to ground from the base of my arm.

--The next moment.

Swoosh, green colored bundle of vines grows toward the sky from the ground.

I took some distance away since I thought that a plant-type monster had appeared, but the thing that has grown to 10 meter high is the vine of a sweet potato.

Excluding its abnormal scale, it's a completely normal plant.

Don't tell me, it's because of my blood?

I can try experimenting it when I've got some free time, but right now is not the time to do such thing.

I heal the cut wound with [Aqua Heal] in order to prevent blood from dripping more than this.

The blood has stopped, but it doesn't seem like my arm will regrow.

I've expected this much.

During my experiment with mouses, [Aqua Heal] couldn't restore lost limbs either.

Before I take out an upper grade magic potion, I use my right hand to uproot the potato and put it into Storage.

It'll be annoying if this potato becomes a new seed of trouble after all.

I take out an upper magic potion that has been fully charged with magic power beforehand and drink it in one go.

In my experiment with mouses, this restored the lost arms and legs.

However, my arm doesn't regrow even after I wait for a while.

So my plan failed....

I grieve at my numbed mind from fatigue.

I also desist from connecting the cut hand from earlier back.

--What?

Something is caught in the corner of my consciousness.

For some reason, I got a flashback about when I dived into the scout's shadow.

--That's right.

Why was I able to interfere the shadow space with spirit, destroying it. <TLN: Spirit as in Fighting Spirit, not 'spirit being' (Seirei)>

The sakuramochi demon said [Primeval Magic] or something....

<TLN: I initially TL-ed it as Origin magic, but I think it should have been 'Primitive' instead. Edit:Changed to Primeval now>

There are many cases in fictional works where this kind of magic somehow does something with [Spirit] and [Image].

It should be enough if there's a material.

I take out the treasured magic potion barrel from Storage, and soak my cut arm in it.

I scream loudly with fighting spirit while remembering the scene from an old anime where the character got resurrected from bleached bones.

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

I don't know whether something called [Primitive Magic] really exists, or [Self-Healing] skill showed its full potential.

However, rather than that--

The hand I've pulled from the barrel, which has been properly restored, is many times more important.

It seems the wound was re-opened during the restoration, the upper grade magic potion in the barrel has been ruined with my blood getting mixed in, but I can just make more something like potion.

I've got a lot of Blood Spheres, that are needed for making upper grade magic potion, from True Ancestor Ban.

Now then, I guess I'll go back to the Royal Capital....

I contact Arisa with [Telephone] magic.

『Arisa I've cleaned up this side. Let's reunite in the mansion.』

『I-is it over already? I could hear some loud sound from outside the royal capital, are you alright? Are you injured anywhere?』

『Yeah, I'm fine.』

I tell her so and cut the call.

Before invoking teleport magic, I exterminate the remaining monsters in the royal capital with [Remote Arrow] and [Short Stun].

There are some remaining in the underground and the indoors, but there isn't anyone nearby there, there are opposing forces and it's not urgent, so leaving them for later should be alright.

"Ten-cha~n"

I heard the voice of Mito coming here flying while fluttering on her broom.

There's the homonculus Ten-chan beside Mito too.

If Mito's identity is just as I've guessed, then I want to tell her that I'm Suzuki Ichirou and various other things.

However, there are other things that need to be done right now.

I can meet Mito as many times as I want if I just put a marker on her.

I leave the fainted heavenly dragon, and teleported back to my mansion in the royal capital.

◇

"Master~?"

After returning to Pendragon Mansion, the first person who comes welcoming me is Tama.

I catch Tama who's jumping straight to my head with [Magic Hand] and give her a lift.

"I'm home, Tama."

"Not injured~?"

"Yeah, of course."

I tell a lie to the worried Tama.

No, it's the truth in my current condition.

"Satou."

Mia embraces me with a thud.

Our armament are obstructing each other, so the reunion doesn't look good.

Following the two, the other girls are happy for my safety.

"Everyone, thank you for your hard work. I'll ask you to do another job when the dawn comes, so get some nap for three hours."

I took off my golden armor's helmet, and told so to everyone.

My disguise mask was removed together with the helmet.

"Understood."

"Aye!"

"Yes nanodesu."

Everyone answers unanimously to my instruction, and matching that, their empty stomaches also sing in chorus.

It seems they're hungry after fighting a long battle.

I take out a wagon with pre-made light meals and fruit drinks for midnight snacks behind everyone.

"Then, I shall make something light before we sleep."

"No, I've prepared them already, for those who are hungry, eat them and then take a nap. You can take off the golden armor since you're going to act in your usual condition after the sleep."

I stop Lulu and point at the wagon behind everyone.

"Wa~i"

"Roasto beefu-san nanodesu!"

"Announcing the existences of karages with bones."

"They look truly delicious."

"Parfait."

"Arisa, there are potatoes too."

"....Since when."

Except Arisa who looks like she needs an explanation, everyone begins to capture the sandwiches and karages.

Lulu who usually minds her manner seems to be quite hungry too, she has food on both her hands, putting them into her mouth in a hurry.

"Sleep after you eat lightly okay. You should sleep early since I'll wake you up forcefully once it's dawn."

Everyone nods while continuing to chew their food, silence comes to the room.

"--Don't you need a space magician?"

However, Arisa who's teleported to the corridor ahead stands.

"So, where is Master going to alone?"

"I'm not going out to fight. I'm just going to help people who are trapped under the debris you see."

"Then, everyone should together--"

I shake my head before Arisa finish her sentences.

"Don't force yourself. Everyone has exceeded their fatigue limit after continuously fighting a greater demon. They'll collapse from overworking if they don't rest their nerves once."

"But isn't Master the same too."

It's the truth that I'm mentally tired, nevertheless I'd feel bad leaving the people that need to be rescued alone.

"It's alright, I'll change places with everyone and get some sleep when it's morning."

I persuade Arisa while patting her head, and I get back to the Royal Capital's sky through Echigoya Workshop's roof.

I've re-equipped the disguise mask, but I use the Mito-like disguise mask that I'm going to use for evening party on the area around my eyes where the golden helmet isn't covering.

◇

Before commencing the rescue operation, I'll report to every place I'm related to.

I contact the king in the royal castle with [Telephone], and report that I've finished exterminating the greater demon and the three lines that appeared later--I told him that they were magic weapons prepared by the demon.

In addition, I also tell him the location and the number of the remaining monsters, and ask for the Shiga Eight Swords and the holy knights to dispatch.

Just in case, I asked him to tell the citizens not to eat meat from red rope pattern monsters when he announces the resolution of the incident with [Public Information Space]. Even though I think it's fine, it'll be troubling if there are some strange side effects.

Next, I contact Echigoya's manager with [Telephone] magic, tell her that the battle is over, and instruct her to prepare the necessary arrangements for reviving the royal capital from now on.

Even though she should just have a sleepless night in fear, the manager replied normally, "Certainly", and began to act.

It's truly reliable of her, but please be careful of workaholic okay.

Next, I also tell Porina the workshop manager who's taking refuge in Echigoya's workshop underground to start the preparation for helping the victims.

I don't have much time, so I only told a word of gratitude to every member of Echigoya Firm starting from Tifaliza and Nell.

◇

There are about 8670 people that need to be helped.

There are a lot, but it might be what can be expected from the leading city of the continent with 200.000 population.

Most of them are injured people who ran away outside the royal capital. It seems there are priests and priestess, but looks like their healing aren't enough.

Among those, around 1000 are people under collapsed buildings, and people who were left behind in buildings that caught fire.

There are many who are from the lower-income class area. The victims from the wealthy and noble area are in two-digit number too, but they're few overall, so I go to the low-income class area first to help.

I saw a pair of young brother and sister frantically trying to move the debris on top of a fallen building.

"Someone! Please help! Mother and the others are under here!"

"No one's coming. Help clear even one piece of debris if you got time to scream for help."

"Onii"

Checking the map, there are these children's mother and several other people under this building.

--My way of helping is quite simple.

While landing on top of the building, I specify the range on the map and put the debris and the building materials into my Storage.

After putting the debris into my Storage in a flash, just like that, the people who were under the building lay bare.

The siblings who suddenly lost their footholds screamed while falling, but I catch them with [Magic Hand] and put them on my shoulders.

There were many injured people, so I healed them all with [Aqua Heal], and carry them to the safety on the side of the road with [Magic Hand].

The hands of the siblings who are moved from meeting their mother are in bad shapes too, so I also heal them.

I lightly raise my hand toward their words of gratitude, and immediately head toward the other people who need help.

I'm doing rescue at the rate of 16 people per minute, putting the corpses of monsters I find along the way.

I don't remember leaving any corpse behind, but I'll prioritize saving people who are alive for now.

Along the way, the king began a broadcast, and then the people who were panicking began to noticeably calm down. As expected of the king of a large country.

I completed the rescue operation faster than I had planned. It didn't even take one hour due to me abandoning prudence.

It's usually plain, but the effect of unique skill is immense after all.

Next, I go outside the royal capital, and heal the injured people with [Aqua Heal] while still floating in the air.

I've expected people thanking and cheering me, but there are even people who fall prostrate and pray to me.

--Please do that kind of thing toward God.

◇

It's two hours before dawn.

This time I'm removing debris blocking the royal capital's roads by putting them into Storage.

Doing them all is troublesome as expected, so I prioritize the paths people use for evacuation like the main road and parks.

There are places that have caved-in, so I contact the prime minister who's dealing with the royal capital to prioritize dispatching earth magicians there.

Now the supply cart units of soldiers and the knights who are doing disaster relief and victims aid should be able to move.

Lastly, I collect the corpses, and leave the memorial service for them to the neighboring inhabitants.

I check on the menu's memo if I left anything.

Alright, no problem. What hero Nanashi should do in the royal capital is complete.

And then I go gather around 202 life magicians and 11 priests from the neighboring cities before the daybreak.

I had got the king in the royal castle to issue a letter of authorization beforehand, so I was able to recruit the people from the local viceroys and governors without any problem.

Of course, I'm only able to gather these people so fast in such a time probably because of transporting by teleportation, and the 10 gold coins reward for each of them.

I want to scout some of these people to Echigoya, so I've instructed Porina the workshop manager and Nell the life magician to check the appropriate ones.

I let them stay in the appendix dorm of Echigoya Workshop, I've gathered them in order to sustain sanitation of the people who have lost their houses during this incident.

Being covered in mud on top of being hungry and tired, they should feel at the bottom now.

I don't need to supply the food, the king has released the emergency savings of the treasury and mobilized the prime minister, the generals, the supply cart units, and the lower bureaucrats and officials.

With this, there are only rebuilding and holding funeral services for the victims left to do.

The dance party tonight is probably still going to be held in order to show the dignity of the kingdom toward foreign countries.

It's the big moment for our girls, so I'd like to be able to enjoy it without anxiety in the future.

....Still, I'm tired.

With the rising morning sun behind me, I teleport back to Pendragon Mansion where everyone is sleeping.

12-30. The Dance Party at the Royal Castle

Satou's here. In battle manga where battles come one after another, I feel that the scenes of everyday life are simply intermezzo. However, when I'm put into the situation myself, I become wanting to refrain from battles and rest in a peaceful place.

◇

"Ten-chan, I'm fallingggggg~~"

While Mito was leaving such scream, the heavenly dragon returned to Fujisan Mountains as if fleeing.

Judging from the luminous points on the map, it seems Mito and Homonculus Ten-chan are with her too.

If they don't come here until we're about to leave the Royal Capital, I'm going to Fujisan Mountains to meet Mito myself.

....Oh right, I forgot to collect the scales dropped by the heavenly dragon.

I don't mind leaving them there, but if it caused some weird gold rush uproar, the local farmers would be troubled. I'll go quickly collect them.

◇

Fuffufu~n, so I hum while teleporting back to Pendragon Mansion.

Actually, when I was collecting the scales, a call from Aze-san who was worried about me came through [World Phone].

--The worried Aze-san was cute too.

The girls seem to be still asleep, so I change to my everyday clothing and go downstairs.

There, the commuting servants have gathered in full force.

"""Good morning, Master."""

"Ah, morning."

I reply their sharp morning greeting, and tell the old butler that it's fine for them to take a day off on their houses since it's after the incident yesterday.

"I am very thankful for your consideration--"

According to the old butler, the houses of the commuting servants are all fine.

A blue luminous point that signifies my friend are reflected on my radar.

I instruct the old butler to let the girls sleeping on the second floor until they wake up themselves and go toward the entrance hall.

"Master, there is a visitor for you."

"Satou-san, good morning."

Coming from the entranceway, the maid-san guides Sera-san who's wearing priestess clothing to the room.

I'm amazed that Duke Oyugock and his retainers let her go out even though it's after such incident.

"Good morning, Sera-san. Has anything happened for you to be this early?"

"I'm sorry for coming so early. Satou-san, actually I have something to ask you--"

Sera who was having a bit of hard time asking, asked me to accompany her inspecting the city.

Of course it's not a pleasure trip, but to heal people who are seriously injured in the royal capital.

The people of royal capital have been completely healed by Nanashi though, but I can't say it as Satou.

Putting that aside, even without asking me Sera has four knights accompanying her who've followed her to my mansion.

When I check about them to Sera, they are assigned as a condition if she wants to go outside the noble street by Duke Oyugock, and they are to mobilize with me.

If you only hear that part, it sounds as if Duke Oyugock is trying to make Sera be together with me, but in actuality if I go with her, Liza who's an equal match to a Shiga Eight Swords and the others would surely also go along, that must be his hidden plan.

I readily consent to Sera's request, and go around the royal capital while receiving appraising glances from the female escort knights.

◇

"Even though there are so much damage, there doesn't seem to be anyone injured isn't it."

"Yes, that seems to be so--"

I nod at Sera who looks perplexed.

This neighborhood is the wealthy area, so golems, slaves, and servant-like men are gathered to remove the debris and such.

I also catch sights of magic soldiers and magicians wearing robes repairing the caved-in road.

While looking at them at a glance, we pass through the wealthy area and enter the general citizen area.

I look at the surrounding, and even though it hasn't even been two hours since the daybreak, the citizens have begun cooperating to clear up the collapsed buildings.

I don't see many golems and magicians over here.

Even though we're just here to inspect them, the citizens who noticed us stop their work and fall prostrate, so we continue moving while inspecting as much as possible so that we won't get in the way.

"Hime-sama, even though the surrounding houses are destroyed to such degrees, there isn't a single debris on the road."

"Yes, the military engineers of the royal capital are excellent aren't they."

One of the escort knights talks to Sera like she's in awe while advancing the horses.

The military engineers are certainly excellent, but these are my works. As expected, without cheat, the royal capital lacks the man power needed to remove the debris two hours after the incident.

I also catch sights of life magicians hired by Echigoya Firm cleaning the citizens' dirt, and giving food in the public park.

The housewives from the neighborhood seem to be helping too.

Since there are some people who look dead tired nearby the public park, Sera gets down from the horse and call them.

"Are you feeling unwell?"

"N-no, priestess-sama. These people are the people who have been saved from under the debris--"

A nearby old woman who's fallen prostrate tells Sera that they're just sleeping from exhaustion.

"Hero-sama saved my grandchildren who were trapped under the debris."

After hearing the old woman, the people on the surrounding also lift up their head and each begins to boast about hero.

"I was saved from the monster by Hero-sama's magic."

"It sure was amazing. From somewhere far away his figure couldn't even be seen, several hundreds magic arrows defeated the monsters, that even the knights had trouble in a blink of an eye."

"I had got injury big enough my arm was almost torn off, but the golden armor Hero-sama healed it fer' me."

--It's ticklish, so please stop there.

"I'm able to live on thanks to Hero Nanashi-sama."

When the surrounding people see the old woman putting her hands together and praying, they also began to pray, namu namu, too.

....Like I said, please stop with the praying.

Unable to endure any longer, I urged Sera to leave the park, and headed toward the low income people area this time.

As we advance the road, the people gradually look more disorderly.

The crowding nearby the square where there's a food distribution is particularly bad. There's a food distribution too in the general citizen area, but it's on the verge of becoming a riot here.

They don't line up, cut each other's line, and have fist fight with every little thing.

The expression of Sera who's disconnected with violence begins to cloud when she sees such scene.

--CLAP.

I stop the noise in the square with the sound of my clapping palm.

The secret is to create Magic Edge right before they hit.

"O-oy, aren't those nobles-sama."

"There are knights-sama too."

People who have begun to notice us prostate themselves one by one.

It would have been over with [What, it's just a noble huh] if this were in Labyrinth City, but it became this period-drama-like since nobles from big family tend to strut around, and they can easily dispose of people they deem rude.

"Everyone, the food has been prepared by the King, it's enough for everyone's share. Please act orderly befitting of Shiga Kingdom people."

Sera speaks to the citizens with a dignified smile.

"Oy, the heck is 'orderly'?"

"Dunno. Rather than that, what does 'befitting' mean?"

I picked up such conversation with my Attentive Ears skill.

Nevertheless, it seems the rough nuance has been transmitted, the people who are taken aback with Sera's smile, start to form lines as instructed by the officials who are distributing the food.

We wave our hands to the officials who are bowing toward us, and then we set out to return, closing the royal capital inspection.

◇

I part with Sera in front of Duke Oyugock's mansion that's next to the royal castle, and stop by the royal castle's guest house where Baron Muno and the others are staying.

I'm relieved that there's no victim in the baron house except a maid who fell down the stair in panic.

Lady Karina seemed to visit us during my absence, but she didn't seem to have any particular business with me.

She was probably checking the well-being of our girls.

<TLN: Reminder that Satou's expression of "Our girls" can be interpreted as "My family's children".>

I finish lunch with everyone quickly and hasten everyone to begin the preparation for the evening party early.

I'm the lowest class of noble, so I have to enter the venue before upper ranking nobles.

The party begins after sunset, but it seems we need to enter the venue one hour before.

While everyone is finishing their preparation, I become Nanashi to meet the king and the prime minister in the royal castle.

When I showed up my face in the king's office, both of them thanked me so vigorously like they'd fall prostrate many many times.

It was beginning to become annoying along the way, so I forcefully interrupted and began my true objective coming here--I told them the details of the incident and the true identity of the black lines.

Both of them were shocked but it seemed they knew that I was not an ordinary existence from the reports of their retainers, so they believed it relatively easy.

"Partial summoning of Demong God...."

"Yeah, that's why I'll have to seclude myself in the forbidden library."

"Certainly. We will prepare an excellent librarian, so please order that person if you need necessary documents."

"Thankies."

Searching things seem like it'll be fun if it's with a 'tsun' female knight.

After I've finished my report, I ask them about the treatment of the incident's criminals.

All remnants of [Light of Liberty] and [Wings of Liberty] are to be publicly executed after the Kingdom Conference. The noble who provided the base for [Light of Liberty] is condemned the crime of treason, and every family members are to be executed--

"Are the young children too?"

"No. In accordance of the law enacted by Na-, Ancient King-sama, children who are 10 years old and younger are to spend the rest of their life in the monastery located at the foot of Fujisan Mountains."

I see, that law sounds like what that guy those days would insist enacting.

Since I've understood, the prime minister continues talking about the treatment of the other people.

As for other nobles who cooperated with that noble, they'll be treated with various punishments depending on the degree of their cooperation, ranging from the family head's execution, to fine penalty.

The temple knight who attacked the Shiga Eight Swords seem to be dispatched by a Cardinal who transferred from Holy Kingdom Parion at the continent's west, but that guy seemed to have escaped by taking advantage of the confusion during the incident.

All people connected with Holy Kingdom Parion are confined under the castle under the pretext of sheltering them.

And, about the carefree occult group, "Wind of Freedom", their members aren't free of blame, several members who did radical speech and conducts are to be punished lightly as a warning.

◇

"Ja, Ja~n!"

"Ja~n?"

"Ja jan nanodesu!"

While I was relaxing in Pendragon Mansion's living room after finishing the general affairs, Arisa, Tama, and Pochi appeared to show off their dresses while saying those things.

Simply put, their dresses are Cinderella-like.

There are frames called panniers inside, upping the volumes of the skirts. The big ribbons on both sides are cute.

The three are wearing matching dresses with the color as the only difference. Arisa's is white, Pochi's is yellow, Tama's is pink.

The gems on the circlets on their foreheads are also matching each of their dress. Every one of them is a different colored diamond, I've got a hard time making them in fake brilliant cut.

Holy sword Durandal was quite the achiever during the process.

Holy swords really cut well aren't they.

"Everyone looks great."

"Dehehee~"

"Wa~i"

"Nanodesu!"

When I praise the three, they're twirling in their places, expressing their joy.

The swelling skirts look like spinning tops.

"Master, requesting inspection of new equipment."

"Nana-sama, you're wonderful."

"Masita, Nana-sama's dress, praise praise?"

"Master, I really should have, with armor...."

Next, Nana and Liza entered the room.

Nana who leads Shiro and Crow looks somehow proud while still being expressionless. We can't take the two children along so they're wearing their everyday wears.

It's Liza's second time in dress after the banquet yesterday, but it seems she's still not used to skirt.

Liza's dress today is more showy than yesterday.

Several thin clothes cover her chest area, retaining Liza's sharpness while displaying woman-like brilliance.

On that point, Nana's dress lack such ingenuity. It's a normal design with emphasized breasts valley. I just had to be careful so that it wouldn't be vulgar. The bra top is sewed on the dress, so her back line is exposed magnificently.

Liza's dress uses deep blue color, while Nana uses red color fabric.

"It suits you two quite well. Liza, your collar is in disarray. Come here, I'll fix it for you."

"T-thank you very much, Master."

Maybe they're envious to see me fixing Liza's collar, Arisa and the others are trying to disarrange their dresses, but it's not happening since only Liza's dress has collar.

"Master, I'm sorry to have kept you waiting."

"Satou."

The last ones to enter the room is Lulu and Mia.

My eyes are captivated by Lulu in white dress. Lulu who's smiling sweetly is attractive enough to almost make me fall in love.

"Mwu."

Maybe because I was fascinated with Lulu, Mia sulked and kicked my lower leg.

"Sorry sorry, you two look very cute."

Mia's dress is of elvish plant-like taste.

Several transparent cloth that look like leaves are stacked to paint green gradation, and a blue rose-like decoration goes from her left waist to her right shoulder.

I think there was three-dimensional way of sewing in the former world, but since I didn't know the way to do it, I reinforced it with thin mithril wires.

Lulu's dress is a neat wedding-dress like white dress.

At first glance, it looks pure white, but since there are embroidery made with special Adamantite threads, the bottom has chandelier-like illumination, it draws glittering pattern as a surprise.

Of course it's a secret to Lulu.

In addition, I've incorporated the world tree's branch as the lining and weaved fiber made of the whale's beard on every dress, so the defensive power is authentic.

◇

Riding two wagons, we arrived at the guest house inside the royal castle.

This pavilion seems to be used only during the dance party.

Going to the annex from the main building, we head to the first floor of the annex, the venue for lower class nobles. It seems the venue for the upper class nobles is the second floor of the main building, while the first floor being used for their guards and followers to stand by.

After getting off the rotary wagon, we walk on the blue carpet spread on the hallway toward the venue.

"Are those mithril explorers?"

"Lizardkin, Dogkin, Catkin, oh my, even Elf-sama is there."

"A group leads by a black-haired boy-- So those are Pendragon the 『Woundless』!"

I heard such things from a group of lower class nobles who are gossiping around.

It's not particularly a bad gossip, so I bow and smile radiantly when we pass them.

The venue is large enough for around 300 people to dance all at once.

Moreover, when I look closer, there are two rooms that are as wide connected to this.

There are a lot of lower class nobles, so these much space are probably needed.

"Prety~?"

"There's a lot of chandeliers nanodesu."

"It's pretty so I praise."

Tama, Pochi, Nana look up many chandeliers illuminating the venue and admire it.

"Those don't seem to use candles, I wonder if all of those are magic tools?"

"That seems to be the case."

Arisa asked, so I appraised them, and understood that they were magic tools that made use of Light Drops.

There are also ventilation magic tools on the four corners of the room.

As expected of a venue of a large country, it seems there are also crime prevention magic tools installed too.

"It's really gorgeous. I feel that I'm out-of-place."

"That's not true. Liza is a splendid lady you know."

I tell Liza who's being worried that it's not a flattery, it comes from my true feeling.

In actuality, among the nobles in this floor, about 5% of them aren't humans. Most of them are lifetime honorary chevaliers, but there are also those who hold honorary baron pedigree.

"You too Lulu, relax your shoulders a bit."

"B-but. Even if a girl like me dresses up...."

Even though it's dormant lately, Lulu's inferiority complex resurfaces after coming to a showy stage.

From my point of view, she's the most lovely and beautiful in this place, having her beauty shadowed by her inferiority complex is too wasteful.

Right then, the orchestra preparation is complete, and relaxing tune starts to fill the floor.

Even though the host hasn't opened the meeting, some impatient couples have started to dance while matching the tune.

Lulu quietly leaks envious sigh while seeing the dancing couples.

"Young lady, would you like to dance with me?"

I present my hand to Lulu, and ask her to dance with me with slightly pompous tone.

"U-um.... I-if you're fine with me."

Lulu timidly takes my hand, and then I escort her to the open space where the couples are dancing.

Matching the relaxing music, we dance like wandering fish.

At first Lulu was tense trying not to fail, but she was diffused after seeing me purposely took some wrong steps, and it became a relaxing dance.

It was worth clowning around.

The two of us spin and dance, enjoying the peaceful night.

More than fighting demons, really, I'm more suited to this kind of relaxing time.

We continued dancing for several tunes until Lulu was satisfied.

Furthermore, when we returned to where everyone was after finishing the dance, they looked at me as if wanting to dance, so I asked them to be my partner in turns.

"Arisa, you're fine with not dancing?"

"Fuhfuhn, the star performer adorns the closing performance you know!"

I heard Arisa bluffing like that with my Attentive Ears skill.

And, as if that was a flag, blue luminous point besides our girls reflected on the radar....

<TLN: No specific number, thus left as is.>

--The night of dance party seems going to be long.

Chapter 12 Intermission 1: New Year Dish

"Lulu Onee-sama, I earnestly implore you."

....What should I do, Arisa is acting even stranger than usual.

"Do you want something you'd like to have for the evening meal?"

"Banba~gwu~?"

"Leaving out the whale karage is hard too nodesu."

It was Pochi-chan and Tama-chan coming from behind Arisa who answered my question.

Liza-san would have surely requested yakitori.

Nana-san loves kids' lunch.

Mia-chan would be curry I think?

"Luluu~"

"Ah, I'm sorry, Arisa."

I inadvertently forgot about Arisa as my consciousness wandered about dinner.

"So, what is your request? Don't be something too strange or something that Master dislikes okay?"

"Master won't dislike it mon."

Arisa sulked like a child, turning her face the other way with swelling cheeks.

She rarely sulks like this.

"Please Arisa, won't you talk to Onee-chan?"

"....Okay."

When I matched our eyes and asked her, Arisa sheepishly nodded.

--Ah, it's been a while since I feel like an older sister.

◇

"New year dish? What kind of dish is it?"

Arisa was asking a dish called [New Year Dish].

However, I've never heard something like that.

"It's the dish from Master's hometown."

"Then let's ask the way to make it from Master--"

"No!"

--I thought of asking Master, but Arisa stopped me with both her arms spread open.

"Why can't we?"

"We're always getting surprises from Master, so I want to give him some surprise present sometimes."

"Okay. Leave it to Onee-chan."

"Un, I love you Lulu!"

Arara, it's back to 'Lulu' already.

It's unfortunate, but I won't be able to calm down if she keeps calling me Onee-sama, so it might be alright once in a while.

I rolled my sleeves and then went to the kitchen.

However, the real problem was from here....

◇

"Seaweed roll, fish omelet roll, eel roll..."

"Are they all dish with roll?"

I tilted my head in puzzlement, and then Arisa denied with a strange word, "Nein."

Apparently, she doesn't remember the dish's name.

"U~n, I usually only ate them, so I can't remember the name. You boil carrot, taro, lotus root, and kuwai, there are also sliced kamaboko and ham I think."

Arisa is telling me about it too haphazardly, I can't imagine what kind of dish is it.

I wonder if it's like Nabe where you put many things inside?

"Oops, I mustn't forget, black soy bean and Kurikinton! Sweetened boiled sweet potatoes are also the staple aren't they."

....Even if you tell me that it's the staple.

Were those just now for the dessert after dinner?

"Right, right, prawns! Boiled prawns on boudara sea bream served whole! And then, and then, herring roe! There must be herring roe after all. With katsuboshi on it, you put a biit of soy sauce.... U~n, it's unbearable~"

Arisa is grinning widely like when she's fantasizing about Master.

"It's totally unbearable nodesu."

"Unbear-bear~"

Pochi-chan and Tama-chan who imagined the dish from Arisa's words have their mouths open wide like they'll drool.

"So, do you know how to make them?"

"Abbsolutely not."

"Arisa?"

"....Can't Lulu's transcendental cooking skill do something about it?"

Oh you Arisa. She's way too unreasonable.

"I'm not Master, so it's impossible. Since the eels are sold in the market, I think we can do something about it if you tell what kind of taste the boiled vegetables should be like."

"Really?! Asxpected of Lulu. The favorite pupil of the phantom chef!"

"Even if you praise me. I think we can substitute the prawn with river shrimp or crayfish, but I don't think we can get our hands on the sea bream. We have katsuboshi and soy sauce in stock, but what is herring roe?"

To my question, Arisa crosses her arms and frowns.

"Something that has eggs in it. Something that's yellow, lumpy and delicious!"

I waited for Arisa's explanation to continue, but Arisa just kept crossing her arms and breathing roughly.

"U~n, I don't think I've ever seen them even in the royal capital's and the trade city's marketplaces. If I only know the kind of fish it is, I could ask the marketplace people to get it..."

"Then can't we just ask the fish dealer old man at the marketplace for that?"

"Right. That might be good."

Arisa and I, with Pochi-chan and Tama-chan as the guards, went to the royal capital's marketplace.

Come to think of it, why and what are the rolled ingredients for seaweed roll, fish omelet roll, and eel roll I wonder.

◇

"I could get ya river fish, dried and smoked cods, octopus and river shrimp, but sea fish are impossible. Even if an Item Box-holder merchant runs on the fastest horse, it's absolutely impossible to keep them fresh."

The old man of the best wholesale fish dealer in the royal capital told us so when we asked him.

"Hey~, can't you do something somehow?"

"Like I said it's impossible. A falconkin airmail man can make a round trip to the trade city in one day, but there's no way you're paying 10 gold coins to buy fish right?"

The pocket money I got from Master whenever we return from the labyrinth is quite enough.

However, using it like this feels wasteful.

"Oh right, I've got some sakura salmon if ye' like? I don't know no herring ore, but the eggs of sakura salmon have this popping sensation, I recommend them y'know?"

The fish dealer old man shows a sakura salmon that's as long as Pochi-chan, trying to sell it.

The sakura salmon's eggs are scarlet colored aggregation of grains.

"It's salmon roe! Pouring this on rice and then eating them is delish ain't it~"

"Oh, lil' lady, you come from seaside? There aren't many people who eat this 'round here. I'll give them free of charge, so spread it around the people around you."

"Le~ave it to me. We have two excellent cooks, I'm going to make royal capital's people crazy about salted salmon roe!"

"How reliable~"

Arisa finds a kindred spirit on the old man, going gahaha together.

....Oh Arisa. I have to instill her more woman-like behavior when we get back.

◇

"Teleporting four people is hard after all."

A few minutes after leaving the marketplace, we've arrived at the hill overlooking the trade city.

Arisa drinks the magic potion with great relish.

The sweet smell is the new peach taste isn't it.

"Now, let's do the last spurt."

"Faighto~"

"Nanodesu!"

After some slight floating sensation, we arrived at the corner of the warehouse block on the verge of the trade city.

This is the warehouse of Echigoya Firm that Master uses whenever he buys fresh fish.

"Now, let's go everyone!"

"Ou~"

"Nanodesu!"

Tama-chan and Pochi-chan answers Arisa's order with Shupin pose, and then we go to the unloading market while they're pulling my hands.

"This is a good sea bream isn't it."

"Huge"

"Big~"

"It seems to be worth eating nanodesu."

Arisa is being too surprised, but a sea fish that's as big as your spread arm should be the norm.

"Young ladies, you have some sharp eyes. That sea bream is three gold coins."

U~n, it's a bit too expensive.

The market price is around four silver coins I think?

"Yes, here's three gold coins."

Arisa quickly paid before I could negotiate.

The unloading market broker-san grins like he's found an easy mark ignorant of the world, but Arisa returns it with an even worse smile, and continues speaking.

"Hey, I have some ingredients I want, is it alright with you?"

Apparently, the gold coins earlier were for information exchange.

In just about a bell-ring long, the broker-san found the ingredients requested by Arisa.

"Found crabs~?"

"There are even lobsters crowding on the plate nodesu."

Tama-chan and Pochi-can found found them to be delicious.

The broker-san even carries them to the warehouse, and then from there on is no problem since we have the magic bag and Arisa's space magic.

The fisherman-san whom we bought the herring roe from taught me the way to cook it, so it seems doable somehow.

◇

"....■■ Infiltrate"

Mia-chan uses cooking magic to shorten the time for the water to soak the black beans.

It's a water magic created by Master, but since it has no use other than for cooking, everyone half-jokingly calls it cooking magic.

"....■■■ Ripen"

Now then, I'm going to leave the processing that take time to Mia-chan, the problem is the fish omelet roll which recipe I don't know.

"Wrong, this is just omelet."

I've made so many kinds, but it never be like how Arisa wants.

I could have gotten precise hint if Master or Liza-san were here at a time like this....

"Keepatit~~"

"True nanodesu. Leave the cleaning up to Pochi and Tama nodesu!"

Tama-chan and Pochi-can who are holding rolled eggs on both their hands are eating the failed ones enthusiastically.

"You won't be able to eat dinner if you eat too much you know?"

"Another stomach~?"

"It's fine as long as the flavor is different nanodesu."

Flavor huh--right! Seasoning!

"Arisa, tells me the seasoning from Master's hometown."

"Uumm, the seasoning is called『Sashisuseso』. Sato (sugar), Shio (salt), Su (vinegar), Se... Se, Seabura (back fat), So, Soysauce--Shoyu!" <TLN: http://justhungry.com/2003/12/japanese_basics_2.html>

Back fat, that's something I'd have never thought to use as a seasoning.

"Lulu~ This, not it~?"

Tama-chan picked up a small bottle with Mirin inside from among the seasoning in the kitchen.

I tried them all in turns, and it turned out the Mirin that Tama-chan found was the correct answer.

"Right right, this is the flavor! Now Lulu! Let's make the seaweed roll next! Putting herring inside the roll is good, but since we have sakura salmon, let's make sakura salmon seaweed roll!"

--Putting salmon in the seaweed roll?!

The inner part of New Year Dish seems to be quite deep.

It's said that mochi is necessary for New Year Dish, so Pochi-chan and Tama-chan are making mochi on the garden, pound pound.

Mia-chan, Nana-san and the others are also participating, I can hear their cheerful voice.

Let's complete this before Master and Liza-san come back from the banquet and surprise them!

And then, I'll be praised "It's delicious Lulu."!

P-perhaps, he might even say, "The man who makes Lulu his bride is a fortunate man."

While crushing the chestnuts for making Kurikinton, I unconsciously have such delusion.

Tomorrow is the dance party, and the day after tomorrow is the Kingdom Conference.

It's Master's big stage, and there's my Coming-of-age ceremony in the afternoon.

Ehehe~, it's matching with Master.

Feasting, and then congratulating, let's make it a fun new year.

Ufufu, it'll be fun when Master comes back.

Chapter 12 SS 1 : Dance Practice

"Fluttering~?"

"Pochi's dress is soft and fluffy too nanodesu."

The dresses that Master has made for us are very beautiful.

Tama is also dancing round and round with Pochi nodesu.

"Pochi, Tama, we're going to Oppai-san's place in the castle, are you coming?"

"Come~"

"Pochi will go too nodesu."

Pochi nods to Arisa. She says that Lulu is also coming.

Pochi hasn't been moving much ever since she comes to to the royal capital, so she wants to do some training with Karina nodesu.

Nana seems to be doing something in the garden. Together with Shiro and Crow too.

We go to Karina's house in the royal castle.

But, Karina wasn't in the lesson room.

"Huh? Karina-sama?"

"She's feeling a bit sick, she's retiring in her bedroom."

Erina shakes her neck while saying, "Gyoukusai ssu." <TLN: Got your confession completely rejected>

Pochi wonder if Gyokusai is an egg dish? It sounds a bit delicious nanodesu.

"I see, then everyone start your lesson ahead, I'll motivate Karina-sama for a bit."

Arisa said so and then left the room.

Pochi also wanted to go with her, but she said, "It's maidens talk, so leave us two alone", and leave me in the room nodesu.

"Tama is a maiden too~?"

"Even Pochi is a maiden nanodesu."

"N, maiden."

We have to firmly protest here!

Lulu too, it's not the time to giggle nodesuyo?

However, since a mansion's maid came to the room bringing snacks, we're going to protest after eating the snacks nodesu.

You cannot protest with a hungry stomach nodesuyo.

◇

"Fulla~"

"It was delicious nodesu."

"N, satisfied."

Eating snack is happiness.

Pochi can't make light of the mansion's maid skill nodesu.

"I wonder if it uses ginger as the secret ingredient? If you just decrease it a bit more, remove the alcohol and add a drop of brandy, it should taste better. I should try it when we get back."

....Lulu's monologues sounds so tender to Pochi's ears like a lullaby nodesu.

◇

"Hey Pochi. The lesson is starting."

Arisa woke Pochi up, swoosh swoosh.

Hau, Pochi's stomach was full, making her fell asleep nodesu.

Karina is standing with enough fighting spirit beside Arisa.

Her face is like when Pochi and the others challenged the [Floormaster] nodesu.

"I'll display the best dance and make the gazes of the surrounding men gather to me. And then, I'll make Satou regret and be jealous desuwa. A flower is chased by men. I won't become a cheap woman who chase after men desuwa."

Pochi completely doesn't understand what Karina is saying, but Pochi loves doing chasing.

Da da da, da so Pochi chases and then enters the burrowing hole entirely, it's really fun nanodesu.

Tama and Pochi leans our heads to each other.

"Mia, music start."

"Nn."

Karina dances with Lulu.

The two's foot-stepping are wonderful nanodesu. Pochi should train her foot techniques too nanodesu.

Dancing and spinning together with Tama.

"Good good, keep it up!"

Arisa is encouraging everyone with folded arms.

However, Pochi can't step her partner's feet as well as Karina and Lulu.

Tama's evasion is amazing nodesu.

However, Master's evasion is even more amazing nodesu.

Someday, Pochi will show Master that she can dance well enough to step on her partner's feet like Karina and Lulu nodesu!

--However, is it alright for Arisa not to practice dancing nodesu?

Chapter 12 SS 2 : Arisa and Intrigue

"Master, about Lulu's coming-of-age celebration, which do you think is better, white or black? Ah, there's red too."

Arisa asked while showing me some silk cloth.

"Which you said, doesn't white suits Lulu the best?"

"Right isn't it. Pure white is nice after all."

It'll looks good with Lulu's black hair--

--Wait, pure white? The fact that she didn't just say white feels a bit off.

"Wait."

"What?"

I halt Arisa.

"There are two things I want to ask you."

"My secret is expensive you know?"

I ignore Arisa who's posing like a strange evil woman, and ask her what I need to ask.

"You said coming-of-age celebration, is it near the time for Lulu's birthday?"

"Ara? I didn't tell you? There aren't many countries that celebrate birthdays here. Most only celebrate at ages seven and fifteen during new year."

Fumu.... I confirm the date on my Menu.

It's 28th October right now, so it's about two months left huh. With this much time, I should be able to create a long-sleeved kimono.

Arisa continues speaking as if sneering me who's relieved.

"Since one year is 10 months, it's the day after tomorrow."

--Wha!

Come to think of it, Arisa did tell me that one year is 10 months once.

"....Two days left huh."

"Don't tell me, you really haven't prepared anything?"

I have the best clothes prepared for when Lulu won the cooking tournament, but I feel that wearing Chinese dress for her coming-of-age ceremony is not good.

She would likely cry if I gave her the bunny suit I made for Arisa's joke....

--Think! Satou!

While skimming the items in my Storage, I imagine what kind of item I should make.

--Show me the power of that uselessly high INT!

Something that would make women happy are sweets, ornaments and cosmetics, and also a trip huh.

There's nothing special with sweets.

Accessories too, I've always given her the trial products whenever I make dresses and maid uniform, so it'll feel too little too late.

A tiara with a lot of philosopher's stones...is not a good idea. Gift isn't about the amount of money.

I have several repertoires regarding cosmetics, but with Lulu's beauty it'd harm it instead.

Then maybe something like perfume--right, a lipstick might be good.

When my childhood friend asked me a birthday present, she was really happy when I randomly give her a lipstick.

I was running out of money at that time, so I bought the lipstick from a hundred-yen store, I felt like running away when I saw my childhood friend dancing in joy from the cheap lipstick I gave, but I remember giving her a proper lipstick after I got the earnings from my part-time job later on.

"I'll present her a lipstick."

"Ah, she might be pleased with that. I'll even overlook it if I see it on Master's lips."

Arisa said so while laughing amorously.

....She said that in case of Lulu kissing me right? I don't have a hobby of dressing as a girl you know?

--Huh? Arisa asked me about the color just now, can she even make a kimono in two days?

I thought so and confirmed to Arisa.

"Ah, of course it's for battle underwear! Does Master like string for the side? Or maybe you're in lace-faction?"

After spanking Arisa who laughed guhehe, turned out the white cloth from earlier was for the half-finished dress for Lulu.

She's using unraveled whale beard which is used for dress armor for the lining cloth, so the defensive power is way higher than normal metal armor.

In addition, since it could be sexual harassment, I checked if Arisa really made a battle underwear.

....

On later days, Lulu who used the lipstick I gave her while wearing the white dress was really wonderful.

The offensive power is really too high, enough to make me feel dizzy.

It was dazzling enough that I would have proposed her here and then if it wasn't for Aze-san.

"It's my turn in three years. At that time, you have to absolutely, absolutely make a face like just now!"

Arisa who crossed her arms while posing dauntingly roughly breathed, muhhaa, and declared so.

Toward Arisa's reckless objective that seems like a knight challenging a windmill, I cheer for her only in my mind.

--Do your best, Arisa.

Chapter 12 SS 3 : Lulu and Ingredients Shopping

"Huh? Lulu, you sure are early."

"Good morning, Master."

I stop my hands from changing clothes, and greet Master.

Even though Master said I'm early, Master wasn't in the bed when I woke up in the middle of the night, so maybe he didn't sleep tonight too.

I can't imagine Master collapsing from overworking, but even my mother collapsed suddenly.

It might be presumptuous of me, but I harden my heart, I must tell Master to get some sleep!

"Master--"

"Lulu, you're in the middle of changing right? I'm troubled where to look, so can you at least put your underwear?"

--Eh?

Underwear?

I move my line of sight awkwardly to below.

That is, just now, the one I was trying to wear, brassiere.

I cover my breasts and squat on the floor.

Ah, my face is hot.

To let Master see the body of an ugly girl like me.... I've polluted his eyes.

"I-I'm sorry. To show such a thing to Master."

"Ah, sorry. My reaction was late due to my slightly lack of sleep. Moreover, it was a sight for sore eyes, so there's no need for you to apologize."

Master who had turned his body the other way gently said so.

I put up the brassiere in a hurry. It seems the bust-up exercise has shown its effect recently, they've grown bigger and the brassiere size becomes wrong.

I have to ask Arisa to adjust the size next time.

"Lulu give this package to Arisa when she's woken up. It's dangerous, so be careful about the children opening the package okay."

"Yes, I understand."

I put the package from Master into my own magic bag temporarily.

I want to put it in Arisa's magic bag, but it can't be helped since you can only put and take out things from your own magic bag.

Master waves his hand to me and then leaves the room.

--Ah! Maybe he was hungry.

There's still some time before the commuting maids come, so I have to make it!

I grab the apron in a hurry and chase after Master.

◇

"Is it alright with just plum rice porridge?"

"Yeah, it's nice for the stomach, and above all, Lulu's cooking is delicious."

Ehehehee, I got praised.

"Right, there's a morning market opening near the royal capital's gate during this hour, do you want to see it?"

For Master's invitation, I check the clock that Master's made hung on the wall.

There's still two hours before everyone wakes up--it's alright isn't it?

"Yes! I want to go."

"Then we'll be going after I've finished eating this, so fix your clothes okay."

--Eh?

Aaaa..... I've done it again.

To have only my underwear under the apron, there's a limit to being improper.

Like this, I'm just a female pervert.

While reflecting on it, I went back to my room in a hurry to change.

◇

"As one would expect of the royal capital, there's an abundance of goods huh."

"Yes! It makes it hard to choose."

There's a lot of seasoning, there's a lot of ingredients I've never seen, just thinking how to use them makes me feel giddy.

If possible I'd love to study cooking together with Master just like it was before we went to the elf hometown.... Such thing is too luxurious for me.

"Ah, Master, although they're small, aren't those tuna?"

"It's true, let's go see it Lulu."

Master pulled my hand while smiling happily.

Oh Master, he really likes tuna.

I hold my cheeks with the unconnected hand so that it won't loosen, and enjoy the brief happiness.

◇

After we've finished the shopping, I'm sitting together with Master on a bench next to a stall, enjoying some light meal.

Maybe because I've walked a lot, the fragrance of the soba that's just been milled stimulates my appetite.

"It's the first time I've eaten soba made of buckwheat dough, but it's surprisingly delicious isn't it."

"Yes. It's not firm like the soba I ate before, but this is delicious too."

It's the first for me, but it seems it's the first too for Master who has extensive knowledge.

It seems there's still a lot of dish unknown to me in Royal Capital.

The money I received in the Labyrinth City has accumulated so much I don't know if it'll ever be used up, so it might be good to eat out at various places.

I won't ask something luxurious like wanting it to be together with Master.

Exploring a lot of delicious shops with everyone, it'll be fun.

Eating the local dishes in various regions, and then next time, I'll be treating those dishes to someone else in another region.

Recently, I sometimes dream like that.

It might be an unreachable dream with this slave body, but someday I'll save enough money and make it a reality.

And then, at that time, beside me will be--.

Chapter 12 SS 4 : Tama and Bad People Suppression

"Night strolling~?"

Tama found Master who was going out, so it's an emergency capture nano.

I mean, Arisa and Mia asked me.

"Ah, you found me. Keep it a secret from everyone okay?"

"Aye"

Master puts Wing Boots on Tama, and then we go together.

Mia and Arisa said, "Catch Master when he's going out alone."

But, right now he's with Tama, so it's alright.

--It's alright right?

From on top of the neighboring mansion, Tama flies pyo~n departing!

Master's black mantle is fluttering, he looks so happy. The white mask is also laughing.

Tama can't fly well, so Master holds her in his arms.

"To where~?"

"A bit more--look, it's over there."

We land at the top of a spire with a thump.

Even though the mantle is shaken by the wind, Master doesn't shakes even an inch.

--As expected, nano.

"Look there, I'm going to suppress those bad people."

"Bad people~?"

When Tama looks at the place Master is pointing at, there are people in black clothing full of weapons lurking in the back alley.

"It seems they're going to attack the homes of our employees--wait, we can talk about that later."

Master comes before Tama's face.

When you stare so hard, it's embarrassing, nyan.

"Listen now, they are far weaker than the labyrinth monsters, so don't forget to hold back okay."

"Aye!"

Tama replies with shutan pose.

"Now, let's start the ninja time."

Tama nods to answer Master.

I mean, Ninjas don't talk.

While holding Tama, Master lands in front of the black clothed people.

"Who the hell are you!"

"Your enemies."

Tama hides behind the shadow as soon as we land.

"What? The pink lump disappears?"

"Rather than that, kill this suspicious mask!"

"""Ou!"""

The black-clothed people attack Master all at once.

Tama cannot go help.

I mean, there is no need.

--Ammazing!

Master increases to six, and then attack the black-clothed people who're attacking from six directions!

Every one of them fell to the floor without even having time to swing their swords.

Tama has to learn it too!

I mean, she's a ninja.

◇

Tama will get scolded if she just watches. She has to work too--

"It's noisy on that side."

"Maybe they got found out by the guards."

"Even if it's just us, let's quickly plunder, kill and escape."

"Right."

Discovered bad people.

Shuriken, shu, shu, shu~?

--Huh?

"Hmph, you seem to be quite skillful, but it's not enough against this great me who's an ex-Red Iron ya'know?"

Tama held back too much.

Uncle-san attacked with a great axe.

Iai flash nano.

When a Ninja 'shupan', draws, and then 'shushut', sheaths, something like a great axe is cut in two.

"Wo, what? Red blade flew?"

Unyu, Magic Edge Cannon came out.

--Ah, Master catches the Magic Edge Cannon on the other side.

Tama waves her hand, thank you Master.

Huh? But wasn't Master fighting over there?

When she turns around, Master is standing over there too.

Afterimage! Arisa often said, "That's an afterimage!" when she played as demon king nyan!

As expected of Tama's master.

"Magic weapons huh. You cheater!"

Uncle-san is angry, punpun.

Tama is not a cheater.

Besides, the one saying cheater is the cheater themselves nano.

I mean, Ninjas are an ally of justice.

Tama too, will afterimage.

"Kuh, Twinkling Movement huh!"

Uncle-san takes some distance while blocking the kunai with his axe.

U~n, it's a bit wrong.

While evading the daggers thrown around by Uncle-san, Tama sees Master who's fighting over there.

U~n, it's difficult.

Does Tama move slightly like, gyun, maybe~?

"Tsk, they were easily evaded, then how about this! 『Flame』"

Uncle-san points a short wand with fire stone here.

A small fireball comes flying.

It's useless nyan.

If Tama just, cut-this-one--done.

"WHAT! This guy cut a magic!"

Next is Tama's turn.

Moving slightly, like, gyun.

"Wha, this guy increased?!"

Looks like it's a success.

But, Tama hit Uncle-san's stomach too enthusiastically.

Uncle-san who spurted blood like he was dying got healed by Master's magic.

Master, thank you nano.

"Looks like Tama has cleaned up her part too. The guards seem to be coming here, let's go back after I've given these guys to them."

"Aye!"

After Master give the bad people to the guward people, we return to the mansion.

We remove our disguises along the way and eat [Yonakisoba] on a stall that sounds [pipuu].

"Who would've thought that there's a ramen stall here."

"Delish~"

Tama wants to eat [Yonakisoba] with Pochi and everyone next time.

"That's right, let's go with Pochi and the others next time."

"Aye!"

Therefore, so happy from Master's words, Tama answers with energetic shutan pose.

Chapter 12 Intermission 2 : New Year Greeting

"Wish you a happy new year."

"Satou! W-wish you a happy new year!"

Receiving my surprise happy new year greeting, Aze-san greeted back like she was surprised.

Making use of the time difference between the royal capital and Boruenan countryside, I came to Boruenan to do happy new year greeting.

I had prepared the pretext of using the new Unique Skill [Unit Arrangement], but everyone was fast asleep since they were making merry until late at night during the evening party and the after party yesterday.

Today Aze-san is even cuter than usual.

No, I should say that that she's beautiful on her miko attire huh.

"I like your normal clothes, but that miko attire is also lovely isn't it."

"T-thank yu--"

She was saying the last part embarrassingly and sheepishly I couldn't hear it, but since I was able to see blushing Aze-san, I deemed it good.

"Are you not using the little girl illusion today?"

"T-that's! I-it's not like that! That's--"

When I was playing around with Aze-san, Lua-san came in wearing miko attire.

"Ara, Satou-san. Is it fine for you to be away from Shiga Kingdom already?"

"Yes, fortunately."

I had told them about the greater demon and the summoned part of Demon God ahead with [Telephone] magic.

"It's about time for the ceremony, let's go to the world tree."

"Satou will also come right?"

"Yes, of course I'll be observing."

I came here for that sake after all.

They tell me that they will perform offering dance at the time of sunrise in the observatory of the world tree, so they need to prepare various things.

An altar like the one in Shinto shrines has been prepared in the observatory, and including Aze-san, there are more than 100 miko and diviners preparing things.

The light is put off when everyone has taken their position, the room is wrapped in silence.

When the first sunlight begins to be seen on the faraway horizon, the sound of transverse flute and organ begin to spread.

The 'shan-shan' sound I heard sometimes are probably from the kagura bells the miko and the diviners are carrying.

And then when the sunlight illuminates the observatory, Aze-san who was standing by begins to dance the Kagura Dance with dignified expression.

The other miko starts to dance one after another, while the comforting sound from the diviners fill the altar with solemn atmosphere.

Their movements are accurate as if they've programmed to it.

And yet, they don't look mechanical. Looking from the elves' perspectives, it's probably a dance they've performed for hundreds, thousands of years, so it probably has become as natural as breathing to them.

The dance continues on for about 30 minutes, and I've perfectly recorded it from start to finish.

I'll show it to Mia and the others later.

When I was gazing at the prime and proper mode Aze-san, she seemed to notice me and came over while taking Lua-san along.

"Satou."

"Good work Aze-san. It was a very wonderful dance."

I hand over a fluffy towel to Aze-san.

While looking at her who's wiping her sweat from the side, I ask her the question I've been having in mind.

"Aze-san, I forgot to ask before, but which God was the dance dedicated to?"

"It's to Dragon God-sama."

--Dragon God Akon Kagura?

"D-does the elf revere the Dragon God?"

If that's the case, then I have to confess that I've killed their deity....

"No, it's not like that. Rather, the elves only revere us and the Creator God who created the seven pillar gods."

Oops, some last boss-like name came out of Aze-san's mouth.

"This is the first time I've heard of Creator God--"

"That's only natural. It's a God that came from a far far away world together with the seven pillar gods after all."

Lua-san answered my doubt.

Come to think of it, the same thing was written in the picture book about myth from before.

"It's independent?"

"Yes, about 100 hundred million years have passed since they came to this world, but not even once an oracle came from Creator God. There are many gods who leave their worlds, and that particular God has non-interference policy."

The time span is strange.

Rather, so there are a lot of gods in other worlds huh.

Oops, the story has been diverted.

"But, then why is the dance dedicated to the Dragon God?"

"That's because--"

The thing that Aze-san told me was close to the content of the myth picture book I read before.

As a thank for the Dragon God who welcomed the gods coming to this world, they've been doing the offering dance for generations in the span of 100 million years.

100 million years huh....

Then keeping silent about will be too dishonest of me.

I steeled myself, asked to meet the demi-god mode Aze-san who's linked with the world tree's archive, and confessed that I had killed the Dragon God.

"....to the Dragon God?"

Demi-god mode Aze-san looks perplexed for the first time.

"Apparently, you are not lying."

After a while, she greatly breathes out and turns her tranquil eyes to me.

"Satou, I have been surprised by you so many times, but this is the first time I'm this shocked in the 100 million years after I came to this land."

I wanted to lower my head from her sublime voice, but I psyche myself and stare at the dignified face of demi-god mode Aze-san.

"However, there is no problem if you just merely killed the Dragon God."

——WHAT？

"When the gods had just came to this world, God Zaikuon and God Garleon challenged the Dragon God and got themselves killed, but they were revived in 1000 years time. If it's the Dragon God then it will probably be revived in 100 years."

As expected of God.
Or rather, does that mean it would seek revenge in 100 years?

....Well I guess it's alright. There's no great difference since my life would've ran out in 100 years anyway.

"Fufufu, Satou sure thinks some interesting things."

Oops, demi-god mode Aze-san could read your mind in this room only was it.

"Dragon God hates to lose, but it doesn't mind the method of fighting. If you don't want to fight with force, then you can fight with wits or games."

"--I see."

Then I have to develop PCs and game consoles in the 100 years before the Dragon God gets revived.

Even better, aiming for VR games seems fun too.

"Please let me participate when that happens."

"Yes, of course."

I express my gratitude to demi-god mode Aze-san, and then I get back to the usual tree house together with the usual Aze-san.

◇

"Oh right, I've brought new year dishes since I thought of eating it with everyone."

"Ara, then we have to call Nea."

Lua-san who's followed along with us asks a pixie flying nearby to be a messenger.

Nea-san is an elf cook researcher who bets her life to reproduce the Japanese dishes told by the late hero.

"Hey, Daisaku said that you eat new year dishes with your family, is that true?"

"Yes, that's true."

Of course, you also treat your friends who visit you with the dishes, but most are eaten together with your family right?

"--Is that so."

It seems Aze-san is pleased with my answer, she sits down happily beside me.

There's just enough space for Mia to sit between us.

....You can sit closer you know?

◇

"My! Are those neyyear dishes?"

When I spread the six-tiered food boxes, Nea-san who came from the window with wind magic asked with peculiar pronunciation.

"Happy new year, Nea-san."

"Ara, me of all people--"

Nea-san apologizes for her bad manner.

No no, Nea-san's tension is always like this when it's related to food.

"Satou-san, happy new year. Please take care of me this year too."

Nea-san is keeping appearance like a graceful lady, but her eyes are shining fiery like she's found a prey, scrutinizing the new year dish.

I quietly hands her the recipe collection without any bribe.

She should be able to perfect the "faux" new year dish that I and Lulu made.

"Then let us eat."

"Wa~i"

To Lua-san's signal, Aze-san approved it like a child.

Looks like she's weak to delicious things like usual.

"This omelet is tasty!"

"That one is called datemaki."

I explain the dish simply to Aze-san who stuffs her mouth with the datemaki.

Aze-san is listening happily, "uh-huh", but since she's absorbed in tasting the food, she's probably going to forget it tomorrow.

"Daisaku said. If you shout out your love as you eat datemaki, you'll learn the six-swords style right?"

--Hero Daisaku! Please be more moderate when you play around with Aze-san!

I complained to the late hero in my mind.

"Is this soup a clear soup?"

"That's called Ozouni."

"Eh~. --This mochi! There's red bean paste inside! Ozouni is sweet, I love it."

--Love!

Repeat, please!

"Aze-san, does the Ozouni suits your taste?"

"Yes, it's so sweet I like it very much."

--Like it very much.

I'll compile the voice record from this time, and make it into hearing item for when I feel down.

I want to praise my past self who decided to make not the light-brown miso ozouni that Arisa requested, but the ozouni that Aze-san likes.

Usually Lua-san would have looked like she would vomit sugar, but today it seems she's busy with dishes she's seen for the first time, it doesn't seem she pay any attention to me and Aze-san flirting.

Rather than calling it flirting, it feels more like a relationship between a guest and a waiter, but that's not true.

Subjectivity is important at a time like this.

"The prawns' husks are...."

"If you hold it like this and do this, you can take it off easily you know."

"It's true! As expected of Satou."

While teaching the way to break the sea bream into pieces, I teach Aze-san who's having a hard time with the prawns the way to shell them, we pass the time while talking about various stories.

As I've thought, Visiting Boruenan countryside really heals me.

As the multi-tiered food boxes get emptied, Aze-san mutters "I can't eat anymore" happily while curling on my lap looking satisfied.

I wanted to enjoy this happiness a bit more, but since Arisa contacted me "It's about time to depart for the Kingdom Conference" through [World Phone], I bid my farewell to Aze-san and the others.

I'm going to stock fresh shrimps in the royal capital, and make some shrimp curry.

New year dishes are nice, but curry is also nice isn't it.

※ The narrator is a big-wig of the demon lord believers [Light of Liberty]

Intermission: In the Shadow of the Royal Capital

"This is the artifact entrusted by the previous Earl Bobi."

The thing on top of the cloth that the man presents is a bracelet that looks like it's made from braiding of violet-colored hair.

"Fire Magician-dono, is this really it?"

"Umu, I will even bet the house name of Dasles on it."

It doesn't look like an artifact blessed by Demon God-sama, but we should know whether it's real when we use it.

If it were a fake, this man could just pay with his soul then.

"As for the rewards--"

I leave it to one of my underlings.

This fire magician seeks a certain information as the reward.

"The tigerkin girl is in a district in the slum where they don't let humans in. Important as it may, it would be slightly troubling if fire magician-dono makes a big fuss. Therefore, for our friendship, I have ordered for that girl to be abducted, and get her to fire magician-dono."

The fire magician nods like he's displeased hearing the underling.

I don't know what grudge he has, but to come far from the east, quite the hard work he's gone through.

◇

"....■■■■■■■ Summon Artifact"

In exchange of 100 sacrifices, a black short horn falls on top of the altar.

"So this is『Short Horn』. The demon god-sama's artifact that can sublimate people into demons...."

I was tempted to reflexively used it, but such imprudence is not allowed before our ambition.

Because I'm yielding it to His Highness to sublimate into a demon and ascend the throne.

I continue to spend everyday changing the souls of the poor who are no different than trash to become artifacts.

The voices of resentment and curses of the poor when their souls are offered to the artifact fill the Holy Grail.

◇

"This pill can produce monster huh?"

"Yes, and as it is a military secret of our Empire, we kindly ask Cardinal-sama to keep it a secret."

The weaselkin merchant brings a box full of small pills on his little fingers.

Used separately, this is nothing more than lowest-grade magic potion, but it changes normal creatures into monsters if you give it to one that has a magic core buried inside its body after it's gone critical state from taking Fiend Drug and then give it magic wave through the activation magic tool.

Getting the fiend drug is a bit hard, but thanks to the help of His Highness, and his accomplice, Honored One, it has become possible to mass produce it in the labyrinth's underground.

With this, we can turn the royal capital into monster paradise like Heki territory.

◇

....What is happening.

For the lower-class noble who was making the Fiend Drug in the labyrinth city to get arrested, and for even the fiend drug that were being transported to the Royal Capital to get seized as well....

"『Mirage』"

"I am here...."

"Disguise yourself as Marquis Kelten, and dispatch『Violet』to the Labyrinth City. Dispose of Sokel before all of the underground fields are found."

"Is it alright if I do not go myself?"

"I do not mind. There should be some demi-humans with wings in『Violet』. Let those people go there."

"As you wish."

I leave the『Disguise』artifact given by Honored One to [Mirage]. If one disguise oneself with this artifact, one cannot be seen through even with Personage Appraisal and Malice Appraisal.

I do not think that it could deceive the appraisal ability of Parion's hero, but that hero should be far in the weaselkin kingdom, chasing after the present demon king.

This is the time of [Union Season] that only happen once in every 666 years.

It's the time of the demon lords revival, the [Great Demon Lords' Season] so to speak.

I have to thank Demon God-sama to have blessed me the fortune of being born in the year of the holy season that hasn't happened since the time of [Golden Wild Boar King] that destroyed Furu Empire.

◇

All of the fiend drug fields in the underground labyrinth have been found by a man who called himself hero's follower.

Moreover, he even unashamedly snatched the noble daughters who were left chastise for the sake of demon possession.

I had stealthily carried away the stored fiend drug in the warehouse of the army headquarter but half of them were confiscated by the authorities.

Right before the drug were all destroyed, [Mirage] who disguised himself as Marquis Kelten stopped it, but most of it had been carried to the Royal Research Institute in order to be disposed.

The real Marquis Kelten has been arrested by the prime minister too, so [Mirage] can't disguise himself as him until the successor is selected.

Yet, my underlings managed to bribe a knight, and we were able to scatter the fiend drug in the underground waterway.

With this, I can simply wait for the right time to sow the seed I got from the weaselkins.

◇

The first experiment was a success.

I was able to change the rat that had eaten fiend-drug absorbing slimes into rat monster by giving it the seed and using the activation tool left by the weaselkins.

The artificial monsters had red-rope patterns, and they displayed strong power and vigorous appetite compared to the common monsters.

....But one problem remains.

"Every monster got debilitated in less than three days and disintegrated."

"Damn weaselkins, to leave us with these defective products..."

Reports from my underling are not favorable.

I cannot turn the royal capital into monster paradise like this.

--It's unavoidable.

Let's prioritize hatching His Highness now.

I instruct my underling to sow the seeds in various places in the royal capital and continue the preparation for the hatching.

Afterward from there, if we get our hands on the Orb, our ambition should come true.

◇

The fire magician who got irritated from the abduction plan of the tigerkin girl that wasn't going well turned one section of the slum into blaze. He's a fool who can't be patience before the more important matter.

--It'd be bad if we are exposed through that guy.

I gave several of my subordinates [Short Horns] and the valuable [Long Horn], and dispatched them to the blazing section of the slum to dispose of the fire magician.

Every one of my underlings that had turned into lesser and mid demons met their ends on the fifth seat of Shiga Eight Swords the gun-user that happened to be there, who also got killed in the process.

How pathetic of them considering he lost his seat to Prince Sharlick the holy sword user.

As I thought, the upstart sublimated demons can't be compared to the natural demons.

Unfortunately, we couldn't find the fire magician in the royal capital afterward.

He probably got caught in the fire he created himself and died.

Two days later, there was a bizarre case where the corpse of a white furred tigerkin soldier in cruel condition was left in front of the gate.

It might be the handiworks of the fire magician in question.

In order to secure his arrest, I'll send Sir Jizon the former temple knight in the royal capital.

◇

"How is the condition of His Highness?"

"Yes, he spend the days uneventfully like usual."

I nod back to my underlings reports.

"I see.... So have you found out the location of the thing from before?"

"It is in the Treasury of the royal castle after all. It's enshrined in the deepest one."

One of my underlings proudly reported the information he got from bribing the vice chief who was in control of cataloging.

I endure not to say that he should have been proud about getting the thing from before--the orb instead.

"Good grief, it has become unthinkably troublesome since we failed at shooting down the airship that was staged to be Duke Bishtal's assassination."

"It was also for disposing the Mithril Explorers to stop them from being headaches in the future, but it was too greedy."

"The plan to steal the orbs under the pretext of helping them was...."

"To do three things at once, this greediness is your fault!"

"If you have to say that, then you're also--"

I strike the tip of bishop's staff I have in my hand to the floor.

"Leave it at that."

I stop the tedious complaints of my underlings, and confirm several things.

"『Mirage』, can you not break into the royal castle?"

"It is impossible. Because normally there is the annoying seal left behind by Ancestor King Yamato...."

If I borrow that person's power, getting the orb is a simple matter, but I cannot give such an odd chore to Honored One. I have to exhaust my resources in order to do it.

◇

....The tactics is underway.

I finished the preparation for the tamed monsters for bombing the obstructive Shiga Eight Swords.

[Mirage] who disguised himself as the Naval General Staff had fed false information to the soldiers of the royal capital's gate, stating that it's for practice.

I have also slipped in Sir Jizon into the banquet in order to exterminate Shiga Eight Swords who escape the attack.

The anxiety of the royal capita's people should be at its peak after the frequent attacks of the monsters.

Judging from the uproar of the ignorant people during the manifestation of the [Dog-head Demon Lord] the other day, they would surely dance as I've predicted on the stage this time.

...The whistling arrow from the megalith far away rang the bell of the beginning.

Now then, dance you people of Royal Capital.

The time for the manifestation of the true demon lord is near.

The Light of Liberty--

●Profiles

【Light of Liberty】Demon Lord believers based in Holy Kingdom Parion.

【Mirage】A member of Light of Liberty. A high level scout that can use holy magic.

【His Highness】An unknown person who has appeared many times in only name.

【Honored One】First appearance. Judging from the Narrator's view point, it's possible that this person is a demon.

【Wings of Freedom】Demon lord believers based in Oyugock Dukedom.

【Previous Earl Bobi】A noble of Oyugock dukedom. Supported Wings of Freedom.

【Fire Magician】Has grudge against tigerkins. It's unknown whether he's the same pyromaniac whom Satou once arrested in Puta Town.

【Dasles】A house name of Makiwa Kingdom's marquis. It has died out now.

【Tigerkin Girl】It's unknown whether she's the same Princess Runya who was being sold in the black market of the Duchy capital.

【Tigerkin Warrior】It's unknown whether slaughtered man is the same person as Sir Galgaoron who saved Princess Runya from the black market.

【Prince Sharlick】Fought the yellow greater demon in Oyugock dukedom into cripple.

【Gun-user of Shiga Eight Swords】The fift seat of Shiga Eight Swords. Killed each other in a fight against a mid demon.

【Marquis Kelten】The noble who's framed. Has srong influence in the military.

【Violet】A military unit formed of crime slaves. Mainly does dirty works.

【Hero's Follower】It's Satou who's disguised himself as Kuro.

【Sokel】An underling noble who was affiliated with the fiend drug manufacture.

【Noble Daughters】Saved from the Lost Thieves by Kuro. Employees of Echigoya Firm.

Skill Table of the Protagonist up until Chapter 12

It's written as: [Name (Skill Level) The chapter where it's acquired].

Skills that have been acquired but not written in the chapter, are written here. I added ※ in the end to distinguish them.

Skill Standards

Lv1....Beginner

Lv3....Standard

Lv5....Expert

Lv7....Master

Lv9....Genius

Lv10....Godly

● Weapon Skill (61p)

Shooting (Lv10) 1-9

Spear (Lv10) 1-9 ◎Went UP from 0 => 10 on 3-8

Bow (——) 1-9

One-Handed Sword (Lv10) 1-9

One-Handed Mace (——) 1-9

Dagger (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from 0 => 10 on 6-2

Throwing (Lv1) 1-9 ▼

Two-Handed Mace (——) 1-9

Two-Handed Sword (——) 1-10

One-Handed Axe (——) 1-10

Two-Handed Axe (——) 1-10

Two-Handed Hammer (Lv10) 1-10 ◎Went UP from 0 => 10 on 3-8

One-Handed Hammer (——) 1-10

Fighting (Lv10) 1-10 ▼

● Physical Battle Skill (255p)

Aiming (Lv10) 1-9

Sniping (Lv10) 1-9

Surprise Attack (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Reckless Courage (——) 1-9

Iai (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Shield (Lv10) 1-9

Evasion (Lv10) 1-9

Parrying (Lv10) 1-9

Shield Bash (Lv5) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 on 6-2

Kicking (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Helmet Splitter (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Air Battle (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Weapon Destruction (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Dual Wielding (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Continuous Attack (Lv10) 3-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-

Mind's Eye (Lv10) 6-3

Thrusting (Lv10) 6-3

Heavy Blow (Lv10) 6-3

Penetrating (Lv10) 6-3

Magic Edge (Lv10) 6-3

Spiral Spear Strike (Lv10) 6-3

Flash Slash (Lv10) 7-20

Holy Edge (Lv10) 7-21

Foresight: Anti-Personnel Combat (Lv10) 8-23

Magic Edge Cannon (Mana Blast) (Lv10) inbetween 9-29 to 10-3

Armor Penetrate (Lv10) 11-19(new) Mana Strike (Lv10) 11-19(new)

● Tactics Skill (60P)

Retreat (Lv10) 1-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Cooperation (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Command (Lv10) 2-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Formation (Lv10) 2-8 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Strategy (Lv10) 2-12 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Provocation (Lv10) 6-13

● Movement Skill (80P)

Dashing (Lv10) 1-4 ※

Jumping (Lv10) 1-4 ※

Three-Dimensional Manuever (Lv10) 1-4 ※

Herculean Strength (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Off-Road (Lv10) 5-14

Sky Drive (Lv10) 7-7

Ground Shrink (Lv10) 7-20

Space Walk (——) 9-23

Flash Drive (Lv10) 9-31

- Magic Skills (150p)

Summoning Magic: Foreign World (Lv10) 1-2

Force Magic: Foreign World (Lv10) 1-2

Prayer (——) 1-4

Lightning Magic: Demon (——) 1-9

Fire Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7

Wind Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7

Lightning Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 8-7

Earth Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7

Water Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 8-7

Ice Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7

Light Magic (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 7-7

Life Magic (Lv10) 2-1

Holy Magic: Parion Belief (——) 2-1

Contract (——) 3-3

Mind Magic (——) 3-4 ※

Shadow Magic (——) 5-9

Force Magic (Lv10) 6-7

Name Order (——) 6-Intermission: Satou's House Name Gravity Magic: Demon (——) 7-20

Space Magic: Demon (——) 7-20

Destruction Magic: Demon (——) 7-21

Explosion Magic: Demon (——) 7-21

Holy Magic: Tenion Belief (——) 8-26

Flame Magic (Lv10) 8-7

Explosion Magic (Lv10) 8-7

Destruction Magic (Lv10) 8-7

Space Magic (Lv10) Inbetween 8-13~15

Lightning Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10

Dark Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10

Flame Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10

Wind Magic: Dragon (——) 9-10

Forest Magic (——) 9-13

Soul Magic (——) 9-19

Soul Magic: House Fairy (——) 10-18

- Resistance Skills (254p)

Lightning Resistance (Lv10) 1-9

Paralysis Resistance (Lv10) 1-9

Pain Resistance (Lv10) 1-9

Shock Resistance (Lv10) 1-9

Fear Resistance (Lv10) 1-9 Went UP from Lv 3 => Lv10 on 12-27

Poison Resistance (Lv10) 1-9

Petrification Resistance (Lv10) 1-9

Fire Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 ◎Went Up from Lv0 => Lv 10 on 3-8

Wind Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Earth Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Water Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Ice Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Light Resistance (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Decay Resistance (Lv10) 1-10

Mind Resistance (Lv10) 3-4 ※

Shadow Resistance (Lv10) 5-9

Alcohol Resistance (Lv1) 7-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv1 before Chapter 8

Gravity Resistance (Lv10) 7-20

Space Resistance (Lv10) 7-20

Destruction Resistance (Lv10) 7-21

Explosion Resistance (Lv10) 7-21

Instant Death Resistance (Lv10) 7-22

Dark Resistance (Lv10) 9-10

Stink Resistance (Lv3) 10-29

Life Drain Resistance (Lv10) 11-9 (new) Curse Resistance (Lv10) 12-26(new) Chaos Resistance (Lv10) 12-26(new)

● Production Skills (150p)

Woodwork (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 on 6-4

Leathercraft (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 inbetween Chapter 6 and 7

Weapon Creation (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 on 6-10

Blacksmith (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv4 => Lv10 inbetween Chapter 6 and 7

Compounding (Lv10) 4-9

Alchemy (Lv10) 4-9

Weapon Reinforcement (Lv10) 6-3

Armor Creation (Lv10) 6-4

Sculpture (Lv10) 6-10

Engraving (Lv10) 6-10

Magic Tool Creation (Lv10) 6-10

Bonework (Lv10) 7-12

Glasswork (Lv10) 8-5

Sewing (Lv10) 8-12

Counterfeit (Lv10) 8-21

- Science Skills (111p)

Arithmetic (Lv10) 1-4

Lost Knowledge (——) 1-4

Shiga National Language (Lv10) 1-5

Demon Language (Lv5) 1-9 Went UP from Lv1 => Lv5 on 7-13

Appraisal (Lv10) 2-2 ▼

Inference (——) 2-6

DeRiddle (Lv10) 3-8

Experiment (Lv10) 4-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Inspection (Lv10) 4-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Education (Lv10) 5-2 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Ash Ratkin Language (Lv1) 5-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv1 on 6-2

Green Scalekin Language (Lv1) 5-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv1 on 6-2

Elf Language (Lv10) 5-4 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv10 on 6-10

Dissection (——) 6-2

Etiquette (Lv5) 6-14 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 right before Chapter 7

Social (Lv5) 6-Intermission: Satou's House Name
Heraldry (Lv5) 6-Intermission: Satou's House Name
Decryption (Lv10) 8-26

Tigerkin Language (Lv1) 8-25
Dragon Language (Lv5) 9-10
Silga Language (Lv3) 9-11

● Art Skills (43p)

Singing (——) 1-4 ※
Painting (——) 1-4
Game (——) 1-4
Amplification (Lv3) 2-7 ▼ Went UP from Lv1 => Lv3 on 6-2
Tongue-twister (Lv10) 6-1
Smooth Talking (Lv10) 6-1
Performance (Lv10) 6-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-7
Acting (——) 6-22
Ventriloquism (Lv10) 8-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 9-10
Dance (——) 8-11

● Commerce Skill (70p)

Negotiation (Lv10) 1-5
Excuse (Lv10) 1-5
Estimation (Lv10) 1-6
Haggling (Lv10) 1-6

Poker Face (Lv5) 1-7 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 on 6-2

Nonchalant (——) 1-8

Persuasion (Lv5) 1-8 ▼ Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2

Bribing (Lv5) 1-8 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2

Lip Service (Lv5) 2-3 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2

Tact (Lv10) 6-22 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 inbetween Chapter 6 and Chapter 7

● Labor Skills (75p)

Camping (——) 1-4 ※

Washing (——) 1-4 ※

Reclamation (Lv10) 1-4 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-13

Cultivation (——) 1-4

Harvesting (——) 1-4

Mowing (——) 1-4

Lumbering (——) 1-4

Cleaning (——) 1-4

Surveillance (Lv10) 1-7 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Arresting (Lv10) 1-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Service (——) 3-4

Carrying (——) 4-3

Marshalling (Lv5) 4-6 Went UP from Lv3 => Lv5 on 6-2

Packing (——) 5-14

Cooking (Lv10) 6-2

Dismantling (Lv10) 6-2

Picking (Lv10) 6-13

Mounting (Lv10) 6-15

Horse-riding (——) 6-15

Taming (——) 9-26

Training (——) 9-26

- Labyrinth Skill (59p)

Trap Release (Lv10) 2-10 ◎Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 3-8

Trap Usage (Lv5) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv5 on 6-2

Trap Discovery (Lv10) 2-10

Excavation (Lv10) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Treasure Discovery (Lv10) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Treasure Chest Unlocking (Lv10) 2-10 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Item Box (Lv4) 3-5 ◎Went UP from Lv2 => Lv4 on 5-2

- Spy Skill (140p)

Deception (Lv10) 1-5

Lip-reading (Lv10) 1-5 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Attentive Ears (Lv10) 1-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Spy (Lv10) 1-9

QuickDressing (Lv10) 1-10

Disguise (Lv10) 1-10

Behind-the-scene (Lv10) 2-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Abduction (Lv10) 2-6

Assassination (Lv10) 2-6 Went UP from Lv0 => Lv10 on 6-2

Plot (——) 2-6

False Accusation (——) 2-6

Evidence Destruction (Lv10) 6-33

Concealment (Lv10) 7-19

Invisibility (Lv10) 7-19

Tiptoeing (Lv10) 7-19

Strange Voice (Lv10) 8-20

● Magic Power Skills (81p)

Self-Healing (Lv10) 1-9

Magic Operation (Lv10) 6-3

Magic Bestowal (Lv10) 6-3

Magic Healing (Lv10) 6-22

Ghost Seer (Lv1) 7-4

Magic Perception (Lv10) 7-8

Magic Control (Lv10) 9-18

Spirit Light Control (Lv10) 9-18

Spirit Seer (Lv10) 9-18

Magic Armor (Lv10) Used it on Chapter 12-28 (Acquired on 11-20)

● Specialty Skill (110p)

Condemnation (——) 2-6

Questioning (Lv10) 3-4 Went UP from Lv5 => Lv10 on 9-6

Sex Technique (——) 4-10

Friendly Talk (——) 4-10

Temptation (——) 4-10

Enemy Search (Lv10) 6-3

Crisis Perception (Lv10) 6-3

Space Grasp (Lv10) 6-3

Distant View (Lv10) 6-32

Bird's Eye View (Lv10) 6-32

Telephoto (Lv10) 6-32

Night Vision (Lv10) 7-3

Light Intensity Adjustment (Lv10) 7-3

Pacification (——) 8-22

Survival (Lv10) 9-23

Coercion (Lv10) 10-29 ※It was not described「」 (——) 12-28 ※A skill that cannot be chosen

・Total Point Used: 1699 points (1421 remaining points) ※Main Character's level has become 312

●Title List

It's written as the chapter where the title is gotten, and then the title.

1-2　Demon Slayer

1-2　Scalekin Slayer

1-2 Calamity of Scalekin

1-2　Natural Enemy of Scalekin

1-2 Wyvern Slayer

1-2 Dragon Slayer [Lesser]

1-2 Dragon Slayer [Infant Dragon]

1-2 Dragon Slayer [Mature Dragon]

1-2 Dragon Slayer [Elder Dragon]

1-2　Dragon Slayer [※Peculiar Name※]　 ※Omitted since there are a lot 1-2 Natural Enemy of Dragonkin

1-2 God Slayer

1-4 Ardent Believer

1-10 Combat Ready

1-10 Skilled Warrior

1-10 One who Dances with Demon

1-10 Hero

2-1 One who Pray for the Dead

2-1 One who Saves

2-1 One who Protect Books

2-7 Labyrinth Explorer

2-8 Insect Slayer

2-9 Tamer

2-12 Undead Slayer

2-12 Demon Slayer

3-8 One who Traverses Labyrinth

5-12 Undead King Slayer

5-12 One who Traverses Maze

5-13 Survivor

5-15 Elf's Friend

6-3 Blacksmith of Magic Spear

6-5 Bounty Hunter

6-7 Magician of Dining Table

6-22 Doctor

6-22 Healer

6-22 Saint

6-22 Ham Actor

6-22 Clown

7-4 Blacksmith of Fairy Sword

7-4 Hard Drinker

7-4 Heavy Drinker

7-4 Heavyweight Drinker

7-4 Friend of Dwarf

7-7 Magic Blacksmith

7-7 One who Flies Without Wing

7-22 Demon Lord Slayer

7-22 Demon Lord Slayer [Golden Wild Boar King]

7-22 True Hero

7-22 Unsung Hero

8-14 Magic Sword Blacksmith

8-14 Magic Weapon Blacksmith

8-19 Great Monstrous Fish Slayer

8-19 Illusionist

8-19 Light Art User

8-19 Sky Chef

8-21 Holy Sword Blacksmith

8-21 Counterfeit Artist

8-23 Sword Dancer

Intermission Friend of Orc ※Intermission: Orc Alchemist

9-4 Tribune

9-4 Condemner

9-11 Friend of Black Dragon

9-11 Mountain Crusher

9-11 Hearty Eater

9-11 Big Eater

9-11 Savior

9-11 Worshiped One

9-13 Guest of Forest

9-13 Lover of the Forest Maiden

9-26 Sky Deer Rider

9-31 Fast One

9-31 Conqueror of the Sky

10-29 Natural Enemy of Lost Thief 10-29 Guardian of Order

10-49 Demon Lord Slayer『Dog-head Ancient King』

10-49 Favorite Child of Goddess

10-49 Earth-splitting Magician

10-49 Sky-tearing Magician

11-7 Rescuer

11-7 Fugitive

11-17 Dragon Tamer

11-17 Dragoon

12-28 God Spirit

12-28 One who Violate the Taboo

12-28 Torture King

12-28 Sadist

12-28 Natural Enemy of Heavenly Dragons

13-1. Ascending Peerage

Satou's here. In order to escape the predicament, the main character unleashes their hidden ability, that kind of method appears often in tales. However, it seems that it won't go that well in reality.

◇

At the opening day of the Kingdom Conference, we have gathered in the great audience hall in order to participate in the [Great Audience Ceremony].

It seems today is the time in which people are conferred and raised peerage, and posts such as cabinet minister are announced.

Although it's called Kingdom Conference, they're not doing anything resembling conference in the opening day.

Today it's not only Satou who's going to participate in the [Great Audience Ceremony], Nanashi is too.

Nanashi is only going to appear for about 10 minutes, but even during that time, Satou cannot not present in the ceremony.

It's slightly troublesome, but I should be able to manage it somehow.

The great audience hall we're in is unlike other audience hall I've seen so far that are rectangular shaped, this one is fan-shaped.

I wonder if it's like a concert hall or a ceremonial hall?

More than 1000 nobles are lined up in the great audience hall that's slightly dark.

Even with this many people, the great audience hall is large enough for it not to feel cramped.

The king's throne is on the highest place, behind it there are some thin glass tube objects that look like neon tubes that are extended to the ceiling.

And then, once the music starts to flow in low volume, the objects begin to be clad in light.

"His Majesty the King, entering."

The high-ranking official working as the host announces that the king is entering, and then when the king sits on his throne, the objects shine, while the object's unseen orchestra starts playing a solemn tune.

The play is probably for enhancing the king's authority.

--Now then, since the surrounding's line of sights have gathered on the throne, I'll change to Nanashi.

Next moment, I'm already in the royal castle's waiting room.

Through my [Special Ability], the [Unit Arrangement], that I haven't been able to use until now.

For some reason, I've become able to use this after the disturbance from before was over.

If we talk about the reason, I can only think two things, either it's because I defeated 'gods' or because I wore the Divine Sword's power.

Unfortunately, [Unit Creation] is still unusable.

With this [Unit Arrangement], I can freely move my team unit in my home ground.

Moreover, it's without using magic power.

Truly a cheat ability.

Right now, the places recognized as home ground are only the mansions I own, Dragon Valley, Muno City, Boruenan Countryside, Labyrinth City, Duchy Capital, and Royal Capital.

Now then, the chamberlain is approaching from the other side of the door.

I'll think of this area with [Unit Arrangement].

Further, the place where I should have been was arranged with Satou's doll at the same time when I moved here. Of course I've changed the positions with [Unit Arrangement].

The inside of this Satou doll is an automatic skeletal golem wearing disguise suit I've made in the [Mansion of Ivy] in the Labyrinth City before.

It can't hold a conversation nor fight, but its gesture traces are perfect so there's no problem as a short-time substitute.

It's specialized in camouflage, so it doesn't seem like anyone can distinguish it as a doll from the real person as long as they don't have Arisa's level of [Persona Appraisal].

I've confirmed it by testing Kuro doll with an appraiser advisor contracted by Echigoya firm.

Now then, I, who have changed into golden armored hero Nanashi with [QuickDress] skill, is guided by the chamberlain to the great audience hall.

"Introducing, the hero who saved our kingdom from crisis--Hero Nanashi."

While being lighted by spotlight from light magic, I step forward next to the king.

Since I've returned holy sword Claiomh Solais to Mito, I'm armed with the fake made from Orichalcum metal.

The nobles' line of sights concentrate on me.

I stand before the king and with my back on the nobles, I take off my helmet and kneel.

I've used a newly made white mask for the face, but the nobles shouldn't have seen it.

"Hero Nanashi, the people of our kingdom have been saved by you. Extolling your achievement, we will grant you the house name of Mitsukuni and the peerage of dukedom."

"I respectfully receive."

The king looks like he has a bit of a hard time, but he can't exactly act the way he usually does in front of other nobles.

Before long, the king's body is wrapped in white phosphoresce.

"■■ Conferring Peerage"

I'm wrapped with floating light particles as the king chants the spell.

>Title [Duke of Shiga Kingdom] Acquired

>Rank [Noble (Duke)] Acquired

I update the status in the Exchange column since it doesn't automatically change.

I put the golden helmet again and turn back toward the nobles.

Heroic music plays from the orchestra in good timing as the illumination on the back darken as it has been prepared in advance.

I take out the imitation holy sword and put magic power into it, showing off the blue light toward the great audience hall.

"My name is Nanashi. The sword that defeats demons. I do not mingle in quarrels between men. When men fight against powerful demons beyond their capacities, call my name. I will go toward that land and destroy the demon--"

The speech is in accordance to Shiga Kingdom ceremonial courtesy, but coming out of my own mouth, it sounds like what a chuunibyou would say, damaging me with plain mental damage.

Finishing the five minutes speech, hero Nanashi will now leave this place.

"--Then, I will go to the land where I'm needed."

I float slowly with Sky Drive toward the top of the great audience hall.

After rising enough, I make the 30-meter long airship I've left floating in the royal castle's courtyard to appear in the room.

Noise appear from the nobles who are surprised.

"Ooh, is that the Jules Verne?"

"The same model of ship as Saga Empire hero's ship huh!"

I heard such voices from the nobles.

The first voice was of Baron Muno.

The outer shell of my airship is made in Boruenan just like the hero's ship, so it's only natural.

While floating, I board the airship, and after a short pause, I teleport together with the airship to the royal castle's courtyard using [Unit Arrangement].

Now then, Nanashi's turn is over.

I start the airship's auto-pilot, and make it so that it'll go toward the duchy capital area after flying a lap around the royal capital.

I slow its speed to be only as fast as a horse's, and instruct the automatic skeletal golems equipped with golden armors to wave their hands toward the royal capital's people while standing in the opened observatory room at the bow.

With this, people who think that we are the same people as them should be decreased now.

After all, the royal capital's people witness hero Nanashi and the golden knights parading around while we are participating in the ceremony.

Once I've finished the series of preparation, I use [Unit Arrangement] to go back to the great audience hall. Of course, I've changed back the Exchange column and my clothes.

I would have pushed Nanashi's role to Mito if she were in the royal capital, but it seems she's in the Fujisan mountains along with the Heavenly Dragon.

◇

"Lord Leon Muno. I elevate you to the rank of Earldom."

"I respectfully accept."

Continuing the new year ceremony, Baron Muno underwent peerage raising ceremony.

After an exchange in Shiga Kingdom Language, the king who's holding the Royal Scepter chants a spell.

"■■ Convert Peerage"

I've never heard that command word before.

When the king finishes chanting, ring of light appear around Baron Muno and the king, then infinite symbol-like shapes are formed on the outer circumference.

The ring of light illuminates the surrounding for a while.

Before long the ring of light is disappearing to the sky and the ground.

And then, Baron Muno's title and rank have been changed to [Earl] when the light subsides.

Since the ceremony is over, Earl Muno bows to the king and gets back to his seat.

There's no applause or cheer, I wonder if that's the rule. Though it's not like it's because of it, the orchestra starts to play a solemn but rousing tune.

Next, the eldest son of old Earl Lesseu undergoes the [Succession to Peerage] ceremony and becomes the new Earl Lesseu.

"Chevalier Satou Pendragon, to be present."

Since I got called by the facilitator official, I stand up from my seat.

I thought that they were going to call it in turn by the ranking, but I got called earlier than Jeril who holds Baronet rank.

I kneel in front of the king while having a slight unpleasant premonition.

"I elevate Chevalier Satou Pendragon to the rank of viscountcy."

....Wait.

Wasn't it decided that I would be raised to merely either honorary baron or baronet?

The difference between a generation-long honorary noble to a permanent viscount is like the difference between a president of a neighborhood association to a diet member y'know?

The king begins the spell without confirming me like he did with Nanashi and Earl Muno.

"■■ Convert Peerage"

I'm wrapped with particles of light with the king's spell.

The effect is different compared to the earls' earlier.

>Title [Viscount of Shiga Kingdom] Acquired

>Rank [Noble (Viscount)] Acquired

I'm not the only one who's surprised, booing and noise come from the nobles regardless of lower and upper ranked ones.

When I look closely, the booing come from the protégés and family of Duke Bishtal.

I understand how you guys feel but please complain about it to the king instead.

◇

Following after Jeril who became a baron, many nobles also underwent the promotion ceremony.

"Retainer of Pendragon House, Liza."

Next is the turn for the [Ennoblement] of the Mithril Explorers.

Liza is the very first, probably because she's won against a Shiga Eight Swords.

Liza who's chosen to wear knight clothes today walks toward the king with nervous expression on her face.

"Slave of Pendragon House, Liza, I confer you the peerage of Honorary Baroness of Kishresgalza."

--Honorary Baroness?

"■■ Conferring Peerage"

Once the king's spell ends, Liza's name changes into [Liza Kishresgalza].

Kishresgalza is the name of Liza's tribe. And then her titles of [Satou's

Slave] and the rank [Slave] have disappeared, and the titles [Retainer of Pendragon], [Baroness of Shiga Kingdom] and the rank [Noble (Baroness)] have appeared.

"Baroness Liza Kishresgalza, use your peerless spearmanship to protect the people."

"At your will."

The king said different lines than the obligatory ones for the first time.

Continuing on, Nana, Lulu, Arisa, Tama, and Pochi are conferred [Honorary Chevalier] rank.

However, Arisa's and Lulu's ranks remain [Slave].

Through Ms. Nina, I've told the thing about Arisa's and Lulu's [Geass] in advance, and we have been recognized as a special case.

Normally everyone would have been declined the [Ennoblement], but since there was the case with Liza, we were given this special exception.

According to the prime minister's information, the only people who have [Geass] skill are the emperor of weaselkin empire, and the magi of the western kingdom who's called [Dark Sage].

Once I've gotten the Chant orb, I'm thinking of going to either of the country to get the [Geass] skill.

Another way is with the pope of Holy Kingdom Parion, the so-called Zazaris person, his ceremonial magic [Wish] seems like it could release the [Geass], but since this magic's compensation seems to be big, it's going to be the last resort.

In addition, due to the elven law, Mia cannot become a noble of foreign countries, so she's declined the Ennoblement.

Just being an elf gets you to be treated like a state guest though, so the person herself doesn't seem to mind it.

◇

Once the elevation and conferment ceremony is over, the nobles who are going to be demoted and get their peerage stripped are announced.

The noble who hid the [Light of Liberty] members and the other nobles who helped him are going to be executed along with their families.

Children who are 10 years old and younger are not to be executed, they're going to be sent to the monastery on Fujisan mountain foot.

Next, they announce the shuffle and addition of official positions.

The prime minister is to hold another position, that is the minister of [Ministry of Tourism].

No matter how I think about it, it's blatantly obvious that it's a front for the prime minister's spy network, on top of it overlapping with the [Ministry of Foreign Affair].

Among the candidates of Shiga Eight Swords, only Jeril is chosen.

The remaining two don't seem to be qualified. There are an axe-user and a shield-user whose levels are close to Jeril among the Mithril

Explorers, I'll recommend them before my turn comes.

Lastly the king himself announces that the second and third large-scale warships are going into commission within this year, and the current warship that's already in commission is going to go on patrols to every internal territory, and each regional lords will be loaned a small airship.

Those airships are probably using the aerodynamic engines I gave them as Nanashi.

The magic furnace's fuel consumption is bad so the cost of service is expensive, it shouldn't revolutionize distribution that could catch the gods' attention.

The demand for magic cores which are the fuel for the magic furnace is going to increase, I have a hunch that more people would come to the Labyrinth City and Seryuu city.

In addition, the magic furnace occupies a lot of space in the small airship, so its load capacity is only as good as one carriage.

The small airships are only usable for the lords and governors, yet cheer still come from the territory lords.

Thus the new year's great audience ceremony is over, and the king does a broadcast through [Communique] Space.

There were these words in it.

"--thanks to Hero Duke Nanashi Mitsukuni and the Order of Golden Knights who saved the royal capital from the demon--"

Apparently they call us the [Order of Golden Knights] in the official papers.

I pray in my heart that there will be no event that would require us to appear again in the royal capital.

◇

From tomorrow on, Kingdom Conference will be held for four days until the fifth day of January.

The lower nobles can chose to only participate in the new year ceremony, but as someone who has been conferred the rank of the lowest seat of the upper nobility, I'm also stuck to take part for four days.

"Still, it would have been nice if Master told us beforehand that you'd become a viscount."

"I too only knew about it during the actual thing you see."

Geez, it's terrible even for a kingdom where the rulers rule the bottom.

Perhaps it was someone's plan since they knew I would have refused had I known.

Well, I guess there's no use crying over spilled milk.

It's not like I can decline now.

I exchange words with Arisa like that while everyone is in kotatsu, enjoying the new year dish made by Lulu.

Arisa's family name as a noble is Tachibana.

Previously, Ms. Nina had told us that Chevalier Tachibana existed, but when we checked the list of nobles in the royal castle, she had mistaken it with Chevalier Tachivana, so Arisa was able to use her former family name without problem.

By the way, Pochi's and Tama's family names are the same as Liza's. At first, the girls said that they wanted Pendragon family name, but Arisa bewildered them by saying, "It's worth it when your family name changes to Pendragon when you're getting married right?", so each chose a different house name.

Lulu inherited the family name of her ancestor Japanese, 'Watari', Nana inherited 'Nagasaki' from her previous master, Zen.

"Master, please try eating this one too."

"Thank you. Lulu's new year dish is a bit unusual, but it's very delicious."

I tell my thought about Lulu's new year dish.

"--Unusual?"

"Yeah, there's no fish and prawn surimi in the datemaki, and the kurikinton is entirely made of chestnuts, they're different from the recipes of my hometown."

When I pointed out the unusual parts in murmur to Arisa, her expression becomes bitter like she's feeling full of "I've been had."

Apparently, she used vague recipe for Lulu to make.

"U, um, I'll make it again!"

"Sorry, sorry. My way of speaking was bad. The flavor isn't the same with the one I know, but it tastes better than the new year dish I know."

I said more to hold back Lulu who had stood up.

"Yummymy~?"

"Lulu's dish is tasty nodesu!"

"N, tasty."

Tama, Pochi, and Mia also agree with me.

Their favorites are; the sea bream served whole for Tama, fried prawns for Pochi, and Kurikinton for Mia.

"The recipes for the new year dish differ in each region, so it's fine to think of this as the royal capita-style new year dish you know?"

"That's right Lulu. This boudara is quite chewy, it's delicious."

Smiles return Lulu's face with mine and Liza's words.

When the meal is over, everyone is relaxing on the kotatsu.

Tama is peeling and eating chestnuts while sitting on my lap, Mia is feeding me a bunch of peeled oranges.

--Ah, how peaceful.

Pink color from lipstick is adorned on the lips of Lulu who's dressed up as if she's proud of it

I sent word of praises many times to Lulu today, enjoying her beauty dyed in red. The smile of a bashful beautiful girl can really become a habit.

I'm enjoying the peaceful dinner with everyone, restoring my energy for tomorrow.

Now then, I'll work vigorously again tomorrow!

13-2. New Year Works

Satou's here. There were many times where I had to go to work during the last day of the year once I became a working adult, but made sure to wrestle the day off during the new year's day. You have to relish the feeling of new year for at least the morning of the new year's day after all.

◇

"--That is all, keep selling our products to procure cash until the time of the auction after the Kingdom Conference. Tell the nobles with no money that we can discuss to sell them things with credit by next month."

"Understood."

After putting the children to sleep, I went to Echigoya Firm and reaffirmed the direction and policy for the new year.

The people who have gathered on the top floor of the main building of Echigoya Firm are former noble daughter explorers who manage the firm including the Manager, Porina and other the workshop managers, and also Kuro's slaves, Nell and Tifaliza, six people in total.

"Kuro-sama several letters have come from nobles who are impressed with Nanashi-sama's recent endeavor, they wish to personally meet. There are letters from the three dukes and the eight marquises which require fast responses among them--"

"I won't meet them. I entrust it to Manager. Tell them that I'm going to another country with my master, Nanashi-sama."

"Certainly. As for the order of the visitations--"

"I'll leave it to you."

Manager solemnly nods without a trace of displeasure on her face even though I've left it all to her.

This girl is well-versed in the power balance of lineage nobles and negotiations, so she's more reliable in annoying negotiations than me.

"Kuro-sama, we are lacking employees for accounting and paperworks in the secret division. In addition, there have been more spies trying to intrude the residence, so I would like to request the increase of personnels that can deal with it...."

"Okay. I permit you to hire more. I'd leave it to Manager for the selection and the wages. Report only the summary to me."

"Thank you very much for your trust. However, since it's a secret division, I am thinking of buying knowledgeable slaves instead of employees."

Fumu, slaves huh.

I look up the inventory of the slave traders on the map.

It seems there are enough people in the slave trader where I bought Nell and Tifaliza.

There were many noble houses who were stripped off their peerages for the crime of treason, so maybe the retainers of those houses were sold as crime slaves.

"Very well, I permit the slave buying. Bill the payment for the end of the month."

"There is no problem with the payment, but we cannot establish master-servant contracts if Kuro-sama doesn't go yourself."

"You be the master."

"Is it alright for me to?"

I'm planning to use use Echigoya Firm's budget to buy them anyway, so there's no problem and I affirm her.

"Lastly, there's a request for our cooperation in the revival of the royal capital from the prime minister."

"--Cooperation?"

"Yes, although they said cooperation, it is about ordering raw materials from Echigoya Firm."

I look at the document presented by Tifaliza who's beside Manager.

The price in the contract is five times the market price so it's quite nice, but the time limit is very limited.

"Very well, accept it."

"Kuro-sama, concerning--"

Manager told me that acquiring the raw materials would be difficult even for five times the market price since there are currently a rush for building material-buying around the royal capital.

"No problem. Order the material from the Duchy Capital, Muno territory, and Kuhanou territory."

"However, then the cost for carrying them would..."

"Have you forgotten Manager?"

There's no problem if I just carry them myself.

I can probably secure them at 20% the market price if I buy them on-site.

It shouldn't be laborious if I just have the local merchants to get the materials ready.

Once the work talk is over, we're having a new year banquet.

With Manager's instruction, the luxurious dishes and liquor prepared in downstairs are lined up on the huge table in the strategy meeting room.

--Right, I have to tell them one more thing before they all get drunk.

"Everyone, listen. Tomorrow night, I'm giving you a special duty after the night time."

The night time is around six hours after the sunset.

After confirming that everyone has heard me, I continue.

"It'll be over in a moment, but there's a high possibility that you won't be able to work afterward. Finish the work for that day beforehand."

Compared to the noise when I told them about [Special duty] at first, the room fell silent now.

I thought that there would be some complaints since they'd be getting late-night works so soon in the new year, but the atmosphere doesn't seem to be that. If anything, it seems favorable.

Good grief, you guys are too workaholic.

Manager asked me which clothes would be good for it, so I told her to wear whatever she likes.

Not like clothes would affect much during works, she sure asks some strange things.

At that time, a blue luminous point is reflected on the radar. In front of Pendragon mansion's house.

I tell everyone that I'm going to leave early since some business came up, and come back to Pendragon Mansion with [Unit Arrangement].

I realized that I had forgotten to tell the important point, "I'm taking the management-level people to the labyrinth for leveling", but since there's no danger for them anyway, telling them at the appointed day should be fine.

◇

"Master, there is a guest."

"Ah, Lulu. Sorry for waking you up."

I change to my own clothes with Quick-Dress after getting back to my private room.

Everyone has woken up from the knocker's sound from the entrance hall, but I tell them that they may sleep, and then I go downstairs while taking only Lulu and Liza along.

When I opened the entrance, soft light of golden hair entered my view.

"Sa-Satou-san! I-I'm glad that you're alright."

Zena-san who should've been in the Labyrinth City hugs me.

While hugging me with trembling hands, she keeps repeating, "I'm glad. I'm really glad." with tearful voice.

Behind her are Lilio and the other two girls from Zena Squad. Apparently, they rode on several horses, both the girls and the horses are breathing feebly.

'Burun', I heard some familiar snort, so when I look at the horses, there are two carriage horses with dignity among the war horses and the passenger horses.

They're Gii and Darii that we left in the labyrinth city's mansion.

When I look closer, the other horses are also the horses from our mansion. Ms. Miteruna who's house-sitting the mansion probably lent them.

"Yes, please don't worry. None of our girls is hurt either. Now, everyone, you must be tired. I'll prepare the guest rooms, so please wipe your sweat and relax."

"I'll prepare the guest rooms immediately."

"Then I will take the horses to the stable."

Reacting to my words, Lulu and Liza start to act before I order them.

I invite the three people of Zena Squad while soothing Zena-san who's crying while still hugging me.

"It seemed to be terrible, but there was no victim around this area huh."

"Yes, fortune blessed us."

I guide the four to the parlor while answering Ms. Iona.

"Did a demon lord come out maybe?"

"No, it was just a round pink-colored greater demon and a lot of monsters."

"--Greater?!"

When I answered the joking Lilio honestly, beside her, Zena-san who was drinking Lulu's tea turned her head as if she was going to jump.

"Ah, you don't need to worry. They were all defeated by Hero Nanashi-sama, and his Order of Golden Knights. We couldn't get a turn to come out at all."

"What a relief...."

According to Zena Squad, a priest who was training together with them in the labyrinth city suddenly received an oracle that conveyed about the crisis in the royal capital.

"Geez, stopping Zena-chi who suddenly used magic, going to run was hard you see."

"Mo-mou, Lilio! I even said so much to keep it a secret!"

You can certainly run faster than a horse with [Wind Walk] of the wind magic, but the muscle fatigue from using it is furious, so it's not suited for marathon-like long range.

"And then we asked Miteruna-dono on our accord to borrow the mansion horses and intruded everyone upon them. We forcibly and unreasonably borrowed the horses, so please I would ask your tolerance for Miteruna-dono."

"It's alright. I've given that much discretion to her."

Miss Iona apologized for Ms. Miteruna's judgment, but since there's no particular problem about it, I smile back.

Lulu come in to tell that the rooms have been prepared, so I let the girls whose stamina gauges are about to dry up to sleep.

"Zena-chi can sleep with the boy you know?"

"Mou! Stupid Lilio!"

My bed is wide, so adding only Zena-san is not a problem, but since everyone would be together, ero-things like Lilio's imagined won't happen you know.

Before parting with the girls in front of the parlor, I tell Zena-san, "Thank you for worrying about me."

◇

"Eh? You're attending the Kingdom Conference?"

"Yes, I was elevated to Viscountcy during the『Great Audience Ceremony』yesterday, so I'm obliged to attend the conference."

I apologize to Zena-san and the others who are eating breakfast together with us for not being able to accompany them touring the royal capital.

I guess it can't be helped for Zena-san to mutter, "V-viscount?!" while her face is hardening. Even though I had become a honorary knight when we reunited in the labyrinth city, I jumped up three ranks to a viscount when we reunited again in the royal capital.

I wait for Zena-san to calm down and then continue the talk.

The girls intended to immediately return to the labyrinth city after confirming my safety, but since the horses need two days to rest, they're going to tour the royal capital with Ms. Lilio and Ms. Ruu recommendation.

In public, it's to be an [Inspection].

"Then maybe I should ask Liza to guide you?"

"Yes, certainly. Zena-sama, I am unfit to be Master's replacement, but I will guide you with utmost sincerity."

"Please, I'm sorry to trouble you."

Liza readily consents my request, she's going to guide Zena-san and the others.

"Getting a honorary baroness to guide you sure is luxurious~"

"Hey, Arisa."

Reproving voice of Lulu toward Arisa's teasing words echoes in the dining room.

"Honorary baroness?"

"Yes, I was given the peerage yesterday."

Liza solemnly answers Zena-san who's surprised.

"No way! A lizardkin is a noble?!"

"Is it because she's a mithril explorer?"

"Tsk, tsk, tsk, Liza-san's achievement is not just that~"

Arisa replied the slightly rude Ms. Lilio and the plainly surprised Ms. Ruu with bragging.

"You see! She defeated that living legend, Zeff Julberg the『Unfalling』of Shiga Eight Swords!"

"Amazing!"

"Y-you serious?"

"Shiga Eight Swords is the strongest group of knights in Shiga Kingdom right?"

"I can't simply believe that being brought up suddenly, but if that's the truth, I can understand how she was given Honorary Baroness peerage."

The girls of Zena squad each reacted differently to Arisa's exaggerated remark.

It was only Zena-san who frankly commended back.

"Moreover, she declined the invitation to become a Shiga Eight Swords, and chose to be Master's retainer you know~"

Arisa sticks out her flat chest.

Lastly, she told them, "All of us have also become 『Honorary Chevaliers』 you see!", but Liza's impact was too great, their reaction were only like, "Hm~m."

I call out to Arisa to change the topic.

"Arisa, sorry but can you attend the Royal Academy until we go back to the Labyrinth city from now on?"

Actually I was to go to the royal academy myself to check the content of the lesson and head-hunting people, but since I couldn't go due to the Kingdom Conference, I thought of having Arisa as my substitute.

--However, Arisa's reaction is slightly different from my expectation.

"Awright! It's the school arc isn't it! Breaking into the school arc, in the armed battle meet, the labyrinth explorers and the triumvirate! Wooooo, I'm boilinggg!"

"Arisa, bad manners!"

Lulu scolds Arisa who stands up on her chair.

"Can't be helped nya~"

"We're in front of the guests you know?"

"Please forgive."

Arisa who's in reflecting pose is being scolded by Lulu in low voice.

"School~?"

"Training school nanodesu?"

"I guess it's similar. There are classes for literature, and magic besides about the labyrinth. Does everyone want to go too?"

"Going~"

"I want to go nodesu!"

"Yes!"

"I want."

Only four people replied energetically, Tama Pochi, Shiro, and Crow.

If Shiro and Crow go, then Nana has to go as their guardian, but I wonder how about Lulu and Mia?

"I have been given a letter of invitation from the chefs of royal castle, so I am thinking of visiting there."

Come to think of it, Lulu and the royal castle's chefs did some kind of cooking battle during the end-of-year evening party didn't they.

I'm worried to let Lulu go by herself.

"Nana, sorry but could you go with Lulu as her guard?"

"Accepted Master's order."

Nana easily nodded, so I check Mia's plan.

"Mia, what are you going to do?"

"Go."

Mia had a difficult face, but she decided to go to the royal academy together with Arisa and the others since being alone in the mansion would be meaningless.

◇

I ride with the four people of Zena Squad in the carriage going for the castle, and go toward the mansion of Earl Seryuu in the royal capital.

As expected, they can't exactly not check on Earl Seryuu's safety when they've come to the royal capital and all.

When we were telling the guards the purpose of our visit, just right at that time, a carriage carrying Earl Seryuu's party going to the royal castle came.

Zena-san and the others get down the carriage, and kneel beside the carriage of Earl Seryuu.

"Zena of Marientail house huh. I remember seeing the girls behind too."

"We have come rushing to the royal capital from the labyrinth city after hearing the disaster that happened here."

Zena-san nervously replied Earl Seryuu.

"Umu, good works."

The Earl roughly replied with appreciation and turns his view toward me.

"Then, any reason you were coming from Sir Pendragon's carriage?"

The Earl is asking Zena-san but his inquisitive line of sights are turned toward me.

Right at that, another carriage came from the mansion.

"Earl-sama, is there any problem?"

A past-thirty year-old noble with red hair comes down the carriage.

The nobleman smiles broadly when his eyes meet mine.

"Ooh, isn't it Satou-dono?!"

"Viscount Belton-sama, it has been a while."

He was the noble I saved from being eaten by spiders during the disturbance of Seryuu City's Labyrinth.

"Belton, are you two acquainted?"

"Yes, he's the benefactor who saved me and my daughter from peril in the labyrinth."

"Hou? I did not receive any report pertaining a retainer of Earl Muno being involved in the case from before...."

The earl strokes his beard as if going back his memory.

"Does Satou-dono serves Earl Muno?"

"Yes, there were some fate. I was appointed to be a honorary chevalier by Earl Muno after the incident."

"Hou, isn't that quite good!"

Viscount Belton misunderstands and claps my shoulder, bang bang, congratulating me.

This person should be a magician, but his way of rejoicing things is like a knight or a warrior. I wonder if people who use fire magic are all hearty?

"Don't be mistaken Belton. Sir Pendragon was elevated yesterday, he's a viscount like you now."

"W-what?!"

The viscount leaks out voice of surprise when the earl corrects him.

Apparently, he didn't connect that Sir Pendragon and Satou were the same person. Well, there was no way he'd thought that the peddler he knew would become a Mithril explorer.

"Master, we should go soon."

"Umu, right."

A butler-like old man who's in the same carriage as the earl warns the earl while holding a watch magic tool in one hand.

"People of Zena Squad. In light of your loyalty, I will not question the matter about you leaving your post without permission. I will provide rooms in the mansion. Relax yourself for a while before returning to the labyrinth city."

"Yes, we wish to express our gratitude."

Army-mode Zena-san sure is gallant.

Since the Earl and Viscount Belton went to the royal castle, I also went there after leaving Zena-san and the others in Earl Seryuu's mansion.

After the carriage takes me to the castle, it will go back to carry Zena-san and the others back to Pendragon Mansion where Liza is waiting.

Today's Kingdom Conference--

It's over after the selection for the people in charge of Royal Capital's revival, and the report from the three order of knights departing to go to war with Bishtal Dukedom.

There were some three-hour recesses, but at that time, a lot of nobles came to promote their daughters and daughters of their family, so I was annoyed.

The nobles who did so weren't only upper-class ones who attend the kingdom conference, but also lower-class nobles who purposely came to the conference for that sake.

Nobles from the faction of Marquis Lloyd and Earl Houen protected me during the second recess, so it was peaceful, but they came asking which dishes I was going to bring out in the cooking contest with excited faces, so I couldn't get some rest after all.

I'm thinking of doing a banquet in the guest house where Earl Muno is staying once, in order to change their target.

As expected, Pendragon Mansion is too small to invite upper nobles.

13-3. Royal Academy

This time it's in Arisa's point of view.

"Pleased to meet you Chevalier Tachibana. I am the principal of the Royal Academy, Litou Maiya."

A dignified old woman greeted me from the other side of her work desk.

I've visited the Royal Academy in the Noble Street while taking the children along.

Her name seems strange to be of Shiga Kingdom.

I think the name is one that's often found on the western part of the continent.

I pass the letter that has been given by my beloved Master to the principal.

The letter of introduction was from Duke Oyugock so I had thought that there would be no obstacles, but I never thought we would meet face-to-face suddenly.

"I'm told that you will be entering our academy, but is it not just you, but also the children behind you?"

The principal raises her eyebrows when she sees the children behind me.

"Our academy requires students to be able to read and write, and do basic arithmetic in order to be enrolled here. Even if the recommendation comes from Duke-sama, if they don't have that much scholarly ability...."

"Tama, can do arithmatic and read and write too~?"

"Pochi too, she writes novels and she can perfectly calculate nanodesu."

"Me too~"

"I can do it too."

Tama, Pochi, Shiro and Crow answered the principal in turns.

It seems Mia isn't interested with the conversation, she's absorbed looking at the painting on the wall.

"Is it the same with the person over there?"

"Mwu?"

Mia who's been called turns her head, and her hood falls back down from the inertia of her twintails.

"E-elf-sama?! Are you perhaps an Elf-sama from Boruenan Forest?"

"Nn, Mia."

Mia nods toward the principal who's bent her body forward the desk in surprise.

The nobles we met for the past two days were all courteous but they acted normally, this person must be an elf-lover, no doubt bout it.

Along with Mia, we were able to enroll at the Royal Academy without problem.

◇

"--In the same way, there are various subjects other than the basic in our academy. Which subject do you wish to attend?"

Summarizing the principal's long explanation, this academy has six main schools; high-grade school, noble school, maiden school, knight school, magic school, and childhood school, along with 12 subjects.

It'll be a different story if we stay in the Royal Capital as permanent residents, but since we're only enrolling for a limited time, we decide to intrude upon three schools after consulting with her.

It's decided that Mia and me would be in the magic school, Pochi and Tama in the knight school, and Shiro and Crow to be in the childhood school.

I thought of enrolling into the maiden school for bridal training, or the high-grade school to study political science and economics, but my interest lies on the place where I can research magic after all.

Since our cheat Master can create a kingdom or an empire on his own if he wants, studying territory management and how to become an emperor are probably better, but I didn't go through it since doing it during limited enrollment would be half-baked.

Throwing Pochi and Tama alone to the knight school felt like some kind of flag, so I had decided to accompany them on the first day.

I should consult with Master tomorrow.

◇

I take Pochi and Tama along to the knight school guided by a teacher.

Only people who are recommended by nobles can enroll to this place.

"I'm sorry, but just in case, please do a simple test."

"Aye!"

"Pochi is good with test nanodesu!"

"What kind of test is it?"

I ask the muscle teacher.

"It's a simple thing for someone who aspires to become a knight. Simply take a sword and do practice-swinging with it. Please try swinging it ten ti--me?!"

Swoosh swoosh, Pochi and Tama are swinging the swords at speed where the swords' tips can't be seen while sitting.

The teacher is so surprised his jaw looks like it'll fall off.

I tell the two to be prudent and receive Pochi's sword.

--Oh, it's unexpectedly heavy despite how it looks.

I wonder if the center of gravity is on the tip?

My stats have been increased to the level of a normal knight through level up, but it doesn't seem like I can keep my posture while swinging it.

I secretly use [Power Assist] magic chantlessly.

It's a sub-type of the higher [Physical Reinforcement] for spy-use that our Master has made.

I swing the sword like practice-swinging of kendo.

My tension gradually goes up whenever I swing the sword.

Swords sure have this mysterious charm that would likely make you shout "Wooooo" huh.

I understand well how the two felt just now.

"Alright, Dame Tachibana has passed too."

"Thank you."

I return the sword to the teacher with composed face.

Feels like I'll suffer muscular pain if I don't get some massage when we get back.

Oh right! I'll have Master massage me stickly.

Of course, I have to massage Master back once it's over!

Guhehehe, doing as I please to a shota's body huh.

I'm boiling~.

"Arisa~?"

"Face, nanodesu."

The two who are looking at me from below poke my lips.

Oops, not good, be prim and proper, prim and proper.

◇

"Tama Kishresgalza."

"Pochi Kishresgalza nanodesu!"

"I am Arisa Tachibana. Everyone, please get along well with us."

The classroom is full of kids.

I guess most are around 13 years old?

As expected of knight apprentices, all of the kids have bulking muscles even though they're baby-faced, there's no one who attracts my attention.

There are around 30 people, but there are only two girls. One of them is a delicate girl that looks like a young lady, looking out-of-place here, but the other one is a girl that's better build than boys.

The level differences are from 3 to 7. There are also non-standard kids whose levels are 11 and 15.

Most of the noble kids occupy the 7, thus they have relatively more skills.

Half have martial arts skills, and around 20% have magic skills.

"Fuhn, demi-humans and womens huh. Knight school's standard sure has fallen."

A handsome boy whose atmosphere feels like a young nobleman threw some template-like sarcasm.

And there's someone who reacts to that instantly.

"What did you say! Try saying it again. In the name of Kelten House, I challenge you to a duel!"

It's the delicate-looking girl from earlier.

Rather, why are you the one who's angry.

"Fighting is bad~"

"That's right nanodesu! We have to get along with each other nodesuyo. Bad nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi cut themselves between the two kids with Flickering Movement, flapping their hands to intermediate the two.

"....O, oy."

"Didn't these two just suddenly move?"

"Don't tell me, Flickering Movement?"

"Don't be stupid. If they can use Flickering Movement, they'll get scouted to the knight order instead of knight school."

The classmates lost their composures when they saw the two's transcendental-like techniques.

I looked at the muscle teacher thinking that he should quickly stop them, but he seems to find the students' independence interesting while folding his arms.

--Geez. How troublesome.

"Please leave it at that you two."

I arbitrate them in Tama's and Pochi's places as an adult myself.

"The young nobleman over there. I don't mind if you classify people by gender, but please stop discriminating them by it. Even women can be a master of wonderful swordsmanship like Ryouna-sama of Shiga Eight Swords."

I brought up the six-packs aunty from before against a kid who seems weak against authority like him so that he can't argue back.

Next, I turn toward the instantaneous-boiling young lady.

"We'd like to thank you the young lady of Sir Kelten for defending us."

This girl should have been rebuked for her own sake, but that's the job of the teacher.

Bringing that now would put her to shame, I can just point it out to her later when we're alone.

"R-Ryouna-sama is an exception! Men is stronger, and they excel in a fight! Aren't most of the Shiga Eight Swords men too!"

The boy took the wrong turn again, and bit back.

However, the one who replies him is the delicate girl.

"Ara, the one who broke Julberg-sama of that Shiga Eight Swords, 『Black Spear』 Liza-sama is a woman you know."

Pochi and Tama who heard words of praise for Liza-san begin to wear happy expressions on their faces.

"Liza strong~"

"That's right nanodesu. Liza is strong nodesu!"

"Wait, you girls! Add 'sama' honorific! That lady should have been conferred the rank of honorary earl equaling Shiga Eight Swords right about now."

The young lady scolds the two who praise Liza-san.

"Not that~?"

"It's not that nodesu."

"What do you mean by that!"

The two probably wanted to say that Liza-san had refused to become a Shiga Eight Swords, so she's not a honorary earl but a honorary baronetess, but it doesn't seem that they can convey it well.

"Please calm down. Liza Kishresgalza-sama has declined the invitation to become a Shiga Eight Swords. She has been given the rank of honorary baronetcy in the『Great Audience Ceremony』the other day."

"It's as if you've seen it firsthand--Kishresgalza?"

<TLN: TL mistake in earlier chapter, Liza is a Baronetess, not a Baroness.>

Oh, it seems she did hear Pochi's and Tama's introduction earlier.

"Yes, the three of us were present at the occasion. You might have noticed it, but these two are like little sisters to Kishresgalza-sama."

"....Liza-sama's little sisters?"

Geez, I'd likely bite my tongue if I don't get serious when I say Liza-san's family name.

The voice of the handsome boy whose existence was forgotten cuts in there.

"You girls, fight me! I'll apologize for my words earlier if I lose. Teacher, please the arrangement for the training center."

"Very well."

The muscle teacher nodded to the arrogant words of the boy, told everyone, "The first class is study by observation of the duel", and then guided the classmates to the training ground.

--Damn these muscle-brain bunch.

◇

"Now, come! The three of you can come at once."

The boy who's equipped with a shock-absorbing helmet and padding holds his wooden sword toward us and shouts.

There are five boys behind him scowling at us.

"Private Tama. I appoint you to be the vanguard."

"Roger~"

"Listen okay? Aim for the weapon. Mia is not here, so even if you make a mistake, don't hurt him okay."

"Aye aye sir~?"

I ask the dexterous Tama to finish it by destroying the opponent's weapon.

Of course with a low voice that can't be heard by the other party.

"To the front! Take your stance."

The boy holds the sword in knight style.

Tama is in natural posture.

"Begin!"

With the muscle teacher's signal, the boy stabs toward Tama while shouting.

That sure looks dangerous~. You'll get a big injury even with a wooden sword like that.

"Wooooooo!"

The boy's stab is sharp. His footworks is very fast it's hard to think it's the same boy.

The kids of the explorer training school can't be compared to him. I guess that's as expected of level 11.

--However, his opponent is just too bad.

"Tama is a captivating dancer~?"

Tama is evading the boy's stabs left and right with magnificent steps.

If it's Tama, she can probably do the same even against members of

Shiga Eight Swords.

"Tama, do your best nanodesu!"

"Aye~"

Answering Pochi's support, Tama round slices the boy's sword with her own wooden sword.

"Wha"

"Secret sword, round slices dance~?"

Tama who's run past boy takes a strange victory pose.

It seems the boy loses his strength from the excessively absurd technique that cut his wooden sword to slices, he's sitting on the spot.

"Winner, Tama."

The classmates cheer with the muscle teacher's declaration.

Only a single cynical-looking boy leaves the training center behind the classmates while smiling smugly like "Hmph". It's the level 15 boy.

He would have become the rival if this were a school story, but unfortunately, it's unasked for.

◇

The followers of the boy challenged us one by one afterward, but Tama and Pochi alternately hurled their weapons, taking the victory.

The muscle teacher asked us not to break the equipment, so they refrained from round slicing them.

After the followers had all fallen, the big girl challenged, and then it turned into something like a class match somehow.

"Next~?"

"It's Pochi's turn this time nanodesu!"

Pochi who's holding a wooden sword look toward the classmates with a happy face, but there's no one who challenges back.

The young lady and the first boy challenged three times each, but it was an easy victory.

"Alright, today's class is over."

Once the muscle teacher declares so, several people with ragged breathing beat the ground while looking frustrated.

Ah, the frustrated faces of boys are nice aren't they~.

Use this frustration to grow! I'm cheering on you!

"Everyone, you should now understand that there's someone even higher on the top right? However, do not be discouraged okay? These two are special. They're real explorers who have been risking their life in the labyrinth ever since they're small."

Apparently, muscle teacher made use of the occasion well.

Now the kids would probably be more diligent in their training with idealized image yet not getting ahead of themselves.

It's important to have a clear target after all.

But, with this the two should have been recognized and won't become the target of bullying, there are also several kids who look like they'll get along with the two too, so I won't complain.

In addition, the handsome boy who picked a quarrel with the two also apologized to the two properly.

Looking at his disorderly emotion while apologizing, I feel like it's enough to last me three meals.

Oh no~ I can't get enough of the school arc~

◇

"There are only strange dishes in that store, but they're mysteriously tasty."

"Sometimes they're bad tho'"

"But that mayo thing will absolutely become a habit ya' know?"

After the class is over, we were invited by the fourth son of a honorary chevalier, the big girl and a phanterkin boy to eat out.

....Still mayo huh. It stinks of a reincarnated or a teleported person.

Well, it's just like usual with the trouble though.

--Maybe because I'm thinking strangely like that, we encounter a strange scene.

"You dirty orphan, don't walk so brazenly in this place!"

"Souya-dono, please don't use violence. Shin is just doing chores in the school!"

"Don't mind me. Hit me if you want. I have to end my work quickly. Make it brief please."

The one doing the hitting is a slightly plump yet wastefully beautiful boy. With his black hair, if he's a bit thinner, his beauty would be comparable to Lulu.

His name is Asian-like, or rather, Japanese-like; Souya. He looks like a hero or a teleported person. His skill is only [Engraving]. 14 years old.

The one doing the protecting is our acquaintance.

It's the pink-haired princess of a small kingdom, Menea. She's not with her maids, probably because she's in the school. I think it's a bit too unsafe.

The boy who's getting hit is slim and has white hair, a handsome boy with a French-looking face. His name is Shin, like he's an earthling, but it's a name that's often found here in this world so it's probably unrelated.

His skill is only [One-handed Sword]. He's 14 years old just like the black-haired boy.

Still, it's a situation that would surely make you want to retort "You think this is shoujo manga!".

"Oy, it's His Highness again."

"That handyman really is often entangled with His Highness."

"He's probably upset to see the princess talking with the handyman."

"Ugly His Highness sure is persistent even though the princess hates him."

We heard such conversations from the upper classmen nearby.

Ugly His Highness? Perhaps that kid is also like Lulu, having aggregation of unfortunate parts?

"Fuhn, my hand is dirty now!"

The boy called His Highness arrogantly leaves while Princess Menea is scowling at him.

"Oh no! The blood--"

"It's alright. The handkerchief will get dirty."

Princess Menea who sees the blood flowing from the mouth of the boy who's been hit takes out a handkerchief and tries to wipe that blood with it.

The boy declines curtly and wipes it with his own hand.

--Kuh, what the heck is this shoujo manga space!

Is this the so-called "Note:Limited to good-looking men" thing.

Dammit, I should have been in that position since this is the school arc....

God why!

I curse at the love-comedy god in my heart.

Author's note:

Next time we'll be back with Satou's point of view. The second day of Royal Academy is planned after 2-3 episodes later.

●Profiles

【Menea】The third princess of a small kingdom, Rumooku. A pink-haired beautiful girl. 17 years old.

【Rumooku Kingdom】Once partnered with weaselkin to summon otherworld people.

【Kelten】A marquis with great influence in the army.

13-4. New Year Special Training

Satou's here. I sometimes wish to go back to my school days when I'm busy with works, but I feel like I'll give up if I really get back to my school days since I'd be running out of money then.

◇

"Welcome back Master."

"""Welcome back"""

Returning from the Kingdom Conference, I'm welcomed by the butler and the maids who are lined up on the entrance way as I got off the carriage.

It's like I'm a royalty or a noble--wait, I am a noble.

"Master, Marientail-sama and her friends have come to visit you."

"Okay. Are they in the parlor?"

"Yes."

"Then I guess I'll go greet them before changing my clothes."

When I said so, one of the maids went to the parlor as a herald.

These commuting employees are all strangely capable. It might be good to call several loli maids in the labyrinth city to let them learn here.

I enter the door that's been opened by the butler, and go toward the parlor where Zena-san and the others are waiting.

As expected, the room feels cramped with 15 people inside.

I briefly greet back with "I'm back" to our girls who welcome me.

It seems they had some fun in the Royal Academy, they all look gleaming.

"I'm sorry for disturbing you. Satou-san.... umm, I have to call you Viscount-sama now don't I."

"Please call me Satou like always when we're not in public."

I tell so to Zena-san who looks a bit lonely.

Even though it's only natural to differentiate between public and private matters, I don't really like to be treated distantly by a friend.

"--Is it alright?"

"Yes, please call me like you've always been."

"Yes!"

Zena-san replied with a smile that was like the sun.

As ever, Zena-san's expression when she's like this is quite nice.

"I'll change my clothes immediately, so let's have a meal together. Zena-san and her friends are eating with us right?"

"Um, that is..."

I thought that Zena-san and the others would naturally dine with us, but it seems they've been invited to a dinner with Earl Seryuu.

Looks like it's also for them to report their progress in Labyrinth City.

"That's unfortunate. You're going to stay in the royal capital for a while right? Then there will another chance. Tomorrow I'll make royal court dishes using a whole sakura salmon okay."

"Ro-royal court dishes! Please! I'm looking forward to it."

While having such conversations, I see Zena-san and the others off as they are going back to the Earl's mansion.

Lilio got some kind of parcel from Lulu. It seems to be an assortment of new year dish which the girls like.

◇

As for the dinner of that day, the royal court dishes which have been taught to Lulu in the royal castle are lined up on the dining table.

They're all luxurious dishes. There are some new year dishes leftover so it's kind of wasteful, but we can just eat them for breakfast tomorrow.

"--Pochi plucked it, then Pochi threw it, Pochi plucked it then Pochi threw it, it was a great success nodesu!"

"Tama too had great successes~?"

I'm listening to Pochi and Tama who are reporting about their peerless matches against their classmates of the knight school.

I asked Arisa with my eyes, "Did you let them hurt anyone?"

"Don't look at me with those eyes please. I had told to the two to only attack the weapons, so it was alright. There should be less challengers tomorrow, and the two understand how to hold back from their training with Pendora guys, so it's alright I said."

"It's alrite~"

"That's right nanodesu. Master (teacher) taught Pochi to go easy on weak people nodesu."

Oops, that's a problematic remark.

"Pochi, you must not say that your friends are『Weak people』okay."

"Pochi can't nanodesu? Master (teacher) often said it nodesu."

U~n, I guess that's because it's natural for the elven master teachers to look down in regards of martial art.

"Then why don't we imagine it."

"Imagine~?"

"Nanodesu?"

I look at the two with "let me see" face.

"Imagine if a martial artist whom Pochi and Tama don't know look down on you before you even fight, 'You guys are weak. You're worthless', what do you think?"

"Pochi is not weak nodesu!"

"Tama too is strong~?"

The two who obediently imagined what I said and became angry.

"However, if the martial artist said, 'Hmph, weak people bark the loudest' without even listening to you two, what will you do?"

"Fight~?"

"Pochi will challenge him to a match nodesu."

Yup, I'm glad that the two react as I've led them to.

"That's right. If you two said『Weak』to your friends, don't you think they will get angry like with the imagined martial artist earlier?"

The two cross their arms and imagine it hard with difficult faces.

"They will absolutely get angry nodesu!"

Pochi is trembling while looking shocked.

"Tama won't say weak~"

"Pochi too won't say it nodesu!"

I affirm the honest words of the two with "That's right", and pat their heads.

Now they won't hurt anyone nor get into some strange troubles.

Liza is also nodding for some reason, but I think there's a merit to provoking your opponent in actual battles you know?

I had Arisa to report about people and nobles in the knight school whom we should be careful with.

There are a lot of interesting capable people, doesn't seem like you'll get bored in that school.

◇

"Then, was it fun too for you Mia?"

"Nn."

Mia nods, and then puts a peeled orange into her mouth.

Huh? That's all?

....Geez, it's very like taciturn Mia.

Tomorrow Arisa is going to the magic school where Mia is anyway, I guess I can just hear it from Arisa.

"There wasn't any problem in the royal castle's kitchen right?"

"Y-yes. It was unfortunate that we weren't with Master, but I was able to learn various things like techniques, the way to see through ingredients, and knacks."

Seeing through ingredients is probably needless once she gets the Item Appraisal skill, but the orb will be granted the day after the auction is over.

I'm glad that Lulu wasn't being bullied or something, I'll be learning those techniques from Lulu later myself.

"Lulu was taken good care of so I report."

"Thank you Nana."

Lulu might have been bullied if she was alone, but since Nana said it frankly, she was probably really taken good care of.

Lastly I asked Liza where she guided Zena-san and the others to.

"I mainly guided them to places for eating out and arms shops."

"....It's really like Liza-san."

Just as Arisa has muttered, it's very like Liza.

But since it's Zena-san and the others, they might be happy about it instead.

"Then you should show them around the shopping street where we went together. There are many pretty accessories and clothes there."

"Certainly."

I would have bought them accessories if I went with them, but please treat it as a preview for now.

I sure want to show Zena-san and her friends around the city at least once during their stay here.

◇

"Oh right, the pink princess from before was there too."

The person Arisa said while grinning is probably the princess of Rumooku Kingdom who has anime-like pink hair, Princess Menea.

"That should be the case considering Princess Menea is a student of the Royal Academy. However, don't use 'pink princess', call her Princess Menea normally."

"Ye~s"

As I chide her, Arisa replies back like a child.

"And then, and then, Princess Menea was being contested by two handsome boys just like in shoujo manga."

'Gehehe', so Arisa laughed, but even when that girl met me, she said some flowery words like "Fated person" or something, so I can't necessarily deny it.

"Hee, she sure is popular."

"What's with that disinterested reaction."

What kind of reaction did you expect coming from me.

"Then you see, the real issue is after that."

Arisa changes her posture and leans forward on the kotetsu.

"One of them, the plump handsome boy was called『His Highness』."

--His Highness huh. It's the same word as the demon lord spirit-dweller whom the [Light of Liberty] executives were saying, but....

"Was he not a normal noble? What's his name?"

"Err, he was called Souya."

Fumu, it's a Japanese-like name.

I found him immediately when I searched the map.

He lives in a wealthy area but it's not in the noble street.

I check his birthplace in the note column while also comparing it with the people directory I got from the royal castle as Nanashi.

"Apparently, he's really a descendant of the royal family. He seems to be the bastard son of the previous king and a merchant's daughter."

The mansion where Souya-kun lives is of his merchant mother.

Just in case, I checked various documents from the Prime Minister and found a hit on the firm's name.

It's a merchant family who secures their livelihood by doing trades with foreign countries, they own several sea-faring ships in the foreign trade city. It seems their main customers are the countries on the western part of the continent, and the weaselkin empire on the eastern part of the continent.

The reason why they're recorded in the document is because they had a deal with the earl house that was executed due to treason from the case before, and supplied imported goods--such as accessories and books from Holy Kingdom Parion to the house of nobles that idolized the easy-going occult group, [Wind of Liberty].

It seems they also supplied stuffed goods and artworks from foreign countries to the house of Marquis Kelten.

Though the prime minister's subordinates have probably investigated them, I mark Souya-kun and the higher-ups of the merchant house since they seem slightly suspicious.

Incidentally, I also tried searching for people, demons, or people possessed by demons with [Unknown Skill], but I got no hit.

◇

"Ku-Kuro-sama, we have been waisting for you."

The manager who looks tense unusually fumbled her words of greeting.

However, I, who had teleported to Echigoya Firm with [Unit Arrangement], stopped my train of thought due to the unexpected scene.

The executives of Echigoya Firm are lined up before me.

That's fine and all. I was the one who called them in the first place.

--However, why are they all half-naked?

The Manager is wearing laced nightgown with exposed skin, her important parts are barely covered by the laces, but they all would be exposed if she just moved.

The noble daughters behind her too, although theirs are more docile, they're wearing sensational clothes that don't differ much with the manager's.

Porina is wearing somewhat calmer clothes, but the soft-looking dress shows her body line clearly, it doesn't look like clothes you're wearing for work.

Nell has night clothes that are separated on top and the bottom. Normally these kind of clothes aren't sexy, but they produce peculiar eroticism in this group.

Tifaliza can't look at me directly. Her icy beauty is dyed in vermilion color, her embarrassed gestures trying to hide her body is too dangerous. If the two of us were alone, I could have involuntarily push her down.

Good grief, it's "What kind of Eroge is this?" world.

I coughed once to clear my throat.

....Calm down Satou. No wait, I'm Kuro right now.

"Manager, today you sure are wearing some wonderful clothes."

"Y-yes. We were all called by Kuro-sama, so everyone did their best to show off."

--『Tomorrow night, I'm giving you a special duty after the night time.』

--『It'll be over in a moment, but there's a high possibility that you won't be able to work afterward.』

They misunderstood those lines huh?!

They interpreted special duty as night attendant, and the latter line as not being able to move afterward eh....

I'm slightly attracted to leave the misunderstanding and do a group one, but let's not.

Even if I hide behind the rationale of failing as a proprietor were I put my hands on my important employees, carelessly doing it could drown me in carnal desire turning me into a degenerate.

I'm limiting the venting of these hands toward the professional onee-sans that won't turn into degenerate later on.

If I have a girlfriend, I'd flirt with her instead though.

Now then, let's end these girls' anxiety here.

"It seems you have misunderstood. I do not intend to force myself upon you girls. Special duty is about another thing. Change into your work clothes since it's going to take some time. Wear shoes that are easy to move around."

Leaving the Manager and the other who subtly look like they feel like running away, I move to my second villa in the underground labyrinth.

Waiting idly is wasteful, so I head toward the live-box for the power-leveling today.

I run to the area where the live-box is located, and arrive at the hall where it is.

Monsters are crawling out from the [Gushing Holes] on the walls nearby the live-box, so I clean them up for the sake of safe power-leveling.

I put log huts on the corners of the hall from my storage in order to prevent [Gushing Holes] structurally.

I activate the holy monument magic tools I've installed on the huts to create small barriers.

Red magic circles are invoked, the area about 10 meters from the holy monuments become safe areas where monsters can't get close.

They're not physical barriers, so they can't completely shut out the monsters, but monsters can't get close to it if they're just normal monsters.

After checking the entry of [Unit Arrangement] on the menu, I register this place as a home ground.

I'll do this method on various places in preparation of moving ahead of time.

I connect the holy monuments to magic furnace and start it. The output is only second-rate, but it's more than enough for supplying the holy monument with magic power.

I'll make it like the barrier pillars on villages when I create other home grounds next time.

Since that type don't need magic furnace.

◇

"T-this place is?! --Labyrinth?"

"That's right. It's Area 277 of the middle-layer of the labyrinth."

Everyone's expression is hardened when I simply reply the manager's question.

I guess they would be scared considering these girls have one-digit levels and are wearing everyday clothings.

"Do not worry. I have removed dangerous monsters."

When I gently told so, everyone fell down on the ground.

Apparently they've lost their strengths.

Looks like I'd better stop doing this kind of surprise.

"Follow me. I will make you girls hunt the preserved live-box monsters ahead and get your levels raised."

We climb the stair on the wall of the live-box, and reach the place where we can see the content of the live box.

Inside the live box are the monsters that have greatly multiplied--[Maze Cockroaches] eating the fodder monsters that are in awful states

To be honest, the spectacle is like in a dream.

"Your pride as an explorer might not allow it, but this is an order. I'll forcefully make you do it even if you don't want to."

I take out weapons from my Storage and give it to the Manager, Nell and Porina.

"This is? Is it a wand?"

"That's right. It's called Spray Gun, but it's the same type as the fire wand and lightning wand."

It looks like a shotgun with a truncated barrel. The place for the cartridge is loaded with Fire stones and Lightning stones, the element can be changed as needed.

When I was making a certain thing with converging ability half-heartedly, it shot out spray-like net lightning and flame instead.

It looks exactly like a gun, but it's classified as a wand.

Its killing power is weak, so it can only be used as a distraction for power-leveling.

"Everyone shoot toward the center of the live-box in turns. Change with the person behind you once you shot."

"""YES!"""

With unexpectedly good replies, everyone takes the gun and pulls the trigger as instructed.

"Kuro-sama, the lightning is spread, it's not very effective."

"Do not mind it. It's fine."

Manager who looks baffled steps back, changing with the next person.

This time I've prepared three type of cartridges, [Ice], [Wind], and [Lightning]. If things go well, I plan for them to earn the skill for each element.

Just in case, I had let them put their hands into my Item Box before they shot the guns. We're lucky if they get the skill with this, but there's no loss either way.

Furthermore, I make several of them who have experiences studying magic to use Magic Scrolls to invoke attack magic.

"Kuro-sama, everyone has completed their turns."

"Alright, this will be dangerous, so everyone get back to the stairs."

After checking that everyone has stepped back, I exterminate the [Maze Cockroaches] with [Fire Storm].

"W-what great flame...."

"Is that advanced magic?"

"Yet it was done chantlessly--"

Putting aside the surprised executives, I open the map to check everyone's status.

--Oops, I went too far.

The Maze Cockroaches earlier were only level 7 each, so I thought that it would be fine even if there were a bit too many, but it seems they had propagated to more than 1000.

There are a lot of executives, so it's been reduced somewhat, yet all of them have leveled up to 16.

Porina who was originally high-leveled, the Manager and her two adjutants became level 17 with my rash method of leveling up.

"--Huh? Power feels like entering me somehow ssu."

"I feel something too...."

Starting with Nell whose level was the lowest, the executives began to talk about their bad condition one by one.

You'll get level up intoxication if you level up by more than 10 of course.

Using [Magic Hands], I support the executives who look like they would fall down the stairs, and then teleport to Echigoya Firm's strategy meeting room with [Unit Arrangement].

"Good work. The special training for today is over."

"Kuro-sama, my body feels strange you see ssu."

"That's only the symptom of level up. You'll feel like usual once you get some rest."

I answer Nell who seems energetic despite looking tired.

"T-that wasn't a lie of some drunkards was it."

"Then...., maybe I've leveled up to 10?"

"....No way, that can't be true."

Despite looking tired, the executives can't seem to hide their excitement from leveling up.

They should become around level 30 if we continue for about seven days. If their levels get that high, they probably won't get rolled up in a situation like the other day.

Among the girls who have leveled up, five learned magic skills, one learned Item Box skill. It's safe to say that the result is more than anticipated.

None of our girls learned Item Box skill even after they got to level 50, the luck is on our side this time.

I can't leave the girls who can't move their bodies as it is, so I carry them to the nap room and the parlor of the main building, and let them sleep there.

For some reason, everyone wanted it to be princess carry, so I complied, but the executives' tensions were strange.

I wonder if princess carry is that nice?

My business today is over once I carry the lucky Tifaliza who learned Item Box skill to her room far behind.

"....Kuro-sama."

I let her who's sleep talking like that to sleep, and leave the room.

"--Coward"

I heard that faint monologue with Attentive Ears skill, but I pretended not to hear it and went to the night district alone.

The technique of the professional onee-san was wonderful after all.

13-5. At The Royal Castle

Satou's here. Just when you think troublesome things and problems are going to end, more of them come.

I think saying, "I took care of the bugs", during the final stage of development is a flag.

◇

"By the way, has Sir Pendragon decided on your first wife?"

It's Toruma who brought that subject up when we're in the middle of the Kingdom Conference recess.

Since he said some inappropriate things, nobles who are into little girls are glaring at me with murderous eyes from a distant table, and even the gluttonous nobles of Duchy Capital are looking complicated.

By the way, the reason why a honorary baronet like him is in this place is because he came to deliver a message for Viscount Shimen.

"I don't intend to get married for the time being."

I tell him honestly.

I do really want to make Aze-san my wife, but since elves are fundamentally very patient, I feel that she won't take me seriously unless I persist at it for at least 10 years.

"You can't do that do you? You're a permanent noble now, not a generation-long honorary noble, so by the kingdom's law, if you don't have a child within a year, you have to marry another woman if I'm not mistaken. My older brother has even got to his fourth wife after all."

--Are you serious?!

What's with that bad law.

It might be needed in this world where death comes easy, but I'd like to have free will in regards to marriage at least.

Toruma's story still continues, it seems it's normal for upper nobles to have three wives, and besides the legal ones, most of them have around five mistresses.

There are only a handful of upper nobles who only have a wife, including Earl Muno.

Real world harem huh....

I'm amazed that they can keep their stamina--ah I see, so that's the reason why Echigoya's vitality supplements are selling that well.

Even though I've set the price to be such a rip-off, the supply in the Royal Capital have all ben sold out.

"If the Royal Family don't ask you to take a wife from them or something, then take Karina as your wife please. I know that Sir Pendragon likes younger girls, but I think it's better for the first wife to be older."

"Wait Baronet Shimen. Do not be forceful."

Marquis Lloyd stopped Toruma who had started to promote Lady Karina.

As expected of old man's wisdom. He's not just a glutton nobl--

"By the way, Sir Pendragon, the girls of our house are famous for their fertility you see."

--I take it all back.

You're going to act like Toruma too huh.

"Toruma oji-sama, please don't trouble Satou-san so much."

Sera who's attending to Duke Oyugock came to help me while smiling gracefully.

Even though she was just having a chat with the female officials, she's a good child who takes care of her friend.

Sera sits right next to me.

....Isn't she a bit too close?

"Right, Satou-san."

It's the precious life boat after all. Let's ride on the stream.

"Yes, I never thought that I would become a permanent noble in the first place, so I haven't though of marriage yet."

As urged by Sera, I told so to everyone.

Toruma seemed to understand that, he stopped trying to be a matchmaker.

I wonder if Sera is happy that her mediation gone well, she's sipping her tea while smiling broadly.

◇

Now then, after thinking this calmly, the thing that's needed is having a heir.

Then there's no need for it to be a biological child in particular. I can just adopt a suitable child to succeed the house of Pendragon.

Since I felt better now, I start to listen carefully to the topic of discussion of the Kingdom Conference that I had been ignoring.

In order to secure the material needed for the royal castle's reconstruction, the nobles are debating whether to confiscate the material from merchants who are buying up goods, or to import them from the neighboring territories.

--Oops, that reminds me, I haven't said anything about the material matter to the Manager.

At the start of the lunch recess, I contact Echigoya Firm with [Telephone], and tell her to select several executive staff that will be dispatched to secure material.

While I was doing so, the morning section of the Kingdom Conference ended, and it became the time for the lunch break.

I'm invited to have a lunch together with the nobles of Duchy Capital, but I have to refuse them since I've been invited by the prime minister beforehand.

It's said that the prime minister will always dine together with anyone who's become an upper noble, and then decide whether that person has the social aptitude or not.

"Viscount Pendragon-sama, please follow me."

The prime minister's chamberlain whom I remember seeing has come to pick me up so I follow him.

We met when I was acting as Kuro though, so I can't exactly talk familiarly with him.

While feeling slightly awkward, I was led to a dining room with good lighting.

The prime minister and his cohorts will come afterward, so I'm watching the scenery from the window to kill the time.

I can see the big sakura tree from here well.

"--It appears you like sakura trees."

"Yes, I quite like them."

It was the prime minister that call out to me, followed by some officials.

When did he come.

Still, the atmosphere feels like some kind of interview even though we're supposed to have a meal.

"Sit down. The dishes today are made by chefs whom we have invited from other countries. I do not mind if you don't finish it if it doesn't suit your taste."

--Hohou, that sounds fun.

The appetizer is salad with boiled shrimps as the topping.

I thought it was just some plain salad, but the moment it entered my mouth, I got done in by the out-of-ordinary dressing.

Just when I thought it was dressing, turned out it's sauce with honey as the base.

It's quite delicious if I just forget my prejudice, but it has quite an impact.

The prime minister is eating calmly, but I know from my experiences of meeting him many times as Nanashi.

He must be absolutely enjoying my surprised reaction.

Next, some clear white silky soup come out.

The aroma makes it seem like corn soup, but I can't let my guard down.

Considering my experience just now, I put the soup slightly to my mouth--sour!

The aftertaste isn't bad, but it's hard for people who aren't good with sour things.

"Do the foreign dishes suit your taste?"

"Yes, they taste quite titillatingly tasty."

This isn't lip service, but what I truly think.

I'll go see the chefs after the meal and ask them to tell whose country dishes are these.

Like so, the gap between the appearance and the taste of the prime minister surprise menu were all present, but on the whole, they were delicious so I don't have any complain.

I enjoy various dishes while replying the prime minister's questions with inoffensive answers.

And then the main menu that comes out is a green caterpillar the size of a piglet.

It smells like a pork teriyaki.

The waiter cuts the crust of the caterpillar and serves it on a plate.

Lastly, the viscous gel-like body of the caterpillar is spread on pieces of the crust like sauce.

....Wait, wouldn't it have been better if you did this before you take it out?

Well, this must be delicious too.

If it was the previous me who hadn't been living in the labyrinth city, I would have absolutely refused it, but now that I've eaten various monster meat in the labyrinth, this much is within my tolerance level--probably.

Let's believe the prime minister's tongue.

I make up my mind and put the crust wrapped in the sauce as instructed by the waiter.

--Delicious.

Despite the crunchy texture of the crust, the inside is juicy, it's a relatively interesting food texture.

The salty-sweet sauce matches it well too.

"--Pass."

The prime minister who seems to be in good mood said so to the officials on his sides, but I heard it.

Oh no, so this was some kind of test?

I should have frowned in the middle of the way, and not eaten the last dish.

I got absorbed enjoying eating the delicious dishes, I had involuntarily eaten them all.

I can't call Marquis Lloyd and Earl Haku gluttonous nobles like this.

◇

After the lunch with the prime minister, I have about 30 minutes before the Kingdom Conference start in the noon, so I stealthily go to Echigoya Firm.

"Kuro-sama, I have selected these three for the dispatch."

There three girls with their belongings ready near the Manager.

These girls have reliable skills such as [Market Price] and [Negotiation]. They shouldn't have it before, so it must be because of the power-leveling yesterday.

"Good choices."

I thank the Manager who has arranged this in short time, and instruct them their objectives from now on.

"Your mission is to purchase building materials and secure temporary branches of Echigoya Firm. Buy the building material cheaply with local delivery. You do not have to think about the transportation. I do not mind even if the buildings of the temporary branches aren't that great, pick one that can be turned over by the end of the month."

"""Yes! Kuro-sama."""

I take the girls who replied energetically, and move to the Duchy Capital with Unit Arrangement.

I drop off one of them here, and then I go to Muno City with Unit Arrangement once again, and drop off another girl here.

We moved to the last location, Kuhanou City by return teleporting twice.

"Ku-Kuro-sama, please let me rest for a bit, I feel dizzy."

Apparently, Return teleport feels more nauseating than Unit Arrangement.

She wants me to stay with her until she feels better, but the noon conference is going to start in about 20 minutes.

I carry the noble daughter to a nearby teahouse, borrow a private room and let her sleep there.

"Kuro-sama...."

"Rest for a while here. I will come here in the night, so finish your duty until then."

I tell so as business-like as possible to the girl who's looking up while speaking in curious sexy voice.

Your reason gets dangerous when you're approached by a twenty-year old beautiful woman in a room you know.

◇

『Like I said! The [Dragon's Eye] have been stolen!』

"Please calm down His Highness."

When I was heading toward the afternoon conference, I heard some interesting words from the voice coming from the other side of the corridor, so I stopped on the way.

....[His Highness] again huh. I feel a bit sick with it.

There are a Leprechaun boy who's using fairy language to speak, and an official who's speaking fairy language in broken language, seemingly barely able to.

The Leprechaun boy is wearing gaudy white clothes, and over the top ornaments as if matching the clothes.

As said by the official, the leprechaun is a royalty of the leprechaun kingdom on the western part of the continent. His actual age is 365 year old, so he's not as young as he looks.

In addition since the fairy language is the common language of fairykin, which is also called the low-rank version of elf language, I can understand it without problem. It feels like unsophisticated words of the graceful elf language.

『Is there any problem?』

『Oh! You seem to know fairy language. The [Dragon's Eye] in my room has been stolen!』

『Is it some kind of jewel?』

『It's not! [Dragon's Eye] is an orb that's been passed down in our kingdom. It grants the user the appraisal eyes the dragons have that can see through all things in universe.』

--It's orb this time huh.

Lately I've been reading too much into anything that's related to demons.

If this keeps up, I could end up burning any whithered silver grass I see with Laser.

I pull myself together, and convey his words to the official.

"It's another case of thievery!"

I incline my head in puzzlement hearing the official.

"Are there many thievery in the royal castle?"

As I ask so to the official, I search the [Dragon's Eye] on the map, but it doesn't exist anywhere.

I wonder if it's either teleported away or kept in Item Box.

"...N-no, it's nothing like that."

The official tries to gloss over it disorderly.

『What are you speaking about! It's the treasure of our kingdom! Dispatch the search party immediately!』

The leprechaun boy appeals desperately, so I postpone the thing about the other thievery, and tell the official the boy's request.

The [Dragon's Eye] is an artifact that grants temporary [Item Appraisal] skill to the user, when the user is under the effect of this artifact, his eyes will be split vertically, and turn yellow as the name implies.

From talking with the boy, I understand that the user can use the skill three times during a day, and the effect can last for one hour for each use.

After finishing various arrangements, I asked the official who said the remark earlier, and got to know that there had been three cases of thievery in the past two days in the royal castle.

The damages are all items that looked like Orbs.

--Orb-like items huh.

Before, the sakuramochi demon or the scout of [Light of Liberty] said that they needed Orbs for the hatching of [His Highness].

I wonder if it's the handiworks of people related to [His Highness].

The orbs that were in the royal castle's treasury are being kept by me until the start of the Auction.

I wonder if the bunch who don't know that are picking orb-like things?

Still, just who is this [His Highness]?

As one expect of a large kingdom, the people who can be called [His Highness] number in more than 100, so putting markers and tracking them is a bit too much works.

There was nothing suspicious when I searched the map yesterday after my talk with Arisa.

Currently, there is no remnant of [Wings of Liberty] and [Light of Liberty] that revere demon lords in the royal capital.

If this were manga or light novel, you can probably wring it out from people who get in contact with the main character, but such a rule can't be applied to reality.

If it is, the bastard child prince with Japanese face called Souya whom Arisa came across to should be [His Highness].

I've told about the remarks of the Sakuramochi demon and the [Light of Liberty] to the king and the prime minister, so I'll leave it to them find out who [His Highness] is. I'll try to set up a trap and see if I can catch the culprit.

While pondering about the best trap to use for it, I slip into the second division of the noon Kingdom Conference barely in time.

13-6. Royal Academy (2)

※ The story is in Arisa's point of view.

Together with Mia, I go through the academy's gate.

"Misanalia-sama, we have been waiting for you."

"Morning."

The principal who was waiting at the academy's gate took Mia away while I was blanking out in amazement.

After they parted without waiting for me, a handsome 30s teacher who was beside the principal stepped forward beside me.

"Dame Tachibana, please come over here. I'm Hebin a senior teacher. I will be guiding you."

"Please take care of me, Hebin-sensei."

His face which has the visage of sorrow matches very well with his sombre voice.

The peculiar way his relaxed voice sounds is nice.

Said in novel's word, it would be called [Nekonadegoe].

While thinking such stupid thing, I am guided to enter the school building.

Contrary to Hebin-sensei's cruel-looking face, he seems to be the type that can pay attention, he walks while matching my walking pace.

"Please sit over there, I'll bring tool to measure your magic power."

"Yes, Sensei."

I was brought to a splendid room that seems to be a parlor, and then I sit on the fluffy sofa.

Even though I'm sitting gracefully, my mind can't keep calm from the word [Magic Power Measurement].

It will be with a magic crystal, and then it'll explode and then they'll be surprised like, "What enormous magic power!".

Kuffuffufuu~, school arc has to start with magic power OP-ness after all!

◇

"Four star it is. That's quite an amount of magic power. As expected of Misanalia-sama's friend."

Hebin-sensei read the value on the measuring equipment and then wrote it on the school entry document.

--Huh? Doesn't the measuring equipment have too high of a tolerance?

As if answering my doubt, Hebin-sensei muttered.

"The measuring equipment for new students was broken by Misanalia-sama, so we borrowed the original measuring equipment made by Ancient King Yamato from the royal castle."

Ah~ So Mia broke it first huh~.

I guess that'd be so. Mia has fifty percent more magic power than mine so it's only natural.

Sheesh, it should have been the cliche for me to surpass the amount of magic power for ordinary person, surprising them, but Mia did it ahead of time.

I-I should bring our cheat Master and show them an amount of magic power enough to break the original measuring equipment--wait, I guess that's impossible.

Our Master would never do such conspicuous thing.

"Do not be disheartened."

Maybe because I was silent, Hebin-sensei followed up with slightly gentle voice.

"Ordinary new students mostly get one or two star. Even among the teachers, only Principal and me who have four star. You should feel proud."

"Thank you very much, Hebin-sensei"

The principal's level is 43, and this sensei's is 41.

My MP is 890, so five star is probably when it's more than 1000.

As for Mia's evaluation--

"Misanalia-sama is five star. It's a new record after the era of Ancient King Yamato and seven generations of great men."

--Like that, as if she's a cheat main character.

She's ordinary compared to our Master who's out of common sense, but Mia is quite amazing herself.

And also, there's no elemental judgment for this kind of measurement.

Because we have Yamato Stone they said. Good grief, there's not enough romance here~.

And then, we change the place and now it's a practical exam.

"Then please destroy that target with magic."

Alright! Time to redeem my honor!

Let alone the target, maybe this Arisa-chan should show off her power by one-shotting the barrier of this practice room with [Inferno].

It should be fine if I just use space magic chantlessly to prevent damage on the surrounding, right.

"I'm saying this just in case, I'll also observe your precision, so I'll subtract your point if you destroy anything besides the target, please be careful."

--Kuh, someone did it already huh.

Can't be helped.

I'll go with Technical Arisa.

"■ ■■ ■■■ ■■ ■ Multiple Fire Dance"

Small fireballs are produced one by one on the tip of my wand.

All 16 fireballs fly to the target in accordance to my precise control.

Each of the fireballs splits into four shots along the way, in total, there are 64 fire shots raining upon the target.

The magic is created by Master for suppressing mob, so each of the shots has low power. It can't even defeat a demi-goblin.

However, 64 shots hit the target as I aimed.

"Splendid. To think you'd draw sakura petal on the target with the holes--"

As the result of making Hebin-sensei impressed I've been admitted to take the special class where the elites gather.

Mia must be there too, I didn't confirm it though.

◇

The class Hebin-sensei took me only has 10 students. There are half of the number of students on average compared to the other classes I saw when we were walking here.

The students' ages are from 10 to 18 year old, 16 year old on average.

The kids of this kingdom start their change to become old men when they're 12 year old, so there's only one precious shota here.

The average level is 9, the highest is a flame magician kid at level 19. The second best is a lightning magician kid at level 15.

The reason why their levels are higher than the kids of the knight school is probably because they can gain experience from behind in safety.

Mia isn't in the room.

Instead I see a familiar pink-haired princess sitting.

She sent a smile to me, so I nodded back to her.

If she's in this class, that means she's excellent despite her problematic behavior with men.

--Kuh, damn you riaju.

I introduce myself as urged by Hebin-sensei.

It seems I need to tell my name and the element I'm good at.

"My name is Arisa Tachibana. I'm fond of fire magic--"

I would remember the pain from my previous life if I introduced myself with impact, so I finished it with a very safe one.

The flame magician boy and the lightning magician young man said, "What, just a fire magician huh", but I completely ignored them. These kind of classmates exist in every class it seems.

Moreover, flame and lightning magic are simply magic whose offensive power are noticeable, it's not like they're higher tier of magic.

By the way, around half of the class members can use basic elemental magic.

Earth, Explosion, Water, Ice, Flame, Wind, Lightning, Force, Summoning, and Soul, there are more than one kid that can use Earth, and the Ice magician can use Soul magic.

Hebin-sensei scolds the boy who said the problematic remark, "There is no tier in magic."

The boy seems to live a pampered life, he apologizes frustratingly while looking disgruntled.

I'm more interested with the glasses shota boy rather than the deteriorated former-boy.

There are two vacant seats in the classroom. One of them is probably Mia's seat, the vacant seat on the front row is beside that shota boy.

That's probably Mia's seat and mine is probably going to be the furthest back beside the flame magician boy....

However, Hebin-sensei points at the front-row seat.

"Tachibana-kun, you can use that seat."

--You serious dood!

The voice in my mind is raised in joy with underling tone to Hebin-sensei unexpected words.

Of course, I keep my appearance graceful.

"Yes, Sensei."

When I said, "Please take care of me" while smiling at the glasses-shota, he sheepishly nodded while his cheeks were turning red.

Kuh, this is it!

It's the legendary techniqueeeeee!

School arc has to be like this after all!

"A-Arisa-kun? I don't know what's happening, but please calm down."

"I-I'm sorry."

Kuhhaaa....I failed.

I got too worked up and inadvertently stood up. It might even came out loud even.

The glasses boy is pulling away even though I had made a good impression.

I hurriedly tried to gloss it over by acting ladlylike, but it wasn't too effective.... Damnit.

◇

When I'm thinking the way to redeem myself, some noise of people talking are coming from the hallway.

The door is opened, and then the principal and some kind of researcher-looking men and women enter the room.

--And then, the one who's being surrounded by them is Mia.

"Arisa."

Mia raises her hand lightly and calls me.

The line of sights in the classroom are gathered to me. The only people who aren't surprised are the principal, Hebin-sensei and Pink-san.

The principal explains to everyone that Mia and me are acquainted while I'm waving back at Mia.

In the meantime, around five men who seem to be the school's staff members are putting desks and chairs inside the classroom.

The principal and the researchers sit on those chairs.

"Then, please Mia-sensei."

"Nn."

--Sensei?

As urged by the principal, Mia begins the lesson as a teacher.

Apparently, Mia is too good, she's become not a student, but a teacher.

Mia.... what a frightening child.

Now then, after the trite is over, I watch Mia's lesson. I feel like I'm doing a class visit.

The school's lesson is like in modern Japan, using blackboard to write the material.

However, the blackboard seems to be a magic tool invented by Ancient King Yamato, if you put magic power into your wand, it then can leave white line like chalk on the blackboard. The production cost is too high, so only Royal Academy has them.

Mia's lesson is done in one-word just as I thought it would be.

Once she's finished demonstrating, she says "Read."

She waits until the students have finished reading, and then she explains while pointing with her long wand, "Basis", "Formula", "Stabilizing Circuit", "Convergence", "Invocation".

"Mia-sama, how about that part?"

"Extension."

Mia answer the question of the man in white robe.

He seems to be a staff member of Royal Academy, he understands with just that and then writes some kind of note.

The majority of the students don't seem to understand, so Hebin-sensei whispers something to Mia.

Mia nods and then beckons me.

"Arisa. Come."

Mou, oh Mia, it can't be helped then~.

I stand up while feeling like an "oh dear" main character, and merrily go to the teacher's desk.

"Then I'll explain in place of Mia."

I tell so, and then various eyes gather to me.

"First, about this wavy thing, this is needed for magic practitioners during the activation of magic for the changing effect of the reaction from the supplying of magic power and thought control. I see some magic books cutting this part in order to raise the spell efficiency, but if you do that, you'll lose the additional room for the run-time control code, and lose its versatility, so be careful okay. Also, you might have known this already, but the explanation for this 'Extension' is written in the Magic Explanation Dictionary by Professor Jib Cloud, so people who heard it for the first time can read it. I think it's also written in the magic book of the sage Trazayuya, but Jib-tan's dictionary is the most detailed, so--"

The students are desperately writing on their notebook while straining their ears to hear my detailed explanation.

It's only the flame magician boy from earlier who's dumbfounded while looking surprised. Arisa-sensei is strict, so if you don't listen to her and can't explain later, it'll be hell ya know?

Mia wrote the explanation on the blackboard since it seemed easy to understand, and I lost my chance to show off my OP-ness as a student.

After the class, I ended up talking with the researchers about spells explanation and idea for new ones, I couldn't get better acquainted with the glasses-shota boy.

I'm happy that I could eat all I wanted in the luxurious cafeteria for teachers and upperclassman, but it wasn't enough to tingle the tongue of me who had gotten used to Master's and Lulu's transcendental ultimate cooking.

◇

"Books of advanced magic you say?"

"Nn."

The morning class is over, so we're asking the principal if we could browse the academy's magic books.

Of course, it's Mia who's asking.

"Normally, I can't give permission for students to read the books, but if it's none other than Misanalia-sama's request then--"

"Thanks."

It seemed like it'd be long, so I winked to Mia, and forcefully ended the talk.

The principal guides us to the door in the back of the library.

According to the principal, this door is protected by complicated barrier, so it won't open unless one uses the magic tool she has for unlocking it.

"■■ Open Lock"

Once the sturdy metal door is opened, the musty smell of old books tickle my nose.

The mucus on my nose is thin ever since I was born in this body, so I quickly use a handkerchief to protect my nose.

Mia cutely sneezes, "kushun", behind me, so I take some tissue and a mask from my Magic Bag and give it to her.

"Here, Mia."

"Thank you."

Inside the room, around 30 bookshelves are lined up with no windows.

And, there are already some visitors on the reading desk.

"Principal-sama--"

There are a princess-like woman with two maid-like girls.

Wonder if she's a noble daughter from somewhere?

--As the result of my appraisal, I understand that she's a real princess.

The sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom, Sistina-san. Her level is 17, her title is [Master of Forbidden Library], her skills are [Etiquette], [Arithmetic], [Alchemy], and [Force Magic].

Her two attendants' levels are at upper 30s, it seems they work as bodyguards and maids.

The principal greets the princess and then introduces Mia and me to her.

"I see, so you are--"

The princess looks at us like she finds it interesting.

"I've been thinking of having a chat with Chevalier Tachibana if possible."

"I feel honored."

I thought that she would say Mia, I wonder why is it me?

Judging from her gestures, I can't think that it was just a lip service at all.

"I'm sorry beforehand, is Chevalier Tachibana's age as her appearance suggest?"

--D-don't tell me, she saw through my X0-year old age from my previous life?!

"....Y-yes. I don't understand the meaning of her highness's question, but it has been 12 years since I was born in the middle of a group of small kingdoms."

I'm saying it in a roundabout way as a precaution if the princess or her attendants hold magic tools that can see through lies.

"Is that so--then, you guys really reach that elevated place in just few years...."

Probably someone who had appraisal skill checked our levels and ages during the new year [Audience Ceremony]. It should have been fine since our cheat Master had prepared mis-recognition item he made himself that couldn't be seen through with just passable things.

"Her highness, she is not someone who's been artificially raised. She possesses both the appropriate power and conduct."

"Oh my, this is the first time principal has praised students to such extent."

It was subtle, but apparently the princess stated that we were artificially raised by power-leveling, and then the principal backed us.

The power-leveling part is the truth, but I'll not correct that.

Who would believe power-leveling done to level 50.

"Chevalier Tachibana, I apologize for my impoliteness. Would you forgive my discourtesy?"

"Yes, her highness. Please call me Arisa if you would."

Putting aside Pink-san and Noja-hime, I never would've thought that a princess of a large kingdom frankly apologized like this. 'Pirorirorin', the sound effect of 'Favorable Impression UP' is resounding in my mind, I smile at the princess.

We would have had a friendly chat with the flow of event, but Mia muttered, "Back", and we were able to get back to our original goal.

Mia reads the advanced water magic book, while I read the fire one.

After skimming through it, I write a rough summary in my notebook.

Accidentally, I heard the conversation of the principal and the princess when I lifted my head.

"--That is classified as a fruit water, water that's been dripped with drops of fruit juice. It is possible to cleanse the fruit juice from the water with holy magic or water magic, but there is no magic that can separate them."

"Is that so...."

It sounds quite useful for experiments, does that not exist?

I think we can separate them by making use of the difference between the ionization tendency and osmosis rate.

Those concepts may not exist here, but useful magic should be made even without knowing the concept.

My eyes met with the princess's while I was thinking so.

"Arisa, do you know any spell that can be used for it?"

"No--"

Hearing my word of denial, the eyes of the princess that are full of expectation cloud over.

"--However, by making use of [Pure Water]'s code that detects the [Impurity in the Water], how about making a new magic that doesn't cleanse but separate?"

The separation part seems annoying, but our Master should be able to compose one in a night.

"New magic?"

"Yes, if it doesn't exist, then you can just make one."

I nod while feeling slightly proud toward the princess who looks surprised.

However, the principal pour cold water with her realistic view.

"Please wait. You will need 1000 gold coins as the expense if you want to research and develop a new spell. Her highness who is able to browse the documents in the forbidden library might be able to make it a bit cheaper but--"

"That much...."

The princess is surprised to hear the amount of money cited by the principal.

I meet eyes with Mia, and try to remember the number of spells that Master has made so far.

I think there are more than 100 in total including the worthless and useful ones.

....Well, it's our cheat Master, so I guess it's alright.

As expected, even a princess of a large kingdom can't easily move that much money freely.

Even if you seek funding from nobles and merchants, investors won't come for a magic with limited usability with no hope of recovery, the principal added.

"However, it's wonderful how you can have the idea of making a new spell."

"That is because Dame Tachibana is an expert of magic equal to Misanalia-sama."

The principal replies the princess's praise.

For some reason, it feels like she's praising Mia more than me, but I don't really mind.

Afterward, Mia joined and we talked about magic theory and writings as the topic until the sun went down.

The princess might have become a close friend if our social positions weren't different. During the heat of talk, the princess even invited us to her laboratory with it being a tea party as a pretext.

◇

The princess asks this when we are about to breakup.

"That reminds me, I saw Viscount Pendragon instructing the duchy capital nobles for the [Fireworks] magic that decorated the sky during the New Year Festival day, was that perhaps made by Arisa?"

"No, that magic was created by our master, Viscount Satou Pendragon."

I clear up the princess's misunderstanding immediately.

Our Master avoids looking conspicuous to the point of being strange, but there should be no problem affirming something that's been found out anyway.

He was really happy with custom scrolls, and brought new magic one after another to the viscount's workshop after all.

"--Is that true?"

"Nn."

Mia nods to the princess who looks like she couldn't believe it, and then she says, "Genius."

"Then I will invite Viscount Pendragon for the next tea party. I want to talk at least once with the person who has the playfulness to pursue that beautiful magic."

--I've done goofed.

I curse at my own stupidity when I see the sparkling face of the princess who looks like a maiden in love.

To think that I helped raising flag with my own hands!

Beside me, Mia who feels the foreboding of the appearance of a new rival frowns.

The only saving grace is the fact that there's zero chance our Master would fall in love with the princess with all the risk of getting involved in power struggle.

Haah, I wonder if he would hurry up and give up on Aze-san which has no hope of succeeding, and put his hands on me and Lulu~

Well, that won't happen huh....

Aah! I want to quickly have the body of an adult that can bewitch Master!

Author's note:

●Character Profiles

【Pink-san】 Menea, the third princess of a small kingdom, Rumooku. A pink-haired beautiful girl. 17 years old.

【Noja-Hime】Mitia, the princess of a small kingdom on the middle of the continent. Speaks with Noja. 15 year old. Yearn to become the hero's attendant.

【Rumooku Kingdom】 Once partnered with weaselkin to summon otherworld people.

【Sistina】The sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom. 18 year old. She's allowed to go in and out of the forbidden library in the royal castle.

13-7. Scattering Bait

Satou's here. Talking about scattering bait, I recall the time when I went fishing with sabiki rig on breakwaters during my childhood. I remember getting slightly frightened by the fish that reacted furiously to the scattering krill bait.

◇

"Sir Pendragon, is this the item that you want to exhibit on the auction the day after tomorrow?"

"The reception period for that one is already over, so I'm thinking of displaying this for the auction next month."

The older generation viscounts from the royal capital are looking at the jewel I've put in front of me with sparkling eyes.

I've come to the social salon after the kingdom conference is over, showing off a jewel made from Blood Bead there.

Of course it's not for boasting or satisfying my vanity, but to lure out the thieves who have been making havoc in the royal castle during the lunch break.

This Blood Bead was one of the item the True Ancestor Ban got from the floormaster, it's mainly used as an ingredient for healing and stamina recovery magic potions.

It seems it's rarely ever used for making disposable magic potion like I'm doing.

It's a lesser version of Blood Sphere that I also received together with it, but this Blood Bead itself is quite a rare material, it can only be gotten as a rare drop of the Blood Stalker monsters that infest the Bloodsucking Labyrinth in Saga Empire.

I saw with my own eyes when Ban and his vampire princesses easily made the thing though, so I don't feel like it's something that valuable.

"I thought this was a Ruby, but this is a Blood Bead right."

"That can't be--The Blood Bead that Bishtal Dukedom has looks more reddish brown doesn't it?"

"I heard that the brighter the red color of a Blood Bead is, the higher quality it is."

"With a Blood Bead this clear, just how valuable is it..."

At the very least, it's valuable enough to dazzle upper ranked nobles of a large kingdom who are used to luxurious items.

...It might have been better if I brought something more moderate, like a fist-sized ruby or emerald or something.

The reaction was bigger than I thought, so this is probably going to make a bigger rumor than planned.

It was a bit conspicuous, but it's nothing compared to when I exterminated a [Floormaster], and when I became a viscount.

◇

Now then, I'll leave it to the nobles and the maids who were there to work spreading the rumor, while I'm preparing the site for the jewel.

Even now, I haven't made the trap for thieves that I was thinking of making when we first came to the royal capital.

I should make the thief trap when I'm checking the place for tonight power-leveling in the labyrinth.

First, I write some simple plan on the memo pad.

I have made one in the labyrinth city mansion, so let's improve that and make a version 2.

Next the preparation for the material.

I'll cut the exceedingly hard wall of the labyrinth with a holy sword, and use it as the building material.

I've stocked up a lot of liquid from tree-type monsters that have powerful adhesion, so there's no problem on that part.

In just 30 minutes, I made a seven-meter tall cube structure as the thief trap.

I've put three-dimensional maze-shaped passages together, and various non-lethal traps inside it.

The passages is too narrow to stand inside, you can barely able to crawl in it, I've also prepared dead-ends here and there.

It's probably going to take around one hour to reach the treasure room if you move in it normally.

Thieves that can employ or summon small creatures can probably invade the treasure room easily, but I can just prepare treasures that can only be moved when you have at least certain amount of strength.

Next I just have to bury this in the garden of my mansion in the royal capital.

◇

I return to the royal castle with teleportation and get back to my mansion with a carriage from there.

It seems I took too much time in the labyrinth, Zena-san's marker who was in my mansion before I had gone to the labyrinth is now in Earl Seryuu's mansion.

After changing my clothes, I ask Arisa about Zena-san while relaxing in the living room.

"Has Zena-san gone back already?"

"Yup, there was a messenger from the Earl calling her back."

Hm~m, did some emergency happen?

I should ask Echigoya Firm if there's any information later.

Pochi and Tama who are playing in the garden show their faces on the window of the living room.

"Prey~?"

"Master, we caught a suspicious person nodesu."

Apparently, the rumor has shown its effect already.

I go to the garden through the back door, and inspect the thief the two have caught.

According to AR reading, he's a member of [Long-armed Ape].

He's probably a remnant of the thieves who attacked us when we first arrived in the royal capital.

Looking at the map, I see a luminous point moving from this mansion toward the downtown.

I put a marker on it for now, I'll arrest it after the meal.

"Now then, suspicious person-kun. Why don't we have you talk on whose order you intruded here?"

"H-hmph. You think this great me will talk?"

"Of course you will--"

I use sound isolation magic and cover ourselves with earth wall magic and then begin the questioning.

"--Do it."

"Prepared~?"

"Suffering of hell is waiting nodesu."

With my instruction, Tama and Pochi begin the torture.

Inside the soundproof space, laughter of the suspicious person is echoing.

In order to help Tama and Pochi who are tickling the man happily, I use [Air Control] magic to restraint the air flow. Now the number of time he's suffocating should go up.

The suspicious person gave up after an hour.

Looks like he's more tight-lipped than I thought.

"--We were ordered by the boss to steal the orbs that were carried by the airship rode by Duke Bishtal y'se. I heard that orb-like things were in this Viscount's mansion--"

The suspicious person talks while grasping for breath.

Fumu, so they were aiming for the orbs when they attacked us during our travel to the royal capital....

The people that we captured earlier seems to be the execution unit's leader.

I search these guys' boss on the map.

....not applicable?

"What's the name of your boss?"

"Ro-Ropo."

I searched that name this time, but I couldn't find it.

"Looks like the torture wasn't enough."

I instruct Pochi to break a cheap bronze sword with her fingers.

The suspicious person insists on his innocence when he saw that.

"W-wait! I'm not telling a lie!"

His expression looks real, but I shouldn't take the words of a thief seriously.

I instruct Tama and Pochi to resume the torture.

『Master, Lulu said that the preparation for the crab nabe has been finished.』

"Okay, I'm going back now."

Sound couldn't reach here, so Arisa contacted me with space magic.

The nabe is more important than torturing the thief.

I tie the thief with a rope and leave him unattended on the earth wall. Even if he gets out of the rope, I can just capture him again when I raid the thief's hideout.

"Now then, you two let's have a dinner."

"Aye!"

"Yes nanodesu!"

I take the two along back to the mansion.

◇

I'm listening to everyone's activities in the royal academy during the dinner.

"Geez, you see, Mia has become a teacher instead of a student. I was surprised you know."

"Nn, surprise."

Mia shows a peace sign toward Arisa while smiling triumphantly.

There's no problem since I was planning to let her work as a teacher in-training in the first place.

"Underling~?"

"That's right nanodesu. Master, please listen to Pochi's story nodesu."

Pochi who was urged by Tama tells about the event in the knight school.

Apparently, the two have gotten some underlings.

And then, Arisa cut in trying to say something after she's finished a bowl of crab rice porridge.

"You see--"

Arisa is hesitating.

"Did you do something bad?"

"Will you get angry?"

"It depends on the content. Quickly say it."

"Uu, it's not something that bad you know..."

Then why are you hesitating.

"I became a friend with the princess ."

"With Princess Menea?"

If you're talking about a princess who's attending the royal academy, I know only Princess Menea.

Arisa shakes her head.

"Not that one. Her highness Sistina."

--Highness again huh.

<TLN: A good time to tell you that the word [殿下] (Denka) for [His/Her Highness] is gender neutral in Japanese.>

However, I feel like I've heard the name Sistina before.

....That's right, the curt princess of the forbidden library should have that name.

Apparently, Arisa became friend with her with magic talk as the impetus.

"Then you see, we were invited to a tea party by the princess."

"Eh~, isn't that great. Together with Mia?"

"Nn."

Mia nods.

Arisa mutters sheepishly, "Master too."

"Don't tell me, I was invited to the tea party by the princess too?"

"Y-Yup."

I see, no wonder she hesitated to say it.

Princess Sistina is free now ever since she canceled her engagement with Earl Lesseu.

If I come to her tea party, the surrounding will misunderstand as me trying to be her spouse.

There's no way that Arisa doesn't understand such a thing, she must be quite fond of the princess.

I don't mind getting some rumor for this.

"You don't have to look like that. I'll go to the princess's tea party."

"....Is it alright?"

"Yeah, it's not like I have an ulterior motive anyway, there's no problem if I regard it as an extension of the tea party organized by the noble wives."

Moreover, Princess Sistina was robbed the status of a territory lord's wife due to a mid-level demon devastating Lesseu Earldom, so the chance of her being the [Highness] is probably low.

--It's a different story if Lesseu Earldom was partially destroyed because she wanted to cancel the engagement though.

◇

After the dinner, and setting the thief trap in the garden, I raided the hideout of the criminal guild [Long-armed Ape] as Kuro, and succeeded arresting all the members.

I had stationed Arisa and Tama on top of the nearby water towers in case they escaped, but it ends up being needless.

A mysterious presence suddenly appears when I've just completed the arrest.

"--Aiming for my limbs like this, you daredevil."

I jump aside to evade the flying blade that appears together with a glint of silver light.

Before I knew it, a man in green attire, holding two curved swords, has appeared there.

According to AR reading, his name is [Ropo], level 66.

--Strange. He didn't exist when I searched awhile ago.

While warding off the twin curved swords' attacks, I put a marker on him.

His swordsmanship is relatively good, but he's not an enemy of me who has [Foresight: Anti-personnel Combat] skill.

"I see, it seems you're quite skilled--"

The man who mutters like he has some leeway tries to strike me again continuously.

This time I evade the attack without blocking it, and cut his green mask before he can pull back his swords.

The face looks familiar.

It's the same face as Propor the [Mirage], the executive of [Light of Liberty] who succeeded summoning parts of Demon God.

Propor and Roppo, their names are similar too. They might be relatives.

Now then, let's stop playing with the swords now and neutralize him with a palm strike like usual.

--Suddenly, the guy acted strangely.

He thrusts his own sword toward his own chest.

The blood gushing from the wound spray toward me.

--My Crisis Perception reacts for some reason.

I jump back to evade getting bathed in the blood.

White smoke raise from the floor that's hit by the blood as if hit by strong acid.

The man is gone.

In the instant the white smoke appeared when I didn't check him, he had escaped to the other room.

The members of [Long-armed Ape] who are in the other room have all been killed.

It's probably to prevent them from talking. He sure is quick to cut them off even though he said they were his limbs or something.

I open the map in the room that smells of iron.

--it's not there?

The marker that shows him is not reflected on the map.

Perhaps he used shadow magic?

I think that as a possibility and then check the marker column of the map.

--Impossible.

The name 'Ropo' isn't written there too.

Marked people are written on the marker column even if they are inside shadow magic or barriers made by Yuika's Unique Skill....

He might have a type of Unique Skill that I don't know.

He's either a hero, a demon, or a demon lord....

At the very least, it's probably okay to consider him related to the real [Highness].

I collected all the things besides the corpses in the hideout and then returned home.

I pray that there are things that contain information about [Highness] among them.

13-8. Princess of the Forbidden Library

Satou's here. Thinking about something alone tends to get you stuck on an impasse. When that happens, taking a bit of break to cool down and consulting with other people should get you to find a simple solution to the problem.

◇

...Spreading rumor about the jewel might have been a mistake.

I think about the Ropo thing earlier while looking at the stars from the roof of my mansion.

I couldn't sense his presence until right before he spoke.

I've lost sight of his existence despite having put a marker on him.

His level is equal to greater demons'.

He probably has concealment-type Unique Skill that's powerful enough to elude another Unique Skill.

I also thought the possibility of him teleporting away chantlessly, but it's impossible to hide from the marker column no matter how far you go.

Maybe dimensional transfer or locked space--but even in the case with Yuika back then, it won't let you hide from marker column.

Considering that, the highest possibility is that he has concealment-type unique skill after all.

Thinking from that, I can guess his identity to a certain extent.

Hero, reincarnated person, demon lord.... perhaps, god or their apostle, I'm certain.

Still, if he has the perfect hiding skill, I wonder why did he leave it to his underlings to steal?

The success rate should be higher if he stole it himself.

Maybe there's some kind of reason?

If I just confirm the AR reading from that time--

My stomach suddenly feels warm, so I throw my view down.

"Wlcome~?"

Tama is curling into a ball on my stomach.

"What's wrong? Did you make a mistake?"

This time Arisa appeared by teleporting, and then silently put the head of me who was watching the stars on her lap.

"--A bit yeah."

"Isn't alright to fail once in a while. You're human after all."

Arisa comforts me sounding like a big sister while patting my hair.

How pathetic of me as their guardian to make them worry like this.

I should stop regretting and reflecting now.

--From now on I won't get my priority wrong.

"You're right."

I stand up while replying Arisa.

Now then, time to act--

◇

I went to the forbidden library in order to seek information.

Of course, as Nanashi that is.

"Hmhmm, hmm, hmmhmmhmm."

--I saw something unusual.

That taciturn princess is humming.

"--Ah"

The princess who notices me has her face reddened and then she shuts her mouth.

"You look happy. Did anything good happen?"

"Yes, a bit."

"Really. That's good."

Apparently, the princess is happy that she gets along with Arisa and Mia.

Getting along is lovely, so they said.

I got to see the happy face of a beauty, so let's get back to my original objective now.

I go to the six-armed golem and ask it to search for some books.

"--Here are the catalogs of forbidden water, fire, and space magic, and unique skills that you wish."

I take the books that have been piled up on top of the desk by the living dolls into my storage, and search keywords such as, "Concealment", "Cognizance Inhibition", "Hiding" through Menu.

The majority of the hit are people who were good at Concealment and

Hiding, I've found many famous people of the past like the thief hero, or the assassin king who had those kinds of unique skills, not only demon lords.

However, every one of those skills is just a skill that has the effect of annulling search-type skill, not that it could oppose search-type unique skills.

--I guess that's to be expected, the sample size is too few in the first place.

There are also a lot of other useful-looking information, so I transcribe these forbidden books into the forbidden book folder of the memo pad.

From the forbidden spell catalog, I ask the librarian for the magic books that have the spells of [Complete Control over Blood] for Mia's use, and [Dimension Shredder] and [Ash Flare] for Arisa's use.

"Please pardon me. The books besides the space magic one are currently being borrowed for reading."

--Reading?

Thus when I turn toward the princess who has resumed to hum again, I see that there are indeed the books that I asked the librarion for.

Looks like she's not reading it now, let's borrow it for a bit.

"Princess, can I have your time for a bit?"

"W-what can I help you with?"

The princess looks shaken, perhaps she never thought that I would call her.

"Can I borrow that book for a moment?"

"Eh, this book?"

"Yup, I'll return it to you immediately."

Since the princess nodded, I put the book into my storage and transcribed not only the spells I wanted, but the entire book.

The princess seemed surprised about something when I was putting the book into my Storage.

"Thank you. Next, please lend me that book."

"Y-yes..."

After processing the second book like the first, I return the book to the princess.

--By any chance, I wonder if the princess is researching the spells for Arisa's and Mia's sake?

"....Um, Hero-sama."

"What is it?"

After thanking her and preparing to leave, the princess unusually talked to me.

"Is a demon lord going to attack the Royal Capital again?"

"There's no oracle about it, so the Royal Capital should be safe right?"

I replied the princess who looks anxious, but I did not speak, "Some greater demon might be acting behind the scene though", out loud.

Still, oracle huh.

I heard in the duchy capital that there would be seven advents of demon lords.

I had heard it after defeating the wild-boar king in the duchy capital underground, so I though the remaining six were mistaken, but since I met the dog-head in the labyrinth city, it's possible that demon lords might appear in the remaining five places.

In fact, Hero Hayato is currently pursuing a demon lord in the weaselkin empire.

After getting the [Chant Orb] at the auction and I become able to teleport to any places with space magic, I'm thinking of checking the places in turns.

Come to to think of it, where were the remaining places of the oracles?

If I remember right, Sera's oracle points to another continent, the others are on the Holy Kingdom Parion on the western part of this continent, Weaselkin Empire on the eastern part of the continent, and the Ratkin

Principality on the northeast part of the continent--If I'm not mistaken, that one should be close to the [Maze of Trazayuya] where Zen was hiding.

The last one is the Kingdom of Yowok that has occupied Arisa's kingdom.

Yowok Kingdom.... I feel like I've heard something about it from a rumor.

It should be on the neighborhood of Bishtal Dukedom that revolted. And also, the younger brother of Marquis Kelten who's under suspicion of doing coup d'etat should be the prince consort of Yowok Kingdom.

....Perhaps, demons are involved in those suspicious stories?

When I'm able to chant magic, I'll go to check Yowok Kingdom first thing first.

"....Then, why are you checking past heroes and demon lords?"

"Even though the Royal Capital is alright, they might appear in other places. And also--"

Using this opportunity, I talked about the peculiar hiding skill that Ropo used to the princess who's well-read.

The princess searches her memory while having a difficult face.

"A thief that can null Hero-sama's Enemy Search Unique Skill is it.... Perhaps he used some kind of artifact that could teleport or hid him in the boundary?"

Fumu, there's the possibility of him using some Artifact-class item too huh.

Opinions from other people really are important after all.

Getting a new view point like this is a hit, but for now, I tell her that it's not that kind of item.

"Even if he used such item, I would have still known where the opponent was."

However, it's also possible that he has combined concealment item and his own superior hiding skill.

"Then he might have been annihilated during that moment."

"Annihilated?"

"Yes, one of the greater demon that Ancient King-sama fought should have that kind of ability. "

Looks like I've overlooked it since I searched only with 'Unique Skill' as the keywords.

....Or rather, isn't it bad for him if he was annihilated?

"What kind of ability is it?"

"It wasn't passed down in detail, but it seems there was a greater demon that could appear before Ancient King-sama in an ever-changing form like as a human, a demi-human, or an animal, befuddling him--"

The princess picked out that from the bottom of her memory to tell me.

"--the ability that can create such things is called『Mock Body Creation (Create Avatar)』."

◇

After hearing more details from the princess, I hunted for information regarding [Mock Body Creation] ability from the forbidden library.

It seems to be a skill that creates a mock body which has the same skill as the user and then the user possesses it.

Looks like it's different than the body clone the sakuramochi demon from before was using.

It seems the main body is defenseless during the creation of the mock body if left as is, but fighting using it with no penalty is such a big advantage.

It's not an exaggeration to call it unfair.

It's written in the book that the demon was defeated by the breath of the heavenly dragon that was together with Ancient King at that time, but the state of the affair is written vaguely.

I guess I'll go ask the person concerned herself.

◇

I tell the members of Echigoya Firm that the special training will be on break today, and for them to strive to better themselves their own.

In addition, half of the executives whom I had sent to gather materials in various branch offices absurdly replied that they had finished their missions.

They are this capable yet they couldn't succeed as explorers and were caught by the lost thieves....

I told the girls that I would pick them up tomorrow evening, and for them to just kick back and relax on some high class inns.

Now then, before I go to Fujisan Mountains to gather intelligence, I'll have to ensure the safety of our girls.

If there's a possibility of a greater demon, I'm afraid of them getting surprise attacks during their sleep.

In order to have relieving sleep, sleeping in the tree house of Boruenan Forest should be good.

This place is the safest place besides being near me.

"Good evening, Lua-san."

"Welcome back, Satou-san. We've prepared the bedding."

"Thank you very much. I'm sorry for asking a big favor so suddenly."

"No, this is nothing much."

Aze-san who's quick to go to bed at night is fast asleep already, so it's only Lua-san here.

Pochi and Tama are already sleeping, so Liza carry them to the bed under her armpits. Shiro and Crow are sleeping happily on Nana's chest.

"Then, I'll be going to Fujisan Mountains."

"Understood. Take care okay."

Sent off by Arisa and the others, I leave Boruenan.

It might be nice to rest in Boruenan Forest for a while after the auction.

We've been working too much lately haven't we.

In addition, as the guards of the thief trap, I've left mass produced bronze golems, scarecrows for surveillance, and small gargoyles for pursuing.

◇

On a straight line, the nearest place to Fujisan mountains is Muno City.

In Nanashi form, I teleported to the wall of Muno City with Unit Arrangement, and flew with Flash Drive to the border of the territory on the direction of Fujisan Mountains.

I'd like to have a base for teleporting in on the border of the territory, so I search for some handy ruin using Map.

"Fumu, an abandoned fort used by thieves as their stronghold huh--"

There's no one who hears my muttering.

Looks like the restoration of public order doesn't reach far out here.

Spending too much time on it would be annoying, so I used [Spray Gun] used for the executives' power-leveling to neutralize the thieves, captured and tied them skillfully with [Magic Hands].

[Unit Arrangement] only covers Friend Units, but it seems that neutralized people like this can be moved together with the unit as captives.

I push the captured thieves to the territorial army and then I go back to the abandoned fort earlier with Unit Arrangement.

--Yup, this is convenient.

Next time, it might be interesting to tame some griffons that thieves avoid and let them nest on the fort.

I dance through the sky while thinking such things, heading toward the sacred Fujisan Mountains where snow remain.

◇

I use the [All Map Exploration] after a long time not using it once I enter Fujisan Mountains.

It seems Tenryu (Heavenly Dragon) and Mito are in the shrine on the mountaintop. Mito is the only human here, the other living beings are only dragons, monsters and beasts.

The monsters are located only on the foot of the mountains, there are dragons from the middle to the top.

Looks like there are more than a hundred lesser dragons, seven adult dragons, and one elder dragon.

I thought of hiding my presence, but it'd be bad they thought of me as someone who was plotting of doing something bad to Mito and Tenryu, so I go toward the shrine boldly openly.

--As the result, looks like it's a failure.

The dragons are coming to me, simply because they can't forgive someone who enters their turf.

Lesser dragons that are smaller than their counterparts in the lower layer of the labyrinth soar in the sky one after another.

Adult dragons and the elder dragon have come from the shrine.

"GUROROROWWWWN", so the vigorous roars of the dragons shake the mountains.

I don't want to hurt the dragons who have become a rare species because of me.

I'll make use of titles and make them become obedient. I put the title [Friend of the Black Dragon].

"KISSYWAAAAAAA"

"BWAOOOOOOWWWWN"

"GURORORROWWWWN"

Their roars become even more intense than before.

I rudely thought that the black dragon Heiron was hated, but I feel the excitement of, "True friends exchange blows with each other", from their eyes.

--I forgot that the dragons are fundamentally battle junkies.

I don't mind keeping them company if there's only a few, but I'm worried that I'd fail at holding back when there are these many.

I change my title to [Natural Enemy of Dragons], and fly past them with Flash Drive while the dragons are flinching.

It seems the dragons here have less guts than the evil dragons, the instant I changed my title, their bodies were stiffened out of fear and they fell one after another to the mountain slopes.

....I wonder if I made the wrong choice?

The mountain slopes become full of big holes, but since the health gauges of these dragons haven't been decreased in the least, they must be playing dead.

The adult dragons didn't fall down, but they glide through the sky while turning away not to meet my line of sight.

The tension in the air feels like they're thinking of something rude, like their life will be over if their flapping wings even attract my attention.

I felt slightly guilty about it, so I apologize in my heart when I pass them.

I'll treat them to some whole roasted goats in a banquet later....

While thinking such a thing, I moved toward the shrine with Flash Drive.

Tenryu (Heavenly Dragon) appears from the shrine, spreads her wings and makes a threatening pose.

This one has a lot of debt from me, so being slightly rough should be fine.

『GROROROROROWWWW--』

I change my title to [Natural Enemy of Heavenly Dragons] and take the wind out of her sails.

『--KYUUWNNN』

....Are you a puppy?

◇

Tenryu turned tail and disappeared into the back of the shrine.

I know wherever she is from the luminous point in the map though, so there's no problem.

I calmly land on the shrine floor.

The inside is warm as if the cold outside is a lie.

It's probably under air conditioner magic.

While advancing the uninhabited corridor, the points that indicate Mito and Ten-chan are reflected on the radar.

Beyond the long corridor, the two appear in greece toga-like clothing.

"Are you the bad kid who's bullying the dragons--"

Mito who's holding a broom while taking an imposing stance looks quite gallant.

Now then, I should clear up the misunderstanding before we talk.

13-9. Fujisan Mountains Shrine

Satou's here. I heard that when you have a childhood friend of the opposite sex, there's a high probability that the two of you will become lovers. Each time, I insisted that childhood's friends lovers only exist in the world of fictions.

◇

"--Huh? Aren't you the violet-haired hero from the other day?"

"Hi, it's been a while."

Looks like she remembers about Nanashi.

She's calmer than I thought--.

"Is this the guy who tortured Ten-chan?"

"That's right Mito. To me who couldn't move, he scoped my body, peeled off my scales, and cut my tail and horns! And then to the inverse scale..."

Ten-chan who follows behind Mito to hide herself complains while shaking.

Looks like the inside is Tenryu.

When her eyes meet mine, she hides behind as if she's a bullied child.

--How pathetic of a heavenly dragon.

For now I should tell the truth to Mito since being silent would make things worse.

"Please don't say it like that. That was a treatment. I swear that it was not an act out of sadism."

"....Really?"

"Yeah of course. I did heal the cut tail and scales with high magic potion and healing magic right."

Mito looks back and confirms Ten-chan, "Ten-chan, is it true?"

To hear both opinions like this, it's very like Mito.

"That's true but.... This guy even tore off my inverse scale y'see? That one hurt even if he healed me."

"There was no helping it right. Your inverse scale was encroached too. Isn't it better than getting your body taken by the Demon God?"

Although her tone is still resentful, Ten-chan gradually loses her force.

"In other words, you helped Ten-chan didn't you?"

"Yeah, it would have been better if there was a less rough way to do it, but I did not stock anesthetic powerful enough for a heavenly dragon."

Anesthetic that works for heavenly dragon-class would make ordinary men die of heart attack after all.

"Ten-chan, say thank you and sorry to this person would you?"

"....Mito."

Scolded by Mito, the transcendental beauty looks like she's a kid.

"'m sorry....thanks....."

After muttering just that much, she ran away toward the back of the shrine.

I thought that, for a little bit, only for a little bit, she looked cute.

That must have been just my imagination.

◇

Now then, let's get back to the main topic.

"Mito, I have a business with you, not Tenryu."

"Me? Don't tell me you fell for me~?"

Mito smiles happily.

And then she rattles on while gesturing dramatically.

"But, you can't! You can't I said, you can't! Because I have Senpai who has promised to take me in the future!"

....She's not talking about me right?

I don't remember making such promise.

"Don't worry, I don't feel that way. Rather, is there any place we can talk calmly?"

Talking while standing on the corridor is that.

"Then let's go to my room. Even though it's called a room, it's a building big enough for the whole parliament to enter."

Mito leads me to a luxurious building that even puts the royal capital's state guest residence to shame. It's made of light green-colored stones that look like marbles.

I'm taken to the living room of that mansion that's close to the entrance.

When we sit down, the living statue maids-san serve us some warm tea.

Their dexterity rival Lulu's even though they're just stone statues.

"Now then, since we've caught our breath, let's get back to the topic at hand."

"Good idea."

I take off the violet-colored wig and place it on the sofa.

"Arara, so it was a wig? Black hair, that means you're the current era's hero--"

I take off the white mask while Mito is speaking.

"--Eh, that beautiful girl's face!"

Mito shouts out when she sees the face of Nanashi that looks exactly like hers.

....Who the heck is a beauty.

"So you were a woman? By any chance, are you me from a parallel world?"

"I'm a genuine man. This is just a disguise."

I stop talking and tear off the Face Mask from the chin.

I sure feel like a phantom thief.

"--I-Ichirou-niii!!!"

I gently receive the hug, with the force of a level 89, of Mito--A junior at my workplace who's also my childhood friend, Kouhai Mitsuko.

I erase the inertia by making use of Unit Arrangement.

"Ichirou-nii, Ichirou-nii, Ichirou-nii, Ichirou-nii--"

I hug her delicate body along with the torrent of emotion that seem to be loaded in my names.

I gently pat Mitsuko's hair like when she was crying as a child, and let her weep to her heart's content until she calms down.

It's only been a year ago for me, but it should have been quite a long time for her.

After crying for about a hour, she's finally stopped, so I try talking to her.

"It's been a while. So you really were summoned as a hero during the development of FFW?"

"Un--Ah, so the bug-ridden FFW have been finished by Ichirou-nii, I mean, Suzuki-senpai?"

"Yeah, I had at least delivered the production-ready package to Mr. Overweight before I came here, so it should be fine."

"That's good. It was always weighting on my mind."

On top of being quite responsible herself, it's her first project after all.

"Oh right, you can keep calling me Ichirou. We're not in the workplace."

"Un, then please call me Hikaru with love."

Hikaru is an important childhood friend for me, but I don't feel love toward her.

"I'll do it if it's just affection."

"You're being cold like that hasn't changed eh."

Hikaru said so and smiled nostalgically.

By the way, Hikaru is Mitsuko's nickname.

She proclaimed that the name Mitsuko wasn't stylish, so she put up the name herself.

"Putting aside the love thing, is it alright to call you with Hikaru instead of Mitsuko now that you're at age?"

"Don't call it at age! I kept being called Shiga Yamato or Mito ever since I came here, so I want you to call me my name when I was in Japan. Calling me Junior-shi is alright too but.... Hikaru is nicer."

She was called [Junior-shi] by Mr. Overweight when she was admitted, and the name spread. "Kouhai is a kouhai (junior) so your name from now on is 『Junior-shi』", so he said and the surrounding people accepted it, the next day, even sales people started to call Hikaru that.

As a retribution, he got the nickname [Mr. Overweight], so both were just as bad.

"Then I'll call you Hikaru."

"Un--"

Some kind of itchy feeling flow between us, but Hikaru tends to self-destruct like Arisa so this kind of mood won't stay long.

"--Wait, why are you so young!"

You're minding that now.

◇

I talked about everything that has happened ever since I got to this world without hiding anything.

This is a good opportunity, I'm also going to tell Arisa and Liza about my real name and the matter of god-slaying once I return to the mansion.

I'll decide what to do with the other girls after consulting with the two.

"So you weren't summoned as a hero?"

"Yeah, according to the current hero there's a high possibility that I was summoned as a normal person by the reincarnated person from Rumooku Kingdom."

"Hm~m, Rumooku Kingdom huh. The pink-haired young king of that kingdom looks similar to Shiga-kun from Teni x Brave~"

Teni x Brave is a puzzling shoujo manga about tennis battles between a blue-haired demon king and a pink-haired hero that Hikaru really got into when she was in Japan.

If I'm not mistaken, the main character was--

"Hikaru. By any chance, did you get the name Shiga Yamato from the main characters of Teni x Brave?"

"Hehe~~, it was the name I always use in games, so it came out on the spur of the moment."

I can't fault her since I also used the name I always use in games too, [Satou] that is.

After talking about my end of things, I listen to various stories of Hikaru after she was summoned as a hero.

"I was bestowed divine power fragment by God Parion in a white room. I didn't want to kill so I chose the『Friendship』skill for befriending demon lords, and just that one filled the vessel of my soul fully."

Certainly, there's a skill called [Friendship] on Hikaru's skill column.

I didn't think that it was a Unique Skill.

"And then after the summoning, I was treated as a failed hero and got my holy sword and holy tools confiscated, and made to be in charge of transporting things with my infinite-capacity Inventory."

Apparently, there were three other heroes besides Hikaru in Saga Empire at the time.

"And then the airship that carried me was shot down by the demon lord's surprise attack, and I became a prisoner of Orc Empire--It's alright, don't worry! My chastity is still there for Ichirou-nii to take."

"I'm not worried about that."

Of course I'm happy that Hikaru wasn't sexually assaulted.

The demon lord that Hikaru talked about was the [Golden Wild Boar King] that I fought in the duchy capital's underground.

Hikaru who had become a prisoner made friends with the orcs thanks to [Friendship] Unique Skill, and built a camaraderie with the demon lord, but the demon lord who was encroached by the god's fragment challenged the two major empires at that time--Furu Empire and Saga Empire, causing a great war, turning the situation upside down.

It was a dreadful war that had a large number of demon lords and multiple heroes fighting with each other.

All of those heroes besides Hikaru lost their lives in that battle, Furu Empire who boasted of being invincible fell into ruin, and the world was thrown in chaos, so Hikaru narrates.

Afterwards, Hikaru was released from being a prisoner, and then she became friend with Tenryu, bestowed holy arms including Claiomh Solais at the Dragon God's place, and accomplished the great deed of vanquishing the great demon lord.

Hikaru herself seem to regret defeating the demon lord and the orcs, she doesn't seem proud about it.

"Did you choose to remain here after subjugating the demon lord?"

"No way. I immediately chose to go home since I wanted to go to where Ichirou-nii was."

--Then, why is she here now?

"When I was returning to Japan, I got an oracle from our enshrined deity--I won't meet Ichirou-nii even if I get back to the former world, it said."

Hikaru stops talking there and then stares at my eyes.

Hikaru's family from her father's side work as Shinto priests of a shrine, and the enshrined deity is--

"Did you meet Ama-no-Mizuhana-Hime?"

"I didn't. Only the voice....no, that's not right, I got something like a lump of image before it become words."

She believed that image, and then she returned to the current Duchy Capital.

After that, Hikaru founded Shiga Kingdom with her followers and comrades.

The current capital of Shiga Kingdom was relocated after the second generation King took over, and she herself passed time by touring while reforming the world and excessively hunting youth restoration medicines in labyrinths.

And then she received another oracle, established a magical cold sleep facility in the tower at the sea of trees on the foot of Fujisan Mountains, and fell asleep there. It's just recently that she woke up it seems.

The violet wig accidentally enters my view.

--Right, I forgot to apologize to Hikaru.

I apologize for not clearing the misunderstanding of the king and the others about me being Yamato, and suggest one thing to her.

"If you want to see your descendants, wear this wig, you'll be treated as the reincarnated Ancient King Yamato and can get to meet them y'see."

"Didn't I say that I protected my chastity! The second generation king is my adopted child you see. He was an illegitimate child of the last Furu emperor, a good child who pressed on even in difficult situations. His favorite phrase was『To not shame the name of Shiga』--"

Come to think of it, the king had Shiga as his family name huh.

"--But, I see. It might be nice to meet the descendant of Sharlick-kun."

Hikaru quietly said those words.

The same name as the third prince--wait, it's the opposite. The third prince probably got his name from the second generation king.

I take out an unused violet wig and Nanashi set from Storage and give it to Hikaru.

◇

After talking about our girls, I get back to the reason why I came here.

"『Mock Body (Avatar)』?"

"Yeah, there was a record about it being used by a greater demon that was killed by Tenryu's breath."

"Then that's probably about the green greater demon. That one was like the different colored one among the rangers."

<TLN: Ranger as in Power Ranger. Sentai.>

According to Nanashi there were six senior greater demons with different colors that served under the Golden Wild Boar King, they were Red, Blue, Yellow, Green, and Black.

As for the greater demon itself, there are a lot of them that exist it seems.

"How did you deal with it?"

"I figured its characteristic after encountering it many times. It used 『Zamasu』 as its ending word. I could quickly distinguish if it was a mock body if we just talked for a bit."

.....Why didn't it just change the ending word.

The Ropo from back then talked normally, so it was not the same person huh.

"Then it's most likely a concealment type Unique Skill after all."

"Ichirou-nii's Unique Skill is enemy search type is it."

"Yeah, it's close to that. Once I marked someone, I know wherever they are even if they went to a different dimension."

"Hee, then does it know my current location?"

What is she saying when she's right in front of me.... Hikaru's luminous point disappears from the Radar.

Surprised, I open the map and check the marker column, Hikaru's marker denotes location unknown too.

"How about it?"

The moment Hikaru spoke, her marker reappeared on the Radar.

"The marker still existed, but the location became unknown."

Looks like she's satisfied with my answer, she nods proudly with crossed arms.

"As I thought. Ichirou-nii's search skill gets its information from the same resource as the analysis board that I made."

"Analysis board, you mean Yamato Stone?"

"Looks like it's called that now.... Rather than that, it's about the resource."

According to Hikaru's explanation, there's a stream of Magic Essence created by the Dragon God--the so-called Dragon Vein--and, the thing that's flowing in that stream is not just Magic Essence, but also various information.

The information from Appraisal and Market Price/Estimation skills also come from this Dragon Vein.

"In other words, if you can stop the information from flowing into that

Dragon Vein, you can isolate the information."

"....I see."

Recognition Inhibition type items work by circulating false information to that stream.

I understand the principle, but then I can't catch Ropo like this--

"However, it's difficult to maintain complete isolation you know. Your own magic power will be getting depleted terribly fast while you're isolating yourself from the flow of Magic Essence, and during that time, you can't even recover your magic power from outside~"

Looking at Hikaru's MP gauge, it's been decreased by about 30%.

If it's decreased that much in just that short time, maintaining it in a long period of time should be difficult even if the user's level is relatively high.

I can understand why Ropo didn't do the stealing himself.

I imitate Hikaru and try to isolate myself from the flow of Magic Essence.

....It's not going well.

Is it different from cutting off my presence?

Just like when I use hiding skills, I assimilate myself with the surrounding and furthermore, I project the opposite side of my body on the Magic Essence like optical camouflage--

＞[Recognition Inhibition] Skill Acquired

＞[Magic Essence Concealment] Skill Acquired

＞[Magic Essence Camouflage] Skill Acquired

＞[Optical Camouflage] Skill Acquired

＞TItle [One who Deludes All] Acquired

I got something slightly different too, but well, since it looks useful, there's no particular problem.

Now that I'm able to do it myself, I now understand the way to sniff out the camouflage.

"You're amazing Ichirou-nii. Is it a magic to make you disappear?"

"No, it seems to be an 『Optical Camouflage』 skill."

"It seems huh. You'd be a Jack all trades, Master of none if you waste your skill points you know?"

I tell Hikaru who's worried, "It's alright", and start to try getting the crucial skill.

I ask Hikaru to activate her camouflaging from Magic Essence skill.

Just like before, Hikaru's luminous point disappears from the Radar.

In order to increase my concentration, I cut OFF the menu indicators.

--Search for the oddness.

If there's none of it, then search for the blank space.

If there's no blank space, then search for the discrepancy.

As if looking at the dead point of my view, I stare hard at the thing that can't be seen....

....The fluctuation of information.

....The unnaturalness of the flow.

--I see it!

>[Oddness Detection] Skill Acquired
>[Magic Essence Distribution Perception] Skill Acquired
>[Anti Magic Essence Camouflage Detection] Skill Acquired
>Title [One who Sees Through All] Acquired

Alright!
Skills get.

Unfortunately, it seems the skills can't link well with the Map, but I can use them to detect within the Radar's range.

Now then, the preparation is complete.
I'll seize Ropo's tail when I get back to the Royal Capital!

13-10. Arrest

Satou's here. Fun chases between detectives and thieves only happens in fiction. I think in reality, several policemen form a team to track down the criminal.

◇

I talked all night with Hikaru, and left the Heavenly Dragon Shrine as the sun rose.

The plan is for Hikaru to go to the Royal Capital after soothing Tenryu.

The shrine is treated as its own area, so I can't directly teleport to it through Unit Arrangement, I can do short-range teleport to it though.

I've put a carved seal board for Return Teleport in Hikaru's mansion, so we can meet anytime.

I wanted to reconcile with the dragons before going out of the shrine, but they were frightened more than I thought and didn't want to get close to the shrine, so I asked Hikaru for their mental care.

I'm thinking of bringing some presents for them another day.

I thought of going to Boruenan Forest but it was at the hour where only Lulu should have woken up, so I went to the Royal Capital first to eliminate the thieves.

I move to Pendragon Mansion with Unit Arrangement, quickly activate the Anti Magic Essence Camouflage skill, and then notice one thing as I open the menu.

--The opponent shouldn't be activating it permanently if it's a skill with bad fuel consumption.

So I thought and checked the map, turned out Ropo is existing normally in an area of the slump.

Looks like my expectation is right on mark.

I investigate the thief hideout where Ropo is on the map, and move to his room with Unit Arrangement.

Right before that, I changed into Kuro form like yesterday from Nanashi form.

Two half-naked women are sleeping on both sides of the bed.

They haven't noticed me yet. Probably because I'm using Magic Essence Camouflage skill and Hiding skill.

The two women seem to be thieves too, so I can apprehend them without reserve.

I slightly lift up Ropo who's still sleeping with [Magic Hand] and then tie him with a rope made of [Thorn Foot]'s ivy.

Looks like he wakes up, he raises a hoarse scream.

Hearing that scream, the women ready daggers on their hands on top of the bed.

It's troublesome, so I neutralize the women with [Remote Stun].

I tumble the neutralized women off the bed, and then lightly cut Ropo's cheek with the dagger.

Unlike with yesterday, the spilling blood didn't become smoke, it only stained the bed red.

"Who the hell are yaaa"

--He's forgotten already even though we just met yesterday?

Without answering him, I strike his stomach with [Remote Stun] like with the women.

I had thought that he would resist, but Ropo's status quickly becomes 'Fainted'.

....Strange. It's too easy.

When I see Ropo with Anti Magic Essence Camouflage skill activated, I feel something odd on his neck.

According to AR reading it's a recognition inhibition type artifact called [Thief God Harness].

I couldn't take it off, so I store it into the Storage directly.

--Who is this guy?

The person I had thought was Ropo turned into someone else.

It's a level 30 middle-aged bearded man.

Apparently, he's a body double who disguised himself by using an artifact.

I round up the other thieves beside the fake Ropo and take them to the royal capital's soldiers.

◇

I return to the thief hideout and recover the fainted fake Ropo to question him.

"Now then, you'll be telling me your relationship with Ropo."

"Hmph, like I'd talk to you bastard--"

I can call Pochi-sensei and Tama-sensei here, but let's just threaten him normally.

I cut a steel armor that's in the room in half with a magic sword in my hand.

"I wonder if you'd still utter the same thing after losing your limbs?"

I don't actually intend to carry it out, although those can be restored with high magic potion.

"--That cold-blooded face is serious huh."

Apparently, Poker Face skill is doing a good job.

"I'd rather be killed here than selling Head."

Fake Ropo pretends to be tough with shaking voice.

"Do you have a long history with Ropo?"

"Yeah.... Since I was a petty thief in Holy Kingdom Parion, it's already more than 10 years huh--"

Despite saying that he'd rather be killed, he began to leak out information like it's normal, maybe it's due to Negotiation and Questioning skills.

Apparently, the person himself doesn't seem to notice that fact.

"--Propor-aniki was going to do something big in Shiga Kingdom, so we came here to prepare the preliminary work y'see--"

"Hou, that famous Mirage huh."

"Hehee, Aniki is awesome."

Fake Ropo smoothly told the situation surrounding him like a drunk man.

I got [Confession Inducement] skill before I knew it. I allocate points to it since it seems useful.

The item that this guy used was given to him by Mirage Propor he said.

....Wait, his story earlier was a bit strange.

The positions of Ropor and this guy should have been like the subcontractors of Mirage.

I understand if Ropor sees Shinkiro as his aniki (elder brother/senior), but shouldn't this guy refer to him as ojiki? <TLN: Sort of "uncle" version of aniki I guess.>

The custom might be different, but let's try confirming it.

"Mirage Propor isn't your ojiki but your aniki?"

"Isn't that a given? He's my aniki who took me out of the slum."

"Wasn't it Ropor?"

"But of course--Head is a benefactor."

"Benefactor of what?"

"What, you ask.... I wonder what?"

Fake Ropor falls silence with a dubious face.

He looks similar to Baron Muno and the others who were manipulated by the demon's mind magic.

--My Crisis Perception is reacting.

A silver light flies, aiming for me and Fake Ropor.

I catch that with [Magic Hand] and put it into my Storage, and counterattacked the invisible assailant without preparation.

"How did you know my location zamasu?"

Ropor who flew from my kick raises his head from the debris.

--Zamasu?!

Ignoring the fake Ropor who's screaming behind, I kick Ropor who's standing up again.

Breaking the defense he had formed by crossing his arms, I kicked him again to the debris.

Looks like he's camouflaging from the magic essence, his information has disappeared from the AR reading.

Then let's bluff here.

"--What's the green demon doing in a place like this?"

Hearing my words, Ropor's face becomes like a Noh mask.

On his right left arm, I found the same bracelet that the fake Ropor was wearing.

"To be found out by a mere level 50 white haired kid like this, how pathetic zamasu."

I take out the holy sword Durandal from Storage and slash at Ropor who's cackling like a frog, or to be exact, the green demon with it.

Of course, the aim is the bracelet on its left arm.

I smash the countless ice swords that have appeared around the demon with [Break Magic] chantlessly, and cut its left arm with Durandal in my hand.

I tried to put the bracelet together with the falling left arm into the Storage, but it was repelled.

--Then.

I incinerate its left arm with [Forge] magic.

The heat from the blast blows the underground thief hideout into pieces.

I don't intend to be a man-killer, so I reluctantly protect the fake Ropor with [Flexible Shield] and [Shelter] magic.

Surprisingly, the bracelet persists even while covered in flame.

I catch the bracelet inside the flame with [Magic Hand], and put it into the Storage this time.

And then, the green demon splits the smoke, attacking me.

Matching its name, it's holding a green magic sword in its hand.

I merely bend my body to evade the attacking magic sword, and then swing the holy sword while in unnatural stance, cutting its body in half.

I felt slight resistant cutting an opponent that looked exactly like a human, but since the inside was a demon, carelessly holding back would bring a chance for it, so I hardened my heart.

Just like yesterday, the blood spilling from it produce white smoke.

From between the white smoke gaps, I see the mock body that has been split standing. It feels surreal since it looks like a human.

As I stare at the crumbling mock body, its information is displayed on the AR reading like usual.

Its name has become, [Ropor(Fake)], and the race is [Human(Demon)].

Looks like it can still disguise itself even without the bracelet, but its original state can't deceive my Menu.

I record the information on the AR before it disappears along with black smoke.

It seems it has disguise, hiding, camouflage skills, along with [Mind Magic] and [Ice Magic].

"--Let's end the opening act. We will be back with the enthronement of His Highness. Enjoy your short-lived peace while you can zamasu!"

The mock body completely disappeared after leaving such parting threat.

....Apparently, it can't hide its ending word when it's worked up.

The marker of the mock body has disappeared from the map.

Looks like the mock body was treated like it had died when it disappeared, so it's gone from the marker column.

When I check on it, the [Thief God Harness] bracelet that I've collected from the green demon and the fake Ropor is a set of three items.

In addition to having the effect of inhibiting recognition and manipulating your own information, it can also let the people who equip it to exchange their locations by teleport.

Since I had nothing to lose, I tried searching for the last one, and found the owner in an orphanage in the outer circumference of the Royal Capital.

Now then, I guess I'll settle this before the breakfast--

◇

"Boy. Is that bandana yours?"

I ask the white haired boy who's drawing water from the orphanage's water well.

The boy has the name Shin like a Japanese would, but his face looks like a Caucasian.

"--That's right."

Shin boy hits the bandana with his hand after faltering a bit.

This bandana is the last of [Thief God Harness]. There's a closed eye picture drawn on the forehead part.

"Where did you get it?"

"I got it from a dead old beggar who was squashed under the debris during the monsters attack before."

....Fumu, so that old man was the original owner huh.

No, there's a possibility that Shin boy is in disguise.

"Let me borrow it for a bit."

"Ah--"

I snatch Shin boy's bandana with [Magic Hand].

Shin boy leaked out voice of surprise since it seemed he never thought that I would snatch it while crossing my arms.

His name and race don't change even without the bandana. His level is still 3 too.

The places that have changed are the Skill column and Detail column. His [One-handed Sword] skill disappears and [Pain Resistance] skill appears, his detailed information changes into blank.

Oh wait, his title has increased too--this is?!

I prevent looking surprised with Poker Face skill, and ask the protesting boy.

"What did you do before coming to this orphanage?"

"Dunno."

"There's no way you don't know right?"

"It's true. I don't have any memory before I was picked up by the director here."

Shin boy shouts on verge of becoming angry.

Judging from his appearance, he doesn't seem to be lying.

Considering his blank detail, his memory loss is probably a fact.

"Hero, demon lord, highness--Do you recognize any of those words?"

"I've heard about heroes and demon lords from aunties' stories who came to the orphanage. As for 'highness', the princess and the plump man at the academy were called that."

I ask for more details from Shin boy, it seems to be about princess Menea and Souya-kun the illegitimate child.

Come to think of it, the name Shin came out in Arisa's story too.

"Last question. What's your relationship with the dead beggar?"

"He was an old man who often talked about something I didn't understand whenever he found me."

"What kind of talk?"

Shin boy seems to dislike the old man, he looks fed up.

"'What do you think of freedom, or enthronement, or sacrifice', those complete nonsense."

Freely offering sacrifices for the enthronement huh.

That old man might have been a member of Light of Liberty.

"....He-hey, if you want that bandana, I'll sell it to you for one copp-no one silver coin."

Shin boy talked so, what a godsend.

I'd be hesitant to take away a keepsake, but if it can be solved with money, then it's a simple matter.

At any rate, leaving this item alone is too dangerous.

"Very well, I'll buy it."

I give him a silver coin together with a black bandana from my Storage.

"....This is?"

"Wear that instead. It's a cheap item but it's better than nothing right?"

"Y-yeah....I'll take it."

Shin boy tries to behave curtly, but his mouth loosens.

Looks like he's pleased with the homemade recognition inhibition black bandana.

"Farewell. Boy."

I turn my back from Shin Boy--Hero Shin, and leave that place.

Yes, he was concealing the title [Hero].

I gave him the recognition inhibition bandana in order to hide his title.

It might be good to give him a holy wooden sword for training the next time we meet.

I'll consult about him with a real hero, Hikaru.

13-11. Local Hero

Satou's here. When I became a working adult, there were many times when I was forced to fight for 24 hours. When you lack of sleep, you become short-tempered and tend to fail, so I desperately defended for three-hour sleep privilege at the time I hadn't got a cheat body.

◇

"Sorry, I have something to ask you--"

I moved to the abandoned fortress in Muno territory, and asked Hikaru at the mountaintop using Telephone.

『Hero? Maybe he's not a hero summoned by god Parion's secret art, but a local hero?』

Local.... They're not vegetables.

『There were only a few of them during my era. Like the lizardkin or dogkin heroes.』

When I think about it, I'm also similar to a local hero.

I got the title [Hero] after defeating Wagahai-kun after all--that's right, I remember now.

--The title Hero is obtained after you've passed beyond the point of life and death

Zen the [No Life King] said such things before.

That guy wanted me to gain the title Hero by driving me to the wall.

Shin boy might have passed a certain experience that was enough to make his hair white and became a Hero.

That might be the cause of his memory loss too.

Next, I tell the thing I've heard from Shin boy to Hikaru.

『Sacrifices huh.... Perhaps the demons might be thinking of using that Shin boy to make the demon lord into a [True Demon Lord].』

"What's that?"

『Umm you see. When a hero defeats a demon lord, their title becomes [True Hero] right. If a demon lord defeats a hero, its title won't change, but it'll get abruptly stronger. The orc demon lord that I talked to you about back then was like that too~. Every time it defeated a hero, its power increased and the demon lord erosion got worse.』

Fumu, there's no way you'd level up from defeating just one opponent with the same level as yours, so heroes and demon lords probably have special growth element to each other.

The gods might have set it like that.

『Okay. Ichirou-nii seems busy and all, so I'll indirectly guard him once I get back to the Royal Capital.』

"I'm sorry, thanks."

I'm thankful to Hikaru's suggestion.

There's no particular problem even if a demon lord becomes [True Demon Lord] and relatively powers up, but I don't feel like abandoning someone who's going to be sacrificed by the demons.

However, it'll be sometime before Hikaru returns to the Royal Capital, so I'll have to deploy people to protect Shin boy until then.

I thank Hikaru, and then tell her about the green demon.

『Geh, that green fellow hasn't been destroyed? Aww~, that's some troublesome guy that survives.』

"Can it create mock body in arbitrary places?"

『The demon should only be able to create it in the place where the real body is. The resourceful kid in my hero party said so.』

Then it's possible to intercept the demon before it attacks by searching the demon's level regularly.

"Do you know where the demon's base is?"

『Back then it was hiding in Biroho Kingdom, but it was destroyed along with the city by Ten-chan's breath, so it should be in another place right now maybe?』

"The present location of that?"

『Umm, I don't have a map now so I don't know. It's around the west-northwest area from the Labyrinth city.』

Around the western part of Marquis Eluet's territory--the tip of the desert huh.

After checking various things, I cut the call with Hikaru.

I've decided to go to the demon's former base I heard from Hikaru earlier before returning to Boruenan village.

I move to the prepared teleport base in the vast desert, and search for the demon's level.

I couldn't find the green demon with search even though I went out of my way here.

Using this opportunity, I stop by the labyrinth's villa, stock some tomatoes for breakfast, and teleport to Boruenan village.

◇

I was thinking of telling Arisa and Liza my real name and the matter about the Dragon Valley after the breakfast, but the chase took more time than I had though, so I decided to postpone it until evening.

It's not something that needs to be told in a hurry anyway.

We went back to the Royal Capital's mansion from the Boruenan Village, and then I sent the children to the school.

When I was preparing to go out with the carriage after changing my clothes, Zena-san and her friends visited.

They're slower than usual today.

Usually they would have come over before the children went to school after breakfast.

"Welcome, Zena-san. It seems you were called by Earl Seryuu yesterday--"

"I'm sorry, Viscount-sama!"

When I was talking, Lilio who was behind Zena-san apologized.

Since it seems there's something, I guide them to the living room and listen to their story.

"--I see. In short, the Earl misunderstood the relationship between me and Zena-san?"

"Un, I spoke a bit too much--"

Fumu, there's nothing between us that would have led to misunderstanding though....

I heard that magic soldiers are precious, so perhaps the Earl thought that I was seducing his retainer to be mine?

"Viscount-sama, please take this."

Miss Iona submits a letter from beside Lilio who's apologizing on her knees.

Looking at the seal of the sealing wax, it seems to be from Earl Seryuu.

"--It seems to be an invitation for a luncheon."

I show the letter to the members of Zena Squad, write a letter for my consent and pass it to Zena-san.

The date written in the letter is tomorrow.

Being sudden has its limit too.

I write the luncheon in the schedule book of the menu, narrowly fitting it into the fourth day of the Kingdom Conference.

This conference is over tomorrow. Three days after the day after tomorrow is the long-awaited auction.

--Let's get through it quickly!

◇

I meet Consul Nina and Earl Muno during the short morning break that day, and tell them about the lunch with Earl Seryuu tomorrow.

According to Consul Nina, it's most likely going to be about the newly created Labyrinth of Seryuu City.

"Specifically, he probably wants you, who have several Mithril explorers as your retainers, and a group of excellent explorers as the lower branch in the Labyrinth City."

I didn't understand the meaning of lower branch for an instant, but it's probably about the Explorer Training School and the graduates.

I don't actually have the authority to order the Pendora guys, but it seems the surrounding people see it like that.

"He's probably giving you that magic soldier as your mistress to buy your favor."

The fact that it's 'mistress' not 'wife' seems to be the problem with her peerage.

Ms Nina warned me not to make some strange promise with Earl Seryuu, but they fundamentally leave it to my will.

The short break is over, so I thank Ms Nina and the others and then go back to the conference.

It's not like I'm against helping the Earl with the labyrinth management, but I want to avoid turning Zena-san into a political piece.

◇

During the lunch, I order Echigoya Firm's Manager to employ several watchers for Shin boy.

Though they're called watchers, they're not some high level spies, but they're just some non-combatants detective-like people.

I told her to only make them watch Shin boy.

They're not going at it directly, they're only going to report back if there's anyone suspicious contacting or monitoring the boy.

Even if the boy is abducted for sacrifice, it's possible to rescue him as long as they report fast.

Or rather, if the mastermind kidnaps him, I could arrest them all and finish the case.

....It might be slightly heartless of me, but he's not a friend right now after all.

◇

Evening after I came back to the mansion from the conference, the butler reported that there were many thieves caught in the courtyard's trap.

It seems they're unrelated to Ropo, but after the meal I'll change into Kuro and round them all up in their hideout.

The sole healing time is when I listen to the children's story about the school during our meal.

"Master, listen! Nanodesu."

Pochi who's waiting for the second helping of the thick steak appeals in high tension.

"What is it? Say it."

"Today we had a training with the teacher of teacher, the great teacher!"

"He was strong~?"

Tama who's eating shrimps wholly with their shells earnestly nods.

Someone whom these two refer as strong huh....

"What's the name of this great teacher?"

"E~m"

"Great teacher Heim nanodesu."

--As I thought.

It's probably Shiga Eight Sword Heim the [Weed].

If I'm not mistaken his seat was raised to be the second seat of Shiga Eight Swords recently.

"Pochi went like 'zushat' then 'kyuit' but then he blocked like 'pon' nodesu."

"When Tama went from behind, he blocked by turning the sword behind~?"

He's someone whose level equals the two's without power-leveling, so he must have various experiences.

"Did he tell you something?"

"Come play~?"

"Come to the knight order's training center when you're free, it'll be a good practice, he said nodesu."

So he really was soliciting them.

Unlike Liza, these two are minor with peerage, so they can't be employed in the military of Shiga Kingdom without my permission as their guardian.

Yet, I'm a bit worried, so--

"You can go to the training center, but you have to go with Liza. Okay?"

"Aye aye Sir~"

"Yes nanodesu."

I told them so.

I did it without asking Liza's approval, but it should be a good training for her since she'll be against Shiga Eight Swords whose power are on par with her.

"How about Mia and Arisa, what were you doing today?"

"U~n, I helped Mia's lecture, and also--"

"Magic cloth."

Mia interrupted Arisa who was groaning with folded arms, and muttered.

"Ah, right right. We had a practice to make magic cloth by embroidering magic circuit on magic cloth using silver thread."

"He~, is it similar to yuriha fiber cloth that the elves and brownies make?"

I asked if it was the same as yuriha fiber that I usually wear, but Arisa shook her head, denying it.

"It's like an inferior version of it I think. They said that after the embroidery is finished, the cloth is then soaked in liquid made by alchemists, then the liquid will be attached."

I guess it's similar to plating?

When I search the documents I have, there are recipes about it among them.

It was the technique which I ignored in the beginning since it needed a large-scale facility. Many expensive materials became usable once I arrived at Boruenan Village so I completely forgot about it. Embroidery is troublesome, but let's try finding something to use it on.

"Arisa, special training."

"Eh~, embroidery is minute and delicate, I can't~"

"Ufufu, I'll teach you too so let's work hard."

Looks like Arisa is bad at embroidery even though she's good at sewing.

With Mia and Lulu teaching you, temper your embroidery skill and girl's power.

In addition, Shiro and Crow spent their time in the childhood school without any mishaps.

Apparently, an upper noble daughter who likes birds is protecting them from people who dislike demi-humans.

"Teena-sama said that she once participated in the Princess's tea party too."

"Un, she said that. Crow, take the bone."

"Shiro, I'll do it, but you have to become independent okay?"

Shiro who likes fish pushes the works of taking the fish bones to Crow.

I found many hit when I searched the name Teena that Kuro mentioned, but the only one who was in the upper noble area was the granddaughter of Marquis Kelten.

While I'm at it, I ask them the name of the princess, turns out it's the little sister of the forbidden library's princess from the same mother. The world seems quite small.

Next, I ask Lulu and Nana about their activities in the royal castle's kitchen.

"Today we made a lot of swe~et snacks."

From tomorrow evening after the Kingdom Conference is over, there will a ball held every day until the closing of the auction, and so she showed them her idea for new snacks, and she was taught the recipes of the royal court.

The children react to the word of sweet snacks.

"You serious!"

"I got a lot of them as presents, so let's bring them to Boruenan Village and eat them together with everyone."

"Snack~"

"Wa~i, nanodesu!"

I smile at Lulu and reply, "I'm looking forward to it."

Since Zena-san and her friends don't seem like they'll be coming due to the luncheon, Liza is going to train with the elf masters in Boruenan village today.

"Just a bit more and it feels like I'd get an idea for a new technique", so said Liza.

Pochi and Tama looked like they were interested with the new technique too, so we went to Boruenan Village a bit early.

Now then, after reluctantly parting with them, guess I'll start processing the remaining businesses today.

I retrieve Echigoya firm's members who are on business trips for the Royal Capital's revival matter, and also finish constructing the branch offices and sending the permanent members there at once, I also finish up other tasks.

After raiding the thief's hideout, I also carried out the power-leveling of Echigoya Firm.

This one is going better than expected, their levels have been increased to 30 using only the cultivated monsters.

Soon, it might be good to get in touch with Zena and Lady Karina as Kuro to level them up to 30.

....Well, I guess I can do that after the auction and I'm less busy.

I produce scarecrows for sensing demons all-night, preparing them to do the monitoring job for when I'm asleep.

Deploying the scarecrows in the territories under the control of the king is easy with Unit Arrangement, but as expected, I feel that my mental fatigue has piled up.

The Kingdom Conference should be over tomorrow, I have to take a break once Hikaru comes to the Royal Capital.

◇

In the morning of the last day of the Kingdom Conference, the allocation of the magic cores produced by the Labyrinth City for each territories reached the conclusion.

The groundworks seems to have been laid beforehand, so without any problem--

"Isn't it too outrageous for the supply to our territory to be suspended for three years! Our territory won't be able to be restored!"

--Looks like I can't say that.

With a desperate upset face, the young Earl Lesseu protests to the King and the Consul.

I don't know how is he going to use the magic cores for the restoration, but it seems he's dissatisfied that the magic cores that should have been for his territory are diverted to the knights dispatched to Bisthal Dukedom, and the royal capital's restoration.

He was probably left out during the groundwork-making.

I'm not really interested in it, so I change places with Satou doll I used during Nanashi's ennoblement, and take a brief nap.

Good night....

13-12. Luncheon with Earl Seryuu

Satou's here. The first time I knew the word harem was from a certain story in the Arabian Nights when I was in elementary school. I remember asking the young female teacher, "What's a harem?", and taught, "It's when there are a lot of wives."

If I did that now, I'd be sued of doing a sexual harassment for sure.

◇

It seems the half-hour nap is quite good for me as now I'm able to tackle the luncheon with Earl Seryuu with a clear head.

Thanks to that I remember that I've completely forgotten to talk with Arisa and Liza about the Dragon God slaying.

Piled up fatigue is not good after all.

The preparation for the last day of the auction is very quite enough anyway, I'll take it easy until the day.

While thinking like so, I'm guided by the chamberlain of Earl Seryuu's house to the dining room for guest in the royal castle.

It seems I'm the last of the guests, inside the room are Earl Seryuu couple, his retainers Viscount Belton couple, knights couple of Kigori house whom I don't recognize, and for some reason, Parion Temple's Miko Auna-san and Zena-san who looks nervous too.

Kigori couple probably serve as the Earl's guards.

The husband is a level 40 knight, and the wife is a level 37 magic knight who can use earth magic, they're the strongest-class of warriors in the territory.

I understand that Miko Auna-san is the Earl's daughter from checking the details in the menu.

I thought I had seen her before, turned out she was the Miko-san who healed Zena-san when we first met. Incidentally, she also got me to learn the holy magic skill.

I thank the Earl for inviting me as a lip service, and then greet and introduce myself to the other members in annoying noble-like manner.

I'm guided to the seat of honor in front of the Earl.

Judging from this placement, it doesn't seem to be that bad of a talk.

I talk to Zena-san who's taken the seat beside me in low voice.

"Your dress today looks quite gorgeous. It really suits you."

"T-thank you very much. They're something lent to me by the madam's lady's maid."

I see, I thought it seems bolder than the usual Zena-san who usually wears neat clothes.

"You don't have to be that tense. Leave it to me and enjoy the delicious food."

"Y-yes."

I haven't eased Zena-san's tension enough, but since Earl Seryuu is looking here like he's evaluating me, I cut the talk.

Unlike the one with the prime minister, the luncheon is centered on very normal royal court dishes with the specialty of Earl Seryuu's chef, croquette dish, as the main course.

The conversation during the meal was also quite normal the whole time, with me talking about the detail when I met Zena-san, and them thanking me for cooperating with the Seryuu Earldom's selected corps in the labyrinth city.

I thought the luncheon would end just like that, but then when the strawberries with sugar and honey sauce were distributed as the dessert, the earl instructed the waiters to leave and the main topic began--.

◇

"--I'll get straight to the point. Marry Auna. Don't you want to be a member of our Earl house and be the one in charge of the labyrinth management?"

Oh, he's quite straight.
Still, I think that's a bit too excessive for an upstart 16 year old noble.

I don't know where the Earl got the idea of letting a noble from another house to be in charge of the labyrinth management with its enormous right, but the opposition from the nobles in his territory should be quite fierce.

Let's decline it quickly.

"It is quite an honor, but someone weak like me is not fit for it. Pardon me of being presumptuous, but such an important task may be more suited to someone more experienced."

"--Hmph, he declined without even showing any worry huh. I heard he was unselfish, but to think it's to this degree."

The earl seemed to have expected my refusal, I picked up the earl's faint muttering with Attentive Ears and Lip Reading skills.

The earl gives an eye signal to Viscount Belton, making him stop trying to get the sweet strawberry and talk.

Looks like there are a lot more sweet tooths than I thought.

"Sir Pendragon. You might be misunderstanding, a member of the earl house isn't simply marrying to another earl house. It means that the earl is also giving you the right to succeed the house."

--Uwah, I'd like to refrain from that even more.

"That is such an honor. I do not understand the reason as to why Earl-sama regards someone like me that high, but the lineage of a long-standing noble blood should not be polluted by an upstart like me."

For now, I'll be using the lovely word of "upstart" to flatter the pride of nobles to refuse him.

I'm not really interested in managing labyrinth, and I'm even more uninterested in succeeding the earl.

I might have been tempted by a cool beauty type woman like Lady Auna when I was still in the former world, but now that I've gotten used to beauties like Lulu and Aze-san, I don't feel bewildered.

"Lineage huh--. The aristocratic nobles may prize their lineage, but our Earl house puts more important in valor. Besides, it's useless even if you feign ignorance. I have already understood all of your strength."

....Strength?

Don't tell me, there were witnesses who saw me using the Meteor Shower?

For the time being, I use [Poker Face] skill to hide my surprise and ask him.

"What is this about?"

"--Since you seem to have no idea about it, I'll speak of it."

The earl raises a corner of his mouth and talks in firm voice.

- The capability to escape from a labyrinth unhurt without equipment.

- Saved the Muno Territory which was on the verge of being ruled by demons.

- The ability to mediate the discord in the duchy capital, and obstruct the secret maneuver of the demon lord sympathizers.

- Distinguished himself as an explorer in the labyrinth city, and having the foresight to establish an educational facility for rearing future explorers.

- Mingling with an elf, and also having an amicable relationship with the fairykins who are known to avert humans.

--He really has it thoroughly investigated.

Nevertheless, even though they shouldn't have been something that amazing, when it's listed by the earl like this, 'it's nothing great' feels like an illusion.

"These much should be known by the prime minister and the viceroys. However, the one thing I'm looking in wonder is about the beastkin girls who are with you."

Our beastkin girls, what about them?

--It can't be.

"His complexion doesn't change huh.... Looks like he's not merely an unselfish good-natured person."

Without knowing the unrest in my mind, I picked up the earl's muttering with Attentive Ears Skill.

"I wonder how the lords would think if they knew that the lizardkin girl who defeated the strongest in Shiga Kingdom, Sir Julberg, had one digit level one year ago."

I see, he's grasped the growth the beastkin girls huh.

Come to think of it, their levels and skills were examined with the original Yamato Stone when we got out of Seryuu Labyrinth.

If it's known that warriors equaling Shiga Eight Swords can be mass produced in a year, it's true that people who think of doing bad thing would appear.

Let's hide it and probe the earl's intention.

"In consideration of the upper class nobles' hearts, I'm really...."

"I've said that feigning ignorance is useless. You probably collected magic potions by investing vast amount of capital, and fought continuously in the labyrinth. However, that too depends on the person who does the instructing."

The earl pauses and stares at me to gauge my reaction.

Far from investing, I got positive gain instead.

"I highly value your ability. With your cooperation, the labyrinth management should be able to be in operation in five years. It should be able to be put in motion in 10 years even without your help, but then there would be unpleasant meddling from the kingdom and the lineage nobles."

It seems the Negotiation skill is in effect, the Earl spoke something that didn't need to be said too. You shouldn't have talked about that before getting agreement from the other party you know.

"Come to our house, and I'll make you to be in charge of the labyrinth management, furthermore for 10 years, I'll give you 10 percents of the magic core yield excluding the king's shares."

"That is quite an extraordinary reward."

I'm not attracted to it, but it's quite lavish.

It seems my feeling was transmitted, the earl twitches one of his brows as if he's slightly offended.

"Is it insufficient?"

"No, as I've said before, the reward and the position are too excessive for me."

When I was going to decline like that, the earl covers my words.

"That reminds me, you're in good term with Zena of Marientail house right."

--Like I thought, that one came huh.

I've slightly expected it when Zena-san was here attending the luncheon, looks like she'll be rolled up in some annoying politic.

I must prevent that by any means.

"I'll give the permission if you want to make her your mistress. If you want to make her your wife, then you can marry her after she's been adopted by Belton. I don't mind as long as she's after Auna. If you feel dutiful toward Earl Muno, then I guess the first wife is Soruna-dono or Karina-dono, the second wife is Sera-dono of Duke Oyugock, Aune is the third wife, and Zena is the fourth wife?"

What's with that harem.

I might have been fascinated with the harem route with all those beauties if I don't have someone I hold dear, but let's decline it firmly.

In the first place, I don't understand why Sera is mixed in there.

For the Oracle Miko to return to secular life and become a wife, there's no meaning--huh?

"Even if the first wife has to be Earl Muno's daughter, I'd like for Auna to be the second wife instead of Sera-dono--"

There's something that's bugging me a bit, so I interrupt the earl who's having a fervent speech when he's taking a breath.

"Earl-sama, I do not intend to have multiple wives. Moreover, if my memory serves me correct, Auna-sama should be an Oracle Miko. I thought she couldn't marry unless she returned to secular life?"

In addition, the only one that has Oracle skill in Seryuu city should be only her.

"Hmph, then that means she can just return to secular life. We can just have Parion Temple and Garleon Temple in the Royal Capital to send their miko. There is nothing to fret."

The earl splendidly ignored my remark about monogamy, and informed me about the reason why Lady Auna could marry.

"If the reward isn't enough, then I'll set another one."

Even though I've been saying that it's already too excessive since awhile ago, it doesn't seem to reach him somehow.

No wait, rather it's because I'm refusing that he pretends not to notice it huh?

"I'll put up the decree that prohibits discrimination against demi-humans in my territory. If you wish, I can also add 2000 demi-human slaves from the territory in the reward."

The discrimination won't be gone even with the decree, but legal abolition of demi-human discrimination is attractive.

I can also release the slaves to restore the abandoned cities and districts in Muno territory.

However, in exchange for that, I'll have to marry someone whom I'm not sufficiently familiar with, please leave me out that.

I don't know how the earl perceived my momentary silence, he opens his mouth after nodding with serious face.

"You cannot decide immediately huh. Then I'll give you half a year time."

I feel the sense of foreboding crisis from the earl if half a year has passed.

There should be no need for him to be that persistent with me....

"I will let you be in charge of the labyrinth selected corps during this half a year. Zena of Marientail house--"

"Y-yes."

"Go aid Viscount Pendragon as his attendant in commanding them."

"Yes, I respectfully receive the order."

Zena-san salutes the earl like a soldier while wearing dress.

Thus, Zena-san has become like my attendant for a period of time.

It's vexing to be forced like this by Earl Seryuu, but it's not bad to have the authority to accompany Zena-san in the labyrinth.

Furthermore, I have half a year, that should be enough time to nurture someone who's more capable in managing the labyrinth than me.

If I'm not mistaken there should be several Seryuu City's officials who have pushed their way into Explorer's guild staff training with my mediation.

The female officials were sharp and able, but I'd better train the male official who seems to have deep thinking and good at negotiation and push him to Earl Seryuu.

Looks like I can do something about that one.

Rather, I'm scared that I might have ridden the harem route little by little....

13-13. Evening Party at the Royal Capital

Satou's here. I got fed up of long meetings without reaching any conclusion when I first entered the company, but I was able to calmly participate after knowing the effect of letting out the steam by grumbling.

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"--With that, the Kingdom Conference this time comes to an end. Anyone who has any objection can stand up."

The prime minister who's acting as the speaker declares so as a formality.

There hadn't been anyone who objected at this point for 300 years.

The reason why I used past tense was because I saw a young lord stood up among the seats for territory lords in the front.

"Young master, please take your seat."

"Let me go, do you intend to force misery upon our people."

The young lord violently shakes off his close-aide who urged him to sit down in low voice, and scowls at the prime minister.

"Earl Lesseu huh. State it if you have an objection."

Earl Lesseu's shoulders shake from the deep voice of the prime minister that has intimidating pressure.

"T-then, I'll state it. I want you to reconsider the share of magic cores supplied to our territory!"

Earl Lesseu appealed clearly, but since his voice was trembling, it didn't have that much of a force.

"That should have come to an agreement during the morning conference--"

The prime minister tells Earl Lesseu in an easy-to-understand manner.

The earl seems to be dissatisfied, he looks down while shutting his mouth.

By the way, as for the main problem, the magic cores themselves, although they're needed in mines, as fuel for the mobile base's magic furnace, and production of magic tools, it's hard to say that they're indispensable in people's life.

The magic power needed in cities are supplied by the City Core, pulled from the Source. A large number of magic cores shouldn't be needed inside the city as long as there isn't a magic tool that can guzzle down magic power like nothing like the Mithril magic furnace in the self-governing dominion of Bolhart.

Furthermore, the distribution of the magic cores that's controlled is only the ones from the labyrinth city, the ones gotten from the monsters inside the lords' territories are left to the lords' own discretion.

If it's insufficient, then he can just hunt the monsters in his territory.

Of course that's if he has enough force in his territory.

"--The thing your territory needs is the restoration of public order right? The share of magic cores that should have been for your territory are diverted for the magic furnaces of the mobile bases that will carry the kingdom knights marching toward Bishtal Dukedom, in exchange, the kingdom knights will exterminate rampant monsters in your territory to secure the highways. You too agreed to that plan did you not?"

"T-that is..."

I see, I can read the prime minister's motive a bit.

The prime minister probably wants to prioritize securing the highways of Lesseu Earldom.

Moreover, Earl Lesseu pays the expense himself.

Considering the location, it'll be difficult to secure the supply line for the forces that are going to quell the rebellion in Bisthal Dukedom if the highways in Lesseu Earldom aren't safe.

Furthermore, it would have disturbed the circulation of money and goods from the various northern territories, especially from Marquis Eluett's territory to Royal Capital.

It's only seen from economical and military point of views, but it's probably not wrong.

And, apparently, it's only Earl Lesseu who doesn't seem to notice that.

Eearl Lesseu probably wants the magic core supply for the sake of restarting the precious metal mines in his territory.

He must be wanting to prioritize the profit gains of the earl's house and his retainers which will help him seize the authority among the nobles of his territory.

"I've said many times, the knights exterminating the monsters in the highways should be more effective in restoring the territory more than the supply of magic cores. What is the point of the magic cores for the magic furnaces in the mines and the forts if the safety of the people cannot be guaranteed."

The prime minister talks to Earl Lesseu like admonishing him.

His gentleness is like slowly strangling with a silk rope.

"Then I will yield the share of magic cores for our territory to you--"

Earl Lesseu raises his face that's full of expectation after hearing that, but his expression clouds over once again when he sees the speaker.

That is because the other party is Duke Bishtal.

"--In exchange, the knights will pass through Lesseu Earldom without stopping, and prioritize suppressing the rebellion in my territory."

"Th-that is..."

"You wish for the supply of magic cores, so what are you dissatisfied about!"

Earl Lesseu shudders from the angry voice of Duke Bisthal.

Furthermore, the retainers of Duke Bishtal and nobles of pedigree send jeers as if backing him.

"Please wait, Duke Bishtal--"

The prime minister interrupts them to stop Duke Bisthal and the others who have lost their tempers.

Apparently, the Kingdom Conference is getting an extension.

Good grief.

◇

In the end, the Conference extended for four hours, and the evening party that should have started tonight got postponed to tomorrow.

In addition, about the treatment of Lesseu Earldom, it was settled before it could objected.

There were many nobles of pedigree who looked disappointed, it seemed they were expecting either the king to take away the young Earl Lesseu's territorial lordship after incurring his displeasure, or for the earl to rebel.

The position of a viceroy that can freely control the City Core seems to be that attractive for many nobles.

It seems the neighboring nobles, particularly Earl Zettsu and Earl Kuhanou whose territories adjoin Lesseu Earldom want to loan magic cores for him.

While feeling slightly fed up by the scheming nobles, I walk on the corridor.

I head toward the parking lot to meet our girls who were going to attend the evening party.

I catch sights of several ladies who have gathered for the evening party boarding their carriages away while fuming and complaining.

Moreover, it seems the fact that the cause of the evening party's suspension is Earl Lesseu has been spread, so it'll likely become a severe handicap for the earl who needs to find a bride after his engagement with the princess was canceled.

This is somebody else's problem, but I think Earl Lesseu should have prioritized increasing his allies rather than resources.

"Sir Pendragon!"

I look at the source of the voice calling me and see Toruma waving his hands beyond the crowd.

It seems he was going to attend the evening party too, he's dressed more stylishly than usual.

"After this, there will be an evening party by the nobles of the duchy capital and Cousin-dono in a noble's residence, why don't Satou-dono come too?"

[Cousin-dono] whom Toruma mentioned is probably Earl Muno.

The glutton nobles of Oyugock Dukedom eh, I haven't had many chances to talk with them after coming to the Royal Capital, so this is just right.

"Master~"

Arisa who's being carried by Nana under her arm is calling from the opposite side.

Beside the two, there are Pochi and Tama who are being carried under Liza's arms, and Lulu who's leading Mia by hand.

"We're invited by Her Highness for a tea party, won't Master come?"

"Huh? Wasn't the promise for the day after tomorrow?"

I check the schedule book in Menu while feeling puzzled in my mind.

Yup, there's no mistake, it's the day tomorrow--during the daytime of the second day of the auction.

"That's different from this. We got an invitation letter from her highness's lady's attendant since she was free after the evening party's cancellation."

"Then, Arisa and the others can go themselves."

If an upper nobleman comes to an unmarried princess's place in evening, it'll likely become a scandal in the royal palace.

"Arisa-dono, who is this highness? Don't tell me, one of her highness princesses is calling Sir Pendragon?"

Toruma who was left behind in my conversation with Arisa raises voice of surprise.

Looks like he's too surprised, he can't speak.

"Oh my, isn't that Viscount Pendragon."

"By princess, is it either the 9th princess or the 11th princess?"

"Or it might be the Forbidden Library's master."

"That reminds me, she gave up the declining Earl Lesseu right...."

Unexpectedly, Toruma's voice was too loud, the whispers of the surrounding nobles are spreading like ripples on water.

....Read the mood Toruma.

"It's just that Arisa and Mia are on friendly terms with her. I have not even met her."

"....W-what, is that it."

I looked at Toruma, but the claim that I had not met the princess was directed toward the nobles who were peeking at us.

I'd be glad if the scandalous rumor would decrease with this.

"Arisa and Mia should go to Her Highness's tea party, it won't be good if it's just children, so would Lulu accompany them?"

"Yes, I understand."

Lulu was originally a maid working in Rumooku Kingdom's castle, so she should know well the etiquette for this king of things.

"Mwu, adult."

"Of course I know. I mean that other people wouldn't know that you're an adult from appearance."

I soothe Mia who's insisting that she's an adult by patting her head.

If we go by the inside, Arisa is probably the most adult, but I didn't touch that subject.

In this world, there are many things that are better left unsaid.

I forgot to tell Arisa that the prototype spell for separating liquid had been completed in the meeting just now, but I can just tell her later.

It might be fun to surprise Arisa since the spell is not only using water magic but also lightning magic for the separation part.

◇

Nana went back to the mansion since she was worried about Shiro and Crow, so I participate in the evening party of Duke Oyugock with the beastkin girls.

"Pochi-dono, and Tama-dono are truly adorable."

"Truly, truly!"

"Embarrassed~?"

"Pochi is shy if you praise her that much nodesu."

The ones who are praising Tama and Pochi who are dressed in cute party dresses are Earl Muno and his animal-lover noble friends.

"This roast beef dish comes from our ranch. Please eat it to your heart's content."

"What's this now, this duck dish won't lose to it."

"Delishlish~?"

"It's verry delicious nodesu! Pochi can't have Master and Liza not eat this nodesu!"

The two are eating the recommended dishes that come one after another with relish.

By the way, Liza has been caught by duchy capital's knights and military officers, they currently are having a heated discussions about martial arts.

Her eyes are locked-on to the whole roasted cow on the table though, so I think I should help her out when the time is right.

And, as for me--.

"This is tempura!"

"I am sorry for making Sir Pendragon who's become a viscount to serve the table, but there's no one who can create this taste besides you sir."

"...Bliss."

I was caught by the upper nobles of Duchy Capital starting with Marquis Lloyd, and Earl Houen, and made to fry tempura.

Dear me, I'm glad I didn't bring Lulu.

If I did, her special dress would be spoiled by the oil.

"This tentsuyu is also wonderful."

"When this tender shrimp in this crispy coating are entangled in the tentsuyu sauce, indescribable harmony comes into play."

--Are you some kind of food reporter.

It seems an incident was progressing while I was retorting like that in my mind.

Screams come from among the ladies at the same time red luminous points appear on the radar.

"Arrest~?"

"Stealing is bad nodesuyo?"

When I look there, a handsome butler and a gorgeous-looking maid are being held down by Tama and Pochi.

Apparently, they saw them stealing and then arrested them.

It seems the ladies screamed because they were surprised to see the two suddenly appeared with Flickering Movement.

I leave the tempura pot to the veteran maid and head there.

"Caught them~"

"We caught bad children nodesu."

"You two did well."

I hand over the caught thieves to the guards and praise the two.

As I pat their heads, Pochi's tail is buzzing left and right over her dress, and Tama's stretched tail can be seen behind her head.

I didn't have any turn since the other thieves who were going to casually escape from the room were caught by the secret agents of the duke who dressed as maids and butlers.

"Thank you young ladies. Thanks to you, we didn't lose our heirloom jewel."

"Don't worry be happy~"

"This much is nothing nodesu."

"Viscount Pendragon, your retainers are truly capable."

"I'm honored."

I'm thanked by the nobles who almost lost their jewelries, while the nobles and military officers who were talking to Liza are praising the two.

Still, it seems the jewelries are the objective here too.

Looks like there are still thieves remaining in the Royal Capital even after they've been culled that much. They might have gathered from the neighboring cities too.

Removing the parting gift of Mirage is quite hard.

"Viscount-sama--"

A smiling maid quietly steps up, and points at Pochi's dress that's been dirtied.

It seems the sauce from the dish were spilled on it during the arrest.

"I'm sorry, but can I borrow a room?"

"Yes, we will prepare it. We will remove the stain ourselves, so please keep enjoying your chat Viscount-Sama."

"Thank you. I'll do just that."

I give Pochi to the smiling maid, and put my hand on the shoulder of Tama who was going to follow them from behind to stop her.

"Nyu~?"

"There's a job for Ninja Tama--"

13-14. Evening Party at the Royal Capital (2)

Satou's here. Speaking of nobles, it's all about luxurious dance party. It's an important even for young nobles to have a wonderful meeting with the opposite sex, and broaden their personal connection.

There's no participant fees in Shiga Kingdom though, so it's a troubling event for the person who holds it, being forced to pay the large expense themselves.

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After a short time, a pink-colored shadow emerges from the balcony of the venue

Ninja Tama who appeared in shutan pose reported [Mission Complete] with hand signals.

Looks like she's arrested the friend of the thieves outside without any problem.

I send the finger signals, [Good work, return to base.]

After doing a shupin pose, Tama disappears as if melting into the shadow.

I feel that Tama's ninja skill has been taken to the extreme after getting the [Ninjutsu] skill from the level up after the fight with sakuramochi demon back then.

It looks quite useful, I should ask her to teach me Ninjutsu skill when I have some free time.

"I'm back~?"

"Good work. You've done well."

"Welcome back nanodesu."

Liza and Pochi who've come to get the whole roasted cow presents the meat on a large plate to Tama.

I'd like to challenge the whole roasted cow too, but I'm in a difficult situation since I've been caught by the elderly wives who are trying to promote their daughters and granddaughters.

Even though I ended up refusing it, I would have liked it if the other parties for the marriage meeting to be adult women at least.

No matter how you look at it, the first half of the single digit numbers are just too early.

By the way, Marquis Lloyd and Earl Haku have been called by Duke Oyugock due to the uproar earlier, so the tempura party has been dissolved.

The other nobles were still eager to eat more, but Marquis Lloyd and Earl Haku declared that they didn't want it if they couldn't eat.

They were a bit narrow-minded, but I'm not complaining myself since I got off the tempura duty thanks to it.

By accident, I see a girl who's fidgeting around like she's trying to call me, behind the wives.

I can't remember her name but her face looks familiar, so I call her after checking her name on AR reading.

"Excuse me, a friend of mine has come, so I'll be greeting her. Let's talk about the tea party later--"

I smoothly pass through the wives who look disappointed, toward the daughter of Viscount Emlin.

Her father, Viscount Emlin, is someone who's running a Lulu fruit orchard in the outskirts of the Duchy capital. It seems he's established the orchard in one part of Muno city too recently.

"Good evening, Lina-sama. Did Viscount Emlin cannot come?"

"V-viscount Pendragon-sama! Y-you remember my name?!"

You don't have to be that surprised--in fact, I did forgot.

I thought she looked childish when we met before, but maybe because she left her home to become a lady attendant apprentice at Muno city, she looks more grown up than her 13 year old age suggests.

"Have you got used to the work of a lady attendant?"

"Y-yes. Although I still fail a lot, I'm taught various things by Soruna-sama and Pina-senpai, and I've become able to do more things little by little."

I almost wanted to pat the bashful girl's head, but I endure it since being too familiar to a young lady is not good.

"U-um, Viscount-sama. I-if you'd like--"

"Satou-sama~~"

An energetic voice flew as if drowning out Viscount Emlin's daughter who was going to say something.

When I look to the source of the voice, there's a young lady swinging her arms around while standing.

After she sensed that I had noticed her voice, she runs toward me with a smile on her whole face while lifting the edge of her dress.

"Ririna-sama, you're being vulgar!"

"Wait for me, Ririna."

"Mou, you'll be scolded by mother again."

The circle of friends of the energetic lady--Ririna, the daughter of Gururian City's viceroy, follow her from behind while complaining.

"Satou-sama!"

Along with the energetic voice unsuited for the calm evening party, a soft sensation jumped to between my arms.

"It's been awhile Ririna-sama."

"Good evening, Viscount-sama. Even though we often passed each other ever since I came to the Royal Capital, we never met even once. So I came here since I couldn't wait any longer."

Like a kitten, she nestles her cheeks on my chest with closed eyes.

Even though she's a year older than the daughter of Viscount Emlin earlier, she looks younger due to her short shoulder-length hair and cheerful gestures.

Even though they're not related, the name of the two--Lina and Ririna are confusing.

I have to be careful not to call them wrong.

"Ah, Ririna-samaa"

"Dammit, a mere upstart Viscount... So enviableee"

"Ririna, cutee"

I heard some shrieks and jealousy from the surrounding kids, so I gently put my hands on her shoulders and separate us.

Why is she this emotionally attached--that reminds me, I did defeat a lesser demon before their eyes and lectured them about magic back then.

"A lady shouldn't cling to a man besides your family in public okay?"

"Ara! Did you say I'm a lady? So happy!"

"Ririna-sama, that's enough."

She was going to hug me again, but her personal attendant held her back.

No, I mistook it due to her plain clothes, but she's also a noble--a baroness it seems.

"Viscount-sama, please forgive the young lady's rudeness."

"No no, please don't mind it--"

When I was greeting and doing some harmless lip services, a blue luminous point got reflected on the radar.

Blue dot--in other words, a friend.

"How do you do, Satou-san."

The customers are flooding in today--wait, no, that's not the right expression. I'm the one being invited after all.

"Good evening, Sera-sama."

"You're popular like always aren't you."

I turn back and see Sera as expected, who's together with other ladies.

I don't remember ever seeing the ladies around her, but according to the AR and the memo note, they seem to be the daughters of Marquis Lloyd and Earl Houen.

Not granddaughters, but daughters huh.... As expected of a different world. No wonder the night medicines are selling well.

"Do you fancy a dance?"

"Yes, I'd be glad to."

Sera who heard a cheerful tune of the playing music invited me, so I willingly consent.

"--Aa"

There, the daughter of Viscount Emlin leaked out a small scream, and I saw her hand reaching out slightly.

I didn't notice since she was pushed to the background ever since the daughter of Gururian Viceroy, Ririna, came, but it seems she's been beside me all along.

"Ara? Perhaps you've already made a promise for a dance earlier?"

"N-no--"

The daughter of Viscount Emlin sheepishly denied Sera's question.

I feel sorry to see her looking dejected, so I decide to follow up.

It's probably alright since Sera also made an eye signal.

"--I forgot that I made a promise with her at the duchy capital back then. It was, 'I'll accompany you to a tune when we meet again in an evening party'."

"It cannot be helped if it's a promise. I will concede my turn."

I take the hand of the daughter of Viscount Emlin who lifts her face in full bloom, and head toward the center of the dance hall.

We've danced for three tunes even though I said one.

"You've really improved."

"T-thank you very much. I did my very best since I wanted to dance with Viscount-sama once again!"

I smile back to the daughter of Viscount Emlin who's looking proud.

It's not a lip service of course. She's remarkably improved compared to when we danced in the duchy capital castle back then.

The line of sights of the surrounding young nobles are gathered to the daughter of Viscount Emlin, so I tell her that.

"Your loveliness and elegance have monopolized the gazes of the young noblemen here."

"I-I am.... I-if just that one person sees me, then..."

I feel I'll misunderstand that the daughter of Viscount Emlin is in love with me when she stares at me while blushing and answering like so.

"It'd be nice if that person praises you."

"...I-I've already gotten the praise, it's already alright."

"Is that so, I'm glad for you."

"Yes...."

The daughter of Viscount Emlin smiles slightly shyly.

My protective tendency is stimulated seeing her innocence. While praying for her love to go well, I do my part as the partner of her dance while exchanging silly talks with her.

I part with the daughter of Viscount Emlin who's short of breath, and this time I bring Sera to the dance hall.

"Satou-san."

"What is it? Sera-san."

Come to think of it, I haven't danced with Sera after the duchy capital.

As always she's good even though she should have entered the shrine since she was small.

"Satou-san, umm--"

It's unusual for Sera to fumble her words.

"Is it true that you're in love with the princess?"

The rumor spreads far considering it's Toruma, I wonder if she heard something among the young ladies?

"It's a baseless rumor."

"Really?"

Even though I flatly denied, Sera's expression is still clouded.

Let's add a bit more.

"Yes, Princess Mitia of Nooroku Kingdom and Princess Menea of Rumooku Kingdom are simply acquaintances, and the sixth princess, Shistina-sama is on friendly terms with only Mia and Arisa, I haven't directly met her."

"....Satou-san sure has a lot of princess acquaintances don't you."

--Oops.

I should have excluded Noja Princess Mitia and Pink-haired Princess Menea.

"Then--Who is the foreign princess in your heart?"

I tilt my head in puzzlement after hearing Sera.

There's no mistake that she means Aze-san, but I feel that I've only told that to Lady Karina.

Then, when I look at Lady Karina who's not participating in the performance, our eyes perfectly match. Apparently, she's been watching here, but even before her eyes meet mine, she turns her face away vigorously.

Apparently, I'm now hated by Lady Karina due to the matter back then.

I change position with Sera due to the dance, so I lost sight of Lady Karina, but I saw the young noble women and men of Duchy Capital trying to talk to her for an instant.

It'd be good if she made even one friend with the chance in this evening party....

It seems Sera perceives the slight silence, she asks in a slightly stiff voice.

"--Is it, a secret?"

"No, it's nothing like a secret."

In fact, I do not intend to hide it.

"She's a High Elf called Aialize-sama."

"....High, Elf?"

Sera lifts her surprised face.

Looks like she really didn't expect that she was from another race.

"Truly?"

"Yes."

When I assented, for some reason Sera leaks out breath of relief.

--Hmm? An adolescent girl really is difficult.

As if my doubt reaches her, Sera speaks.

"In other words, Satou-san used it as a mean to escape from marriages?"

"No, it's not like that."

--Why does it become like that.

"I think Satou-san probably truly likes that High Elf, but.... A child can't be born between a human and a High Elf you know?"

"Yes, of course I'm aware of that."

"Then, I think you should carefully keep that love in your heart, and marry a girl from the same race in order to make a heir."

--Brutus, you too huh.

I can understand that looking from the sense of value of Sera and the others.

It's normal in this world to push a marriage partner whom you don't love to the head of the house.

However, right now I don't feel like conforming my marriage mindset to this world.

Even though leaving successors is a duty of any creature, there's no need for everyone to follow the rule right.

I will live for love.

I can't possibly say it since I do go to the brothels occasionally after losing from my desire though....

"If it's about heir--"

I faltered when I was going to say that I'd adopt a child.

It's possible that there would be nobles who would obstruct it if I said it ahead of time.

"You're right. I have to think about heir."

"That's right."

Sera replies with more cheerful tone compared to earlier after successfully persuaded me.

For some reason, Sera dances even closer to me than before.

I can't calm down since Sera's breasts that are bigger for her age are hitting me since a while ago.

"I'm glad that Satou-san isn't like the hero-sama in the tale."

"Hero-sama?"

I can't follow Sera who abruptly changed the topic.

How did it become hero from the flow of conversation earlier?

"Ara? Does a retainer of Earl Muno-sama not know about it? It's a tale of 『The Hero of Fairy Village』, the scene where he pledges eternal love to the queen of fairy is famous."

I'll likely get along well with that hero.

When I search on the map, the book is in the royal castle's library, I'll borrow it before long.

◇

After the dance with Sera-san, I enjoyed dancing with the ladies who were waiting in line.

Of course, with the beastkin girls too.

The dances with Pochi and Tama were like street performance, but since it was received well by animal lover nobles and little ladies, I consider it a good thing.

Liza's dance was more like a combat performance, but thanks to the quick-witted band which quickly changed to speedy tune, the surrounding received it as if it was prearranged from the beginning.

After the evening party, we met with Arisa and the others who came back from the princess's tea party and we all went to Boruenan Village.

Before going to sleep, I call Arisa and Liza to talk about my real name and the matter about god-slaying.

"Arisa, Liza, can I have your time for a bit?"

"Wfhat? Are you att-tracted, worn-out, to Arisa-chan's charm?"

What do you want me be worn-out for.

"A-Arisa, don't sleep on the floor."

"I'm fai~ne, I'm not sleeping. I'm awaje. I'm not sless~ing."

Lulu lifts the sleepy Arisa who's crumbled her posture, in her arms.

It seems she really enjoyed discussing about magic with the princess, she's tottering while looking really sleepy.

"Master, Arisa seems to have fallen asleep, so I will accept any order myself."

"No, it's not really urgent, I'll talk about it tomorrow night."

Arisa would likely sulk if I talked to Liza first after all.

◇

After making sure that the children have slept, I went to Echigoya Firm.

"Kuro-sama, we've been waiting for you."

Behind the Manager, there are 10 unfamiliar young girls, and 12 young men in addition to the executives.

The room feels narrow when there are this many people.

"As I've reported to Kuro-sama. These 22 people are the slaves as additional staff that I've talked about the other day."

The slaves respectfully bow and greet me with the Manager's signal.

I took no notice of it since it's troublesome, but these slaves have good manners.

"They seem to be quite educated slaves don't they?"

"Yes, that is because they previously worked in nobles' mansions."

According to AR reading, it seems they're the former employees of the nobles who were charged of treason during the matter of the sakuramochi demon earlier.

The retainers who were nobles were executed along with their masters, so these slaves are all commoners.

"I plan to make the men work at the stores, warehouses and management in the downtown, and the women to work in the mansion."

"I'll leave that matter to the Manager."

"Certainly."

After the slaves went away, I receive the report about Shin boy's monitoring from the executives.

"He came in contact with two suspicious individuals. One of them is a black-haired boy, and the other one is a pink-haired girl--"

Souya boy picked a quarrel with him and then princess Menea lent him a hand, like that.

It was similar to what Arisa told me before.

"Was that all?"

"Yes, if we exclude the people of the orphanage, those two were the only people who got in contact with him. However, in regard to the orphanage, the director has a bit of problem--"

According to the executive girl, in summary, despite the director accepting orphans that far exceeded the scale of the orphanage, the number of the orphan children didn't change.

There was a rumor saying that the orphans were sold to the slave traders regularly, but an investigation from the authorities found nothing suspicious, and it was concluded that the children simply occasionally escaped.

During the story, I search for the orphanage director's name.

There's nothing particularly suspicious. I thought he was connected to [Light of Liberty], but I didn't find anything like that.

Just in case, I give more orders to the executive girls.

"Investigate the orphanage director's background and people who come in contact with him."

"Yes!"

"And also, check the tracks of the escaped children. I don't mind if you increase the personnels if you're short on it."

"Yes! I understand!!"

The executive girl who looks happy even though her workload has increased must be a workaholic, no doubt.

"From tomorrow on, the auction sponsored by the kingdom will be open for three days. We will stop going to the labyrinth for the period of the auction. Squeeze the money out of the auction's participants without mercy. Do not hold back."

"""Certainly, Kuro-sama"""

I nod back to the executive girls who reply with powerful voice.

Truly reliable.

Except for the final day, entrusting the auction to these girls should be alright.

I've been working without sleep lately after all, I'll take some rest before the real thing.

I'll let the kids take some break from school, and then we should go enjoy the local dishes of the royal capital in commoner's clothings together with everyone.

Looks like I can sleep well tonight after a long time not--.

13-15. Royal Capital Sightseeing, Downtown Arc

Satou's here. For some reason [A parade group distributing fliers] that seldom appeared in the last century's manga remains in my memory. I remember the bitter memory of getting severely scolded by the student council when I tried to do the same to invite people to our circle during my college year.

Cleaning the fliers and the confetti was hard....

◇

I slept well after a long time.

The light from the morning sun peeks through the canopy's curtain.

It seems I had a really deep sleep, I haven't noticed Lulu who's opening the curtain, and the little girls who have slipped into the bed clinging to me.

....Or rather, I should have been the only one sleeping in the Royal Capital's mansion to watch over the green demon, why is everyone here?

They shouldn't have been able to teleport to the Royal Capital with Arisa's magic power, so Aze-san probably sent them.

"Good morning, Master."

"Ah, morning."

Lulu who's opening the curtain greets me with refreshing voice when she notices me waking up.

"Unyu~"

"Mowning, nanoresu."

Pochi and Tama who had woken up from the voice, rolled on my stomach, put their chins on my chest and greeted too.

"Master, good morning, so I greet."

"Good morning, Masita."

"Masita, morning."

Nana who's sleeping with Shiro and Crow on the edge of the bed greeted.

Shiro who's half asleep seems to have pulled the sleeve of Nana's shirt, the charm of Nana's pulled shirt is in full effect.

"Mwu."

Mia who's pulling my ear makes me resist the charm effect, she lets go of my ear when I turn to her.

"Morning."

"Good morning Mia. And also, Arisa--"

I hit the head of Arisa who's trying to enter my shirt.

"--You'll get no breakfast if you don't stop the sexual harassment now."

"I'm short of Masternium. Please give me replenishment."

Arisa who had woken up did a seiza in front of me and said some stupid thing.

"Tama too, short~"

"Pochi is short of Masternium too nanodesu."

"N, short."

The three youth troupe line up beside Arisa, doing seiza.

"U-um--me too, um... short of Masternium."

Lulu also timidly asked, the four of them appealed while doing seiza.

I haven't cared much for them ever since the new year, so it seems they've been lonely.

I hug everyone in turns to supply the Masternium or something, which also act as an apology.

"Mwu, unfair."

"The times were different in order of breasts' sizes."

"--It's just your imagination."

To notice the difference of comma seconds, as expected of Mithril explorers.

◇

"Good morning, Satou-sama."

Zena-san who's wearing a neat military uniform greets me in a well-mannered gesture.

The crests of Seryuu Earldom are embroidered on her uniform's chest and shoulder.

Everyone is surprised to see Zena, who was led to the living room by the butler, wearing unusual clothes.

As for me, I'm more bothered with the fact that she called me with honorific.

"Good morning, Zena-san."

Our girls who came after me greeted her unanimously.

"What's wrong with Zena-san?"

Arisa pulled my clothes, and asked close to my ear.

I tell everyone about the luncheon with Earl Seryuu while we're walking toward the dining room.

"So Earl Seryuu is an attacker~. It's like he's trying to pick a fight with Earl Muno."

"He would probably make an agreement to put priority of magic core supply for Muno territory right?"

"Ah, that might be possible. Even in Kubooku Kingdom the prime minister often grumbled that the mine refinery wouldn't work without supply of magic cores."

We arrive at the table while I'm having that conversation with Arisa.

For some reason Zena stands upright near the door looking like she wouldn't sit, so I call to her.

"Is there something wrong?"

"It is nothing, I had a breakfast at Earl Seryuu's mansion already, so I will stand guard here."

Since Earl Seryuu ordered her to act as my attendant, Zena-san replied like a soldier.

I respect her for being faithful to her mission, but to be honest it's awkward when she's this serious.

"Then let's prepare some tea for you."

"H-however..."

"It's alright. Even if a demon intrudes this room right here and now, we can counter attack while still sitting."

Back then, Liza intercepted bombardment with a meal knife after all, and the other girls don't lose to Liza in reaction speed, so it should be fine.

"Furthermore, it's hard to talk with you at this distance."

"Yes, then please excuse me."

Zena-san sits on a vacant seat, and then a maid put some tea and tea cakes in front of her. As always, the maids here are skillful.

◇

"I'm thinking of touring the downtown today."

During the breakfast, I told them so, and everyone cheered like the sound of crackers.

"But the auction starts today, is it alright? Don't you need to prepare various things."

"Yeah, my business is only on the third day."

"I see, the male needs is on the third day after all, right."

....What are you saying Arisa?

"School~?"

"Ah! ...That's right nanodesu. There's school nodesu."

"You can take a leave."

They're only temporary students anyway, so there's no problem taking a leave for a day.

"I-is it alright nodesu?!"

"Yeah, I permit is as your guardian so it's fine."

"Wa~i"

"Nanodesu!"

Just in case, I told them that anyone still wanting to go to school could go, but there wasn't anyone who chose that.

◇

"Uwaah, what a crowd~"

After getting off the carriage, Arisa muttered while looking dumbfounded.

Today Arisa is in plain town girl clothing.

"Mwu, full."

Mia who's depressed has matching clothes with Arisa, just different colored.

"Nice smell~"

"A lot of tasty smell nanodesu."

"There's a lot of soba smell isn't it."

Tama and Pochi who are wearing shirts and culottes sniff around while closing their eyes and being carried under the arms of Liza who's wearing military uniform.

"It smells slightly savory, so it seems there are some stalls with gallete too."

The town girl fashion suits Lulu very well.

Her cuteness would have kept the flashes on until the end if she was in a cosplay show.

"Looking forward to it so I report."

"It smells nice isn't it Crow."

"Shiro, don't separate your hand from Nana-sama's, okay."

"Okay."

Nana who's in young wife clothing has her hands holding Shiro's and Crow's who are in shirts and cullottes like Pochi and Tama.

Per Arisa's suggestion, today we're all in commoner clothing.

By the way I'm wearing commoner tunic and trousers.

Only four people of Zena Squad who are accompanying us are armed, Liza only has a bronze baton she's put on her waist, and everyone else is empty-handed.

The four people of Zena Squad are looking around at the surrounding vigilantly.

"The big building you can see beyond is the second hall of the auction you see."

"Eh~, so that's where the spoils from the floormasters are being displayed?

"No, the expensive articles are in the first hall inside the royal castle. The ones in here should be things that are displayed for commoners."

There are a little less than 1000 stalls aiming for the guests going to the auction hall in the street where we are.

The majority of the stalls are just sheets spread with junks on them, but there are also some who sell magic potions, salves, and even equipment made of monster parts.

It's truly rich of variations, I don't get tired seeing them.

"This oyaki is tasty nodesu. Pochi will share with Master a bite too nodesu."

"This katayaki is tasty too~"

"Ooh, this fake gallete is quite good."

"Dried persimmon."

"The skewers in the Royal Capital are soft aren't they. The chewiness isn't enough."

"Master, do you know the secret ingredients for the flavor of this Tsutsumi-Yaki? It seems like soy sauce, but it's slightly hot, and yet there's a faint sweet taste too."

"There is a possibility that that young organism is a lost child. I deem it fit to be protected. Master, permission to collect."

Our girls prioritize to buy and eat, they buy various snacks they carry on both their arms, striding around the crowded stalls.

Of course I rejected Nana's request.

"Vroo~?"

"It's amazing nodesu. Flame is coming out of the mouth nanodesu."

There are some people who are doing street performances between the stalls, so I throw some money for the people who amuse us.

"There's a Rabbit Rotation over there."

"Nn, heroic tale."

Rabbit Rotation is where a rabbitkin riding a horse-sized tamed rabbit monster does some techniques.

They're enclosed within fences since it'll be dangerous if the monster rampages.

"No nyoronyoro~?"

"There's no snake person nodesu."

--Snake person?

"Come to think of it, even though we saw a lot of them during our new year tour, there's not even one now."

"The employed snakes might have been eaten by monsters during the disturbance back then, so I guess."

Nana tells her guess to Arisa who looks around wondering.

Ah, the snake charmers huh--

I tried searching on the map, but I couldn't find even one [Snake Charmer].

I wonder if they're seasonal attractions like the lion dance?

◇

Mia and Arisa seem to be tired from walking, so we find some open space to take a short break.

"Zena-san and the others too, you should get some rest."

"No, we're on duty."

--They're quite stubborn.

It's understandable though since there have been red luminous points regularly showing up on the radar.

I'd feel bad if I forcefully stop them, so I distribute cool beverages of apple water with honey to the four of them.

In addition, as soon as I find anyone who has malicious intent toward us, I seize them with always-on [Magic Hands] and throw them away to the back alley, so there's no real harm.

"Aa-----------!!"

Arisa screams while also crushing the dried persimmon she got from Mia on her hand.

"Arisa. Stop shouting suddenly."

"That! Look at that."

Arisa who ignored my scolding catches my shoulder and leaps around.

--What is it?

I lower my waist and match her line of sight, she talks to me in low voice without doing any sexual harassment unusually enough.

"That gray hair! Look at that kid's title."

I see the place where Arisa points at.

As I've expected somehow, Shin boy who's working to collect garbages is there.

"Ah, didn't I tell you."

"Y-you knew? --Or rather, the title wasn't there when I met him in the school back then you know? I-is he maybe a reincarnated person?"

"His hair color should be not that if he was one right?"

"Ah, that's right. That's right isn't it."

I lightly tell Arisa who's slightly calmed about Hero Shin.

We're talking in low voice among the noisy crowd and the music from the street performers, so there's no worry of getting heard by Zena-san and her friends.

"Hm~m, a local hero who's lost his memory huh..."

After pondering while crossing her arms for a bit, Arisa asks with her violet eyes gleaming at me.

"Hey, are you going to raise that kid enough to fight demon lords?"

"No, there's already Hayato and the like, summoned heroes for that job, I'm thinking of letting Sir Julberg raise Shin boy."

"I see, he's not a girl after all~"

Arisa nods like she understands.

....No no, I didn't decide whether to raise him or not by gender you know?

◇

"Let me go--"

I picked up the voice of a little child with Attentive Ears skill just when I was feeling exhausted from Arisa's reckless remark.

Looks like the source of the scream is from the rucksack of a suspicious man who's going to disappear into the back alley.

When I move my line of sight, I see Pochi and Tama are already taking the postures to dash out.

The two's bodies are turned toward the screaming child, only their eyes are locked on to me.

Apparently, they're waiting for my order.

"Go! Pochi!"

"Yes nanodesu!"

"A~ye--"

In an instant, Pochi and Tama disappear with Flickering Movement.

The two appear in front of the man like an anime with dropped frames.

Tama who has noticed that I ordered only Pochi returns back to where she was before in an instant, politely retakes her posture to ready-to-dash position, and turns her face toward me.

"--. Tama is unneeded~?"

"Nothing like that at all."

I point my finger to another crime spot toward Tama who's looking at me with moist eyes.

There were two crime spots.

"Tama goes over there."

"Aye aye sir~, nyan"

While leaving an afterimage and cheerful voice, Tama goes to seize the other kidnapper.

I also ask Liza and Nana to go as their supports.

"E-eh? Um, just what is happening?"

"Zena-cchi, that!"

Lilio points Zena, who's confused because she can't understand the situation, at the man Pochi has arrested.

The other two of Zena squad--Miss Iona and Ruu seem to be on alert against bad people who are going to take the chance during the uproar.

"It's kidnapping. Zena-san, I'm sorry, but could you get the sentry here?"

"Y-yes--"

"I will go with Ruu. Zena-san and Lilio, please guard Viscount-sama."

After stopping Zena-san who was going to run, Miss Iona and Ruu run toward the temporary guard station in front of the stall street.

"Caught the bad guy nodesu."

"Tama too caught one~?"

"Master, I safeguarded the victim, so I report."

"I've safeguarded them too."

Pochi and Tama brought the fainted men and rolled them below my feet.

Nana and Liza brought the child victims each.

The ones saved from the rucksacks are little girls of around elementary school age who don't seem to be rich, looking at their clothes.

Both of the children have white cloth wrapped on their arms, I don't know if it's trending or something.

"Oy, you! Let go of Sina and Olna!"

"Shin-nii."

"Shin-niichan."

Looks like they're acquainted with Shin boy.

The little girls who have noticed the boy jump at Shin boy while crying.

Checking on the AR readings, I understand that the little girls are from the same orphanage as Shin boy.

"Do you know these children?"

"Yes, that's right."

Shin boy stands before me to protect the children.

"Then I'll leave these children to you. I'm going to question these guys."

"D-did you save these kids?"

"Offucou~rse"

"That's right nanodesu."

"T-thank you. Sorry for doubting you. Oy, you too, thank them."

"Thank you for saving me."

"Thank you."

Urged by Shin boy, the children said their thanks to Pochi and Tama.

"Didn't I say not to come since the crowd is dangerous?"

I question the men while Shin boy is scolding the children who were almost kidnapped as the BGM.

"However, director-sensei said we could go."

"The director did?"

"Un, the director wrapped this white cloth to us."

"He said that it was so we could be found even if we got lost in the festival."

"That stingy director did?"

Come to think of it, the director of Shin boy orphanage was suspected of slave trading huh.

"Now then, criminal-kun. There are two things I want to ask you--"

The two aren't people of criminal guild, but the poor from the slums, so they confess easily after I threatened them slightly.

"I-it's true. We were only told to kidnap the children with white cloth wrapped on their arms."

--Guilty huh.

Looks like the orphanage director is the mastermind, or maybe he takes part in the mastermind's plan.

"They said they will give us one big copper coin if we brought the children to the man's place beyond the back alley...."

To kidnap children for such a small change--wait, it's not for the people of the slums huh.

I got a lot of easy money from the matter related to auction this time, so maybe I'll establish a public employment office or something.

Planning the detail is annoying though, I'll leave that to the executives of Echigoya firm.

Two people will be free once the auction is over, so it's just right.

I correct my slightly astray thought, and continue questioning the men.

"Do you know the man who ordered you to do the kidnapping?"

"Yeah. I couldn't see the face since he wore black hood, but the voice was that of a young man."

Fumu, I guess this is as much as I can hear from people hired with money.

"Master, arrested the bad guys in the place this man testified, and safeguarded the young organism so I report."

Nana, holding a young boy whose arm is wrapped in yellow cloth under her arm, comes back while dragging a dirtied kidnapper.

As expected, the public attentions gather here, it's uncomfortable.

Looks like this boy belongs to a different orphanage than the Shin boy's.

Apparently, there isn't only one evil director colluding with the kidnappers.

Now then, I'll have to send invitations to the prison to those evil directors--

13-16. Royal Capital Sightseeing, Downtown Arc (2)

Satou's here. Anywhere you go, there are always people who turn to crime. However, to be biased against the people who are doing honest activities due to the mess caused by the few unscrupulous ones is too sad.

◇

"--The other children are also missing?!"

I heard some troubling things from Shin boy and the saved children when I was searching for the evil directors' locations.

"U-un. Pon and Chobi are gone. When everyone split to search for them, Noza and Joi went missing and then we were caught by the people earlier when we were confused."

"What should we do, Shin-nii"

Fumu, group kidnapping huh.... How nasty.

"Be at ease. We will carry out the rescue operation of the young organisms. Master, the permission!"

Nana is unusually fired up.

"That's right! Our Master will find the kidnappers and rescue the children like a walk in the park!"

"Don't make fun of me just because I'm a kid! How do you search for them in this crowd!"

Shin boy snaps hearing Arisa's rash promise. Looks like he'll become emotional when he's pressed.

The little girls who became anxious hearing his exasperation burst into tears, then Pochi, Tama, and Lulu hurriedly try to calm them down.

Now then, let's get the situation under control--.

I search for people that belong to the orphanage on the map.

Looks like they're confined in a workshop in the same area.

It seems they're with other children from other orphanages.

There are several dozens of crime guild people, one slave trader, and level 20 and 30 man and woman who seem to be the bodyguards.

The man has [Berserker] title and [Frenzy] skill, a bit dangerous.

I question the man Nana caught who was acting as a relay, and get information about the workshop's location.

I've already known but it's a necessary action.

"--Like I said, it'll be fine."

"We'll do it ourselves. We'll find them even if we have to walk until we're utterly exhausted."

I put myself between Arisa and Shin boy who are quarreling even now.

"Leave it at that. I've heard the place where the children are held from this man."

"W-where is it!"

Shin boy is looking like he'll run.

His action is truly like a hero, but his level isn't enough to act in solo.

"It's dangerous to go alone. Let's go together--"

I hold back Shin boy and suggest to him that we should go with him.

"Leave the criminals to us, I'd like to entrust the children rescue to you, is it fine?"

"Y-yeah. As long as I can save the children, I'm fine with it."

"Alright, that's that then. Arisa, Lulu, and Mia, you three please protect these children. Once the guards have come, hand over the kidnappers and tell them about the situation."

"Okkey."

I leave it to Arisa who readily consents, and then we head toward the workshop with Shin boy.

I'll put aside the prison invitation of the evil directors for later.

◇

"Is it an abandoned workshop?"

"Looks like it--"

We arrive at the workshop which has been closed off with thick woods on the entrance with no sign of humans.

While answering Liza, I looked around and found the workshop signboard, which made me realize the reason why this workshop was abandoned.

"Look at that. It's the crest of the Earl house which was destroyed because of the crime of treason."

In other words, this place was used by people related to the [Light of Liberty].

The kidnappers inside are probably carrying out the plan that the [Mirage] had ordered them when he was alive.

The street in front of the workshop is deserted, it seems the inhabitants have gone to the festival around the auction venue.

If it's like this, no one will report to the authorities even if some suspicious men going in and out of the workshop.

"Tama, go infiltrate and look for the place they keep the children."

"Aye aye sir~"

Tama disappears with my instruction.

Shin boy and Zena-san are surprised, but let's ignore them for now.

After waiting a bit under the shadow of the workshop, Tama comes back passing over the fences with 'nyurun' voice.

"Found them~?"

"Fast"

"No way"

Shin boy and Lilio leak out voice of surprise to see Tama who completed her duty in under a minute.

Zena-san is too surprised no voice comes out her.

I've told Tama about the underground employee lodging where the children are held beforehand though, so this result is reasonable.

"I'll leave it to Shin to rescue the children. Pochi and Tama, please guard him."

"Roger~"

"Yes nanodesu."

Nana and Zena-san show disapproval to my instruction.

"Master, permission to accompany the rescue mission."

"There might be other children inside the workshop, so I want Nana to protect them."

"--Taking charge of Master's order."

Nana nods and then pulls back.

"Um, is it fine to let only the children go?"

"It's alright. However, that's right--Lilio-san, would you please accompany the children?"

"Understood. Take care of Zena-cchi 'kay."

"Yes, I won't let even a scratch on her."

Lilio waves her hand energetically to Zena-san whose cheeks are dyed red besides me, and then she trails behind Shin boy.

The four of them cross over the workshop wall, infiltrating it.

"Shiro and Crow, go the top of that tree to see if there's anyone trying to escape. Could you tell me using flash Light Magic if there's anything happen?"

"Un."

"It's 'yes'. Shiro."

"Yes."

Shiro and Crow fly to the top of the tree.

Now then, let's do it.

◇

"--Who the heck are ya? Ya knew this is place belongs to Earl-sama and yet entered?"

The moment we went into the workshop, three crime guild men approached us while threatening.

"Are you people under Earl-sama?"

"Huuh? Something like that doesn't matter! Leave those women and ya kid go away. Ah, you can bring that lizard home with ya."

Zena-san's ears could be polluted from the men's vulgar speech.

"Liza--"

"Understood."

Liza attacks on with my signal.

She doesn't have her favorite spear, but against these small fries, such thing won't be a handicap.

With a single swing of Liza's tail who's closed in fast, the men get mowed down like decayed trees.

Seemingly hearing that sound, the door in the back opens and around 10 tough-looking men come out.

"Tch, I thought they were the guards."

"Looks like they're strong."

"Then, leave it to the two bodyguards--"

I don't intend to keep them company for long, so let's get this over with quickly.

I silently order Liza and Nana.

Liza rushes out like a low-altitude arrow, peerlessly beating down the men.

Nana runs on the space that Liza's created, sends the men who stand on her way flying with magic shield using Force Arte, and rushes into the door.

I can't see it from here, but it seems she knocks down the slave trader inside and saves the children.

The mercenary man who has Berserker title is attacking Liza repeatedly while screaming like a beast.

The other female mercenary is more cool-headed, she tries to attack whenever there's a gap on Liza's defense while using the other men as shields.

They're quite contrast--

"....■■《Wind Protection》"

Zena-san's magic flicked the poisonous dagger that flew out of nowhere.

Looks like it was thrown by the boss.

"Tch, they even brought a magician huh. You guys, seize that black-haired kid!"

"""Yea"""

With the signal from the boss, three men are coming to assault me all at once.

"■■ Wind Fan"

Zena-san's magic obstructs the men's visions with dust, and then she cuts down the men quick like the wind.

She's relatively merciless, but it doesn't seem the men are killed.

She can't compare to our girls, but her strength doesn't pale in comparison to an average holy knight.

Even though they're crime guild people, against hooligans like them, this result is natural.

I saw the shadow of a man who seemed to be the boss trying to hide.

I grab the boss's feet with [Magic Hand] and throw him in front of Liza who's finished dealing with the mercenaries.

"Uwah, what? Is it magic--gueeh"

Stabbed by Liza's baton, the boss faints in agony.

It looks really painful.

Nana came back from the door just when we were finished.

"Master, secured three young organisms."

"Well done. I'll look after those children, so go with Liza to look for any survivors after we tie these guys."

"Yes, Master."

I know there isn't anyone left in this workshop, but I can't not do anything in front of Zena-san.

"Zena-san, let's evacuate the children for the time being."

"Yes."

With Zena-san, I go outside the workshop while bringing the children.

"Who are you onii-chan?"

"Will you bring me back to the orphanage?"

"I'm hungry."

While giving candies to the little girls, I check their skills.

Apparently, they were managed separately because they had magic-type gifts.

They were most likely were going to get slave-contracted ahead of time.

◇

When we get to the workshop's courtyard, the children who were confined in the cellar come out, led by Shin boy.

"Deliverance~?"

"Rescue complete nanodesu."

"You two did well."

I catch the two who are reporting mission complete in my arms and pat their heads.

I instruct Shiro and Crow who came back from the treetop to go to where Arisa and the others are and to bring the guards.

Now then, time to question the boss.

I order Liza to pour water to his head to rouse him up.

"Buwaah--, tch. Pathetic, everyone's captured huh."

"Answer my questions."

"Tch, bring the hero if you want to make me talk."

This boss seems to have the habit of clicking tongue.

"Are you the one who ordered people to kidnap children with cloth wrapped on their arm."

The boss stops talking when I question him.

Let's bluff here.

"Your silence is already an answer. The other guys have already confessed you see? What I want to hear from you is his location."

"Hmph, I won't sell out Mirage-aniki even if you tear apart this body. Don't lump me together with other small fries."

....So this guy is really connected to Mirage too.

I've thought of this before, but Interrogation skill is dangerously effective.

Afterwards, I questioned him many things, and he confessed that he had been regularly gathered orphans and broke people of the slums and given them to the earl's agent.

The gathered people were probably the countless corpses that were in the earl mansion's underground cave.

The boss isn't directly acquainted with the evil directors, but they were in touch through the direct subordinates of Mirage.

It seems they had been ordered to gather the sacrifices every odd months whenever the auction open since a year ago.

The last one was several days before the incident of the year-end.

I also confirmed the thing about the Orbs, but his replies were are all irrelevant.

Apparently, these guys aren't related to the Orb matter.

Fumu, then there's a high possibility that they're unrelated to the green demon's secret plot.

I've heard the thing I wanted to hear from the boss, so I separate from everyone with nature's call as an excuse.

Just in case, I told Liza that I was going to capture the other criminals.

◇

I change to Kuro, and move to boarding place for stagecoaches in the royal capital's eastern gate using Unit Arrangement.

"Are you traveling?"

"What do you want!"

I catch the shoulder of the orphanage director who's carrying a big bag and talk.

"Eey, let go! Do you not know courtesy!"

The orphanage director struggles to shake off my hand.

It seems he's trying to escape the royal capital by riding the stagecoach.

He probably sensed the danger for himself from Echigoya's inquiry.

He has some good intuition.

"Do you know Mirage?"

"W-what is it about? Talk to other people if you're mistaken me with someone. I'm in a hurry."

Fumu, he doesn't seem to be playing dumb, so the evil director doesn't seem to be related to Mirage.

"--Then what about the 'arm cloth'?"

With that, the evil director shakes in surprise, and tries to run off to the stagecoaches while pushing the other passengers.

Looks like he takes part in the kidnapping case.

I catch his shoulder when he's about to get on the stagecoach, and hurl him behind.

With a crashing sound, gold coins flows out of his bag.

"Orphanage director nowadays seem to be quite well off."

While glancing at that, I scowl at the evil director.

"O, oy, it's gold coins."

"Woow"

The masses are starting to make noise when they see the gold coins, but no one tries to steal it, maybe because there's a guard station nearby.

"Oy! What are you doing in front of the gate."

"Guards, arrest this guy."

I show the dagger with Mitsukuni crest to the guards and order them.

The dagger was a thing I got as Nanashi.

There are three evil directors including this one. The other two are arrested in their orphanages.

After questioning the third evil director, I push them and the kidnapper boss to the prime minister secret agent bureau.

Zena-san and the guards were panicking when I snatched the boss as Kuro, but since I've told Liza and the others that Kuro's identity is me, there should be no problem.

After a slightly long nature's call, I returned to where everyone was.

As for the treatment of the evil directors and co--

According to the prime minister, as they took part in the summoning of the greater demon that put the royal capital in danger, they are all charged of treason to be put for capital punishment.

◇

"So, did you question the orphanage directors?"

"Yeah, they were just in for the money. They were acquainted with the earl in question after he donated to the orphanages."

In order to have a secret talk, I put Arisa on my shoulders and parade around the auction venue.

I let the guards to handle the orphans. I gave the guard leader one gold coin as a bonus, so they must have sent the children back to the orphanages properly.

"However, to be thanked by a defiant handsome boy in quite murmur sure fires you up~"

She's probably talking about the curt thank you of Shin boy when we parted.

It's hard for me to agree with Arisa's remark, but it's not like I can't understand if I were to put myself in a cheeky girl's shoes.

'Kyururuu', I heard a sound from Zena-san's stomach.

Having Attentive Ears skill, I'm probably the only one who heard it.

Unlike our girls who have been buying and eating, the four people of Zena squad haven't eaten anything since morning, they must be hungry.

It's already way past 2 PM when I check on the clock.

Looks like we missed lunch due to the kidnapping incident.

"I'm feeling hungry. Let's get some lunch on a shop somewhere."

"Yes! Yes! I know a good shop! Arisa-chan recommends it!"

Arisa reacted to my suggestion first.

There wasn't particular shop I wanted to go, so we went to the so-called creative cuisine shop Arisa recommended.

It was slightly far, so we took a carriage.

It's near the knight school of the royal academy--or rather, it's close by the Echigoya Firm's workshop.

It seems to be the Soba shop that Nell had a meal at back then.

"Here it is!"

Arisa points to a two-story building restaurant while looking proud.

"The gyuudonburi here is delicious nodesu!"

"Like gyuu gyuu~ it's packed with deliciousness~?"

Looks like Pochi and Tama too have come here to eat with their classmates after school and between-meal snacks.

"It smells nice of meat."

"Aren't the smell of soy sauce and miso stronger?"

Lulu and Liza seem hungry too, they're sensitive to the smell.

◇

"Occha~n! Is the back private room available?"

"Ou, if it isn't the noble young lady. Sorry, but the back room's been reserved."

The thirty-something old shopkeeper who has thick body hair comes out of the kitchen.

There are only several people by the counter inside the store, so all the eight tables inside are empty.

"Eh~, how unusual."

"Sorry for being unusual. All the tables are available, so you can sit wherever you like."

"Ho~i"

We secure three six-people tables inside and sit down.

Zena-san and her squad are in the table close to the entrance since they act as the bodyguards.

"What do you like to order?"

"Do you have any recommendation?"

As to be expected of this country's literacy rate, there's no menu in this shop.

"Of course gyuudonburi nanodesu!"

"Mwu, kakiage."

I was actually asking the shopkeeper, but Pochi and Mia quickly told me their own recommendation.

"If you're fine with something a bit expensive, I recommend Oumi cow karage special."

"Then I'll go with that. How about everyone?"

Looks like karage (fried food) have begun to spread in the royal capital.

I urge everyone to order.

"Viscount-sama's treat?"

"W-wait Lilio!"

Zena-san is panicking to Lilio's unreserved remark.

"Of course. You can order anything you like without minding the price. Just in case though, liquor is prohibited okay."

"Alright, as expected of noble-sama!"

"Then I want the most expensive dish!"

"W-wait Ruu!"

"Ruu, let's have some talk later."

Zena-san and Miss Iona raise their eyebrows to Ruu's remark.

"Oy oy, our most expensive dish is two silver coins y'know?"

"I don't mind. Everyone, order without hesitation!"

"Pochi is gyuudonburi nanodesu."

"Tama gyuudonburi too~"

"I'd like Oumi cow karage special like Master's please."

"Kakiage special."

After Pochi, Tama, Lulu and Mia, everyone tells their order to the shopkeeper.

He sure can memorize well without memo.

Lastly, Arisa who was pondering with a serious face speaks her order.

"I'll go with gyuudon set, kakiage, and cold tofu with a lot of spring onions."

Arisa--I can hear the wailing call of diet y'know?

13-17. Royal Capital Sightseeing, Downtown Arc (3)

Satou's here. I remember my superior insisting, "People only see what they want to see" while we were drinking together. I replied randomly and ignored it at that time when I was drunk, but it might be unexpectedly deep.

◇

The Japanese food in the creative cuisine shop turned out not bad taste-wise despite looking bad.

The fried food looking strangely black is probably because they rarely ever change the oil.

It's fine once a while but eating here everyday would make your cholesterol raised to dangerous level.

When we've eaten for awhile, some new guests appear from the shop's entrance.

"Oy, Yui. Is this outskirt eatery really good?"

"U~n, I don't know if it's good, but it's popular you see."

The one who entered first was a plump black-haired boy.

He's handsome enough to pass as an idol if he were slimmer. Rather, he looks like a character from some 2D otome game.

And, the girl who's linking arms with the boy is an acquaintance--the self-proclaimed idol of Southern Japan Union who was summoned by Princess Menea's kingdom, Yui Akasaki.

According to AR, the black-haired boy beside her seems to be Souya boy, the rumored highness of the school.

I was thinking of meeting him sooner or later in order to see if he's the [Highness] that the [Light of Liberty] referred, so this is convenient.

I had confirmed his skill and title without problem using Map search, but I wanted to meet the person directly to ascertain things.

"Ah! Isn't it Satou-san and Arisa!"

"Long time no see~"

Arisa waves back at Yui who's waving her hands while looking so happy.

That expression of Yui gets clouded.

"What's wrong Satou-san, you're wearing poor-looking clothes! Don't tell me, your business failed?"

Looks like she misunderstood seeing our clothes.

"Are they Yui's acquaintances?"

"Y-yes."

"If you don't have any work, you can help in our house. You don't seem to have the strength, but if you were a merchant before, then you should be able to do accountant works. We'll also give enough food for the beastkin and the children over there to at least live on if they do odd jobs."

He's quite cheeky, but this Souya boy seems to be unexpectedly the type who takes good care of others.

I had a prejudice since Arisa said that he was bullying someone weaker, but he might just be a common good guy.

Arisa and the others are putting difficult faces, so it's about time to stop his unilateral performance.

"I am thankful for your kindness, but our jobs are already sufficient--"

Let alone 24, I'm already working 28 hours even now, so there is no need to add more works.

"What, you're Yui's acquaintances. No need to be reserved."

"We're only traveling incognito today. Look at this, see."

Arisa takes the silver noble tag, and the mithril explorer plate from my chest.

"What is it? Silver--Vi-viscount?!"

Souya boy screams with an aghast face when he sees the tag.

There's no way he'd have though that an upper noble would go to a cheap restaurant in commoner clothing after all.

"I'm sorry. I wasn't trying to make fun of you, I couldn't seize the right timing to speak."

I introduce myself to him since I feel like I've done something bad.

"Nice to meet you, I'm Viscount Satou Pendragon. May I ask your name?"

"So-Souya. I cannot tell you my family name due to circumstances. Please forgive me for that."

In case of Shiga Kingdom, if an illegitimate child like him referred himself as Souya Shiga, he would be hauled to the prison with illness as a pretext and be disposed of.

Yui interrupts with a friendly face between us.

"I'm sorry Satou-san. My darling acts bossy around everyone, but he's not a bad guy so please forgive him."

"I don't feel offended. To offer works just because they're your acquaintances of your girlfriend is not something anyone would do just like that."

"Ehehe~, he's not my boyfriend, he's my fiance~"

Come to think of it, I heard such a thing from Aoi boy.

At that time I thought, "He must be a lolicon to fall in love with a 13 year old girl", but if the guy is a 14 year old himself, it's nothing questionable.

Yui covers her mouth bashfully.

A ring fitted with a small diamond glitters on that hand.

"Uwah, stop showing off your ring plainly."

"Ehehehe, isn't nice~ Darling made this for me."

--Hou?

The crafting quality is shoddy, but it's quite a stylish ring.

Although you can't possibly sell it to nobles or wealthy merchants, but it's good enough to be sold in stores.

"I had an opportunity to see a Michaelangelo-made pendant. I was just imitating that."

Come to think of it I remember creating many kind of pendants using [Michaelangelo] name.

Souya boy's pronunciation was slightly strange, but there's no need to point that out.

"Do you want to become a jewel craftsman in the future?"

"...I do not. I (ore), no, I (watashi) have to aim for the position of supremacy. That is my mother's...."

Souya boy spoke painfully but lost his power to continue in the latter half. The only one who heard the part after [watashi] was probably me with my Attentive Ears skill.

Looks like he's burdened with various things as well.

I don't have any intention of sticking my neck out for him though, so let' just watch over lukewarmly.

When I was at a lost as to how to change the subject, another carriage stopped in front of the shop.

It's a gaudy carriage that lower nobles like to ride in.

A sharp-eyed man wearing coachman clothing enters the shop and then looks around the shop interior as if evaluating it.

It seems he thought there was no problem with it, he went back to call the noble waiting outside the shop.

The pink hair swings like spreading flower scent, a beautiful girl treads upon the shop with light steps.

Her white dress covers to her ankles, her boots are peeking from the hem.

Even though her attire looks like something that doesn't fit the TPO, it seems she's aware that she was going to the downtown.

"Hee, so this is the shop with Japanese food."

"Yes, it'll be nice if it suits Aoi's palate."

A boy who looks like a girl entering afterward looks around the shop restlessly with great interest. He is a researcher of my Echigoya Firm, another summoned person like Yui earlier--Land of Prosperous Japan Empire's Aoi Haruka.

The pink princess noblewoman--Princess Menea's pink eyes seem to have finally caught me, she approaches me half-running happily.

"My, Satou-sama!"

"It has been a long time. Princess Menea."

It seem the other children around can't catch up with the sudden appearance of Menea.

"My, please call me Menea."

Princess Menea wraps my hand at a strange distance, and pushes herself.

If this were a manga, I feel like her eyes would turn heart-shaped.

Arisa and Mia would declare me guilty if this kept up, so I gently separate myself from her.

"--Me-Menea. It's been awhile."

The one who replied her instead of me was Souya boy.

Seems he has some feeling for princess Menea, he looks like the template of a boy in love.

Yui looks like she doesn't find it amusing, but it doesn't seem like she'll reprove Souya boy.

"I do not remember allowing you to call me without honorific. I will not object this one out of respect for Satou-sama, but it'll be dealt with appropriately the next time you do it."

--Scary.

Princess Menea rejects Souya boy with an expression that makes her look like a completely different person than the one I know.

Souya boy nods in agreement while trembling and looking pale.

Princess Menea has a good look but her personality is problematic, so I'd like for Souya boy to live with Yui's pure love.

◇

We were going to leave after finishing our meal, but since Princess Menea wanted us to listen to Aoi boy's worry together with her, we went into the restaurant's private room with them.

I'm surrounded by Yui, Souya boy, and Arisa so that Princess Menea won't get close.

"I wonder what I should do...."

Aoi stares at the table and mutters.

"Hey, so what are you worrying about anyway?"

"If you're being bullied by your senpai in Echigoya Firm, shall I go and stop them?"

Arisa and Yui looked at Aoi boy's face and talked.

We've been eating the sweets on top of the table, so it's about time for some serious flavor.

"It's not like that. The manager told me to bring a new idea for invention the day after tomorrow, but I can't think of anything good."

"There should be many for that though?"

Arisa tilts her head in puzzlement.

Apparently, Aoi boy is the type who thinks too deeply.

"That's right! Aoi, make smartphones, smartphones. One that works with magic!"

"Please don't be absurd. I've been told not to make smartphones or telecommunication devices. Also, cars and railroads are not allowed either."

"Why?"

"Long distance telecommunication and mass transportation violate the god's taboo, so I can't do it, said Kuro-sama."

"Eh~, gods are stingy~"

Arisa doesn't join the two's conversation, and puts herself on top of my lap as if constraining Princess Menea who's gone around the table to try to sit besides me.

Arisa--don't stroke someone's thigh casually.

"Do cars include golem carriages too?"

"You might not understand, but it's about cars that work with internal combustion engines and burning oil."

"I see. It'll be dangerous if they explode after all."

"...Y-yes."

While stopping Arisa's sexual harassment, I replied like a native would.

"Hey, what about pump?"

"By pump, do you mean the thing that pulls water?"

"Yes, that."

Arisa is probably talking about pumps that work with human-power.

People use buckets to draw water from wells in Shiga Kingdom, so just having pumps should save quite some labor.

I thought it was quite a good idea, but Aoi boy shakes his head.

"That's not good. Royal Capital has water service...."

Just as Aoi boy's said, the Royal Capital is fully equipped with water and sewer services.

However--.

"It's not like you have to sell it in the Royal Capital."

"Right right. There's no waterworks besides in the Royal Capital, so I think it'll sell explosively well."

Just as Yui and Arisa have said, it should be useful in rural areas.

It's strange that it hasn't been spread by reincarnated people and the others, but it really shouldn't violate the god's taboo.

"--Is it really so?"

"How about presenting that if it seems good?"

"You've got nothing to lose anyway."

Encouraged by Yui and Arisa, Aoi boy seems to be getting motivated too.

"Invention huh.... Aoi or something, you come from the same hometown as Yui right?"

Seemingly like having thought of something, Souya boy talked to Aoi boy.

"Y-yes--wait, you talked about it, Yui-chan."

"Un, sorry. I didn't want to keep any secret to darling."

Aoi boy pressed on Yui who betrayed his secret, but Yui lightly apologized. Her face looks like she doesn't feel bad about it.

"Souya-san, if possible, could you please keep our origins a secret--"

"I know. I don't want to let Yui becomes something like an experimental animal."

Souya boy flatly asserted so, thus Aoi boy leaks out a sigh of relief.

"Now then, getting back on the topic, since you come from the same place, you should know about magical dishes that can be eaten immediately after pouring hot water into it, the『Insutan』or something? How about making that? You should have no problem regarding the market if you have some connection with the military."

"In-stant ramen or bouillon cube, something like them is it.... Making dried noodles and powdered soup seem doable. I'll try doing a presentation about that to the manager!"

He's quite good at looking at things.

I'll scout Souya boy to Echigoya firm if he becomes a bump.

I'll add some information while at it.

"I remember seeing dried noodles in Standell city in Oyugock Dukedom. It should be helpful if you order it right?"

"Thank you very much, Satou-san. I'll ask about it once I go back!"

I'm glad that Aoi boy becomes energetic again.

◇

"It's thanks to Satou-san that Aoi got well! What should I give as a thank."

"No no, I didn't do anything."

Princess Menea approached me while looking impressed, but I really only gave a reference in the end, and actually not did anything. I think the three people besides me are the meritorious ones.

"That's not the case at all! That's right! Will you come for the hanami (sakura blossom viewing)? You can see the royal capital's sakura tree from the girl's dormitory garden well."

Yui gets on Princess Menea's suggestion outright.

"Hanami huh~, that sounds nice! Menea-sama, could I go too with darling?"

"....I-it can't be helped. If Yui insists, then I will allow--"

"I dislike Sakura. I won't go. Yui should go if you want."

Princess Menea seems like she's going to give in to Yui's cheerful request, but Souya refuses with heavy atmosphere.

"--Darling? Wait for me. Let's go together if you're going back. I'm sorry, Menea-sama. Let's do the hanami for later."

Yui hurriedly chases after Souya boy who heads toward the exit.

"Princess Menea.... Do not get close to the white-haired orphan anymore. He's--eerie somehow."

Before going through the exit, Souya boy left a warning that also sounded like a backbiting.

◇

During the hanami with Princess Menea, the girls from the girl's dormitory intruded when they found Mia, so it became quite a chaotic party.

Even though there were no liquor, the tension felt like they'd start stripping, I couldn't follow, so we excused myself by saying that we needed to prepare for the evening party.

"Everyone should go to the evening party ahead of time once you've prepared, I'll be going after finishing my business at Echigoya Firm."

"He? We'll wait."

I told that to Arisa who stopped her hand changing clothes while having a curious expression on her face.

"I'd like you to see Karina-sama's condition before the evening party."

"Okay then, but it's rare for you to worry about Karina-sama."

I think it's not that strange for someone to worry about his employer's daughter.

Lady Karina may get the opportunity to make some friends at that place, so I want Arisa and the others to remove her timidness.

If she were with me, we would get surrounded by nobles who brought marriage proposals, it'd cut down the time.

"Then I'll leave it to you."

"Okkey~"

I wave my hands, going to leave the room, but stop.

"That's right Arisa. I have something to talk about after the evening party, so don't get too frolic to the point of being like you ran out of battery like yesterday."

"Is it perhaps, YO･TO･GI?"

While feeling slightly uneasy toward Arisa who raised a shout of victory like 'Hyaho~i', I leave for Echigoya Firm.

13-18. Satou and Kuro

Satou's here. I've heard that, "You'll die if you meet your doppelganger", though I don't know the source. Is it because you get the urge to kill it when you see yourself objectively?

◇

"Kuro-sama, welcome back."

Even though I moved into the main office without any sound, Tifaliza greets me in no time at all, and then she pushes the button to call the manager.

Sound of footsteps, 'dadada', that aren't fit for a lady are reverberating from the corridor.

The footsteps stop right before the door, and then someone knocks the door after enough time for a few deep breathes.

"Enter."

"Please excuse me."

There wasn't any trace of going full throttle at the corridor on the manager who opened the door.

"Kuro-sama, besides the matter about the auction, there is a report regarding the boy and the orphanage from before. Which shall I report first?"

"Start from the auction."

The latter is probably about the encounter with us during the day, so leaving it for later should be fine.

"Yes, all of the magic arms that were exhibited in the first day have all been bid as planned. Furthermore, nobles, military officers, and merchants who couldn't bid have made reservations. Total income from the successful bid is--"

"It's 30.713 gold coins. The details is in this copy."

Tifaliza's calm and melodius voice takes over the manager's triumphant report.

"We've got quite a lot for only 100 exhibited items."

"The effect from the incident where demons and monsters appeared in the Royal Capital was quite impactful. I heard that magic arms that were exhibited by other people had also been sold for three times the price."

....I see.

I guess it's not improbable for the sudden price hike since the red-rope pattern monsters can't be hurt by normal weapons that haven't been enchanted at least.

"Fumu, check the applicants levels, and prioritize the ones who are level 30 and above and have magic edge skills."

Giving magic swords to people with 1-digit level is meaningless after all.

"Certainly. And also, a special request for a magic sword has come from Sir Heim of Shiga Eight Swords."

"A made-to-order magic sword huh..."

It sounds quite interesting.

After getting the chant orb, making a one-of-a-kind magic sword without burdening Arisa and Mia sounds fun too.

"I can't do it right now, but inform him that we will consider about it positively."

"--Yes, understood."

Looks like she didn't think that I would receive it, the manager's response was slightly delayed.

The manager pulls herself together, rolls up the list on her hand and then continues talking.

"The prime minister requested that we don't sell magic arms to merchants who deal with foreign countries. This is the list of them."

I receive the list from the manager.

The house of Souya boy I met today is in that list. It's no wonder that they're in the list since it seems they have dealings with the weaselkin empire and the continent west.

The prime minister probably sent the sales control request because he wanted to prevent powerful weapons getting to foreign countries.

"It should be natural for us to think about the national defense."

"Then we will handle it as is. Kuro-sama, I'm thinking of asking for tax concession from the prime minister for undertaking the request, would you permit it?"

"Do it."

The manager is shrewd unlike me.

◇

Next, I receive the report about Shin boy.

"--Thus, the kidnapped orphans were saved by Viscount Pendragon and his Mithril explorer retainers. May I ask if the orphanage directors were really arrested by Kuro-sama?"

I reply, "It's the truth", to the manager.

"Then I'll omit the matter about the orphanage directors. The details are described in this report, Kuro-sama can look at it on later time."

I take the report from the manager and toss it into the black hole of the item box.

"The majority of the missing children were found in the slum."

"Is that so--"

--Good.

It seems not all of the missing children were sacrificed for the demon summoning.

"The watchmen reported that social welfare bureau had dispatched junior officers to the orphanages that had lost their directors."

I thought the replacements for the directors wouldn't come for a while, but the public office worked unexpectedly fast.

"Lastly, Shin boy has sold his black bandana to a weaselkin merchant."

"When was it?"

"It was right before the kidnapping incident."

I didn't notice it at that time, so he wasn't wearing the recognition inhibition bandana huh.

That explains Arisa finding out Shin boy's hero title.

Even if I give Shin boy another recognition inhibition item, he will just sell it again if he doesn't understand its importance.

I'll talk to him about the reason properly before giving it next time.

"Who is that merchant?"

"I am very sorry. It's not described in the report."

"Then investigate it, just the name is fine."

"Understood. I'll arrange it so that it'll be ready by tomorrow morning."

I had searched for the bandana on the map, but I couldn't find it. It's probably stored inside Item Box.

I tried searching the weaselkin, but there were more than 1000 of them in the Royal Capital, so I gave up.

Being annoying was one of the reason, but there was simply no information to narrow them down.

"Kuro-sama, you might be not interested in it, but--"

With that preface, the manager talked about how thieves appeared in two venues of the auctions.

They were all amateur thieves, so all of them seemed to have been arrested by the venue guards and soldiers, but the story continues.

"--The goddess statue has disappeared?"

"Yes, the inside of the box that had been carried into the venue was changed into another stone statue."

Fumu, it's probably unrelated to the matter about orbs, but it kinda bothers me.

"It's bothering me a bit. Inquire the detail about the incident."

"Certainly."

Next, I received report about the decrease of burglary of the merchant houses in the Royal Capital.

"That's pleasing to hear and all but...."

I feel puzzled inside my mind since I don't know how it relates to me.

"This is the result of Kuro-sama's actions."

Did I do anything?

"Thanks to Kuro-sama smashing thief hideouts one after another, the number of thieves in the metropolitan area and night burglars have decreased sharply."

Come to think of it, I remember arresting around 400 people recently.

"Excellent."

I replied so and urged the manager for the next report.

◇

"Kuro-sama, there is a little something I need to talk about Sir Pendragon--"

After finishing the report, the manager wanted to consult with a serious face, so we change places from Kuro's office where Tifaliza is working to the manager's room.

"What is it about?"

Don't tell me, has she realized that Kuro and Satou are the same person?

"Y-yes. Actually the main head of the earl house that's related to me--"

"Manager, this is bad!"

The manager was finally going to talk, but then a light blond executive girl rushed in so it got interrupted.

"Viscount Pendragon has come for a meeting!"

--What?

"Moreover, he said that he was Manager's fiance!"

I suppress my surprise with [Poker Face] skill, and search the map in order to find out the identity of the fake Sir Pendragon.

◇

"Nice to meet you, fiancee-dono. I want to talk with just the two of us without other people interfering if possible. Sorry but could you please leave?"

That guy talked while having the exact face of Satou.

Unfortunately the voice is slightly different from my natural voice. It sounds like he's forcing higher pitched voice to sound lower.

I confirmed just in case, but he's not a mock body (avatar) of the green demon.

"--Don't mind it."

I cut off Fake Satou's talk.

"And, what's your business for coming here?"

Fake Satou shrugs off his shoulders to my pressing, he's putting the expression of 'can't be helped then'.

His attitude is quite aggravating, though it's probably his aim.

"I received her marriage proposal, so I thought of meeting her here and having some talk with her. We're neighbors after all."

Fake Satou smiles refreshingly towards the manager.

The manager isn't looking at Fake Satou, but to me, she tells me the reason why he's insisting that he's her fiance.

"A-actually, the head of an earl house related to ours had colluded with my father to propose a marriage to Viscount Pendragon."

I see, so it was among the many marriage proposals that had arrived in the mansion.

I had told the butler to write letters of refusal if the other parties were lower nobles, but I have to write the letters myself if it's for the upper nobles, so it's been put on hold.

It looks like it'll become troublesome if I don't write my replies soon.

Now then, leaving that aside, let's find out Fake Satou's motive.

"Apparently an annoying bug won't go away today, so let's deepen our love in another day."

The manager lifts her eyebrows in anger toward Fake Satou's joke.

She muttered in low voice, "He dared to insult Kuro-sama."

However, it seems because the other party is an upper noble, she endures herself not to raise her hands against him.

"This is a commemoration for our meeting."

Fake Satou takes out a necklace wrapped in cloth from his chest and presents it to the manager.

It's an expensive looking necklace that has a glittering vermilion drop on the top.

The detailed information is displayed beside the necklace on the AR reading--

"I want you to at least take this."

The manager who wants Fake Satou to go away is going to take the necklace without even looking at it.

I grab her arm and stop her.

"....Wait."

"Kuro-sama?"

The manager smiles broadly from my restraint.

"You are really boorish--"

Fake Satou disappeared before he finished speaking.

He didn't run away, he was sunk into the wall after receiving my front kick.

I didn't kill him of course, but he probably won't wake up for now.

I leave the surprised manager and put the necklace dropped by him into my storage.

This necklace is a cursed item, it's a dangerous item that makes the wearer unconsciously obeys the order of the one who has the other pair.

"Ku-Kuro-sama?! He's still tentatively an upper noble. From the standpoint of Kuro-sama and Hero Nanashi-sama...."

"I don't care. It's an impostor."

Long blond hair flows down from Fake Satou's black hair.

I get close to the impostor and strip off his disguise.

"--A woman?"

"That's right."

This person was the female phantom thief whom I met when we first arrived at the Royal Capital.

I had noticed that the Fake Satou was the phantom thief from the beginning, but she didn't do any offense, so I assumed a wait-and-see stance.

I tied the phantom thief with Thorn Foot's ivy, gave her the minimum treatment with a diluted low magic potion, and interrogated her.

"--Then you wanted to manipulate the manager in order to steal the orbs in the underground vault?"

"That's right."

This one wanted orbs too huh--.

Organized thievery has decreased, but now an individual phantom thief has appeared.

I'm getting tired of eliminating them, it's about the time they should stop.

"Is that all you want to ask? Then just quickly hand me over to the guards. Or maybe you want my body?"

The female phantom thief pushes out her breasts while being tied up, provoking me.

It's the manager who reacts instead of me.

"Be silent."

The manager hits the phantom thief with a horseback-riding whip.

A red mark is engraved on the phantom thief's cheek.

"Leave it at that."

I take out a sleeping magic potion from my storage and force the female phantom thief to drink it.

The female phantom thief twists her body, trying to resist it, but she quickly loses her consciousness, turning to [Coma] condition.

She was probably going to try escaping before the imprisonment, but now she should sleep for a whole day.

"Send her to the prison as she wants--"

As if waiting for me to finish dealing with the fake, the ring tone from [Telephone] rings.

The caller is Arisa.

Did anything happen in the royal castle?

While recalling a slight irritation, I put the Telephone reception to ON.

13-19. Nanashi and Arisa

[In Arisa's point of view this time.]

"Arisa, you sure look quite cheerful today."

"You think so?"

Dehehe, I understand myself that my face has broken into a smile.

I don't think something wonderful like Yotogi will happen probably, but getting called out by your loved one in the middle of the night sure fires you up.

If I don't stop myself from getting another three helping in the feast today, were I strip and show my bulging stomach, my maiden's heart will be in a pinch.

Ah but, the dishes in the royal castle are different than what Lulu and Master usually make, so I just can't stop~

--PYWEEEE !

I heard a high-pitched voice when the carriage was just about to arrive at the royal castle's parking lot.

"Chicken meat~?"

"Bird of prey nanodesu."

Bird of prey? Is it like a hawk or an eagle?

"--Coachman! Stop the carriage!"

Liza who's looking outside speaks loudly.

I wonder what is it?

Time for magic!

[Area Search] activate!

Above is--.

◇

"Arisa, pull yourself together."

Liza is slapping my cheeks.
In the grove of trees--the carriage is overturned on the thicket.

Apparently, I fainted.

"W-what happened?"
"The horses acted violently and overturned the carriage."

The horses did--?

"--Right! I remember now!"

Right when I was shouting, I heard the call from Tama and Pochi.

It seems they've gone scouting.

"Lots of carriages fell~"

"It'll be bad if we don't save them quick nanodesu."

That thing flies over the grove of trees like, 'gouu'.

--PYWEEEE !

Beyond the grove, I see many carriages toppled over and something circling in the sky.

Eagle as its upper half of the body, and lion as the lower half.

The mythical beast that rules over the sky--Griffon.

Anyone who sees that figure can only choose to escape.

--PYWEEEE !

However, I'll say this daringly!

"Griffon's cry should be『Guruu』!!!"

"Arisa--what are you saying?"

Liza is looking seriously worried about me.

I'm sorry. I know that it's not a good timing to make the joke, but I couldn't help but did it no matter what.

I wonder if being an otaku is sinful....

"But, how did that monster invade the royal castle?"

I suddenly realized it when I heard Lulu.

Come to think of it, the royal castle has the barrier of Ancient King Yamato, so it was even safe during the attack of a greater demon back then, how did this one enter I wonder?

"Huhuh~?"

"It's Master nanodesu!"

Eh? Where?

"■■■■ ■■ Long Sight. That clothing and violet wig is certainly Master's, so I report."

I also take out a telescope from my magic bag, and look at the back of the circling Griffon.

I see a small figure of a person on its back.

If that figure is really Master, then the Griffon seems to be around 10 meter long big body in total.

"But, I don't think Master would do something that trouble people you know?"

"Nn, agree."

Just as Lulu and Mia have said, this is unlike Master.

--Moreover.

"Everyone, get ready for battle!"

Everyone looks surprised hearing my command.

"A-Arisa?"

"That's an impostor!"

I mean the chest area is swelled.

Master who hates cross-dressing will never cross-dresses by himself.

"For now, let's attract their attention. I'll confine them in my space magic once they come here!"

"Understood. Pochi, Tama, use Magic Edge Cannon. Lulu, guard Mia and Arisa. Nana, provide the counterattack."

Everyone starts to act following Liza's instructions.

◇

Red balls of light shot by the three fly toward the Griffon.

However, right before they hit, the shots missed the Griffon as if they evaded it themselves.

"--Wind barrier."

I hear Mia muttering next to me.

However, we should have succeeded tempting it going to the grove.

I mean the Griffon's hostile line of sight is directed here.

The Griffon plunges toward us at a terrific speed!

I look up at the Griffon and shout.

"Only barrier can win against barrier!"

That ain't the case, but the mood is important!

The tension MAX me can do it!

Without unique skill, there's no way this can be resisted!

--Activating space magic's [<<Dimension Labyrinth>>]!

The space before the Griffon swirls, swallowing its big body.

They tried to evade in a hurry, but their speed became their undoing, they disappeared into the the other dimension created by my magic.

"As expected of Arisa."

"Not yet! Three minutes. I'm going to call for reinforcement, so everyone please help the injured people in the parking lot!"

After I told so, everyone began to act immediately.

I take out the continuous MP-healing magic potion, that Master's created, from magic bag and drink it.

I still have enough magic power, but it's to be doubly sure.

Next I activate space magic's [Telephone], calling Master.

◇

『Yes, it's Satou here.』

"Master, it's an emergency. Come here."

I frankly report.

"What's happened?"

As expected of cheat Master, to come at the next moment, he's too wonderf--mu?

"Wait, don't come with that figure."

"Ah, sorry--"

Master is not in his usual black haired shota-like figure, but in Echigoya Firm's Kuro figure with a foreign actor's face and white hair.

It might be handsome and all, but I like his usual face more than the camouflage mask.

After confirming that no one is looking, Master changes back to the usual Satou figure.

"And, what happened?"

"An impostor of Master and a Griffon appeared."

"What? Here too?"

Master expressed his surprise.

"Eh? Did a Griffon come out too there?"

"No, it was a fake Satou in my case."

So, such a wonderful object appeared.

I want to see it a bit.

"So, where's the impostor and the Griffon?"

"They're there."

We ran out of time-out before I could explain.

The sky broke, and a beak appeared.

"Then, I'll go ahead and eliminate--"

After declaring so reliably, Master won't move for some reason.

"--That idiot."

Master who's unusually angry changed into Nanashi form, disappeared, and reappeared beside the Griffon.

They're saying something in the distant, but I can't hear it here.

Next moment, the Griffon disappeared together with Master.

....I wonder what happened?

Explanation pulisu!

13-20. Nanashi and Arisa (2)

[This is also in Arisa's point of view.]

"Sorry, sorry, an idiot rode on the Griffon, so I had to take them someplace away that wouldn't trouble other people."

"Idiot?"

It's rare for Master who's a gentleman to speak like that.

--I wonder what is this? I feel a really bad premonition.

Then, Liza who should have been doing rescue comes back.

Looks like she's been called by Master's Telephone magic.

Unlike me, Master can use Telephone without speaking. It's plainly cheating, enviable.

"Master, did you call for me."

"Yeah, I want Liza and Arisa to come with me."

"Certainly."

"Okkey."

The scene before my eyes changes into jungle like frame drops in a movie.

There's a Griffon laying on the space before us, grooming itself.

"Hikaru! Where are you?"

Whuat?! A woman's name!!

Th-theis is a case!

The case is happening on the spot, nee-san!

"Ah! Ichirou-nii."

--Another alias?

You might forget your true name before long you know?

Mumu! The black-haired woman who took off her wig lightly runs toward Master.

--That's!

Isn't she the broom woman who barged on when the greater demon attacked!

The broom woman rushes, going to hug Master vigorously, so I put myself between them using short-distance teleport.

"Too soft!"

"Uwah, Teleport magic? Huh aren't you the violet-haired girl. Then maybe it's a Unique Skill?"

The broom woman were surprised against Arisa-chan's impregnable guard.

"You two calm down."

As I intimidatingly growled, 'garuru', Master embraced me.

I don't intend to yield to the broom woman, but in order to fully enjoy this wonderful situation, I decide to stop my hostility outwardly.

◇

"First, she is my childhood friend who comes from the same town, her alias is Hikaru, her real name is Kouhai Mitsuko, she's the Ancient King Yamato herself. It seems she underwent cold sleep with magical means until the present age. She usually calls herself Mito."

There are many things I want to retort, but I'll endure it for now.

I mean, I'm currently experiencing a miracle right now.

For Master to hold me on his lap while patting my head!

Ah, it'll be nice if time stop like this--

"Then, she's Liza of Lizardfolk kin. She's a master of spears and the mediator among my companions."

Introduced by Master, Liza bows to the broom woman.

Liza's eyes are on alert against the broom woman and the Griffon, her hand is not letting go of her spear. As expected of Liza.

"Nice to meet you! You don't have to be so vigilant, I won't harm Ichirou-nii you see."

While turning aside Liza's spirit with ease, the broom woman waves her hand carefreely.

"And, this one is Arisa. As you can see, she's a reincarnated person, and although she's a bit troublesome, she's my advisor."

A-at least call me your lover or your future wife please!

"Don't tell me, there are other girls too?"

"There are though?"

Even though the broom woman asked anxiously, Master replied back utterly normally.

Apparently, the broom woman--nay, Hikaru's position is close to ours.

"Master, a question!"

"What is it so suddenly."

"Is this Hikaru person your ex-girlfriend? Or an ex-wife?"

I asked since I thought the possibility of 'YES' was low, but it might be better if I didn't ask.

My heart is beating like it'll explode.

"There's no way right? I've never gone out with Hikaru. Of course, she's never been my wife either."

"I see~♪"

Alright---------!

Indeed my Master!

"Ichirou-nii is mean. I'm planning to be your wife from now on so it's alright! I mean, I'm not a younger girl now! I'm older than Ichirou-nii! Fufufu, no more lolita! Another world is the best! Now you can't tell me that you're not into younger girls!"

Uwah, her personality somehow feels like a deja vu.

"I've been thinking this since awhile, Arisa's and Hikaru's personalities are similar aren't they. "

S-T-O-P iiiit!

I did think I was fickle, but I don't think I'm that bad.

◇

"And, is the name Ichirou that Hikaru-san has been saying since awhile ago Master's new alias?"

"No that's my real name."

"Real name?"

--Ah, I see.

Satou can't be a real name after all.

"So Master's name was Satou Ichirou."

"Nope. My real name is Suzuki Ichirou."

WHY？

"Where did Satou come from Suzuki Ichirouuuu!"

Master ignores my soulful retort.

I think Master's ignoring talent is too high.

"Should I call Master as Suzuki Ichirou-sama from now on?"

"No, just call me Satou like it's always been."

Master replied so to Liza's question.

I and Liza have never called Master with Satou even once, but let's not tease it needlessly now.

Arisa-chan is a woman who can read mood.

"My default name has been Satou ever since I came here, so being called Satou in this figure has become natural for me."

I see, so it wasn't a name that was added later.

"And, what did this childhood friend Hikaru-san come for?"

"I was asked to do something by Ichirou-nii."

Hikaru answers with a smile.

It looks like she's really in love with Master. I can't help but feel that she's happy to be relied on.

"I asked her to be Shin boy's guard since it seems he's being targeted by a greater demon."

"Ah, that hero kid huh."

I'm not happy that Master relied on this Hikaru instead of us, but complaining about it will be misdirected of me.

It's vexing, but we are no match against a greater demon unless we are all together with our equipment and in fully boosted states.

We have to become stronger, and be relied upon the most!

I'll work hard to aim for level 100 once we get back to the Labyrinth City!

"Right, why were you dressed up as Hero Nanashi?"

"Nn? Because I've succeeded as the second generation Hero Nanashi. I've been told that I won't be attacked even if I ride a dragon if I'm in this clothing."

It bothered me for a bit so I asked, and such an answer came back.

Certainly, I think no one attacked her with arrows or magic, only us did attack.

"But I never thought that the horses would run away earlier than the humans when the Griffon appeared."

"Griffon is the natural enemy of horses in fantasy setting after all."

It's said that Hippogriff is born between a horse and a Griffon isn't it?

Come to think of it, I might have never heard the name Hippogriff in this world.

"You have to apologize to the people you troubled later okay."

"Which reminds me, why did you ride a Griffon?"

"The dragons wouldn't let me ride on them since they were afraid of Ichirou-nii, so I asked the Griffon who was playing in the mountain foot to let me ride on it."

Saying so, Hikaru-cchi release her hidden status and plainly showed her

Unique Skill, [Friendship].

Won't you become the greatest tamer with this skill?

"But you shouldn't have ridden it to as far as the royal castle."

"Well~, I noticed that I didn't have Ichirou-nii's contact address when I arrived at the Royal Capital, so I thought, might as well see Sharlick-kun's descendants at the royal castle."

Hikaru frankly told me her reason when I gave her my honest opinion.

Judging from the flow of the conversation, Sharlick doesn't seem to be about the current third prince, but probably about the second generation Shiga Kingdom's king.

Your own descendants, that super fire you up!

◇

And also, right.

I have to ask one more thing.

"I missed my chance to ask earlier, what do you mean by second generation Nanashi?"

"Ah, since Hikaru can probably defeat a demon lord even if it appears, and the king and the prime minister think Nanashi as the Ancient King Yamato, Hikaru is the right person for it right?"

So it's like that?

How should I say, aren't you pushing the troublesome work to Hikaru-cchi?

Leaving me who had such a doubt behind, Master said something serious.

"Oh right, I've been wanting to talk about something for awhile--"

--WHAT？

I, can't, hear, it.

"To the dragons?"

"That's right. I'm sorry to Liza who's from the clan that worships dragons...."

"No, dragons seek powerful opponents. I heard that the dragons commend anyone who can hurt them by any means. Besides--"

I-can't-hear-it.

"Are you alright?"

Master looked at me, whose thought was in disarray, worryingly

Long eyelashes. His skin is disgustingly beautiful like always.

"S-sorry, I couldn't hear it well. It's about how Master defeated the dragons at the Dragon Valley and leveled up right? I did wonder how Master got to level 310, but to think that the experience points was from defeating dragons. As expected of my Master!"

I talk like a machine gun to escape reality.

Yet, this Hikaru girl!

"Isn't it~. To even defeat the strongest dragon god AkonKagura-sama, can't believe it~ As expected of my Ichirou-nii!"

She plainly thrust the reality, she didn't even doubt or try to escape.

--God slaying?

I could believe it if it was a half, demi-god, or the god's apostle.

"Arisa, I understand that you can't believe it."

No! You don't understand!

"But that's not an excuse to open my robe on the chest and try to enter inside!"

--Isn't it fine, just for a bit!

◇

"Have you calmed down?"

"Un, a bit."

My Masternium is being replenished.

Please wait for a bit more.

"Since Arisa has calmed down, let's get back to the Royal Capital. Hikaru, you change to normal clothing too."

"Un, okay. Guri-kun we're parting here. Really thank you for today."

--PYWEEEE!

I won't retort.

I won't retort anymore!

"And also Hikaru, just call me Satou."

"Then please call me Mito."

"Okay."

"But, can I call you Ichirou-nii when it's just us two?"

"Yeah, I don't mind."

Nuooooou!

"Please call me Hikaru during that time too."

"Yeah."

Flirting is forbidden!

I desperately drill my head on Master's stomach.

"Now then, since Arisa is in bad mood, so let's go back."

We return to the royal castle with Master's Unique Skill.

The people seem to be in the middle of rescue operation, so we go help too.

Despite being the daughter of a noble, Karina is pulling the carriages together with Pochi and Tama, rescuing the injured.

It's a pity that my instruction for her to attract Master's attention isn't going well.

I wonder if I really should instruct Karina to be the tsundere type after all?

◇

In the end, the evening party today is canceled too.

After seeing the young nobles who were supposed to debut on the high society this year crying their eyes out, Hikaru--I mean, Mito secretly apologizes and prays for them to meet their good matches.

Well, the person herself is single without a lover, so you can't expect it to be miraculous.

"--And so, Mito is my childhood friend. She's going to live in the mansion for a while, so please get along well with her."

"Nice to meet you!"

Master introduced Mito to everyone, Mito unabashedly greeted.

After discussing with Liza, we're going to tell about Master's real name in Japan, and about the god slaying to everyone once we find a good opportunity.

For me and Liza, 'Satou' feels more like Master's real name than 'Suzuki Ichirou'.

"Nice to meet you~?"

"Nice to meet you nanodesu."

"Registered as Master's sister-in-law so I report."

Tama, Pochi, and Nana welcomed Mito.

"Mwu, increased."

"P-please take care of me."

Mia and Lulu seem to have mixed feelings due to the appearance of a rival.

"Mito knows that I'm a hero, so you can show her your magic bags and the hidden equipment."

When Master finished speaking, the entrance bell rang.

"--Looks like Zena-san has come."

Master who turned his face toward the entrance muttered.

"Zena? Don't tell me it's another new girl?"

"Yes, it's the girl who's saved Liza and the others, and works as a magic soldier in Seryuu city."

Should I say that the concerned party is in love with Master?

Well, I guess it's fine.

There's a lot besides Zena-tan anyway.

Zena-tan who entered the room is surprised to see Mito.

However, the meaning of that surprise is slightly different from what I expected.

"Mi-Mito-san?!"

"Ara, aren't you the child I met in Zetsu Earldom?"

Looks like Zena-tan and Mito are acquainted.

The world is small~

The two were asking about their common acquaintance, John-kun, but I didn't really care so I ignored it.

After hearing that Mito is Master's childhood friend, Zena-tan is having a complicated look on her face, but Mito looks like she's used to it.

It seems Master really was popular with younger girls in his former world too.

But, well, I'm not that pessimistic to the status quo.

I mean, unlike the monogamous Japan, the countries here approve the polygamy law.

Moreover, Master is an upper noble, so he should be able to have three wives at the very least!

Even if I have to yield the first seat to Aze-tan, I'll get the second and the third seats together with Lulu!

If I just smash Master's strangely high ethics, I should be able to be considered a wife candidate!

My highest priority is to build a bombshell body!

Now then, I'll get the secret of Lulu onee-sama who's stealthily attained C-cup, and get that nice body!

Oh but, tomorrow is the princess's tea party, so I have to sleep quick.

Alright, let's work hard from tomorrow on!

13-21. The Princess's Tea Party

Satou's here. Even someone who's usually taciturn can talk fluently when it's about their favorite thing. If you want to get along with someone who's hard to please, I think you should begin by knowing their favorite thing.

◇

"Thank you for inviting me to the tea party today--"

I bow like a retainer would before Princess Shistina, the sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom.

The ones that have come to the tea party are only Arisa, Mia and me.

The three beastkin girl and Nana have gone to the labyrinth. They wished for it since they hadn't moved their bodies for awhile, so I sent them to the marine area deep in the first layer. Of course, Lulu who brought cooking tools were also with them.

In addition, Crow and Shiro are attending the royal academy like usual, and Hikaru is watching Shin boy.

I finish my greeting, and look around the room while being careful as to not make it seems rude.

As might be expected of the room of the princess of a large kingdom, eight lady's attendants and maids are packed inside.

Every one of the employees is a beauty.

"Welcome Viscount Pendragon. Arisa and Mia-sama too, welcome."

"Good day Shistina-sama. I have brought the snacks I talked about the other day. It has been put inside the magic refrigerator storage, so please go ahead and enjoy it."

"Morning."

Arisa was talking about crepes.

It was topped with strawberry and lulu's fruit ice cream, so I ended up making a magic refrigerator for it too. I made it in the name of one of my alias, Trismegistus.

This is the first time I've been invited to a tea party by the princess, so I've brought some presents that's just right coming from a Viscount.

Adding up the princess's preferences I heard from Arisa, I brought things like stationery with flower fragrance, self-made paper that felt nice to write on, a pen made from water stone that didn't need ink, and a box with lock for putting letters.

Every one of them is adorned with pretty decorations that suit the princess, made in the name of Michaelangelo. They were quite good considering they were made in half an hour.

In addition I also gave six-colored paper tags. They're Arisa's and Mia's favorites, so a researcher should be happy with them.

I also gave things like pastry and perfumes to the personal attendants of the princess.

They've been taking care of Arisa and Mia, so these much is alright.

"This is the first time I've seen such a small refrigerator. Perhaps, Viscount Pendragon made it?"

The princess asked with eyes full of expectation, but I can't exactly tell her YES.

"No, it's a work of Trismegistus-shi."

"That's the name of the up-and-coming mysterious magic tool engineer isn't it. If I'm not mistaken he's contracted exclusively to Echigoya Firm."

"The princess knows well, it was brought by my personal merchant. It is quite useful when I need to bring cakes."

After hearing my conversation with the princess, one of the princess's attendant looked subtly dejected.

A small-sized magic refrigerator is convenient after all, so she probably wanted to have one nearby.

Unlike the pen and the letter box that use the user's magic power, magic refrigerator uses a crimson treasure manufactured from a philosopher's stone as its magic source, so I can't give it.

Beckoned by the princess, we sit on the sofa and then her personal musicians begin to play a soft elegant tune.

Mia seemed to be interested with the musicians, but she sat besides me with a thump after Arisa urged her to.

When the princess touches the crystal pillar-like magic tool beside the sofa, wind begins to circulate around us and the musicians' performance can't be heard anymore.

"I've used the anti-listening device, so you can talk with ease."

"Thank you, Tina-sama."

"Nn."

"You too Viscount Pendragon, please relax more."

The princess's way of speaking changed.

I see, so it's a free and easy party.

Looks like Arisa and Mia are good friends with Princess Shistina.

Apparently, even the special music is nothing more than a way to check the magic tool's function.

"And so, Viscount Pendragon--"

"You can call me with just Satou."

My house name is a bit hard to say, so I tell her to use the easier one.

For some reason, Mia and Arisa who are sitting beside me are grinding my arms and rubbing their heads, but they stop acting strangely after I slip my arm away and pat their heads.

"Then Sir Satou. Could you please tell me about the firework and the <<Firework Illusion>> that you made in Oyugock Dukedom?"

"Yes, it's fine. At first I asked about the firework that was made from gunpowder from Hero Hayato--"

The Deception skill was doing great after a long absence, so I succeeded telling a fabricated story about the making of the firework spell without any trouble--

--Or so it should have been....

"Then! Satou-sama really made the firework!"

The princess links her fingers in front of her chest looking so happy, staring at me with a gaze full of admiration

....Oops.

Maybe I should have told her that I found it in ancient document from Ancient King Yamato's era and recreated it.

No, it's widely known that the firework is my creation in the Duchy Capital, so telling a lie would get it exposed.

"Nn, genius."

Mia nods.

Afterward, we had a break when the maids brought the snacks and the tea, and then the four of us discussed about magic lively.

She stated her knowledge about magic and spells so fluently I'd have never thought she was the same taciturn person like when she was in the Forbidden Library, she was debating with Arisa and Mia about magic.

It's been two hours already, but their liveliness don't seem to be fading.

They look like Akiba warriors when they talk about anime and games they like.

◇

I hesitated as to whether I should show the spell that was requested through Arisa or not, but thinking that the princess probably won't use it for anything strange, I take out the document about the spell I've brought.

Even if I got caught in something annoying because of this, I could probably do something about it through Nanashi.

"This is, don't tell me!"

"I had found some right spell, so I altered it a bit and made it so that it fulfills the request."

I pour water on the silver tray and then pour it with thick colored fruit juice.

After stirring it with a wooden stir stick, I ask Mia to use the spell.

"■■■■ ■ ■ ■■ ■■■ Remove Different Water"

The mixed fluid on the tray is gradually separating.

Eventually, the water is on the left side, and the concentration of fruit juice is gathered on the right side. They'll mix again if left alone, but this should be enough for the spell experiment.

I don't know what she want to use this for, but this might be useful for cooking and such.

"Amazing! Satou-sama, you're amazing!"

The excited princess holds my hands on the table.

Rather, she's been adding "sama" to call my name since awhile ago.

"The color is a bit different than the original fruit juice isn't it."

"Nn, condensed."

Arisa and Mia fold their arms while criticizing the magic's effect.

I've also made other spells, one that uses space magic and another that uses lightning magic, but the former has become an advanced level magic because it over-consume the capacity to pick up the molecules, while the latter makes use of the ionization tendency so it doesn't meet the requirement of separating the fruit juice.

In the end, the water magic that makes use of osmotic pressure has the best cost to performance ratio.

"Your highness, what do you plan to use this spell for?"

"--Can you promise not to laugh at me?"

The princess replied seriously to my nonchalant question.

"Yes, of course."

I replied immediately, but the princess seems to be hesitating about something.

"It's alright, Master won't laugh at people who are earnest."

"Nn, no problem."

Arisa and Mia back the princess when they see her like that.

It seems the princess makes up her mind with that, she resolves herself and speaks.

"I'm researching the method to return monsters into normal creatures."

The princess began to talk with such a shocking statement.

"Do you know that monsters are born from the concentration of miasma?"

"Yes, I do."

"Ever since I heard about it as a child, I've had this question, 『If miasma turns creatures into monsters, can't the reverse happen too?』--"

I did think about that too.

In every book I've read up until know, they've concluded that the process is irreversible, but I've been thinking even now that it should be possible to turn back monsters back with magic.

In fact, humans that had began to change into monsters after consuming Fiend Drug did stop their transformation when their magic power were extracted.

At the very least, I think that if it's immediately after the transformation, they can turn back to the original creatures by pulling out the miasma inside their bodies.

There is a darkness magic that can control miasma and create monster, so I think it's possible if I get that spell.

I didn't see it in the Forbidden Library of Shiga Kingdom, I think asking True Ancestor Ban or the knowledgeable Corpse in the Labyrinth's lower layer might be worth it.

It seems the princess is researching separation magic like this in order to link it with her [Turning monsters back into normal creatures] research.

"--I think that if the miasma in monsters can be pulled out, turning them back into normal creatures, the living space of people will open up more, and then even the people in the downtown will be able to live prosperously."

I agreed with the princess until the halfway through, but I couldn't really agree with the last part.

If people become the ruler of the world, great wars between people are sure to happen.

Moreover, if the monsters are created by the gods to become the deterrence of war, then I can't help but feel that making them disappear would mean violating the gods' taboo.

Furthermore, even if you can turn a monster back into a normal creature, I don't think you will be able to make the monsters in the whole world disappear.

Rather, if you want to enlarge living space, researching monster-repellent barrier should net you better result.

"That's a splendid way of thinking."

Nevertheless, I read the mood, and affirmed the princess's noble desire.

I agree to the first half at least.

Also, it'd be troubling if strangely denying her would make the princess progressing to some distorted way.

If there's no one who sympathizes with with her, I'm worried that a remnant of the [Wings of Liberty] would take advantage of her, making her support the demon's plot after getting tricked.

"I'm glad--"

After hearing my impression, the princess muttered and relaxed her shoulders.

So she really was afraid that her view would be denied.

"I think materializing it would be difficult, but the result of the research would be left for the future. Continuing the research while keeping the hope that it'll blossom someday is alright."

"Yes! Satou-sama!"

In an indirect way, I had told her, "It might be useless, but your research might be useful for someone in the future", but it seems her heartstrings have been touched, the princess is staring at me with gleaming eyes.

For some reason, Arisa and Mia are glaring.

The stares of the maids beyond the anti-listening device are piercing.

Well now, what's up with this place....

Author's note:

●Characters

【Shistina】

The sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom. 18 year old. Allowed to go in and out of the royal castle's forbidden library. Her mother is the daughter of Duke Bishtal. A friend of Arisa and Mia.

【Shin】

A good-looking boy with white hair that Arisa met in the Royal Academy. He seems to be a local hero.

【Trismegistus】

One of Satou's aliases. Used when making magic potions and magic tools.

【Michaelangelo】

One of Satou's aliases. Used when making artworks and accessories.

【Ban】

A reincarnated person who was formerly a Japanese. A vampire True Ancestor who takes up a residence in the lower layer of Selbira's underground labyrinth.

【Corpse】

A reincarnated person who was formerly a Japanese. A mummy military otaku man who takes up a residence in the lower layer of Selbira's underground labyrinth. Once a scientist of Furu empire. Once threatened the gods using nuclear weapons.

【Hayato】

Saga Empire's hero who was summoned from Japan. Currently chasing after a demon lord in the labyrinth of the weaselkin empire.

【Akiba Warrior】

Veteran volunteer. Possible to job-change into a wizard when they exceed 30 year old.

Devoted to do habitual image training in order to prepare for when they get teleported to another world.

13-22. The Princess's Tea Party (2)

Satou's here. I've seen harps in stories and tv shows, but I've never seen one in person. I have an image of a woman wearing toga playing a harp, but that's quite heavy isn't it.

◇

I'm saved by the announcement that the little sister of Princess Shistina will come.

Stopping the anti-listening device, we clean up the spell documents and get back to a normal tea party state.

While feeling a bit like a secret lover of a married woman somehow, my eyes catch sight of a little girl who appears on the entrance of the room.

"Shistina nee-sama!"

The small princess hugs Princess Shistina.

Her name is Doris, born from the same mother as Princess Shistina, she's the twelfth princess who's only 10 years old. She's two years younger than Arisa, but her physique is no different than Arisa's.

Princess Doris is behaving like a spoiled child with her big sister for a while, after that she turns toward Mia and speaks in high tension.

"Mia-sama! I've brought an unusual harp and Hisui today for Mia-sama!"

The 'Hisui' that Princess Doris was talking about isn't a jade but a small songbird with feathers as beautiful as a jade. <TLN: Hisui=jade>

It's singing beautifully from inside a luxurious cage.

--I wonder what is this? I get deja vu like I know this bird.

"Mia-sama, please play this!"

Mia receives the harp, flicks the strings with her finger and confirms the music scale.

The harp looks mystical befitting to be an item of a princess of a large kingdom.

The strings that look like they're made from gold are arranged on the harp's jade-like main body.

In addition, a relief of a long haired woman is carved on its supporting part.

This female statue doesn't seem to be a mere decoration but it also serves as an echo pipe, Mia is doing trial and error with a serious face, trying to grasp the harp's characteristic.

Looks like Princess Doris is bored now that Mia isn't keeping her company, she steps toward me.

"I permit you to give your name."

Princess Doris spoke so as if commanding me who was still sitting.

The way she's trying her best to look dignified is heartwarming.

"Nice to meet you your highness. I am Viscount Satou Pendragon, a retainer of Earl Muno."

After that, I bow stylishly like a young nobleman would.

Normally I would only do this to a lady, but this kind of greeting should make a little girl who's trying hard to look like an adult happy.

"My! What a wonderful greeting, Sir Pendragyon--Viscount-sama. I am the twelfth princess of Shiga Kingdom, Doris Shiga. I'm born from the same mother as Shistina nee-sama's nano--desuwa."

Princess Doris returned the greeting even while fumbling her words and using wrong speech.

After looking restlessly to my sides, she turns toward Arisa.

"Arisa, leave that space."

"No way."

Arisa rudely refused the order even though it was against a princess of a large kingdom.

It seems the princess didn't think that she would be refused, her line of sight loiters around restlessly.

Mia is sitting on the opposite side of Arisa.

After looking troubled for a while, seemingly unable to tell Mia to leave, she smiles as if she's realized something and then she holds both her hands toward me.

--What does she want me to do?

"Let me sit on your lap, Pendra--Satou."

I see, she wants to sit on my lap huh.

"Doris, you're being impolite."

"Princess, sit beside Princess Shistina."

Princess Shistina and Princess Doris's close aide rebuked her, but she turns her clingy-like line of sight toward me.

"--I can't?"

"Understood, Princess Doris."

I grab her waist and put her on my lap.

Mia and Arisa seem dissatisfied, but please let me off for just spoiling a cute child.

◇

After Mia has finished adjusting the strings, she begins playing the harp.

It seems the jade colored bird likes Mia's performance, it's chirping with the music.

--Un? I can feel wave of magic power.

According to information from AR reading, the crystal tree which the harp is made from has an effect on the emotion of the audiences.

Simply put, the item has an extra effect of making the listeners get more easily impressed.

In fact, the people here, besides me who've resisted it, are listening to Mia's performance in ecstasy.

By no means it's because my sensitivity has been gotten bad.

Well, it doesn't seem like it causes any harm anyway, I'll just listen to Mia's performance quietly--.

Right at that time, I heard a bird's shriek, and then sound of metal bursting echoes in the room.

It's followed by the servants' screams, throwing the room into chaos.

Before my view, there's a monster spreading its wing on top of a broken cage.

An emeral green colored bird-type monster opens its bright red eyes.

Red-rope pattern magic circle is emerging from the surface of its jewel-like feathers.

--A red rope monster?

"Hisui's cage!"
"M-monster!"
"Y-your highness, please evacuate!"

I throw the three little girls to the corner of the room, and carry Princess Shistina to that corner.

"Your highnesssssss!"

I feel sorry for the maids who look like they'll faint, but I only have two arms.

I put down Princess Shistina to the falling point of the three little girls, and receive the coming little girls one by one.
I think Arisa is a big game for trying to aim for my lips in this situation.

I felt that the presence of the monster trying to act when I was receiving Arisa, so I kicked one of the heavy sofas toward the monster.

"Mwu."
"Why is a red rope pattern in this place?"
"Let's defeat it for now."

Mia's and Arisa's questions are reasonable, but there are too many non-combatants here.

Removing the monster quickly is probably for the best.

"You can't! Don't kill Hisui!"

When I was going to eliminate the monster, Princess Doris stops me with her whole body.

So that's really what remain of Princess Doris's songbird.

"I'm sorry your highness."

I apologize to the small Princess Doris and rush toward the monster.

Unfortunately, I lack preparation.

--KYURYEEEEEEE.

I block the bird's ultrasonic breath with [Air Curtain] magic chantlessly, and hit the monster's body with my palm.

"HISUIIIIIII!"

Princess Doris's desperate scream is beating my back.

--I'm reflecting.

Even if it's unreasonable, I shouldn't give up easily.

Having nothing to lose in trying, I rob the monster's magic power with [Mana Drain] through my palm.

The red rope magic circle that protects the monster's body disappears.

So far it's just as planned, I'll leave it to luck from here on.

I search the magic core inside the mosnter's body with map search.

It's really not possible huh....

--Wait, perhaps!

I consciously use the [Magic Essence Distribution Perception] that I've learned recently.

--Alright!

I can perceive the distribution of magic essence inside the monster's body.

It seems the magic sense is thick around the blood vessel and the body surface.

The thickest one among them is probably the magic core.

I pierce the monster's body with my arm and pull out the magic core inside.

However, my intuition tells me that doing only this much is the same as just killing the monster.

Then what should I do next?

Maybe I should remove the magic essence flowing in its body?

I execute that thinking.

If I can tear magic barrier with my hand, then I should be able to grasp magic essence too.

I grasp the magic essence together with the blood that's coming out from the wound opened from taking the magic core, and then carefully pull it out like pulling a root from the ground.

I feel like several hours have passed, but it's probably only a few seconds in reality.

I pulled around 70% of the magic essence from the monster's body.

The monster's body is shrunk, turning back into a bird.

"Hisui!"

"Princess, you can't."

"No! Let go!"

--However, the damage is probably to heavy for a small bird to withstand.

The songbird's fire of life is disappearing.

I confirm the stock of magic potions in my storage.

Low-grade medicines are out of question. I think mid-grade medicine should be able to do it, but I don't have the conviction that it'll succeed.

Let's be careful here and use the best one.

I take out a small bottle of upper-grade magic potion from the storage.

It's been mixed with my blood so I can't use it to other people, but there shouldn't be anyone complaining if it's for a bird.

I sprinkle the magic potion on the songbird's wound, and put the rest into its small beak.

--Pi, pi, pu, piru, piru, pipirururuu.

The agonizing voice from the bird gradually turns energetic.

"Hisui! Thank god!"

As expected of upper-grade magic potion.

The effect is outstanding even though it's been mixed with my blood!

"A m-monster got... turned back into the original creature?"

I feel slightly guilty when I hear the feverish voice of Princess Shistina, but since this ended without Princess Doris having some strange trauma, I guess you can call this excellent.

Now then, what kind of excuse should I use.

"Your highness, the medicine that I used just now was called Nectar, an item that was found in the lowest floor of a certain labyrinth--"

Do your best [Deception] skill.

Tomorrow's peace depends on you!

Author's note:

●Characters

【Doris】

The twelfth princess of Shiga Kingdom. 10 years old. Born from the same mother as Princess Shistina's.

Her pet appeared at a glimpse in [12-18. Tea Party's Intruder].

13-23. Outcome of the Tea Party

Satou's here. Anyone can fail. I think the real question is if you can recover from that failure.

◇

After telling Shistina that Nectar is an item that can't be obtained anymore, I tell her to keep it a secret to prevent some ugly contests for it.

In addition, she was probably unstable since Hisui turning back into a bird had just happened, so she accepted the made-up story easily.

I show her an extravagant knuckle duster that I've made from Orichalcum as a joke, telling that it's a magic weapon for dispersing magic power, adding the credibility to the made-up story.

I felt it was not enough with just that, so I cited a famous book as a reference for the basis of canceling monster-fication as another fabricated story.

"--Or so it's written in the ancient document."

"Satou-sama is really knowledgeable."

Princess Shistina is nodding to anything I said with heartmarks on her eyes like Princess Menea, maybe because I had actually materialized her goal before her eyes.

Princess Shistina's first lady's maid seems to notice the irregularity of the situation, but it seems she's going to respect her master's wish, she doesn't question me at all.

Most of the aides were crouching in the corner of the room while closing their eyes during the monster's rampage earlier, so the only people who saw the spectacle earlier were these two, the little Princess Doris, and her wet nurse.

"Hisuii. Thank godd."

"Doris, thank Satou-sama too."

"Yes, onee-sama. Thank you, Satou."

"You're welcome."

Princess Doris is focused to the fact that Hisui is saved so there's no problem with her, but she's probably going to be the epicenter after this.

I'm expecting Princess Shistina to handle her well.

"Princess, we don't know if Hisui will turn into a monster again. Please let me look after it."

"No-!"

Princess Doris's wet nurse tried to keep Hisui, which had turned into a monster once, away from Princess Doris, but Princess Doris obstinately refused her.

Hugged by Princess Doris, the songbird chirps, 'piru piru', for help in agony.

>Unit name [Hisui] wishes to join you. Do you approve? (YES/NO)

A pop up window over Hisui appeared.

--What the heck is this?

For now I'll choose no since it looks dangerous.

Refused by me, Hisui looks sad with tears on its eyes, but I'll harden my heart.

I mean, my hunch is tingling with trouble.

"Hey, loli princess. The bird that's just been saved will die if you hug it that strong you know?"

"Nn, dangerous."

Warned by Arisa and Mia, the princess who notices Hisui's condition loosen her hug.

Using that chance, Hisui slips out of the princess's arms and flies out of the window.

"Aaa, Hisui flew away."

The princess weeps bitterly to her failure.

I put a marker on Hisui so I can catch it later.

It should stop flying in midnight, I can just catch it then.

Princess Doris's wet nurse is worried about it, but Hisui probably won't change into a monster again. I've taken out that much magic essence after all, so it should be fine as long as the bird don't get artificially manipulated.

"Zadou, catch Hisui"

Princess Doris grasps my sleeves while wailing.

"Princess, even if it's the viscount, catching a bird flying in the sky is impossible."

"No! Bizuii"

Then a new visitor shows up.

"What's wrong, Doris. Did Hisui escape?"

"Soltrick-niisama, please catch Hisui."

The one that appeared is the 32 year-old first prince of Shiga Kingdom.

He's the older brother of Princess Shistina from the same mother.

"Sure thing. You guys, catch the bird with some nets. Take a skilled wind magician with you too."

The prince ordered one of his aide, making an arrangement to catch Hisui.

Unlike the third prince Sharlick who looked like a playboy, the first prince looks like a honest military man. I wonder if it's because of his powerful eyebrows?

He looks around wonderingly at the room that's been wasted by the monster-sified Hisui.

"Tina. What on earth happened to this room?"

"Niisama, actually a monster had appeared in this room."

Princess Shistina plainly replied the prince's question.

As it is now, Hisui who's been saved will be killed.

Princess Shistina probably realizes that too.

She hurriedly tries to change the story's direction.

"H-however! With Viscount Pendragon's effort, the monster has been suppressed and disappeared like a mist."

--Forced! That's too forced, Princess Shistina!

"The defeated monster disappeared like a mist?"

The prince turns to me with suspicious eyes.

I know. I know that feel well.

Can't be helped, I'll ask Deception skill-sensei to do the work again.

"Please allow me to explain. I think it was most likely a monster with mist body called『Mirage』.『Mirage』can read people's minds and change its shape. It probably changed into Princess Doris's loved bird since that would make us hesitant to strike it."

"Hmph, ridiculous."

Oh, the prince is tough.

"Even if you're telling the truth, there is no monster that can pass through the Ancient King-sama's barrier protecting the royal castle."

"Your highness, red rope pattern was emerging from the monster."

I dropped another information to the prince who was denying.

"What! Was it an advance party of greater demons!"

"It wouldn't be strange for red ropes that could appear anywhere to appear here!"

"Impossible.... So the red ropes haven't disappeared with the defeat of the greater demon."

"Then, does that mean something like that will happen again."

The ones who reacted weren't only the prince, his aides too.

"Quiet, fools. My sisters are worried."

As expected of the next king, he has the nerves of steel.

The prince jerks his chin, urging me to continue.

"Someone probably brought it inside the royal castle in order to overthrow the kingdom."

"What do you think their aim is?"

"By harming the princess, it might be a warning that the incident from the other day isn't over--no, perhaps, they want to plant the seed of anxiety in the royal castle."

It seems the prince is satisfied with my answer, he's contemplating things.

I told it like so in order to make him understand, but in fact, I think this incident was simply one of the trap for the greater demon attack back then that was activated late.

Looking at the circumstantial evidence, normally you'd have judged that the criminal is Marquis Kelten who gave Hisui to Princess Doris.

It's most likely a plot by people who want to keep him, who's been called a patriot, away from military.

There's a possibility that it was done by someone related to this [Highness] from the green demon's secret plot, but I think that possibility is low.

Those guys are looking for orbs in order to [Hatch] the [Highness].

Their actions are too far apart with each other, hence why I think so.

"Seed of anxiety huh--"

After muttering that, the prince survey the people in the room, and nods once.

"--It's certainly effective it seems. In the name of crown prince Soltrick Shiga, I order. I forbid you to disclose the incident that occurred here. Take it in your heart because people who violate it will be punished."

The people in the room kneel and bow to the prince's dignified words.

As expected. Thanks to that my doing won't leak outside.

"Viscount. My sisters life would have been no more if it wasn't for you. If you want, you can marry either of them. How about it?"

Your eyes aren't laughing, Prince!

And also, Princess Shistina, please don't look so happy!

"I am very honored with the offer, but I am merely an upstart noble. Such an honor is beyond my position."

"Then shall I raise your peerage?"

A prince doesn't have that kind of authority right?

"No, my current position as viscount is already too excessive--"

"Then how about government post? The current Kelten's successor is a bit incompetent you see. You should be able to work well right?"

Oy oy, Marquis Kelten's successor is an authority of military right?

To give such position to an upstart noble, that's too unnatural even if it's for raising my position.

"Your highness, you jest. An official position for a fledging lowest seated upper noble does not exist."

"Right.... Then let me hear your wish. I'll grant it with my authority as a crown prince."

There isn't any in particular, but I can't exactly say "none."

Something that can only be granted by a prince, something that's moderately valuable.

Moreover, something that won't burden the kingdom.

....Yup, I just got the right idea for it.

"Then let me take up on that offer--may I have a letter of introduction to Echigoya Firm?"

"Echigoya Firm?"

Arisa and Mia who know the truth probably see it as a charade, but they prudently keep silent.

I think I should ignore them staring at me with mouth half open though.

"I have heard that that company makes very excellent magic swords, but I cannot order it since I don't have a letter of introduction. With a letter of introduction from your highness, Echigoya Firm shouldn't be able to bluntly refuse."

"I can grant you those magic swords myself though?"

"No, the kingdom's magic swords should only be used by the knights of kingdom. Having the letter of introduction is quite enough for me."

I can make 10 of them in parallel if I just have 30 minutes after all.

"Very well. Prime Minister and Duke Oyugock told me about it, you really are unselfish."

"I am honored."

I replied the amazed prince politely.

"I do not praise you. Be more greedy of your want if you are a noble. You'll get used by the fools if you're too unselfish."

"I'll engrave it in my heart."

I reply the prince who kindly advised with the finest retainer bow.

With my Attentive Ears skill, I should be the only one who heard Arisa muttering "Tsundere prince".

◇

I left the princess's room after promising meeting her in the evening party.

Hisui is on the big sakura tree. Since the crown prince's subordinates seem to be working hard for it, it doesn't seem like I'll need to go out at night to catch the bird.

Arisa asks while we're riding the carriage.

"Hey hey, did you use magic to turn back the monster earlier?"

"It was not magic. It's probably not a skill either I think?"

I answered so, and then Arisa and Mia ask together with amazed faces.

"Then what is it?"

"Strange."

"I don't know either. I tried doing since I felt like I could do it somehow, and I did."

"Somehow, you say."

"Mwu?"

Not satisfied, the two draw closer and I push them back.

"I think it's the same reason why I can grasp and destroy magic and barrier, but I don't know that reason."

It might be the effect from among my many skills, but there's too many of them to inspect.

"Then what about that strange Nectar?"

"It's just an upper grade magic potion."

I take out a small bottle of upper magic potion from the barrel in the storage.

--Huh?

"What's the matter?"

"No, it's nothing. This is the medicine."

"Hee, it looks slightly reddish isn't it."

Arisa opens the small bottle's lid and put a bit of the liquid in her palm.

Right at that moment, Mia opens her eyes wide and raises voices of surprise.

"The spirits have gathered. They've gathered, it's true you know? A lot of them."

Surprised with Mia who speaks in long sentences after a long while, I also activate Spirit Seer skill.

Surprisingly, a lot of spirits are gathered on Arisa's palm, enough that I can't see them.

"Hee, wonder if it's this medicine's effect? It's a Nectar after all huh."

Arisa says so and laughs.

However, I don't have the confident to laugh together with her.

I mean, the upper-grade magic potion that's been mixed with my potion is displayed as [Nectar] on the AR reading before I knew it....

◇

Our carriage passes through the Noble street, and then goes back toward the mansion with Zena Squad as guards.

Today we went around tea parties until the evening.

I couldn't exactly bring Arisa and Mia to the tea parties, so I let them join Liza and the others in the labyrinth with Unit Arrangement.

Lulu had cooked some freshly caught ingredients, but since I had to eat various things in the tea parties, I left after only tasting Lulu's superb dishes.

The afternoon tea parties were all with upper nobles, so preparing the gifts for them was troublesome.

I have to alter the gifts in accordance to each of their positions, so balancing it was difficult.

I went around attending tea parties with Zena Squad as the guards, and got to hear various rumor.

The prime minister who also holds the position of minister of the newly established [Tourism Ministry] seems to be having a dispute for the position of vice minister.

Many capable nobles of pedigree are running for it, but it seems the prime minister isn't agreeing.

The ominous word, "Pass", of the prime minister from my luncheon with him floats in my mind hard.

....It's alright.

With that many candidates running for it, there should be one who can win the prime minister's favor, no doubt.

As for the other rumor I've heard, it was about the decreasing trend of thievery that started with orbs theft.

I also heard that the noble victims were able to get their family heirlooms back through Echigoya Firm.

It's probably about the connection-making that the Manager talked about.

As always she acts fast, how reliable.

After the tea parties were over, I met the children in the labyrinth, and received countless magic cores and every kind of materials.

"An Ice Stone huh, you got some unusual thing."

"Un? That was from a POP-ed treasure chest. It was in the chest with the『Bell』over there."

I check the hand bell that Arisa points at.

This bell is a magic tool called [Magic Sealing Bell], it seems to have the power to repel possessing ghosts.

Although I don't know how effective it is, it's quite an interesting item.

"Body, flank, scatter~ pound~?"

"Pochi did a lot today nodesu!"

"Worked hard"

Everyone is telling me the events in the labyrinth.

I praise everyone's activity.

"We made a crab nabe today."

"It was great you know. We used the giant crab's shell as the nabe pot, and did all-you-can-eat crab meat!"

"It was delicious, so I report to Master."

Lulu, Arisa, and Nana talk about seafood lunch they had.

At first I only wanted to taste it a bit, but I certainly want to participate too next time.

"The grilled diamond fish's crunchiness were fresh, the taste was transparent."

"Only Liza-san could eat that."

"Teeth can't stand it~?"

"The diamond was hard nodesu."

I don't remember a fish that hard.

Perhaps they found a rare pop monster.

I'll look for it in the labyrinth later.

But before that, let's enjoy a dinner with everyone and Zena Squad who have worked hard.

A former royal chef that the butler has prepared is going to show his skill for today's dinner, so I'm anticipating it even now.

"Really working forward to it, Master."

"Yeah, let's eat many delicious things, and steal the taste."

"Yes, Master!"

While conversing with Lulu, I open the door to the dining room.

13-24. Secret of the Red Rope

Satou's here. I can't follow forced events in RPG games where I seek freedom, though I'm fine if it's in novel games. When I've become the side that create them, I understand that making it like that is easier though.

◇

After having a dinner together with everyone and Zena squad, I went to Echigoya Firm in Kuro form.

The dinner by the former royal chef was splendid.

The flavor itself didn't differ much from mine or Lulu's, but the steamed fish was decorated with pickled flower inviting small joy, and there were balanced sour and bitter small dishes in between the main dishes so that we wouldn't get tired with the taste, it was a refreshing meal.

These kind of little attentions to details and scheme might come from the chef's experience as a royal chef that surpass the limit of skill .

It was truly a good experience--.

"Kuro-sama, did anything good happen?"

The manager asked about my good mood.

Tifaliza who's turning the documents beside the manager is having an undisturbed composed face like usual.

"It's nothing much. Leaving that aside, give me the report for the second day of the auction."

"Yes, certainly."

The things exhibited in the second day of the auction were many kinds of magic medicines.

"The exhibited items this time were 64 bottles of hair growth formula, 288 bottles of vitality medicine, 24 bottles of mid-grade stamina medicine, 24 bottles of mid-grade magic power medicine, 144 bottles of nutrient, 20 bottles of lumbago medicine, 20 bottles of stiff shoulder medicine, 144 bottles of headache medicine, in total there were 952 articles."

The popular hair growth formula's share is one unit per month so there was only a few of them exhibited. The vitality medicine's share is in dozens unit so they're exhibited. <TLN: Not really sure what Satou is talking about here.>

"Did we exhibit lumbago and stiff shoulder medicines too?"

"Yes, we got quite good feedback when I tried giving four of them each to civil officials who were working under high pressure all years, so I had them exhibited."

I had made those medicines as a joke with no real use, so giving all of them to the civil officials is no problem.

All of the ingredient for the medicine can be gotten plentifully in the upper layer of the labyrinth and making them isn't a hard work anyway, maybe I should make them more if they have frequent customers.

I was troubled with stiff shoulders when I was in the former world, so I know their hardship after all.

"The total amount we got from the auction is 3592 gold coins."

Fuh~n, that's that huh.

Around 10% of magic swords--no wait.

Something's strange.

It's no wonder when it's magic swords that can only be mass produced by me, but in case of magic medicines, anyone can make them as long as they have the ingredients and the recipes you see?

"That's higher than the anticipated. Did anything happen?"

"Yes, we had expected that there would be scramble for the hair growth formula and vitality medicines, however--"

If you had expected them, you could have just told me and I would have mass produced them all-night.

"During the opening, the proxies of Duke Bishtal and Marquis Llyoid were having a fierce bidding war for it, so the other people were lured and bid for it too. Moreover, both of them are popular item that need reservation more than one month in advance after all."

I see....

Still, even though neither Duke Bishtal nor Marquis Lloyd is bald, what are they going to use hair growth formula for?

Wonder if their relatives need it?

"The stamina medicines were won by my knight parent's house who are going to war, but the magic power medicines were won by the people of Shiga 33 Wands."

"--It appears that the market has evaluated that the medicine has the same recovery effect as the upper-grade magic power medicine."

Tifaliza supplemented the manager's report.

Upper grade magic medicines don't seem to be sold in general, so I understand how it had become a competition.

After all, no one will agree to make them even if you ask a famous alchemist, because gathering the ingredients for it is annoying.

Above all, in order to get [Blood Bead], you'll need to go into the [Labyrinth of Dead] the den of undead, and defeat some vampires.

Moreover, on top of vampires being tough enemies, the [Blood Bead] is a rare drop.

It's really hard to get them by just winning in a straight shogi match.

"The nutrients were selling as expected, there is nothing special to mention. The lumbago, stiff shoulders, and headaches medicines were all bought by the family of the prime minister."

"--A letter regarding that matter has arrived from Prime Minister-sama."

I confirm the letter that Tifalize gave me.

There's a sealing wax politely placed.

I break the seal with the paper knife the manager handed to me.

"What has the prime minister written?"

"It's a request from the prime minister to buy them regularly."

It doesn't seem that the prime minister is using them himself, I think they should just ask some magician to heal them if they need to use medicines regularly.

It seems my doubt was transmitted, Tifaliza's ice blue eyes jolt and then she adds.

"The effect of Kuro-sama-made stiff shoulders and headache medicines is immediate and long-lasting, it's better than low-grade magic potion. They might be inferior to mid-grade magic, but if someone were to employ a mid-magic-user magician for such a trivial thing, they will surely lose their job."

Perhaps, Tifaliza suffers from headaches too?

I should mass produce them since I have the diluted recipe anyway.

"Give a positive answer to the prime minister. I'll also give the recipes for the three of them later. Employ people that are skilled enough and check whether they can produce something equal."

If there are a lot of demand for it, then I can just increase the supply.

I want to welcome Echigoya Firm that can keep their balance in black with more commodity without me.

◇

Items made in the downtown workshop were exhibited in the second auction hall but since they were sold at normal price, I ignored them.

It's fine as along as they're in the black unrelated to me.

After finishing the paperwork, I drink the tea made by the new slave maid to quench my thirst.

I put some Mont Blanc cake as the tea cake for the executives.

I got it from Lulu with some nice chestnuts.

"Kuro-sama, I am sorry for the impudent request beforehand, but do you know the current position of a person called Toril?"

The manager unusually asked that.

The name doesn't sound familiar.

I searched the territory that's under direct control of the king on the map, and found that there were one in the nearby village, one in a junction town, and one in the mountains of the royal capital's outskirt. It seems they're the only three with the name.

"It's not that I don't know, but what is it for?"

"Knowing the location of that person is a requirement to secure the cooperation of a potent collaborator."

--I see, he's the link needed to create a collaborator for Echigoya Firm.

There is no need to hesitate if the manager appraises them as a [Potent Collaborator].

"I don't mind, but how old is this Toril?"

"Yes, he's a 11 year old boy."

"That one is in the cave in the mountains north-northwest of the Royal Capital. Do you need a map?"

"Y-yes, if it's possible...."

I draw it on the paper that Tifaliza's handed.

Drawing the contour line would be better, but then it wouldn't be like a fantasy world's map, so I stopped myself.

I take another piece and draw the map for the inside of the cave.

"I don't know what you'll use it for, but there are lethal traps on this point, so tell it to the other party."

"Yes, I understand."

I obviously overdid it, but since I can erase Kuro's position anytime, there's no problem--.

If I get involved in something troublesome, I can make it so that Kuro dies in a fight with a demon lord.

Of course, I'll perform as the demon lord that defeats Kuro myself.

--I thought of some stupid thing, but the manager probably will manage how much information will be given to the other party.

She knows that I hate troublesome things, so I'm sure she will do it well.

When I was hesitating whether to ask for another refill, my ears heard an auditory hallucination.

--Pipiru, piru.

"Kuro-sama, is that bird Kuro-sama's pet?"

The manager puts her hands on her cheeks and asks.

There's a jade colored bird resting on the overcoat rack before her field of vision.

"--Kuro-sama, please be careful."

"What's wrong? Tifaliza?"

"That bird invaded Kuro-sama's office which has the windows and the door shut."

The manager holds her breath after hearing Tifaliza.

In order to prevent espionage, I've put air ventilation magic tools in this room, the windows and the door are completely sealed.

--Piru, piru.

Hisui turns toward me, chirps once again, and like before--

>Unit name [Hisui] wishes to join you. Do you approve? (YES/NO)

--A pop-up window appeared.

Of course I choose NO.

I hate forced events that are looped until you choose YES.

--Piru.

Rejected again by me, Hisui looks sorrowful with teary eyes, and then it flies outside the room like a pubertal girl that's been dumped.

At that time, I saw with my own eyes that it flew away without breaking the glass window.

In addition, confirming its detail on the map, I see that Hisui's status has changed greatly compared to before.

Level 10 is normal, but it's now classified as a Mythical Beast, and its race has changed to [God Bird].

It seems the race has special abilities of [Material Permeation], [Short Distance Teleport], and [Protective Coloration].

I feel that it'll be an excellent spy if I can tame it--wait it has no mean to communicate with me huh. I can't translate its pirupiru chirping after all.

Pursuing Hisui's marker, I understand that it's heading to the royal castle's villa.

It's probably returning to Princess Doris's place this time.

◇

After a moment of relief, it seems I'm loved by troubles today.

When I teleported back to Pendragon Mansion nearby Echigoya Firm, an alarm came from the scarecrows deployed on the royal capital's outskirts.

-Ton, tsu, tsu. Ton, tsu. Ton, tsu, ton....

I open the map and search for the demon OR specific levels.

Found the mock body (avatar) of the green demon on the edge of the territory under direct control of the king. It's moving speed is fast, looks like it's riding a tamed wyvern.

I moved to a mountain range several kilometers away from the Royal Capital with Unit Arrangement.

Defeating it too fast might expose my searching ability after all.

Apparently, the green demon's mock body goes down to a place two mountains away from here, and intends to go to the Royal Capital by land.

It's easy to eliminate it here and now, but now that I have a chance, I'll let it roam free and capture the green demon's cooperators all at once.

I put markers on the mock body and the wyvern, and then I move to the rooftop of the Shin boy's orphanage.

Hikaru isn't here except for the time when I can't deploy urgently.

Right now she's delivering my handmade whale meat dishes for the Griffon and the Dragons.

I've given her a disposable long-distance communication device this time, so there's no problem. I'll come to her if there's a signal from her.

And then, the mock body who's finally invaded the Royal Capital late at night is caught on my view.

The mock body this time is a foreigner-looking person with dark brown skin.

"The slums huh...."

The mock body advances through the back alley of the slums while greeting some sleeping beggars along the way.

Just in case, I put markers on the men it had greeted.

After passing through the slums, the mock body jumps over a wall of a mansion in the wealthy area, invading it.

I activate Magic Essence Camouflage skill and tails the back of the mock body.

--This place is?

I noticed it when I saw another marker inside the mansion.

This is the family house of Souya boy who's called his highness.

....Don't tell me, he's the real [Highness]?

I'm baffled to link someone who's unexpectedly kind despite his arrogant attitude to an existence called demon lord.

I saw the mock body going through the back door, but then it went through a passage to a detached building of the mansion.

"--I brought a message from Mirage."

"Who the hell are you?"

A half-naked slender man that came out of the detached building scowls at the mock body suspiciously.

Confirming it on the map, it seems the slender man is a fallen noble.

Besides the fact that his father belongs to the carefree occult group [Wind of Liberty] in the Royal Capital, his connection with demons is unknown.

"Together with the Light of liberty"

"Seeking liberty, the Wings ride upon the Wind."

I heard some kind of password with Attentive Ears skill.

This is good. I'll have to tell this to the prime minister later and make use of it during the arrest.

"Looks like you're the real Hyakumen. As always, your disguise is amazing...."

--Hyakumen? Is it the nickname of the green demon that's like a Hyakumensou?

So the green demon has come in contact with this man many times before with its mock body.

"And, what's the message?"

"There is no change in the plan. As soon as you get the orb, tell them to act together with the snake charmers."

"Then should I continue giving food mixed with the pills from the weasels to the poor?"

"Of course. Mirage has not said to stop it."

"Understood."

--Pills?

And also, snake charmers huh.... There shouldn't be any in the Royal Capital when I searched them before though.

"I have told you what's needed."

"Yeah, certainly. Oh right, the fund is running low...."

"Hmph, that again. I don't mind if you use it for liquor or women, but don't neglect your work you hear me?"

"Of course. I don't want to be killed by Mirage."

A pouch thrown by the mock body falls before the slender man, gold coins are spilt from it.

Apparently, the slender man is cooperating with the demons for money.

After scornfully glancing once at the slender man who jumped at the gold coins, the mock body leaves the mansion behind.

Afterward, he went to the hideout's basement where Ropo was after going around three thief hideouts.

I see the mock body taking out some kind of magic tool from the bag it's carrying.

Looks like it's a barrier generator tool to help it hide itself.

After checking that the barrier has been deployed, the green demon plops down on the broken bed.

Do demons get tired too?

"Fuu, that deplorable white hair shouldn't be able to find me here zamasu."

"--Not really, no."

I decapitate the dark brown mock body who hurriedly got up the bed.

"I-impossible. Did you lurk here all this time zamasuka!"

Like I'd do that--.

I finely chop the green demon's mock body's head.

It seems the mock body's stamina has been exhausted, its crumbling remains become black mist and disperse.

I thought of interrogating the demon, but in order to pass the tomorrow's auction in peace, I prioritized eliminating it.

The mock body probably will come again after it's respawned, interrogating the people who got in contact with the green demon should do just fine.

I've completed the magic to track the green demon's main body anyway, so its fate should run out after I get the Chant Orb.

Good grief, a mid-boss should have just obediently wait for the hero in the demon lord's castle.

--There's no such thing as demon lord's castle though.

In addition, the barrier generator tool is made by human so I put it in the Storage.

I report the thieves and beggars that got in contact with the green demon to the authorities and leave the rest to them, and then as Kuro, I go toward the slender man who seems to know various things, I'll make him spit it all out.

For the sake of spending the third day of the auction tomorrow in peace, there will be no mercy!

13-25. Secret of the Red Rope (2)

Satou's here. Talking about interrogation reminds me of spy movies. It seems even interrogation can have change in fashion, from violent and torture, to guiding through words and drugs like truth serum, they're changing through ages.

◇

When I get near the detached building where the slender man is, I hear voices of men and women entwining.

It's boorish of me to disturb an exercise of love, but let's have them sacrificed for the sake of the public welfare.

When I kicked the entrance and intruded, the sound suddenly stopped, and then I heard some rustling sounds like they'd flee.

After passing through the entrance and entering the bedroom inside, a half-naked beauty with coquettish smiles turns toward me.

If someone were to put their hands to someone her age in Japan, they'd be caught due to the juvenile protection regulation.

"That guy has escaped. Go there if you want to chase after him. Or maybe you want to play with me? It's just one gold coin a night you know?"

I throw the cloth near my feet to the girl, covering her naked body.

She doesn't seem to be shy, but she's probably not a flasher either.

"Tell me if you know the things he's done."

"He's a trash whose parents are fallen nobles, shamelessly leeching off in this house by depending on the favor that his father did long ago. Is it okay with that much?"

Just when I thought that she told me easily, it seems she's going to charge now.

The girl signals with her fingers to give her money, so I takes several gold coins from my storage and throw it to the bed.

"....Did that guy do something to be guilty of?"

Looks like the girl became cautious instead since it was too much.

I'll not hide it and make her speak for her sake too.

"It's treason. You're not his mistress or collaborator right? If you speak everything you know, I won't accuse you of the crime as an information provider."

"O-okay. That's why please promise me not to involve my little sister and mother..."

Looks like the crime of treason is more serious than I thought.

To the girl who's desperately clinging to me, I tell, "That' depends on the information you provide", and push her behind.

Taking advantage of a girl who's worried about her family like this, I'm quite awful if I do say so myself.

"He had been engrossed in a society called 『Wind of Liberty』 since a while ago, but ever since his father was shut out of the high society, he said something like, 『This world is wrong for not accepting me』 and then began to associate with some strange foreign people."

"Do you know which country they're from?"

"I think they're probably from Holy Kingdom Parion. They said something like, 『The kingdom of the god who brought the hero summoning is the preceptor of demon lord believers』."

--Preceptor (oshou)? Ah, she means hotbed (onshou).

So it's just someone who's into an occult club that's dissatisfied with his situation and gets pulled into the road of evil by the people of the Holy Kingdom Parion huh.

"Some beastfolk merchants also often showed up here. They were probably weaselfolk kin."

"Do you know which firm they belong to?"

"I can't differentiate their faces, but looking at the differences of their clothings' expensiveness, I think there are around three kind of merchants coming in and out. He threw the transaction papers into that shelf, I think you'll know it if you see them."

This girl is quite a good source of information.

After collecting the documents from the shelf, I learn the names of the weaselfolks.

One of them is a man called Usan who's delivered platinum to Echigoya

Firm.

Judging from the documents, there's a high chance that he's not simply in charge of transportation.

It seems the slender man carried the [Pills] thing that appeared in the conversation between the slender man and the green demon earlier, there's nothing of it left in this detached building.

Now then, I've heard what I need to hear.

"Wear your clothes and leave this mansion. Do not come here again."

"U-un. That's why--"

"I'll arrange so that you won't be charged of treason, do not worry."

"Un, thank you."

I turn away after seeing the girl who runs with her clothes still in disarray, and then collect all the items in this detached building into my storage.

Just to be sure, I also collected all the junk in the basement.

I did it broadly in order to prevent me overlooking any clue.

I was thinking of letting the slender man roaming free to catch the other collaborators, but he only hid in an inn in the outskirts, and didn't contact anyone.

There's no helping it, so I decided to raid the inn.

I don't want to trouble the other guests, so I make use of my hiding skills to invade and catch the slender man.

There's no meaning to catching him quietly if I interrogate him like this, so I move to the prime minister's intelligence bureau with Unit Arrangement.

"Who's there--what, it's Kuro-dono. Please don't surprise me."

"Sorry. Let me borrow the underground torture chamber."

"Please go ahead, no one is using it today."

I head toward the torture room while being sent off by the skinhead with stitch wound on his face.

I don't remember ever getting acquainted with the macho man, but since it saves me the trouble of explaining who I am, I'll consider it a good thing.

◇

"Wake up--"

I tie the slender man near the wall, and splash him with water from the bucket below.

The slender man who's woken up is overwhelmed by the atmosphere of the torture room and looks like he's going to faint anytime.

"You're awake. If you're going to make this difficult, I'll let a pervert muscle man to turn your body into something that isn't appropriate for a groom you understand?"

It was just a light joke, but the slender man nods buzzingly.

"Answer my questions, do not question back. Nod for 'yes'. Also nod for affirmation. I do not permit any other answer."

I threaten the slender man with the lines of an interrogator from some movie I've seen before.

I ask the first question while the slender man is affirming his will to answer.

"Talk about the pills. Your life will be prolonged the more you talk. Keep that in your mind while you're talking."

It seems my kind persuasion is having an effect, the slender man talks obediently.

"T-the pills were first brought by a suspicious guy called Po-Propor. He said it was a medicine for epidemic disease."

"Medicine for epidemic disease?"

Propor and the green demon can't be ones who do charity.

I take out some pills from the bag that the slender man was carrying.

A lot of them are jintan-sized but there are also some that are as big as a pachinko ball. <TLN: Jintan https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jintan_%28Japanese_medicine%29 .>

The pill's name is [Reborn Seed].

According the information from the AR reading, "Absorb the surrounding magic essence, increase physical strength and resistance."

The, "Medicine for epidemic disease" part is probably not a lie, but the "Absorb the surrounding magic essence" part sounds dangerous.

Expecting the slender man to know something, I decide to ask a leading question.

"--And the true effect of the pill is?"

"....You knew already right?"

It seems he knows.

"Answer the question."

"Those are fiend drugs. I saw a man who couldn't stand his hunger swallowing up a large amount of the pills died. The form of that man was exactly the same as the people from Violet who took too much fiend drug."

The slender man spit out words like he couldn't stand the sin anymore.

The figures of the crime slave unit of the kingdom called Violet are flashing in my mind, reminding me the grotesque forms of those soldiers.

However, even though there's a record of people dying from taking too much fiend drug, there's no case where the victims become grotesque looking.

Perhaps the fiend drug is concentrated, turning it into reinforcement type--or perhaps, it might be a [completely different thing].

At the very least, there's a high chance that these pills are the main cause of the red rope monsters and Hisui's case.

I can try experimenting it with animals, but it probably doesn't have immediate effect.

I'll bring the pills to the Royal Research Institute later and ask them to investigate the ingredient.

◇

Next I'll ask about the snake charmers--just when I think I about that, I notice something I forgot to ask.

I remember him saying, "Mixed with the food distributed to the poor", during his conversation with the green demon.

I have to question that.

"Next, talk about how you use the pills."

"....I distributed it."

The slender man stops talking halfway through, I urge him to continue with my eyes.

"I distributed it to the people and the orphanages in downtown."

--Orphanages?

"I distributed it saying that they were medicine for epidemic disease. ...The drunkards didn't take it since they said it made the liquor tasted bad, but most of the people were delighted because it made them more energetic they said. That's right, those people were delighted. Damn it....Those fools...."

I feels that the man directed the last "fool" toward himself more than to the people who took the pills.

But, what the slender man thinks doesn't matter.

Rather than that, the thing about the orphanages is bad.

Any medicine has strong effect to young children.

"Which orphanage?"

"W-which.... It's all of the orphanages in downtown."

I sent a menacing look, and then the slender man stopped his delirious talk, raised his head and answered my question.

Looking at the map, I understand that it's not only the orphanages, the pills also present in a large number in the metropolitan area.

As the slender man's said, most are in the orphanages and the dismantling places in the downtown. There are also some in the underpass, though only a few.

Unfortunately, some of them are also present in the room of Princess Doris's employees.

So this pill is really involved in Hisui monsterfication disturbance.

Fortunately, there isn't any in Shin boy's orphanage.

--No wait.

"You distributed it to all the orphanages in the downtown right?"

"Y-yea."

"Not even one was spared?"

"That's right. Propor reminded me repetitiously, so there's no mistake about it."

The slender man who didn't want to be tortured frantically reconfirmed.

I gave him the name of Shin boy's orphanage, but he was certain that that orphanage was given the pills too.

I search the other children from Shin boy's orphanage, but there wasn't any child having the symptom of someone who had been taking fiend drug.

That evil director might have sold the pills for money.

Let's continue the questioning.

"You said that the pills were first brought by Propor right? Then who brought it the second time and after?"

"It was weaselfolk kin merchants."

"Which firm they belong to?"

"Many. P-please wait! I-I'll say them all, so please."

It seems the slender man really doesn't want to be holed, he marvelously talks cooperatively.

I write the name of the weaselfolks merchants and their firms on the memo. There are many. Four times the number of the merchants written in the confiscated documents.

He's good to remember this many name.

He could have become someone great if he did a honest job....

Comparing it to the information on the map, I understand that around two-third of the weaselfoks kin in the Royal Capital are involved.

That's too many no matter how you see it.

It should have only involved one or two firms if they used back channel.

I can't deny the possibility that they're all involved in the plot, but I'll delegate that job to the prime minister.

It's better to leave the cross-national plot to the experts.

If it's just looking for the source of the pills, it'll be faster for me to just intrude the empire over there and search the map.

◇

The information about the pills has reached the limit, so I continue to the next.

"Spit out the thing about the『Snake Charmers』"

"....Ee, what about the snake charmers?"

The slender man looks like he's confused as to where to start, I question him about the one that's been bothering me.

"Where are the snake charmers hidden?"

"They're in the slums of the downtown."

I searched the map but I couldn't find them.

"Know that lies lead men to their ruin."

"I'm not lying! It's true! I'm not lying! We gave tools to the beggars in the slums and downtown for them to perform!"

Apparently, [Snake Charmers] are just side jobs for the beggars.

The slender man gave several names of the beggars, and when I confirmed it, I noticed that some of them had markers. They're the beggars who came in contact with the green demon.

"By tools, do you mean this flute?"

"T-that's right."

I noticed there was a lot of them in the bag when I took out the pills earlier.

"What is this flute?"

"Ee, that's the snake charmer's flute."

"I know that."

I point the flute before the slender man.

"What do you use it for? Is what I want to hear. Answer after thinking it through you listen?"

"Ee, outwardly it's a tool to manipulate the snake."

The threat worked, the slender man changed the direction of his answer.

"That flute can summons monster if it's played with a special tune, you see. Those flutes used by the snake charmers were the things that summoned the red rope that attacked the Royal Capital, you see."

I appraised the flute, but it doesn't have the function to do any summoning.

This flute only has the function to absorb the user's magic power to generate a specific pattern with Force magic's [Signal].

Even the name is [Signal Flute], so there should be no mistake about it.

--It's the same function as the harp that Princess Doris pestered Mia to play.

Looks like it's connected.

Certainly, a snake charmer was always present whenever the red rope monster's outbreak happened.

I didn't notice it since they were everywhere in the royal capital, but it seems they were the triggers.

◇

I don't have the proof yet, but thinking that the main cause of the red rope monsters are, almost without a doubt, the pills and the Signal Flute should be alright.

I report the information I got from the slender man to the prime minister and the king.

The slender man was to be put through the capital punishment for the crime of treason, but I appealed to them to tolerate Souya boy's family for lending the man a detached building.

The present head of Souya boy's family couldn't got away from the punishment, but the family shouldn't bear the crime.

In addition, the beggars probably don't know the connection between the flutes and the monsters, so they'll probably only become slaves as the punishment.

Just in case, I tell them to strictly interrogate the beggars who came in contact with the green demon.

After I've finished those arrangement, I head out to gather the remaining pills and Signal Flutes in the metropolitan area.

The red rope case should end with this.

The trade between with the weaselfolk kin empire will probably slow down, but I should let the big-wigs to worry about that.

◇

First, I go around the metropolitan area to collect the remaining Signal Flutes.

I changed my name to [Arsene] this time, and skip about in black mask. I didn't have any handy-looking title, so I picked the [One who Protects the Order] as a bit of a joke.

There wasn't anyone who had the flute in large number like the slender man, but individually, there were many who had them. Many of them are collector noble and the wealthy.

Every one of the flutes was protected with strong barrier and magic, but they are meaningless before Unit Arrangement and Magic Essence Camouflage, the unfair mean.

I felt like I was stealing from them somehow, so I decided to return the flutes after destroying the flutes' magic circuits later.

I left IOU notes with [Arsene] name in the houses that had kept the flutes.

Next, I go collect the pills.

Simply stealing them would be boring, so I left the same amount of konpeito as the pills to the orphanages, and small amount of money to the people of the downtown and the slums.

Doing it as Hero Nanashi is probably better after spreading the rumor that the pills are dangerous beforehand.

People won't agree to have their belongings stolen if you announce it suddenly after all.

Lastly, I found some mouse chewing on the pills when I was collecting them in the underpass.

I tried using [Signal Flute], but it didn't transform into a [Red Rope Monster].

After doing the experiment in every place I was collecting the pill at, for the sixth time--

The cockroach that has transformed into a red rope monster roars loudly.

--GOQUWEEEEEEEE. <TLN: Cockraoch is 'Gokiburi' in Japanese.>

Ocher-colored mist is floating around the red rope cockroach.

To use magic right after transforming into a monster, it's some skilled cockroach alright.

I brush off the mist with a Short Stun bullet.

The red rope cockroach is only level 20, so it's already staggering just from the after-effect of the Short Stun bullet.

I didn't want to get close to it, so I froze it with [Freeze] magic and threw a pebble to destroy it.

I was able to verify it, so I only collected the pill afterward.

I'll leave it to the king and the prime minister to eliminate the potential red rope.

They can just form a unit that can defeat red rope monsters and let them explore the underpass while playing the flute.

It'll be faster if I do it myself, but I don't intend to do something that can be done even without me.

◇

When I've gone to the royal castle to report about the red rope cockroach, the king's office is noisy even though the date has changed.

"Heya, Nanashi-sama!"

The prime minister met me when I entered the king's office.

Apparently, a report about an oracle seems to have come from the Royal Capital's temple.

....Again huh. Gods are working too hard.

And, the content is--

『Fragment of cup breaks, False King is born』

By false king, maybe it's referring to an impostor of the king, an unqualified foolish king, or perhaps someone who wants to usurp the throne.

For the former, since Mito--the real Ancient King Yamato has appeared, there's a possibility that it's pointing that Hero Nanashi and the King are false.

If it's the latter, there's a possibility of coup d'etat happening, but with Marquis Kelten having lost his standing, there's no one who has enough influence to incite rebellion, so the prime minister says.

"What's the『Fragment of cup breaks』about I wonder?"

It made me recall the [Holy Grail] from the Sakuramochi Demon incident, but since it's enshrined in my storage, it probably isn't related.

"According to the theoligians and the temple people, there's a lot of case where the cup refers to a peaceful nation and complete state."

In other words, a part of a peaceful nation is revolting, is that it?

"Thinking from that, perhaps it's valid to think that the young nobleman who causes the rebellion in Bishtal Dukedom falsely assumes the title of king?"

A young minister beside the prime minister told his opinion.

I see, if we turn our attention outside the territory under the direct control of the king, that's probably the most appropriate.

To inform about someone who causes rebellion in a country, like this, the gods sure are caring.

It'll be better if they stop obstructing civilization from developing though.

It doesn't seem to be related to demons, so I excuse myself after I've exhausted all the information.

If there's a follow-up, there should be a contact from Echigoya Firm.

Today I'm busy.

I move to the mountain near the royal castle and eliminate the wyvern that the green demon rode.

Then I went to investigate the direction where I found the green demon.

Using Unit Arrangement for it is troublesome, so I investigate while using Flash Drive.

I went until some undeveloped land and the blue territory following a straight line from the discovery point of the green demon, but I couldn't find any potential place for it.

The blue territory is a den of monsters that's worse than I've heard, so I'll be intruding it once our girls have run out of their prey.

There's a pioneer village created by former explorers on the edge of blue territory, so visiting there seems fun too.

"Mu, it's the morning sun huh--"

There were more unplanned events than I thought, so there are many matters left in hanging.

I'm troubled that things that need to be checked have increased due to demons and demon lord believers.

It might be good to ask Arisa or Tifaliza to set up my inspection schedule.

Maybe because my drowsiness and mental fatigue have piled up, that foolish plan seems like a good idea

I did a stretch and renew my mind.

While basking in the daybreak light, I teleport to Boruenan Village where everyone is with Unit Arrangement.

Now then, it's the long-awaited third day of the auction at last.

Let's get fired up!

13-26. The Third Auction Day

Satou's here. For examinations, for the first date, when I was making preparation for them, I often felt more anxious the more I did. I feel that that anxiety loosened up once I learned how to dump a bit of my enthusiasm.

◇

"Good morning, we've come to met you."

Zena-san whose smile has a trace of shadow comes to do a morning greet.

I've been too busy I feel that I've hardly talked to Zena-san lately.

Once I got my hands on the Chant Orb, I'd invite Zena-san and go on a Royal Capital picnic. Our girls will be happy too.

Today Zena Squad is going to escort Arisa and Mia to the royal castle.

I was actually invited too, but the third auction day where the [Chant Orb] is being exhibited is more important, so I won't be attending with poor health as the reason.

Arisa who comes to the entrance hall with a cute princess-like dress takes a pose while looking proud.

After lightly praising her, I tell her what to do when she's asked about the matter yesterday.

"--Then, we should just maintain that we don't know the detail right?"

"Yeah, that's good enough."

I nod to Arisa.

"Ready."

And then, Mia who had dressed up came to the entrance hall.

When her eyes meet mine, she twirls on the spot.

When I told her that she was cute, she satisfyingly replied, "Nn".

"Then we'll be going. Do you have something to tell to her highness?"

"Nothing in particular--tell her my apology for my absence."

"Un, okay. You work hard too okay!"

I nod to Arisa's encouragement, and send them off after asking Zena-san and her friends to take care of Arisa and Mia.

"Everyone, what's your plan today?"

Returning to the living room, I check the other girls' plans.

Arisa and Mia aren't here today, so there will be no labyrinth expedition.

"I'll be staying in the kitchen since I want to review the dishes from yesterday."

Lulu asserted with a face full of spirit.

Looks like she was swinging the kitchen knife in Boruenan Village tree house's kitchen last night.

"Pochi wants to go to the school today nodesu."

"Hemu coming~"

"That's right nanodesu. We have a practice with great teacher Hemu nodesu."

I tell the two who are swinging wooden swords with faces full of excitement, "Don't use Magic Edge Cannon since it's dangerous okay."

They're able to fire Magic Edge Cannon with normal wooden swords recently, so I can't be carelesss.

"I will accompany them and watch over so that they won't make any mistake."

"I'm relieved to hear that from Liza. I'm counting on you."

"I will exert the utmost of my poor ability."

I feel like Liza would end up fighting Sir Heim instead, but she probably will refrain.

"We (boku-tachi) will go to the school as usual."

It seems Crow and Shiro like to go to school, it might be better to let them commute to the Royal Capital's academy from now on.

It might be good to let them teach the children in the Labyrinth City's training school later in the future.

"Crow, your words."

"--We (watashi-tachi)."

Pointed out by Shiro, Crow corrected her words.

The noble daughter whom the two get along with probably pointed out that girls using [Boku] is strange.

"What are you going to do Nana?"

"I'm hoping to do a classroom visitation. Master, please the permission."

--Classroom visitation?

Is there such an event in Shiga Kingdom?

I don't know if the school side would accept it, so I confirm it with the butler who seems to be in the know.

"I am not familiar with the term classroom visitation, however, they should accept parental visit."

"What should I do to get the permission?"

"There is no problem if we send them a prior notice. We could send a maid with a letter informing them if Master wish for it today."

"Please."

A tactful employee like always.

The butler is the one writing the letter.

I saw off the children, and then a letter came from Sera of Tenion temple when I had gone back to the bedroom to prepare for the feigned illness.

It's probably about the prophecy I've heard in the royal castle last night.

Sera usually would have come visiting herself, but it seems she's in the royal castle's audience room with other big-wigs of Tenion temple.

I open the letter with a paper knife and read the content inside--

『Ring of flame encircles the world, the moon wakes up』

--so the verse of Sera's prophecy is written.

Looking at the [Moon] and [Wakes up] keywords, I imagine it's about the revival of the demon god, but the meaning is far too different than the 『Fragment of cup breaks, False King is born』 I heard yesterday.

Above all, if the demon god is really going to be revived, all the gods should have issued the same warning.

It's probably much ado about nothing, probably something like an annular solar eclipse.

It's normal for a world without scientific progress to treat solar and lunar eclipse as natural disasters.

I write a letter to thank Sera and give it to a maid, tell her that I can't meet anyone who comes and stay in the room.

Now then, I have to go out soon.

◇

"Kuro-sama, I've been waiting for you!"

The manager met me with sweet voice.

Today she's not dressed in her usual sharp director-style dress, but a refined-looking normal noble daughter dress.

It's similar to the dress that an earl daughter was boasting in the tea party yesterday.

Confirming it, it seems to be made from the same workshop.

The price is unreasonable at 30 gold coins, but that's probably not much considering the manager's yearly income.

"Now! Let's go!"

"Please wait--"

Tifaliza's wise voice stops the manager who was going to link her arms wrapped in white gloves to mine.

"--Manager, you forget to report the information from the prime minister."

"I-I know."

Under the ice-like gaze of Tifaliza, the manager clears her throat with a cough.

"I was going to report it once we settle down in the noble seats of the auction hall."

"In truth, you forgot about since you could go on a date with Kuro-sama right?"

An executive girl who appeared from the room's entrance teased the manager who was making an excuse.

When the manager sent a sharp glance to her, she went to the finance room next door while saying, "scary scary."

The manager looks embarrassed with a red face.

....Sheesh.

We're going to the battlefield (auction), and yet there's not enough seriousness.

"Do that after you've completed your duty."

"Y-yes! I'll serve with my whole heart!"

For some reason, the manager's face is blushing harder than earlier even though I scolded her.

It seems she questionably misunderstood the [Duty] part.

"Kuro-sama, forgive me for my audacity, but allow me to report myself. Last night, the prime minister--"

Without giving the manager the chance to speak, Tifaliza smoothly tells me about the prophecy.

She even told me about the interpretation of the prophecy and who told what.

Unfortunately, there's no new information it seems.

After thanking Tifaliza, I head toward the auction hall with the manager.

The executives in charge of the auction should be waiting in the meeting place already.

◇

"We've been waiting for you. We've heard the story from his excellency prime minister. Please submit the orbs for the exhibition."

I take the orbs from my Storage and give it to the supervisor of the auction hall.

Of course the three dangerous orbs like the Demon Summoning one are not for the exhibition, so I'm still carrying it.

--Wait for me. You'll be mine this noon.

I speak to the [Chant] orb that's on the supervisor's hand.

Of course there's no way it'll reply.

To the person who has appraisal skill beside the supervisor--

"W-what are you"

The supervisor's face becomes cramped when he sees the appraiser has sunk into the wall.

Fumu, an explanation is needed huh.

"That man is a thief. I'll take off the camouflage magic tool from his chest, let the man over there appraise it."

While doubting my words, the supervisor directs another appraiser.

"Th-this is a magic tool of『Job Disguise』. I-it's just as the person of Duke Mitsukuni has said, this man is a thief."

"No way! We have only employed people with trustworthy birth and parentage...."

Unlike the supervisor who's making an excuse, the other people in the room tie the thief that's been turned into a mess and takes him away.

I feel like I've gone a bit too far, but there is no mercy against thieves.

Right, there might be others too.

Squeezing the area around the auction hall, I search the map.

--One, two, three....

--Damn you pest (thieves).

I'll let you regret stepping into this place aiming for my『Chant Orb』.

I won't take their life, but I'll make their bodies unable to take anything but liquid food for half a month.

"I'll dispose of the other pest (thieves)."

After declaring so, I check the routes to the targets. I open the closed door with [Clairvoyance] and [Magic Hand] magic, securing the routes.

I fire [Remote Stuns] with dummy chant, sweeping off the auction hall.

In order to prevent any victim other than the targets, I pick the course to be near the ceiling.

I know from the map that the Remote Stun bullets have hit the targets one after another.

It seems two of them have avoided the first bullet, but that's no more than a useless resistance.

In fact, the thieves lost their consciousness after getting hit from successive bullets.

Fuffuffuu, the evils are destroyed.

"Kuro-sama?"

"It's alright. This much is within my expectation dayo (you see)."

I show a relieving smile toward the manager who looks worried.

"Dayo?"

<TLN: This makes him sound kinda merry.>

The manager tilts her head wonderingly.

Oops--my original way of speaking that's not like Kuro's came out.

"Do not worry about small things."

"Y-yes...."

I have to be cooler--.

I look around at the dumbfounded people.

The supervisor keeps opening and closing his mouth, since he seems useless, I talk to the site supervisor who looks responsible.

"What are you getting absentminded for. There are two on the second floor, two in the warehouse, and one in front of the underground vault. Arrest them quick."

"Y-Yes!"

The site supervisor directs his subordinates to arrest them, and runs to the underground vault himself.

Good grief, I'd have liked it if they got a grip on themselves before the sweeping.

After confirming with my own eyes that the Chant Orb has been stored in the underground vault, we head to the upper noble participant waiting room led by a usherette.

In addition, I was warned by the usherette not to use magic in the meeting place.

◇

"--That is all of the procedures for bidding in the auction."

The explanation was long, but it's not that special.

One thing I find unusual is that you have to report the feasible amount of money you have for the bid beforehand, [You cannot bid if the bidding price is more than that amount].

"Is there any question?"

"Can you get the item you've successfully bid immediately?"

There are many things I want to hear, but I'll confirm the most important one.

"No, it will be delivered during the recess on the first floor. The guards in charge of the delivery will be stand by the successful bidder, so please be advised."

It seems they don't bring the won item to the waiting room in order to prevent crime.

The auction will have three two-hour bidding time and one-hour rest time each, nine hours in total.

I thought the rest time was too long when I first heard it, but it seems there's a reason for that.

The door is knocked and then a woman along with guards enter.

"It seems the official appraiser has come. Then, sorry for the inconvenience, but would you please present the money for the bid."

Urged by the usherette, I open the Item Box and take out bags with gold coins inside.

I arrange them on the table one by one. Each one has 100 gold coins inside.

"Amazing...."

"As expected of the house of duke even though they've just emerged."

Attentive Ears skill picked up the maids waiting near the wall talking in low voice.

I keep putting the gold coin bags on the table without minding it.

"Eh...."

"U-um...."

The usherette and even the appraiser look surprised.

They should have gotten used seeing only this much--what strange people.

The table can't hold the gold coin bags any longer, so I call the two.

"Looks like the table's legs have been broken. Do you mind if I put the rest on the floor?"

The usherette, the appraiser and even the guards behind them aren't replying with their mouths hanging open.

Please answer immediately with YES or NO.

I interpreted the silence as YES, so I put gold coin bags one after another on the floor, and then the usherette finally moves.

"P-please wait!"

"What is it? Is the floor giving in?"

"No, that's not it!"

The usherette whose atmosphere feels like she's from the high society is swinging her arms buzzingly with a face that suits her age.

It's cute, but isn't that bad for her work?

"How many gold coins have you prepared?!"

"For now, it's around 300.000 pieces?"

If that's not enough, around 10 million gold coins of Furu Empire are waiting in my storage you know?

"D-do you want to bid the whole city!?"

--How exaggerated.

"Calm down. You are being discourteous."

"P-please forgive me...."

The usherette droops after getting persuaded by the appraiser.

"Either way, it is impossible for me to judge that much. I'll sequentially inspect several samples, afterward please take the notes for the indicated amount of money."

The appraiser said so and then appraised about three bags.

In the end, even though I have only showed them 300 bags for the 30.000 gold coins, they give me 30 notes for bidding that indicate 10.000 gold coins each.

It seems the amount of money for the bidding is announced through the loudspeaker while these notes are being posted.

Since the appraiser only brought five 10.000 gold coin notes, the remaining 25 were delivered to the room later.

And then, after waiting for around an hour.

The announcement for the opening of the third auction day is broadcasted.

"--Then, let's go."

"Yes, Kuro-sama."

I lead the manager by hands, walking toward the noble seats of the auction hall while linking arms.

The auction (battle) finally begins!

13-27. The Third Auction Day (2)

Satou's here. I like Hollywood movies. I can't get enough of the characters escaping dangers one after another without even having the chance to breath. However, I think calm and quiet are better in reality.

◇

The auction has begun.

Around 300 people are sitting on the college hall-like mortar-shaped hall.

The noble seats area that we are located at sticks out on the inside of the hall like a balcony, and there are several of it.

Looks like there are around 30 of it in total.

According to the pamphlet as the substitute of the usherette, the orb auction is after the very first one, so it looks like I'll be bored for an hour.

『Everyone! This [Farsight Scope] was excavated from a treasure chest in the 1-3 area of Selbira's Labyrinth--』

The host is explaining the exhibited item while holding a mic in one hand.

There was no explanation who the exhibitor is.

The bid began before long, but--

『10 gold coins』

『10 gold coins and two silver coins』

『10 gold coins and four silver coins』

『11 gold coins』

And such, the bidding amounts are very tight.

The auction hall is slightly dim, spotlights are highlighting the host and the bidders who raise their notes.

Looks like the light will highlight the bidder who raises their notes, so they'll know the one who raises their notes immediately.

In case there are several people who raise their notes, they'll highlight them from the fastest one in turn.

『14 gold coins』

『....Since no one bids anymore, it's a successful bid. The winner of [Farsight Scope] is number 921!』

Rounds of applause are echoing in the hall once the host declared a successful bid.

The sound don't match the moving hands, so it's probably sound effects from some magic tool.

It seems they don't announce the bidder's name but their number.

Rather than for avoiding needless confusion, it's for hiding the bidder's identity no doubt.

By the way, my bidder number is number three. It's probably because I'm here as a delegate of Duke Mitsukuni house.

Still, I don't know whether it's because the bidders are mainly lower nobles or military men, but the winning bids are all only at 30% of the market price.

The people in this hall are probably aiming for the [Blessing Orbs].

Looks like I have a lot of rivals.

There were some interesting magic tools that were exhibited, but I wait for the [Blessing Orbs] auction without attempting an affair.

"Kuro-sama, please calm down. You don't have to be so worried, we will absolutely win the bid."

The manager who's sitting beside me persuades me while warmly gazing like a kind mother.

So I really shouldn't have let out, "Gununu" sound, or maybe staring hard at the noble seat restraint restlessly was bad... no, it has to be because I'm unconsciously tapping my foot....

I cough once, and then reply the manager with a voice full of dignity.

"There is no need to worry. I am calm."

"Yes, of course."

The manager nods and then presents me with a glass of carbonated fruit water.

I'm bothered with her kind mother-like expression, but this is just right as I feel thirsty.

I gulp it and then refreshing sensation slides down my throat.

"Another glass please."

"Yes."

After drinking the second glass, I feel calmed down.

Looks like I was a bit too eager.

I have to calm down until the real thing.

◇

And then, the long-awaited [Blessing Orbs]'s turn came.

This time there are eight orbs that are going to be displayed, they are our [Water Magic], [Paralyze Resistance], Jeril's [Light Magic], [Chant] and other people's [Transport], [Great Sword], [Arithmetic], and [Horticulture].

The plan should have been that the less interesting items are to be exhibited first, but it seems the management side are worried the bids would be sombre.

They feature the highlight, [Light Magic] right from the outset.

It seems they're right on the money--.

『150 gold coins!』

『153 gold coins!』

『160 gold coins!』

--The price rises rapidly.

"The rise is worse than I thought...."

The manager beside me tilts her head in puzzlement.

That reminds me, I've heard from the guildmaster and Jeril in Labyrinth City that, "It was bid for 3000 gold coins 200 years ago.", so this might be lacking.

『...920...gold coins!』

『930 gold coins!』

『...931...gold coins!』

The price gradually rises, but the end isn't quite in sight yet.

The competition from people from distinguished military families and upper nobles are fierce, maybe because possessing [Light Magic] skill is one of the requirements for entering Holy Knight.

I feel strong-will wanting to win no matter what.

I've also employed a proxy as Satou, but he was dropped off quickly since the upper limit was 500 gold coins.

Leaving that aside, if this keeps up--.

"It's getting prolonged more than we thought isn't it. If this keeps up, it'd be the break time before all the orbs are finished being exhibited."

That's bad...but if I intervened here, there might be other nobles who went after the important [Chant Orb] instead. I want to prevent that from happening.

After about 45 minutes, the [Light Magic] was finally sold for 1096 gold coins.

The man is wearing a mask but that's probably Duke Oyugock.

After that, it was quick.

--[Great Sword], 12 gold coins.

--[Arithmetic], 31 gold coins.

--[Horticulture], 7 gold coins.

--[Transport], 5 gold coins.

It seems orbs that have weak demands are cheap.

And the remainders are [Chant], [Water Magic], and [Paralyze Resistance].

『Then continuing on, after a fierce fight between the [Floormaster, Flame Snake] of the labyrinth's middle layer and the corps led by the

Mithril explorer party, [Lion's Roar]--』

The prologue is too long!

Shut up and let me bid already!

"Kuro-sama--"

The manager puts her white hands on top of mine and whispers.

Not good, not good. I have to be cool.

『--Then let the bid begin.』

I quickly raise my note, however the spotlight isn't highlighting me, but a lower noble in the hall.

There are more than six notes raised when I look around the hall.

Looks like [Chant Orb] is really popular.

It seems there are a lot of people who are stumped at that impossibly hard spell chanting.

The usherette tells me that I'm the fifth.

Apparently, in case of simultaneous note-raises like this, the spotlight will highlight the notes in turn.

Now then, leaving that apart.

The first lower noble announces with tension in his voice.

『10 gold coins!』

--I wait and see.

The spotlight highlights the proxies of the lower nobles one after another.

『11 gold coins!』
『12 gold coins!』
『12 gold coins and 1 silver coin!』

--They play around too much.

"Kuro-sama, please."
"Umu--"

I receive the mic and pause a bit.

First, it's the skirmish.
I'll cut the mob, leaving only the serious opponents.

『100 gold coins』

I calmly said so, and turned my sight toward the one who's going to bid after me in the noble seats.

I wait for the noble of lineage, some Earl or something, to state his bid--.

He's having a long deliberation, perhaps for ascertaining my move.

Looks like he's quite capable.

He's not lacking as an opponent.

And then, voices come out of the hall's speaker.

『The winner of [Chant Orb] is number 3.』

--eh?

"Congratulations, Kuro-sama."

I can hear the manager congratulating me and applauses in the hall.

No but, most of the 300.000 gold coins still remain though....

I feel somewhat downhearted, so I bid and won [Water Magic] and [Paralyze Resistance] for childish prices.

I remembered after having won it that the [Water Magic] and [Paralyze Resistance] orbs were the items we brought from the labyrinth.

◇

"Kuro-sama, is there anything wrong?"

When we're walking to the place to get the items, it seems my dissatisfied mood leaks out, the manager asks worryingly.

"No, it's just that I thought the『Chant Orb』was too cheap considering the winning bid in the past.

"When you say it like that, certainly."

According to the history, [Chant Orb] was won at around 200-400 gold coins.

The answer to that is brought by the usherette who's guiding us.

"That's because of the note raised by your proxy."

"Note?"

She consented when I asked again.

If I'm not mistaken, the color of the note differs depending on the potential amount.

My upper limit was 10.000, so the other people who saw that probably pulled back.

We enter the place to get the item that's strictly protected by high level knights.

The proxy of Duke Oyugock has entered first, they're confirming the payment.

I'm guided to a different table, and then I take out a bag of gold coins for the payment.

--One of the luminous points disappears.

I promptly open the marker list on the map.

--Blast it!

"Ku-Kuro-sama?"

Looks like I unconsciously used [Coercion] skill, the surrounding people have solidified with blue faces.

"The orb has been stolen. I will chase the criminal. Manager, finish the winning bid procedure."

"I-I understand."

After confirming the manager's reply, I leave that place.

◇

The one who steals the orb is a [Phantom Thief].

My [Chant Orb] is in the thief's Item Box. It seems the other orbs have all been stolen too.

At first I thought it was the same phantom thief from before, but it was an old man with a cute un-phantom-thief-like name, Pipin.

Still, he's fast.

Even though it hasn't even been 10 seconds since he got outside, he's already several hundreds meter away.

I understand the reason why he's strangely fast after chasing him with Flash Drive.

--It's a short-distance teleport.

That's a rare gift, but I won't let him escape!

I move in front of Pipin with Unit Arrangement.

"A pursuer huh!"

Pipin heads toward the downtown with short-distance teleport.

Apparently, he can jumps 300 meters in one go.

"I-impossible!"

Pipin continues doing short-distance teleports even while panicking.

Pipin stops running away after five teleportations.

Looking at his remaining MP, he can only jump for one more.

We're standing on a four-story apartment building, but it seems the buildings around here are deserted, there isn't any common people here.

"What's the matter? Are we done playing tag?"

Hearing me speaking like I've cornered a rat, Pipin grins and laughs.

He's probably anticipating the red luminous lights lurking in the surrounding buildings and whatever that makes my [Trap Discovery] reacting since a while ago.

"--Yep, that's right, it's over."

Birdlime balls are raining toward [The place where I was] from the surrounding, and the pitfall and net trap are activated.

Unexpectedly, they're all non-lethal traps.

"Kukuku, there's no way you can escape unless you can teleport like me."

"That seems to be the case."

I agree with the triumphant phantom thief from behind him.

"W-what!"

Pipin does the last teleport while getting surprised.

He's not giving up easily, but this is the last.

◇

There are two figures of people at the place where I move with Unit Arrangement.

Beside Pipin who's standing with his back facing here, the other phantom thief who was disguising as Satou the other day, [Sharururuun], is also standing.

I see, so they were planning to meet here.

It'll be troublesome if they diverge.

Let's settle it quickly.

"W-wait! Please wait."

Sharururuun waved her hand in panic, stopping me when I was going to use Ground Shrink.

Pipin is keeping his silent.

Sharururuun throws a velvet bag to me.

The radar shows the luminous point of a marked item approaching me along with the bag's trajectory.

I take it and put it into the storage.

Now it'll be fine even if we talk carefreely.

Apparently, Pipin is unconscious.

"What are you planning?"

"What? Haven't you heard from Miss Elterina?"

To my question, Sharururuun looked puzzled and said an unknown name.

--Elterina?

Ah, the manager's name huh.

When I look better, Sharururuun's affiliation is [Echigoya Firm].

"Right, you were the one who found my little brother right? Thank you. Thanks to you, I could cut my tie with those bastards."

Fumu, it's about the missing person that the manager asked recently huh.

"That's splendid. I'll leave it to you to take the man to the authority."

"Understood. By the way, what do you want me to do with the items inside his Item Box?"

"I'll entrust it to you."

"Then, I'll use『Forced Storage Opening』and give them to Echigoya Firm."

She tells me so, and then Sharururuun goes along the roof while shouldering Pipin.

I see, I was wondering how she could take out the [Orb] from the Item Box, but it seems there's a skill to forcefully open an Item Box. I'll ask her to teach me later.

After neutralizing Pipin's companions with [Remote Stuns], I fire three Firework magic to the sky in order to alert the guards.

I'll leave it to the guards to clean up the small fries.

◇

I take out the [Chant Orb] from Storage.

Fufufufufu---.

I stare at that gallant figure while suppressing my laughter.

It finally comes into my hands.

I've confirmed with the manager using [Telephone] magic that the payment has been completed.

There is nothing that holds me back anymore.

Flooded with emotion, I hold the [Chant Orb] high toward the sky.

The orb glitters from the light of the sun.

Come now! With this I can freely use any magic!

13-29. Behind the Orbs (1)

[※ This chapter is in multiple point of views.

This chapter chronologically happens between Chapter 13-27 and 13-28.]

◇Mito's POV◇

"Nothing to do at all~"

Sitting down on top of a water tower in the downtown, I look down below.

Ichirou-nii picked me up this morning, so I've been watching over the orphanage where Shin-kun is, but there's really nothing happening.

The green demon that came to the Royal Capital last night didn't get in touch with Shin-kun either, so I'm thinking that this child might not be related to the recent series of events.

--Oops, found a contact!

Some evil-looking men approach Shin-kun and the children of the orphanages who have come to a well to draw water.

I can't hear them.... I'll try using [Hearing Boost] magic.

"--Transport these."

"And the reward?"

"I'll give you a meal once you've finished transporting it. That's fine with you right?"

"I want something that can be brought back to the orphanage."

Arara, isn't he a good child. No wonder Ichirou-nii would meddle.

It seems they're reached an agreement, Shin-kun leaves the children to draw water and then follows the men.

I put on the body-hiding mantle, and chase after them by jumping on the roofs.

"I should just transport this right?"

"Yeah, bring it to the warehouse pass the cemetery. You've gone there before, so you know right?"

Shin-kun and several children of the same age are pulling a cart.

The men who gave them the job are from a gray firm called [Stolen Goods Fox]. As the name suggest, they're probably dealing with stolen goods.

Without being called out by the guards, Shin-kun and the others transported the cart to the cemetery just before the destination.

And there, three men in violet priest clothes are blocking their way.

There is no priest clothes in violet color.

But there were people like them when I was working as a king.

--Demon god believers, [Complete Equality].

I checked them with Appraisal skill, but they're not those guys.

Looks like they're a part of a carefree occult club called [Wind of Liberty] that I've heard from Ichirou-nii before.

But, there's something strange. The priests' states are strange. When I check further, they're in the state of [Suggestion].

"Whaat? Oy, priests? You're in the way, can you get out of the road?"

One of the boys who are transporting the goods threatened the three priests.

"Gang of thieves. Know that there is an item that we need to offer to his majesty inside that cart."

"Leave it here and go away."

"If you do, we will not take your lives."

The three announce that indifferently, the boys are drawing their swords, enraged.

"Don't joke around! We'll be held responsible if we abandon the cart. Come if you don't value your life!"

"Very well."

Sneering at that childish threat, the priests pull out rapiers.

Fu~mu, it'll be problematic if Shin-kun is hurt, I'll try asking what those guys want.

I jump out of the grove, and land before the men.

I ward off the swinging rapier with a broom, and block the thrusting rapier with a small shield of [Auto Defense].

"Who are you!"

"Hi~ I'm a passing beau~ty"

The men are grimacing to my smile, and the boys look weary.

These are some very rude guys. I'd like to let them drink some dirt from Ichirou-nii's fingernail. <TLN: Japanese proverb, same meaning as 'take a leaf out of someone's book'.>

"That move--woman! You must be Ryouna the 『Mower』 of Shiga Eight Swords!"

"To think that they'd smell out our plan this fast!"

"We can't hesitate anymore."

The priests jump back and put down their rapiers.

"Will you surrender?"

They ignored me even though I kindly suggested it.

The three priests took something red from their chests, put it on their foreheads, and then say something simultaneously.

"""O Short Horn, feed upon our desire to grant us violent power"""

Together with the priests' shouts, something break through their priests' clothes, and then they change into gorilla-like lesser demons.

"You guys, escape!"

As I order them, the boys try to run away while desperately pulling the cart.

"Just dump the luggage!"

--GRROUWWWN.

As if interrupting my warning, the gorillas wreck the surrounding with storm magic.

The cart is overturned, and the boys fall to the tombstones.

Good, Shin boy is alright.

The other children are getting up and running away in groups of two and three.

I pour magic power into the holy sword taken out from Inventory and recite the holy verse.

"<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais, become 13 blades, dancing in the sky."

The holy swords turns the lower demons into black dust one after another.

I look around to find the wire puller who manipulated them while seeing the reliable holy swords on the corner of my vision.

--There.

A short beastfolk disappears into the thicket that surround the cemetery.

I'm worried about Shin boy and the luggage, but I'll chase that guy first.

I should've contracted a new familiar after waking up in the ruin.

◇Shin's POV◇

What is this?

What?

What is this!

Just when some priests blocked my work transporting a cart, a strange aunty cut in, and in the end the people turned into monsters.

Isn't that strange?

It's too strange!

"Oy! Let's run! Stop dawdling!"

Jeje the Lizardfolk who's usually taciturn urges everyone.
I hurriedly begin to push back the cart.

"Just throw the luggage!"

The aunty shouted from behind, but we can't do that.
This portage work is a job from a crime guild.

If we break or steal the luggage, we'll be treated harsher than turning into slaves.

--GRROUWWWN.

Storm raged from behind, we're blown away together with the cart.

"D-demons!"

"Run!"

Everyone scrambles away.

I also desperately crawl below the overturned cart.

When I push some obstructing boxes, a statue of goddess falls out from the inside.

For some reason I can't get my eyes off it even though it's at a time like this.

The second storm rages on when my hand reaches out to that goddess statue.

I roll on the ground while holding the goddess statue.

I saw blue light swords pulled by the aunty turning the lesser demons into black dust.

The aunty shouts, "Wait!", and then she jumps out to the other side of the cemetery.

--Am I saved?

I feel something odd in my hand while feeling relieved.

The goddess statue has crumbled into sand.

A violet orb appeared from the inside.

I scoop the orb that's emitting ominous light from the interior, and hold it over the sunlight.

◇Arisa's POV◇

--This is bad.

"I wonder how will Sir Pendragon interpret this formula."

Like so.

"This cake was made by Sir Pendragon right. He's really versatile isn't he."

Or so, Princess Shistina's reaction is bad.
Looking at her reaction and the flow, she's too much like a girl in love.

Thanks to that, the matter of [Nectar] or Hisui weren't talked about much, so we were saved though.
Geez, she's just too easy.

Perhaps our Master has the qualification as a first-rate flag architect?

That Master of ours had just contacted me with [Short Message] magic, telling that he had obtained the [Chant Orb] safely.

He probably mailed cause I wouldn't pick up [Telephone].

The writing style is so merry you wouldn't have thought it was the usual Master.

It's too frustrating that I can't preserve it.

At the end of that message, he wrote that in order to master the chant and to register magic into the magic column, he would go to, "A place where I wouldn't worry about human damage."

He's probably experimenting in the vast desert to the west of Labyrinth City Selbira.

My tension is rising just by imagining the spectacle.

Maybe I should cut the tea party short and go visit it with Mia.

Mia who looks like she'll vomit sugar seeing Shistina chattering fondly of Master, mutters, "Mwu?"

I can hear pitter-patter footsteps from the direction where she's looking at.

"Onee-sama!"

Loli princess Doris who jumped into the room hugs Shistina.

The attendants of Doris who are running after her from behind apologize for the rudeness in panic.

It seems courtesy is required if you're sister princesses of a large kingdom.

"That Hisui you see, even though she had gone back to her cage and ate her meal before I knew it yesterday, she's gone again just now!"

"How mysterious--"

The bird has drank Nectar after all, I wonder if she's gained some strange ability or something?

I have to report to Master and ask if we need to do something about it.

If possible, in the bed while we're huddling our faces together--guhehehe.

My delightful delusion is interrupted by pirupiru chirps.

"Hisuiiiii!"

Hisui who's appeared in the room before anyone knew pulls Doris's hair and dress, trying to take her somewhere.

"No! Stop it, Hisui!"

However, it seems Princess Doris doesn't understand it.

This time, she's flying around Shistina, doing her best to take her outside.

I'm bothered with Hisui's curious desperation.

Did she get an ability to detect disaster after drinking the Nectar?

"Nn, piruru, piru, piru."

When Mia mimicked Hisui's cry, Hisui chirped back, "pipirupirupiru" too.

"As expected of elf-sama, she understands bird's language!"

One of the maids speaks with admiration.

Mia continues to pirupiru with a composed face, but she's just playing around by mimicking the chirping.

If this were a manga, there would sweat marks on Mia's face, no doubt.

While also helping Mia, I'll go check the royal capital from the top of the big sakura tree.

"I'll be going to the washroom for a bit."

After telling so, I take Mia along into a private luxurious toilet.

"Master hasn't contacted us with anything so I think it's fine, but let's check out outside for a bit."

"Nn."

I can't teleport to a precise location without a carved seal board, so I teleport to the sky above the big sakura tree.

The sunlight is darkened even though it should be clear today.

"Arisa, above."

"Ugeh, the heck is thaaaaaat!"

After teleporting to the top of the big sakura tree and sitting down, I looked above urged by Mia, and screamed to the abnormal scene before my eyes.

"A rock?"

I see a huge rock trying to come out of a crack in the sky on top of the royal castle.

It's as big as the whole royal castle.

If that falls, there will be a lot of victims from the castle.

I immediately invoke [World Phone], but I can't connect to Master.

It's not blocked, the reaction feels like when Telephone magic can't reach a target that's too far away.

"Arisa."

--It can't be helped, let's decide quickly.

"Over Boost"

Violet glow is wrapping me.

I take the coolest looking pose, and then shout out the magic name with fighting spirit.

"『Gate』 open!"

Riding on my spirit, the effect of Unique Skill is raised.

A teleport gate at the size that can swallow a private house is opened in the sky.

But it's too small to redirect that rock.

"Magic potion."

With fighting spirit, I gulp down the magic potion that Mia gives me.

It' super sweet. It's sweet enough my teeth feel like melting, but power is gushing forth.

Master's love recovers my magic power in a flash.

"Over Boost aaaand, 『Gate』 opeen!"

By overlapping the magic, the teleport gate widens.

Violet light coils the dimension rift, widening the teleport gate.

But, it's still a bit short.

The royal castle should be saved with just this much, but enormous damage will appear on the castle's surrounding.

The parking lot where Zena-tan and her friends are standing by and the guest house where Karina is should be in danger.

"Blood."

The capillary on my fingers have torn and blood are spurting out of it, maybe because I was repeatedly being forceful.

I'll say thanks later to Mia who wraps them with a handkerchief.

I drink the second magic potion, and use the Unique Skill for the third time today.

Over Boost.

The depth of my soul is screaming like creaking sounds.

A pain that's about three time more painful than wisdom teeth attacks my body.

I think Master warned me about it back then.

If you over-use Unique Skill, the vessel of your soul would break, and you'd fall into a demon lord.

--But, if I run away here, it'll be a disgrace as a woman!

I'll lose if I don't push myself here!

"Gooooooooooo!"

I put all of my magic power, and then the [Gate] widens even though it's destabilizing.

I can't control the teleport gate with my ability.

〖Dryad! Lend us your power! The requester is Misanalia! A spirit user of Boruenan Forest possessing Spirit Eyes!〗

〖Okay~, the sakura tree will disappear if I don't help here.〗

Mia shouted something in elf language, and then a pink-colored dryad appeared from the big sakura tree.

〖Young lady, I'll connect your wand with the sakura tree to be an assist, do your best after that.〗

I don't understand her words, but the control suddenly feels easier.

The [Gate] that was about to dissolve any moment became like a calm water surface.

And then, the huge rock finally falls from the sky.

No! The position is a bit bad.

--Funnu.

I fire myself up and shift the [Gate] to the site where the huge rock falls.

It seems my forehead's blood vessels have erupted, my view is dyed red.

However, it was worth overdoing!

The huge rock falls out of the [Gate] to the outskirt plain. Whenever the huge rock hits the ground, around magnitude 3 earthquake shakes the royal capital.

The huge rock falls just like that, splitting the mountain nearby, and then stops.

"Huu, this is thanks to Hisui. Putting us aside, if that child didn't inform us, the people of the royal castle wouldn't be saved."

"Arisa."

While drinking the magic potion that Mia gave me, I shift my gaze to the emergency alarm magic tool that's been ringing since awhile ago.

This is a tool to notify us when something is happening with our group.

The lamp indicating Liza is shining.

13-28. Orb

[This chapter is in third person point of view.]

The boy pulls back the orb that he has raised up toward the sky.

"I see.... I wanted my memories erased myself."

The moment the boy saw the sun light reflected on the orb, the locked memory played back in the boy's mind like a revolving lantern.

--The memories from the former world.

--The memories when he was summoned during a ritual of a small kingdom.

--A beautiful woman who transcended humans.

--And then the people who rescued him who was kidnapped under the pretext of 'summoning'.

"I remember...."

The boy grips his other hand not holding the orb hard enough to spill blood.

"I wanted to try living as a person of this world, and see if I would still think the same like before my memory was sealed...huh."

The boy sighs once to himself for his roundabout way of sealing his own memory.

And then, this time he chooses to use the orb.

"To gain power from this orb, I should do it like this."

The boys understands how to use the orb just by flowing it with his magic power; he swallows it.

The boy's throat moves, and then the power of blessings dwells in the boy before the orb could reach his stomachs.

"■■■ Breeze"

The breeze of life magic shakes the boy's hair.

"Kukkukku, this is magic--"

The current boy can use any magic.

Because he can browse all magic like turning a dictionary.

"--For I am the king who rules over magic."

The boy smiles with his mouth looking like the shape of a down crescent moon.

And then a cataclysm happens as if responding to that smile.

--Flame envelops the world.

Beyond the horizon, flame raises toward the void sky as if blown from the earth.

That's happening on 360 degree direction, there are walls of flame everywhere you see.

"Looks like the world welcomes its end---"

The boy laughs loudly with his hands reaching out to the sky.

As if waiting for his laughter to end, the flame walls that have surrounded the world abruptly disappears.

Without even questioning the unknown walls of flame, the boy mutters to himself.

"A king who's alone doesn't look good.... Right, I'll summon a servant."

By just thinking that, a magic circle that emits violet light appears on the ground.

Two circles float to mid-air, then the upper circle projects a light cylinder.

Black stains are created inside the cylinder, and then it produces a grotesque figure before long.

The figure pushes down the joint cemetery stone monuments to where the boy stands, one after another.

『Your highness, the greater demon [Black Three] has come before your presence, I am blissful.』

<TLN: The demon refers to himself with 'wagahai'>

The boy knits his brow toward the black greater demon that's appeared.

"I am the king. Call me majesty."

『As you wish, your majesty. I consent.』

Accompanied by the greater demon, the boy who's smiling harder feels an intense vertigo.

"....Guh, w-what?"

『A human body is brittle, it cannot endure the recoil from the summoning, so is my humble opinion.』

Just as the greater demon had said, the boy's body was assailed by the recoil of the forbidden magic used to summon a greater demon and the sudden shortage of magic power.

"If it's weak, then I can just remodel it, yes, remodel it stronger."

As if waiting for the boy's mutter, the power of magic without chanting transforms the boy's body with crackling sound.

--The bones lengthen, the muscles increase, the figure turns into that of an adult.

"Gugagagaga"

The boy screams with his mouth.

The physical growth stops when he's become a two-meter tall big figure.

However, the transformation isn't stopping.

--A thin violet-colored horn appears on his forehead, and his hair lengthens until the waist.

"Haa, haa, haa"

Repeating short panting, the boy's hair is shining silver, his bangs is dyed in violet color.

The boy clicks his fingers once, and then clothes and mantles appear out of thin air, wrapping the boy's body.

Someone calls to the boy who's dumbfounded with the transformation of his body.

『What a magnificent figure zamasu. With this, his majesty『Onifolk King』will be delighted too zamasu.』

"So it's you--"

The boy looks at the source of the voice.

There are the green demon in its 30-meter long green dragon mock body, and its lower demon subordinates.

『Please pardon me to be in the form that once bared its fang to the king. I have brought an item for congratulating your highness zamasu.』

Boom, the ground shakes, and then on its place is a lump of magic crystal pillar that has the effect of MP recovery.

It's not an item that can be gotten easily even for a senior greater demon.

"That is?"

『It's an item for recovering magic power called magic crystal pillar zamasu.』

"I see, hand it over."

The boy uses [Magic Hand] magic to move the magic crystal pillar.

The moment he touches it, the boy's magic power that was about to run out is recovered in a flash.

"This is magnificent."

『I am extremely delighted to see that it is to your highness's liking zamasu.』

"Call me majesty."

『Understood zamasu--』

Even though the green demon is using polite speech toward the boy, perhaps his loyalty doesn't lie to the boy.

The green demon suddenly raises its dragon's neck toward a section of the sky and scowls at it.

『--It seems an annoying person has noticed us zamasu. Leave it to me zamasu.』

After saying that the green demon kicks the ground and soars to the sky.

The lower demons that had accompanied the green demon also disappeared without even leaving a shadow just like when they appeared.

They're probably familiars for shuttle use.

◇

『Your majesty's order, I await.』

"Right. First I'll punish the kidnappers--"

The boy orders the greater demon to bring one of the people of the kingdom that kidnapped him.

Ignoring the greater demon that showed its displeasure by keeping silent, the boy talks to himself in delirium.

"What kind of punishments should I do? Ordinary punishments are not good. Making that beautiful princess cry tears of fear and regret is good....Right. I have a good plan...."

The boy chuckles to his own good idea.

Before long, the greater demon returned while carrying an unconscious girl.

"Wake up."

Using mind magic chantlessly, he wakes the girl--Princess Menea up.

"He-here is? ....Demons!"

Princess Menea immediately stands guard, and then throws a magic tool for emergency summon to the ground.

A mist-like dog shrouded in white mist growls toward the boy and the greater demon.

"Futile."

The boy clicks his fingers, and then the white mist dog disappears into the air with a whimper.

"...N-no way....Chantless magic."

Princess Menea speaks with trembling voice.
The girl is probably aware.

--An opponent that can use chantless magic, that is.

"....Demon lord."

Princess Menea shrinks back in fear.

"What's wrong? Don't you usually come to me yourself?"

The boy clicks his fingers, and then ivy which grow from the ground restrain Princess Menea and lift her up.

"Do not worry, princess of the kingdom of sinners. I will not kill you immediately."

The boy swings his arm, and then the thick trees are parted to the sides, revealing the royal castle and the big sakura tree beyond.

"First, I who was summoned by you bastards will destroy the capital of a foreign kingdom. Witness the slaughter of your friends and the innocent people, and cry."

Princess Menea who's being scowled by the mad boy is trembling to the point of losing her consciousness.

Nay, every time she's going to faint, she's forcefully woken up with the boy's magic.

"Once it's over, I'll bring your head to Rumooku Kingdom and abduct that beautiful sister of the king."

The boy laughs with a slight admiration among his insanity.

"....Yuriko-sama is already....."

Princess Menea's mutter never reach the boy.

"First, I'll start with that hateful sakura tree."

Princess Menea sees the visage of a person before the grotesque transformation from the boy's face.

"....Y-you are!"

Taking no notice of the girl, the boy starts a spell chant since the first [Breeze].

Enormous magic power is gathering to the boy, that spell chant forms a shape.

The sky above the royal castle is split, the tip of a gigantic meteorite shows itself up.

"Fuhahahahaha, look at my meteor! This is power--"

The boy who was going to laugh loudly with spread arms turns toward Princess Menea.

"--What are you doing?"

Before the boy's eyes, a plump boy is struggling to untie Princess Menea from the ivy.

The boy clicks his fingers, and then the ivy that binds Princess Menea flings the plump boy away.

"Uwaaaa"

"Souya-dono!"

The boy rolls on the cemetery while repeatedly raising dust.

The boy recognizes the plump Souya boy, but right now he's an existence that's no different than a garbage, he loses interest after glancing at him once.

The boy clicks his fingers, and then a bundle of fireballs appear.

"Clown begone."

The fireballs explode above the boy, the flame wrap the boy's figure.

There isn't any trace of the charred remain of the boy once the flame disappear.

"Hmph, vaporized without leaving a bone huh..."

Even though he's a bit puzzled, the boy seems to think of it as of little significance, he turns his concern toward the meteorite creation.

The gigantic meteorite is giving a roaring sound while being created in the sky, however only 50% of it has appeared.

The boy suddenly looks around, the greater demon scowls at a section of the cemetery.

"--As expected of a greater demon, you're not leaving any opening."

A lone swordsman appears from behind the grove.

"Your majesty, please leave cleaning up the small fry too me. I am industrious."

"Small fry huh.... Been a while since I was called that. Second seat of Shiga Eight Sword, Heim the『Weed』, coming!"

He rushes with Flickering Movement, the greater demon also accelerates and counterattacks while leaving black afterimage.

The demon blocks the great swords with its claw, and then Heim kicks the counterattacking claw away.

Heim is freely wielding the great sword that should've been heavy and slow, he deals with the greater demon's claw by kicking its tail.

"Fushururuu, you're good human! I am delighted."

"I'd have died from the first attack if I didn't use the forbidden acceleration drug..."

The greater demon breathes roughly, taking a charging posture with both its claws on the ground.

In order to meet it, Heim takes an upper stance with the great sword.

"Heim-sama! The one who creates that meteorite is that silver-haired demon lord!"

Princess Menea screams so to Heim, but the greater demon's protection is firm, it seems Heim can't approach the boy.

When the gigantic meteorite finally starts its fall, the boy speaks to himself while his eyes are chasing it.

"Now, it's the beginning of the end--"

◇

"Aaa! The big sakura tree is--"

Princess Menea's scream resounds throughout the cemetery.

And then, the moment the meteorite is going to touch the big sakura tree, the space over there looks like it's split and then the meteorite disappears.

"I-Impossible!"

There's no one who responds to the boy's surprise.

The moment the meteorite disappears completely, the ground of the royal capital shakes.

The lone scream of Princess Menea is echoing throughout the cemetery.

"Assistance~?"

"Assistance for assistant nanodesu!"

Little swordsmen wrapped in golden sparkle break into the place.

"Worthy rivals! I welcome."

The dogfolk swordsman--Pochi assaults the greater demon while leaving blue glow behind.

The greater demon's claws wrapped in red light clash with the small holy sword, scattering red and blue sparks.

The catfolk swordsman--Tama who's rushing from the side is counterattacked by the demon's tail.

The tail quickly cuts down the swordsman's stomach, a little figure falls on the cemetery.

--However, the thing that's fallen down is a log wrapped in a pink mantle.

"Utsusemi~?"

<TLN: Cast-off cicada shell.>

Slipping off before anyone knew it, the cat ninja Tama releases Princess Menea, and then takes her away to the edge of the cemetery.

Souya boy who should have lost his life in flames is over there too.

His survival is due to cat ninja Tama's secret action.

"Impertinent, who are you bastards!"

As if waiting for the boy to ask their identity, several girls in golden armors land on the cemetery.

"Isn't it obvious! We're the allies of justice!"

A girl in golden dress armor whose violet hair is trailing behind--Arisa laughs cheerfully.

"Come now! Let the match be--huh? Why are you here?"

Arisa is shaken when she perceives the former visage of the grown-up boy.

"W-why are you... Answer me!"

The boy throws his mantle, and then he scowls at Arisa with a smug face.

"You servant, you're being haughty toward the one who rules over magic, the omnipotent king, me!"

The boy rebukes Arisa with all his dignity.

However, without being daunted by it, Arisa asks another question.

"Answer me, you who should have been a hero, why?!"

"I don't care about the me whose memory was sealed."

The boy clicks his fingers, several force spears appear attacking Arisa.

"Useless useless useless, so I declare."

A beautiful woman wrapped in golden armor--Nana amasses impregnable defensive wall before Arisa.

The force spears disappear fruitlessly the moment they touch the defensive wall.

"Are you obstructing me, small fries!"

Right at then, boom, a grotesque figure wrapped in green scales is dropped.

"Thank you for the wait, it's the appearance of the star performer! Hero Nanashi Second, coming!"

A woman protected by 13 holy swords glowing blue is taking a victory pose on top of the green dragon.

"Ara~? Your look sure has really changed."

Mito tilts her head when she sees the boy's face.

"H-hey, Mito, you're late."

"Real sorry. This green greater demon was tenacious you see."

When Mito shrugs her shoulders, the greater demon who's taken the form of a green dragon disappears like a mist.

It probably couldn't maintain the mock body (avatar).

"Now then, let's fight."

"Wait a minute. That guy is--"

"I know. However, I'm a hero, he's a demon lord. That's a reason enough to fight."

Mito holds back Arisa who's still trying to stop the boy.

"Now then, let's go--"

She twirls the holy wand taken out of her Inventory once, and then glares at the boy.

"--Demon Lord Shin!"

Thus the curtain opens for the fight between a demon lord and a hero--.

13-30. Behind the Orbs (2)

[※ This chapter is in multiple point of views.]

◇Liza's POV◇

"Fui~"

"I give nodesu."

Tama and Pochi who have been fighting Heim of Shiga Eight Swords plop down to the ground.

"E-err, Heim-dono--"

The teacher of knight school is trying to talk to Sir Heim, but being somewhat excited, he pays no attention to the teacher and turns toward me.

"What splendid talent. To be that skillful at those ages. Dame Kishreshgalza, are you the master of these girls?"

"No, these girls' masters are Master and the elves of Boruenan Village."

<TLN: Different 'master', Shishou vs Goshujin-sama.>

While feeling bad for the teacher, I answer Sir Heim's question.

"By Master you mean Viscount Pendragon isn't it.... I'd like to have a match with him once, but isn't he a magic swordsman? Isn't Dame

Kishreshgalza more skilled in pure skill?"

"No, I cannot be compared to Master."

I'm confident that I've become slightly stronger, but Master's spearmanship is extraordinary.

My ideal ultimate spearmanship is in there.

One day, I want to reach that stage.

"Fumu, I really should have a match--"

As if interrupting Sir Heim, screams break out from the school building.

The school building has been noisy since awhile ago, but this time the scream are echoing even though there are no cheers here.

"--What?! I'll go see it for a bit. Teacher Datz, evacuate with the students if you sense anything amiss."

After saying so, Sir Heim leaves for the scream at terrifying speed.

"Tama."

"Aye~?"

"Follow Sir Heim. If you find anything, return immediately to report."

"Aye aye sir~"

After getting my order, Tama disappears from the place.

Ninjutsu is quite a wonderful thing.

That reminds me, I wonder what was the fire wall beyond the royal capital that was burning during Pochi and Tama's fight.

Master might be fighting a newly appearing demon lord again.

I have to better myself to become an existence that Master can rely on.

◇Tama's POV◇

Ninja runs.

Running in the shadow, byun byun.

Ah, it's He~m.

A monkey-like black demon person jumps, running away to the other side.

The demon person was carrying a pink-haired girl under its arm.

Enviable hair color, nyan.

Tama follows He~m, who runs after the demon, from behind.

A plump kid called Souya is also running after it desperately, but since he's slow, he's getting left behind gradually.

Do your best~ Tama cheers in her mind.

Tama can't talk, Tama is a ninja after all.

It seems the goal is the cemetery ahead. For now Tama is going back to inform Liza.

"I'm back~?"

"Good work. So, what is happening?"

"A demon kidnapped someone~"

"Kidnapping is bad nanodesu."

"Right.... Let's report to Master."

Liza operates a magic tool, clack-clack.

It's glittering, pretty.

"There is no response.... For now let's go ahead and confirm whether we can eliminate the demon."

"Aye aye sir~"

"Roger nanodesu."

Tama runs toward the cemetery together with Liza and Pochi.

◇Mito's POV◇

"Let go! You human woman! Kicking this great Eneshiepet-sama who's connected by blood to the nine founder clans of Weaselfolk, what rudeness!"

"Be quiet."

Catching the weasel who ran around from place to place took more time than I thought.

Even if I go back now, Shin-kun and his friends probably have carried the stolen goods to the warehouse.

I tie up the stubborn weasel, and decide to bring him to Echigoya Firm ahead.

Roaring noisily on the ground would trouble people, so I go to Echigoya Firm by jumping on roofs.

When I'm halfway to Echigoya Firm, flapping sounds from something like a flying gigantic bird is resounding in the royal capital.

It's near the cemetery from earlier.

"Oooooo!!"

"Mou, how noisy--"

While frowning at the weaselfolk who's tied like a bagworm making a ruckus, I turn to look at the place the weaselfolk is looking.

--Geh, an infant green dragon?

Its sight is locked on to me.

I throw the weasel on the roof and then run into the sky.

I don't have Sky Drive skill like Ichirou-nii, but there are a lot of force magic to create foothold I can use, so it's alright.

Fearing damage to the surrounding, I ran to the sky.

The infant dragon shoots out a green-colored breath.

I spread out the force magic [Giant Shield] urgently, blocking the breath.

As expected of dragon's breath. It's hard even with an advanced magic.

Right after I've finished enduring it, the green dragon's fangs approach.

I evade it with a paper-thin difference.

"A nostalgic face zamasu. I never thought that I'd meet a descendant of Hero Yamato zamasu."

Yuck, it's not a real dragon, but an avatar of the green demon huh.

Still, it's noisy with its zamasuzamasu like always.

I lead it to outside of the royal capital while evading its attacks.

Along the way, I saw the space on top of the royal castle split, and a huge rock appeared.

"Geh, Meteor?"

"That's the false king's magic zamasu. Let us have a nice fight while enjoying the destruction of royal capital zamasu!"

The green demon sneers at me who's surprised.

"Read the mood. I can't afford to fight you right now."

I have to do something fast.

"<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais! Take care of Zamasu!"

I leave it to the holy sword Claiomh Solais to take care of the green demon's avatar, and then I head toward the royal castle myself.

I accelerate in the sky using force magic's [Counter Cube].

But, it's a bit too far. I won't make it like this.

Even if I didn't make it, the current king should be able to defend against it by using the city core's power properly.

The whimsical Sakura Dryad probably would help too.

--That's?!

An unexpected ending waited.

The huge lump of ruck was caught by a teleport gate, and got ejected outside the royal capital.

Humans should not be able to use that degree of magic.

If that was true, then it must have been with the help of a city core or god's fragments, you'd need absurdness to break through the limit of humans.

And then, I found the kid who was being rash on top of the sakura tree.

I land beside that kid.

"You're bloody all over! Hold on, I'll use recovery magic--"

"It's alright, Mito-tan. I've already drank recovery potion and blood-forming medicine. My body feels a bit light, but I should be able to move in no time."

"Leave the rest to me and Satou, you go get some rest."

Arisa shakes her head weakly to me.

"It's no good. I can't reach Master with『World Phone』. It seems he's in a place where magic can't reach."

"Then I'll do it myself. I'm still a leading hero of generation after all. I can do something about it as long as the opponent isn't a non-standard demon lord like the wild boar-head or the dog-head. I have the holy wand this time too."

It's an item I got from Ichirou-nii, not the wand that I used long ago, but the performance of its magic manipulation precision and magic convergence efficacy are higher than the divine gift holy wand.

He said that it was a prototype from the time he was making a wand for himself, but with this wand, I should be able to fight against a greater demon easily even alone.

I hit the green demon that's shaken off the holy sword coming here with [Divine Hammer] magic.

It'd be troubling if it intruded during my fight with the demon lord.

I'll finish this guy off first before fighting the demon lord.

"I'll be going ahead, you should take a rest before Satou returns."

After telling so, I challenge the green demon in an air battle.

◇Arisa's POV◇

Leaving Mito to handle the green greater demon, I, whose strength has recovered, am taken by Nana and Lulu to a spire overlooking the cemetery.

"Tell me about the situation--"

I tell about the thing I've heard from Liza and the others who are fighting in the cemetery from [Telephone] to everyone.

I tell them that a being that seems to be a demon lord has captured Princess Menea and Souya, and that Pochi, Tama and Heim of Shiga Eight Swords are fighting a black greater demon together.

I confirm that Tama has rescued Princess Menea from the top of the spire.

Alright, it's about time for our turn.

I ask Lulu and Mia to stay here, and teleport to the battlefield.

My new dress armor's defensive power has remarkably improved compared to the time of the sakuramochi demon's fight. It has higher defensive power than Nana during the floormaster fight.

I've also added space magic's [Dimension Reflection] too in addition.

Truly the invincible full armor magical girl Arisa-chan.

And then, the demon lord we're confronting in the battlefield is--

"Impertinent, who are you bastards!"

"Isn't it obvious! We're the allies of justice!"

While replying to the slightly weak-looking demon lord's question, we set up our battle formation in the cemetery.

It looks like we can defeat it since it's only at level 50.

"Come now! Let the match be--"

While setting my arrival pose, I learned the demon lord's name through [Persona Appraisal].

The demon's lord name is [Shin].

It's the name of the local hero.

His looks has changed, but Shin boy's visage certainly remains.

"Huh? Why are you here?"

The demon lord looks at me like looking at a garbage.

"W-why are you... Answer me!"

"You servant, you're being haughty toward the one who rules over magic, the omnipotent king, me!"

"Answer me, you who should have been a hero, why?!"

"I don't care about the me whose memory was sealed."

The boy puts down his mantle and then produces several force spears to attack me.

"Useless useless useless, so I declare."

Nana who's beside me blocks those.

"Are you obstructing me, small fries!"

As if interrupting the angry demon lord, a dragon wrapped in green colored scales falls down with a boom.

"Thank you for the wait, it's the appearance of the star performer! Hero Nanashi Second, coming!"

With 13 holy swords shining blue floating around her, Mito is taking a victory pose on top of the green dragon.

"Ara~? Your look sure has really changed."

Mito inclines her head when she sees Demon Lord Shin's face.

"H-hey, Mito, you're late."

"Real sorry. This green greater demon was tenacious you see."

Mito shrugs her shoulders and then the greater demon in the shape of a green dragon disappears like a mist.

It probably couldn't maintain the mock body (avatar).

"Now then, let's fight."

Mito scowls at Demon Lord Shin and declares so.

"Wait a minute. That guy is--"

"I know. However, I'm a hero, he's a demon lord. That's a reason enough to fight."

I try to stop her in a hurry, but Mito doesn't pay any heed.

"Now then, let's go Demon Lord Shin!"

"I said wait--"

Still trying to stop her, I stop Mito who's raised an arm.

"Give it up Arisa. There's no person that can return once they've become a demon lord. They can go back to the ring of reincarnation if their soul vessel hasn't been completely broken. The only salvation is to pluck their life when they're still in the border of humanity, before going mad."

Mito speaks while staring at Shin.

Bitterness seems to be hidden deep within that voice.

Still, you'd be out of the samsara if the vessel got broken huh.

For the sake of being lovey-dovey with Master even in the next life, I have to refrain from overdoing it like earlier.

"Is there any meaning dying as an ordinary man. Men have to aim for the top."

"Even if that's from a given power?"

"I am the master of that power. Even if it's a power given by that shitty father, I'm the one who decide how to use it."

--Father? Who is he talking about?

That question appears in my mind while Mito and Demon Lord Shin are having a dialogue.

"Is that so.... We're in parallel lines further than this. I'll end it in a blow that won't hurt. Divine Javelin."

15 huge force spears appear around Mito.

Detailed magic circles are being engraved on the telephone pole-sized spears over and over.

And then, the 13 holy sword Claimh Solais's splits float in line with them.

"Hmph, a hero centered around magic usage huh--You've picked the wrong opponent."

When Demon Lord Shin clicks his fingers, Mito's magic disappears, and the holy sword Claiomh Solais that was floating in mid-air falls down to the ground.

At the same time, the defensive walls that surrounded our armor also disappeared.

Fortunately, the circulating magic power in the armor themselves haven't disappeared.

Liza who's fighting the black greater demon shot a magic edge cannon, but it disappeared in the middle of the way.

"No way, annulling magic with no regard to the level difference..."

"Fuhahahaha, any kind of magic is under my control for I am the one who rules over magic."

Demon Lord Shin laughs loudly to the shocked Mito.

Shin's unique skill is just one, the name is [Master Wizard].

Well, I've assumed as much.

I send a hand signal to Lulu at the spire.

Demon Lord Shin is blown off from the flank.

Slightly later, the sound of a bullet arrives in the cemetery.

--Nice, sniper!

My older sister has stylish skill.

"T-to think you're attacking from afar.... As expected of the same kind of people as father."

Shin who's lost one of his arm stands up while violet blood is spilling from his wound.

"This much is nothing."

An arm grows from his shoulder.

A second bullet attacks Shin, but his defensive magic protects him from that.

It seems he can use magic even though we can't.

What cheat!

"Eyesore."

Shin clicks his fingers, and then the spire where Lulu and Mia are collapses with a roaring sound.

It's alright, Lulu and Mia should have ridden Garuda that Mia's created to the base.

"Your Majesty, I am not useful, I apologize."

The black demon that's been stabbed by Liza's dragon spear crumbles into dust.

Pochi and Tama seem fine, but Sir Heim has wounds all over his body, looking like he'll die.

"I don't mind. That means I just have to summon more."

Summoning magic circles appear one after another beside Shin, black demons are appearing from them.

『Your highness, greater demon [Black Four] to your presence. I am deeply moved.』

『Your highness, greater demon [Black Five] to your presence. I rejoice.』

『Your highness, greater demon [Black Six] to your presence--』

In total there are 16 of them.

D-don't tell me.... A-all of them are greater demons?

"Pinch~?"

"T-this is an adversity nanodesu. This is bad nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi were exchanging those words while drinking stamina and magic power recovery potion alternatively.

Pochi is flapping around in panic, but Tama looks like she's composed somehow.

"You two, let's decrease their number with the first attack. Withdraw at full speed once the combo attack is over."

"Aye aye sir~"

"Ro-roger nanodesu."

Liza readies her dragon spear, and orders Tama and Pochi with a face that looks like she's prepared to die.

"Leave this to me, you girls run."

Mito tells us so looking like she doesn't have any leeway.

But, I don't agree to that.

"We can't do that. I won't be able to face Master if we leave Mito-tan to cover our rear and escape."

"That's my line."

Besides, magic has been sealed, and I can't use teleport after all.

I stand beside Mito who's picked up the holy sword from the ground.

I glare at Demon Lord Shin who's lording over us with a composed face.

I'll show you the rash joke items I've loaded in the dress armor together with Master in bad taste.

In the corner of my view, I saw Tama's ears twitching, and then she looked up at the sky.

--What's in the sky?

"Don't worry be happy~"

"Keseran pasaran nanodesu."

Matching the two's muttering, heroic music begins to resound in the battlefield.

It's Wagner's [Ride of the Valkyries] played by Mia.

When I look at the source of the music, I see Mia playing a musical instrument on top of a tree beyond the cemetery while looking up at the sky.

Garuda probably got rolled up in the magic purge and disappeared.

"To play the music for your own funeral, how resolute. In light of that spirit, I'll kill you in one blow without suffering--"

Demon Lord Shin raises his arm.

In the next moment, cold air with ozone-like odor sweep over the cemetery.

Kuh, this is demon lord's attack--

The white fog that blocked my view disappears in an instant.

--He?

Before my eyes, there are the figures of the demon lord and the greater demons locked up in transparent glass-like pillars.

And then--.

"I'm back, is anyone hurt?"

Master who's landed on top of the demon lord's icicle is waving his hands with a carefree smile.

【Keseran Pasaran】

Kesaran Pasaran is a fluffy white ball UMA, but the words are a bit different.

Arisa the commentator didn't do her job, so it's unknown whether Pochi misspoke the text.

<TLN: Only SFW site I could find: http://megamitensei.wikia.com/wiki/Kesaran_Pasaran >

13-31. Demon Lord Shin

Satou's here. I feel that there have been less adults who scold their children compared to when I was a child. I wonder how are children who aren't scolded when they did bad things going to learn the society moral.

◇

"Wlcome~"

"Welcome back nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi jumped to me, so I quickly equip the mask, stop them with both my arms and then we descend to the ground together.

It seems these two saw me when I had teleported back in the sky.

Mia also played a BGM with my arrival, she must have found me from the spirit light.

Arisa runs as if rolling toward us who have landed on the ground.

"Mou, where have you been! I couldn't reach you even with 『World Phone』!"

"Sorry, sorry. I was getting rid of a space kaiju in the void sky."

Arisa's telephone probably didn't reach me because of the effect of the space magic's [Planet Guard] that I used to protect the earth and the world's tree from the wave of after-effect from my attack magic.

It's a version of [City Guard] spell I found in the forbidden library during my catalog search that I half-jokingly remodeled.

I didn't think that it would have its turn when I remodeled it, but I'm glad that I made it.

Putting that aside, since Liza and Nana are rushing here, I turn to them.

"Master, thank you for your rescue."

"Master, is it a result of the new magic chant, so I ask."

"That's right. Look, ■■■ Breeze."

I hand Tama and Pochi over to Liza, and demonstrate a chant to Nana.

Lulu and Mia who are left alone on the grove beyond are waving their hands, so I pick them up with [Magic Hand].

"Eh? Wasn't there something strange just now? How did the chant succeed with that."

Arisa found some fault in my chant.

Certainly, I do feel that the intonation isn't elegant, but the magic properly activates and gets listed in the magic column, so it's fine right.

Demanding everything to be perfect is not good.

"W-wait. Rather than that, why are you able to use magic in the magic void space?"

Hikaru asked some strange question.

Come to think of it, I feel that the effect of [Seal Binding Ice Coffin

(Shield Coffin)] earlier was a bit lower.

I try creating some magic arrows, and then they begin to break down after several seconds.

After confirming the demon lord's unique skill, I found the reason why Mito couldn't defeat the demon lord.

Apparently, it has a Unique Skill with bad affinity for Hikaru who's specializing in magic battle.

--Huh?

I noticed something unusual when I saw the demon lord's name as I was checking its stats.

"Isn't this Shin boy! Why did a hero like him turn into demon lord?"

"That, you see~ We don't know either."

Both Arisa and Hikaru shake their heads to my question.

Shin boy's title has changed into [Demon Lord], his [Hero] title has become a hidden title.

There are other hidden titles too, [Artificial Demon Lord], [False King].

I can somehow guess that there's something in his body from these titles.

I'll pay no mind to his level turning into 50 from a single-digit number.

"....Two hero Nanashi?"

Looking at the voice caught with my Attentive Ears skill, I see the dying Heim of Shiga Eight Swords lifting his head.

For some reason, Princess Menea and Souya boy who are unconscious are lying near him.

I don't understand the situation, but I make him sleep with [Anesthetic Sleep] magic, and heal his wounds with healing magic.

"Then, I'll ask Shin-kun his situation for a bit. It'll be bad if any damage happen here in the Royal Capital, so I'll be going to the desert."

Before that, I'll defeat the greater demons.

I thought of using them for our girls' power-leveling, but we can find as many strong monsters as we like, so there's no need for some misplaced inclination here.

I invoke the forbidden spell of destruction magic [Divine Ash], turning a demon together with the shield coffin into black dust.

"No way, wasn't now a forbidden spell?"

"Yeah, there's no damage to the surrounding despite being a forbidden spell, it's a convenient spell, see."

I explain it to the surprised Hikaru.

This was also something I found in the forbidden library during my catalog search.

It turns even the adjoining space into ash, so it's a convenient spell against a foe like the sakuramochi demon from before. It seems it can defeat monster with no substance and barrier too.

It's a single object magic, so I use it again for 15 times continuously.

The magic requires 300MP for one shot, so I use a mass-produced holy sword as a battery along the way.

"F-Forbidden spells, chantlessly?"

Hikaru leaks out voice of surprise, but for some reason, I can use forbidden spells from the magic column normally.

Being able to instantly use forbidden spells that normally need several minutes to several dozens of minutes chanting, I think it's quite a cheat.

I open the [Gate] of space magic, and throw Shin-kun together with the Shield Coffin's pillar into it.

I hold back Arisa and the others who were going to follow with my hand.

"I-I want to go too."

"You can't. A demon lord can use unusual attacks in various ways, so everyone should wait here in the royal capital. Furthermore, a state of emergency happened here, so there are many things that need to be taken care of right?"

When I say so, everyone besides Mito pulls back.

Bringing Mito who's a hero along should be fine, but I want her to do something, so I ask her before she can talk.

"Mito, please go to the royal capital and tell them that the demon lord has been eliminated."

"I can do that after he's been--"

"Master! Can you turn him into a human again like you did with Hisui last time? Is it impossible to turn him back, not killing him?"

Arisa desperately spoke, interrupting Mito.

Mito who sees that Arisa is having a complicated expression with resignation mixed in.

She's probably seen many things during her time as Ancient King Yamato. Next time I'll listen to her complaints and hardships together with some liquor.

"That's my intention from the start. I can't guarantee that he'll absolutely turn back, but I'll try to take as many measures as possible."

"U-un. Master can surely do it. I believe you!"

I undertake that while patting Arisa who has tears on the corner of her eyes.

As an insurance for if anything happens, I have to turn that back into human by all means.

After teleporting everyone to the places they want with Unit Arrangement, I take a wand that's specialized in expanding range from my Storage.

It looks like a dead twig with a lot of emerald-colored branches.

It's something manufactured from a branch growing on the world tree in the void sky, so calling it a twig isn't necessarily wrong.

I use the mind magic's [Flat People] toward the people of the royal capital.

This is an original spell I've created from mind magic's [Shepperd] and [Brain Wash] in order to suppress panic and unrest of people.

After confirming the effect on the map, I move to the desert where Shin-kun is waiting with Unit Arrangement.

◇

The shield coffin where Shin-kun's imprisoned is waiting among the dry air where the sun is blazing.

It's a composite of space and ice magic so it's not something so fragile it can melt from heat.

Nevertheless, I can hear the sound of ice crackling from inside the shield coffin.

Demon lords really can't be sealed with just this much after all.

When I look better, violet mist has begun to ooze out from the inside.

I reach my hand to see if I can touch it like with magic and barrier, but my hand just passes through it. It somehow looks like when I tried to cut a [God's Fragment] with a holy sword.

It'll be troubling if he forces himself and gets his demon lord-fication progressed, so I decide to release the magic myself.

Oops, before that let's move to a better place where I don't have to worry about environmental damage.

I make a sub-space using the forbidden spell of space magic [Another World].

The enclosure doesn't surpass the sub-space created by the goblin princess Yuika's Unique Skill, that one is just in another league compared to this.

By default, there's nothing inside the sub-space, so I set it to transcribe the surrounding terrain.

The sub-space is as vast as the current desert, so it'd be alright even if we fight.

I restore my magic power that has been used up in large quantity from the mass-produced holy sword, and then move to the sub-space.

After closing the entrance to the former world, I release the shield coffin that imprisons Shin boy.

I put a troublesome-looking recovery item called [Magic Crystal Pillar], that has been imprisoned together with him into, into my storage.

Shin boy appears while scattering white chunks of ice.

"W-where is this? Has my magic turned the royal capital into a desert?"

Shin boy made a guess while glaring at me.

Unfortunately, his articulation was a bit strange.

It seems to be the initial stage of a broken soul vessel, so I have to make him stop using his power.

Looking at his Unique Skill's name, it should be a passive-type, so its effect to the [Soul Vessel] should be lower compared to active-type ones that have number of usage limit.

"Do you want to know where this is?"

"Say it!"

In order to intimidate him, I destroy the [Sand Spear] magic that Shin boy used with [Break Magic].

"Impossible! Erasing a magic invoked by me, the ruler of magic?"

Next, he began to summon greater demons, but I hindered it by using [Break Magic] whenever their heads showed up, forcing the greater demons back.

"Duaamnnn you out-of-bounds reincarnated personn"

Shin boy roars, but his magic has been used up, so I can only hear it as sour grapes.

Far from even fighting, he probably can't even use a reinforcement magic.

Shin boy notices that the [Magic Crystal Pillar] is gone when he was trying to recover his magic power, he looks around the surrounding restlessly.

I cross my arms while examining him.

He seems to be a child without patience, I'll answer him once as a bait to pull information out of him.

"I'll talk to you so calm down. This is another world."

"Another world? What do you mean."

Shin boy asked another question to my vague answer.

"The so-called sub-space see."

"S-sub-space? ....That means you used the age of gods magic, 『Another World』!"

He can see through the magic name from the 'sub-space' term probably because of his [Master Wizard] Unique Skill.

I think the age of gods magic refers to [Magic used when gods were living among people], but please stop adding a new category since it's confusing.

"You're all questions huh. I'd like you to answer my questions sometimes too."

"Hmph, what do you want to know."

--Huh? He's awfully obedient.

"Who made you into a demon lord?"

"I wanted to become demon lord myself."

He wasn't forced by anyone huh?

"Not that, I mean the people who cooperated with you in order to turn you into a demon lord."

"The one who gave me the Demon Lord Orb was my shitty father."

--Demon Lord Orb?

Looks like the theft disturbance in the Royal Capital was actually aiming for that Demon Lord Orb.

I tried searching on the map, but the thing called Demon Lord Orb doesn't exist around him or in any known area.

Still, an item that changes a person into a demon lord huh....

Don't tell me, the shitty father he's talking about is the demon god?

"You shouldn't call your father shitty."

"I don't care about someone who thoroughly caused troubles to me and my mother, and then became a demon lord in another world after dying."

Good. Apparently he's not the demon god--.

Although it'd be bad if the father is the type of a demon lord that could mass-produce demon lords like himself, guessing from Shin boy's [False King] title and what I heard from the Dog-head, his father probably turned his own [God's Fragment] into the shape of the so-called Demon Lord Orb and gave it to Shin-kun.

Nevertheless, even though Shin-kun is saying whatever, he's still explaining it properly, it seems his nature is still a virtuous one. Having the interrogation easy is truly nice.

I have to visit his father once I've finished talking to him.

"Answer my question this time."

Turn end huh.

Well fine. Looks like we can have a discussion for now.

◇

"--I wanted to be strong enough to beat that shitty father."

After some long dialogs, the reason why Shin boy used the Demon Lord Orb is this.

There are also other desires like wanting the power needed to survive in this harsh world, but the biggest one seems to be that.

His line of thinking of wanting the result immediately is very like a boy, but there are things that you should not choose in order to obtain the result.

"Then you could have just become a hero."

"Hmph, only the elites chosen and summoned by God Parion can become heroes. A human that can only grovel on the ground like me can only become a demon lord."

No no, normally you don't become a demon lord either.

Still, it's a failure....

It's too late now, but if I just talked about his hero title when I met him, he wouldn't become a demon lord.

Well, it's really too late now.

There's no way anyone can know that unless they have the ability to see the future.

--Right!

I wonder if he'll agree to turn back into human if I tell him about the hero title, making him lose his attachment to demon lord?

I should try to persuade him by leading him.

"You have the qualification to become a hero."

"Grandma said that crooks whisper the thing you want to hear to play with people's heart."

What grandma said is right, but it's the truth in this case.

"Then you should check it yourself and see. You can use magic to check your own title right?"

"Ah, that's right."

Shin boy begins to chant, I copy that through my ears.

The chant is of the magic version of appraisal skill.

>[Mimic: Magic] Skill Acquired.

Oh, it looks like quite an useful skill.

I have to activate it.

"....I really have the hero title."

"Do you have any idea? It seems you've defeated an overwhelmingly powerful enemy and obtained it."

It's about what the [No-Life King] Zen talked about back then.

"I do.... When many monsters appeared in the Royal Capital, I fought a monster while guarding the orphanage kids.... When I was swinging my hatchet around and almost getting killed.... I might have died if a light arrow and an invisible cannonball didn't fall from the sky and defeated the monster."

Ah, the time when red rope monsters appeared en masse huh.

Shin boy probably talked about [Remote Arrow] and [Remote Stun] magic that I used.

"However, I'm a demon lord--"

Regret dwells in Shin boy's voice.

I guess now is the right timing to persuade him?

"You can just start over. I have turned a creature that had turned into a monster back into a normal bird. I'm certain that I can turn demon lord back too."

Since Hisui changed into a God Bird, Shin boy might turn into a High Human or something, but since he'll be upwardly compatible then, do pardon me.

Hearing me, Shin boy looks downward and repeats a monologue from his mouth.

--He really can't believe it after all huh.

I listen to it carefully, waiting for his answer.

"C-can I really start over?"

"Yes, of course."

I answer Shin boy's shaking voice with a dubious smile.

It's not visible since I'm wearing a mask though.

"--Like I'd say that! You hypocrite!"

Shin boy assaults me with a sword sparkling like a diamond created from magic.

According to AR reading, it's called Dragon Rending Sword with performance that exceeds the original holy sword Excalibur.

The chant spell that he's been chanting in low voice since a while ago is probably the forbidden spell [Dragon Rending Sword (Dragon Slayer)].

I think the Dog-head from before said that it's the sword that the demon god uses. I was lucky to get the spell from a windfall.

It has terrific performance, but there's no meaning to it if the user is clumsy.

"I-Impossible! Stopping a sword between hands?!"

I strike the Dragon Rending Sword stopped between my hands with my knee, destroying it.

Looks like the durability isn't that big of a deal.

It seems there are still rooms for improvement for this magic. I'm thinking of fully remodeling the spell, dyeing it with my preference.

"A magic sword with Indestructible attribute--destroyed?!"

Shin boy is surprised exaggeratedly.

In the first place, there's no way it can be broken if there's such an attribute.

I'm interested in the [God Dancing Armor] that the Dog-head was saying too, but I'd be putting the cart before the horse if his demon lord-fication progressed because he forced himself, so I restrain myself.

I didn't stop him from chanting the Dragon Rending Sword spell because I thought it'll be easier to persuade him if I broke his trump card.

By no means it's because I was interested with a code I had never heard before, forgetting to stop him.

--Nope.

His magic power must've run out again after using the Dragon Rending Sword, so he can't use magic for now.

Time to persuade him before it's too late.

"Now then, do you want to retire being a demon lord or stop being a human, choose what you like."

I turn a cheerful smile toward Shin boy.

Of course it was just a little threat. Just as I've promised to Arisa, I don't intend to kill him.

Shin boy is desperately thinking his next move while leaking gununu voice, but he probably won't come up with a good idea.

Now then, after this I just need to take out the [God's Fragment] from him, and then everything is settled.

Truly a happy end!

13-32. Demon Lord Shin (2)

Satou's here. There are various upstarts in stories, but in case of evil characters betraying their friends, I feel that there are many cases where miserable fate wait for them after their rise in power.

◇

Now then, how do I take off the Demon Lord Orb's influence from Shin boy?

While I'm thinking that in my mind, a fool comes intruding in.

"Your highness, I've come to save you with my followers zamasu!"

Smashing through the sub-space's wall, the green demon in green dragon form and mid and lower demons in various forms surge forward.

Looking at the mid demon with drill arms, that one probably has the ability to break through barrier.

"G-good work--"

Shin boy was going to say something, but that voice was erased by the thunderous roar of my advanced magic [Photon Laser] purging the demons.

As expected of an advanced magic.

The demons pleasantly pop off.

It's a bit too noisy, and the surrounding temperature increases greatly, but I guess it can't be helped with this firepower.

Only one mid demon that has Light Resistance skill remains, but I quickly exterminate it with a single magic-power-overloaded Holy Bolt.

"Gugaaagagaga"

I thought that the excessive one-sided battle had a bad influence on Shin boy's mental, so I turn toward him in a hurry--

"Usurpation zamasu. With the power to rule over magic, me can be a demon lord too zamasu!"

<TLN: That 'me' is in the raw.>

I saw the green demon possessing Shin boy just for an instant.

Shin boy's state becomes [Posessed]. He was easily posessed even though he's a demon lord, I wonder if it's because of the difference in levels?

Still, a falling out between friends huh.... In a sense, it's very like demons.

Oops, it'll be too late if I'm too carefree.

I have to do something.

It'll be simple if I use the forbidden spell of light magic [Divine Exorcism], but I haven't registered that in the Magic Column.

--This is bad.

Shin boy would fuse with the green demon if I chant too long.

--It was in a POP-ed treasure chest.

Suddenly, Arisa's voice floated in my mind.

"That's right! I have that."

While unintentionally talking to myself, I take out the [Magic Sealing Bell] from the Storage and ring it.

Ding, the calm sound of the bell spreads in the air like a ripple.

ZWAAAMMMMAASWUUUUUUU.

While letting out a loud scream, the green demon who had merged with Shin boy comes off him.

I get close to it with Ground Shrink, catch the semi-transparent ethereal body of the green demon, and tear it off Shin boy completely.

I cut the demon into pieces with a holy sword while it's still in the air.

Just before the green demon disappears, I track the magic essence line that connects the green demon's avatar to its main body.

Judging from its behavior, the green demon's avatar should not be a stand-alone but a remote-controlled one.

Feeling like trying to find a sinking fishing line in a vast ocean, I extend the magic essence detection.

--Found it!

The next moment, I spring out in the base of the green demon beyond.

I don't know myself how I moved here.

Is it magic or skill--I'll think about it later.

I stitch the main body of the green demon who's zamasuzamasu-ing with the space magic [<<Dimension Pile>>] so that it can't escape, and finish it off with a holy sword.

Oops, I can't let my guard down here.

This kind of guy won't be completely annihilated with just this much.

I use [All Map Exploration] magic after a long while and investigate this area thoroughly.

I thought it'd be an area without map, but it turned out to be [Rotted Abyss Labyrinth: Remains].

Apparently, this is one of the withered labyrinths.

I found a red dot in the area.

It seems to be a split body of the green demon that has possessed a rat.

Good grief, just how hard to die are these demon guys.

Since there won't be any victim in a withered labyrinth anyway, I use the [Photon Laser] from earlier once again, completely annihilating the last fragment of the green demon through the labyrinth wall.

With this, I don't have to worry about the zamasu zamasu and the green demon again.

Auto Loot of the booty begins, my Log is flowing at great speed.

Sorting the room that's full of junks, there are only several green colored globes that remain in the corner of the room.

--What's that?

I go closer to them and the AR reading tells me what they are.

Apparently, they're specimens the green demon had used to make its mock bodies (avatars).

The green globe breaks when I touch it with my hand, and the creature inside shows itself.

--KYEWWROUUUN.

The green infant dragon tilts its head.

Unlike the green demon's mock body, it's really adorable.

While feeding the truck-sized infant dragon with some whale meat, I open a space magic's [Gate] and let it out of here.

After the infant dragon, I also help the other mythical beasts and animals from the globes and let them out of here.

Sorry for the discrimination, but I exterminate the ones that are monsters like wyverns quickly.

The problem is the humans.

For now, after helping them out of the globes, I make them sleep with water magic's [Anesthetic Sleep], and then send them to Echigoya Firm with Unit Arrangement.

I've ordered one of the executive girls to take care of them, so leaving them should be fine.

Of course I send people who have felony on their Reward and Punishments to the Royal Capital's prison with Unit Arrangement.

This isn't the first time I sent people there forcibly, and the wardens there are flexible, so there's no doubt that they'll be taken care of properly.

◇

I come back to the sub-space where I left Shin boy behind.

Even though he's in critical condition, the demon lord's life force ties him to the living.

I thought he'd fine since he's a demon lord, but it seems my estimation is a bit off.

Shin boy would have died if I were to liken him with Wild Boar King and Dog-head.

I stop Shin boy's bleeding with intermediate healing magic.

It'll be troubling if I completely heal him, I'm thinking of releasing Shin boy's demon lord-fication now.

Perhaps the green demon's fusion earlier affects him adversely, violet colored aura begins to ooze out of Shin boy's body.

I try to extend my hand once again, but my hand really does pass through the violet aura.

I take out the Divine Sword from the Storage, and touch it on the violet aura.

The aura is sucked at the point where the Divine Sword touches it, while the surrounding aura is scattered like oil spilled on water.

It doesn't seem good, so I quickly put the Divine Sword back into the Storage.

Now then, what should I do....

I can't be too leisurely at this.

That said, besides the Divine Sword, there's probably nothing that can meddle with the [God's Fragment]--

...no, there's one.

I choose that among the list of item in the Storage.

I don't like showing my failure, but I can't say that either.

I push out the jet black lump toward the violet aura, it feels like touching a thin vinyil membrane.

--I can do it.

Moving like I'm making a cotton candy, I twine the violet aura using the jet black lump--my black arm that I had to cut after being taken by divinity.

As expected of Easy Mode.

Even though I did it myself, I didn't think it'd really work.

Before long, some heavy response came.

While being careful not to sever the thread created by the violet aura, I pull the thread out like I'm fishing, and then a violet light jumps out of Shin boy's chest.

『S-stop with the violence』

The dark violet light grumbles while flickering.

『Geez, just when I was taken out, I got put into some imatture child.』

While swinging left and right, the light grumbles continously.

『Gotta complain to God when I go back』

I don't intend to let it go, so I take out and immediately draw the Divine Sword from the Storage, cutting the [God's Fragment].

Like before, the dark violet light is sucked to the Divine Sword.

Now then, the fragment's disposal is over with this.

I put the Divine Sword back into the storage, and then heal Shin boy who's bloodied all over because the dark violet light jumped out.

His two-meter big figure of man gradually shrinks, returning to his original frail looking boy.

The horn has fallen out and his hair and body color have also returned, but it seems he doesn't completely turn back into his original figure.

His forelock and sideburns are still in violet color among his white hair, his right hand remains in claw shape.

His race has become [Human(Fiend)], and his state is [Miasma Poisoning].

I feel that his race would become Fiend if I left him alone.

His title has also changed to [Fallen Hero], and hidden titles [Former Demon Lord], and [Half Demon] have appeared.

His Unique Skill is gone, and his level falls to 20 from 50, but it's still higher than his original level.

[Composite Magic], [Magic Knowledge], [Magic Resistance: Composite] have also appeared on his skill column. They're some quite enviable skills.

The last one in particular, I want our girls to have it.

Shin boy groans painfully.

His eyes opened for an instant, one of it was red, the other was violet.

It's probablyl an influence from [Miasma Poisoning].

I have to do something fast....

I have a hunch that the [Miasma Poisoning] can be healed if I make him drink the Nectar, but I'm afraid that he'll turn into some godlike High Human being.

While thinking like that, the [Miasma Poisoning] is cured when I use the earth-elemental abnormal status recovery magic.

"Easier to do something than worrying about it huh--hm?"

Shin boy's state jumps into my view who feels anticlimatic.

The [Miasma Poisoning] that should have been cured reappears.

While feeling puzzled, I tried using abnormal status recovery magic from water, light, and other elements, but the result was the same.

Once it's been cured, it reapppears again if I wait for a bit.

Moreover, everytime I cure him, Shin boy's condition becomes worse, a condition called [Weakening] is even added to his state now.

Perhaps he can't be cured unless it's temple type recovery magic.

Although, if I bring Shin boy in his state right now there, they'll likely eliminate him without question.

Hikaru uses force magic, so she should be not that different from me, as for other people....

After thinking that far, I remember a person of exceptional talent.

13-33. Demon Lord Shin (3)

Satou's here. In long stories, new difficulty makes an entry when everything seems to have been solved. Whenever I read the scene, I feel excited with the new things while also feeling sympathetic towards the protagonists.

◇

"If it isn't Kuro? Is the half demon over there a souvenir? Sorry but, if it's for blood supply it's unnecessary you know?"

"You're mistaken, I've got something to consult you--"

This is the castle of Ban the vampire in the lower layer of the labyrinth.

I came here since I thought he, who has lived for a long time, would know something about it.

Aze-san has lived longer, but he should be more well-informed about things related to monsters.

I thought of relying to the orcs of Heraruon temple that are living in the royal capital underground, but bringing an unfamiliar human to the place where they're hiding would not be good, so I took it off the list.

While handing my present, a small barrel of『Blood of Lesseu』wine to the vampire princesses, I cut the talk about Shin boy's [Miasma Poisoning].

"So it's like that dearuka. Ryuna, take out the miasma."

The taciturn little vampire princess bites the unconscious Shin boy's neck and begins to suck the miasma instead of blood.

In just 30 seconds, Shin boy's [Miasma Poisoning] is cured.

However, that's--.

"--what, it came back again?"

Ban is surprised as the [Miasma Poisoning] state came back again just like when I used healing magic.

Looks like the effect of demon lordfication is firmly rooted.

Apparently, the little vampire princess thinks that she's failed, she bites Shin boy's neck once again trying to suck out the [Miasma Poisoning].

Shin looks like he's in pain, so I use magic power healing skill to circulate magic power in his body, relieving his weakened state.

"Hey, I heard Kuro-san came--"

The little-oni (goblin) girl Yuika runs on the corridor of the castle of the perpetual night wearing a frilly apron like a young wife.

Even though she's goblin, she's not ugly like the demi-goblin, she looks completely like a human besides a small horn that grows on her forehead.

I want Lulu, Sera and her to stand together in a stage at least once.

"Ara? A new guest--Ryuna, stop sucking the miasma noja!"

Yuika's gentle expression that looks like Lulu's changes into a stern one like that of a veteran warrior.

The oldest personality of Yuika who has multiple personalities, [White Oni Sovereign] Yuika 3 probably surfaces.

Yuika 3 continues with some shocking words.

"If you keep that up, that youngster's『Soul Vessel』will break!"

As I thought, it seems unlike monsterfication, demon lordfication can't be dealt with ordinary means.

◇

"That youngster's miasma is the proof of the breaking soul vessel."

"Yuika, do you know what we should do?"

I ask Yuika 3 who saw through Shin boy's state in an instant.

"Umu.... The ways to directly restore a soul vessel is limited noja."

Yuika 3 closes her eyes like she's remembering things, and then she suddenly talks.

"According to an ancient document, you should let him soak in the dragon spring created by heavenly dragon or ancient dragons for three days and three nights, but people can't pass through the barrier of the Dragon Valley, and this boy won't hold up if you bring him to another continent."

--Hm? The Dragon Valley's barrier cannot be passed through?

"Once, I fought a hero whose Soul Vessel was broken, but I had some Hermit Liquor (Souma) at that time, so the hero survived by drinking it noja."

"Is there no Souma remaining?"

"None. The one I used at that time was the last."

I look around while applying magic power healing to Shin boy who's breathing painfully.

Yuika didn't mention it, but I could ask the heavenly dragon in the Fujisan mountains to make a dragon spring even without going to another continent.

However, Yuika 3 still continues her story.

"I don't have any Souma, but I know the recipes of medicines with similar effect."

Yuika 3 sticks out her chest proudly.

She looks like she wants to be praised, so I commend her, "As expected of the White Oni Sovereign!", and urge her to continue.

"The Phantom Miraculous Medicine created from the Blood Sphere and the Phantom Soul Liquor."

Unfortunately, I don't have the Phantom Soul Liquor.

"Dragon Vermilion created from Dragon Spring Liquor and Spirit Drop."

Spirit Drop huh.... The Sakura Drop I got from the Sakura Dryad should be a kind of Spirit Drops.

I should be able to make this one.

"Looks like I can somehow make this Dragon Vermilion."

"That's good, but Dragon Vermilion has stronger effect as a strengthening medicine than healing. In case of a fledgling like this youngster, he might die before his Soul Vessel is restored."

--That's out of the question then.

It seems Yuika 3 senses it, she tells the next recipe in a hurry.

"The most certain one is after all, the omnipotent miraculous medicine, Elixir."

"Do you know the recipe?"

"Do not panic."

While her white skin is dyeing red, Yuika pushes the forehead of me who drew closer to her.

"The ingredients for Elixir are a bit troublesome."

Yuika raises one of her fingers, and speaks of the first ingredient.

"First, the『Sap of the World Tree』that only grows in the Elf Village is needed. Well, getting this one is impossible, but do not worry. A sap of an old tree soaked in philosopher's stone can be the substitute noja."

It's fine. I have metric tons [Sap of the World Tree] in my storage.

"Next, you need around 10 grams of the fine powder of either the dragon's bone, fang, or horn. One from an adult dragon is preferable, but using the one from the old evil dragon living in this labyrinth should be fine too, we should go get it together later noja."

I have them from the black dragon Heiron and the heavenly dragon, so there's no problem.

"And then the Monstrous Silver Ash created from the silver skin of the Great Monstrous Fish. I don't want to ever fight that monster again, but making one from the Monstrous Fish and the Silver Narwhal that breed here should be fine."

Silver skin huh....

"By silver skin, do you mean this?"

"W-what? ....T-that's it! How did you get that?!"

It's the piece of meat whom Liza and Pochi were struggling with back then.

So it's really not just a hard-to-eat part.

"I can prepare the other ingredients too. The ingredients earlier are all of it right?"

"There are several miscellaneous ones, but the hard-to-get ones are all of the earlier."

When I've finished hearing the recipe from Yuika 3, Ban who's been looking like he wants to cut into the conversation from awhile ago calls out.

"I'm sorry to interrupt when you two are fired up, but if it's Elixir, I have some dearu."

Telling so, Ban takes out a red bottle from Item Box.

The AR reading also states Elixir.

"It has around 10% probability of being inside the treasure chest that appears after you defeat a『Floormaster』dearu. The effect of the old ones is questionable, but this one is from around five years ago, so it should be fine dearou."

It seems a normal magic medicine will lose its effect in one year, but according to the information on the AR, it's good enough to be considered un-degraded.

"I have no use of it, therefore I'll give it to you."

"Thank you! It really helps."

I open the Elixir bottle I got from Ban and put it on Shin boy's lips.

I slowly hold it into his mouth, and then he begins to slowly swallow it.

Good.... As expected, I don't want to feed it mouth-to-mouth to a man.

"Fumu, he should be fine now nanoja."

Just as Yuika 3 has said, Shin boy's state has changed to [Miasma Poisoning: Slight].

"Next you should let him rest for 2-3 days. He should avoid places where the density of the magic essence fluctuates."

"Then I'll provide a room in my castle."

I accept Ban's offer and entrust Shin boy to the castle maids.

Since Arisa is probably worried, I tell her that Shin boy is saved with [Short Message] magic.

◇

"Come to think of it, Kuro, is that a new mask?"

Yuika 3 stares at my face while looking puzzled.

"I prefer the plain Japanese face from back then rather than the face of a foreigner artist y'know."

Oops, I forgot that I used the face of my Japanese coworker even though I called myself Kuro back then.

Huh? That reminds me, Ban and the vampire princesses reacted the same as back then even though I had a different face, I wonder why?

I ask directly since it bugs me.

"We vampires can distinguish people from the smell of their blood dearu."

Quite vampire-like answer came back.

"Moreover, I have no family who's narrow-minded enough to even raise the corner of their eyes just because the other party looks different, unless it's a scheme."

"That's true, the time scale of humans' and our lives is different, therefore it's normal for their appearance and personality to differ whenever we meet."

Yuika nods to Ban's gallant words.

They're quite open minded.

In truth, there is no problem of me showing my true face to them who are staying indoor in the labyrinth lower layer.

They probably won't plot to make use of my power to do something evil either.

There are also the maids in the castle, but they will be [Contract]-ed not to tell anything when they're dismissed from the castle, so it should be fine.

--This is a good opportunity.

I think so, and release the Kuro disguise.

"This is my true appearance. My real name is Suzuki Ichirou, but I mainly call myself Satou here."

"Hoo, you're quite young dearuna."

"Umu, the glossy skin without a trace of beard is splendid noja."

The reaction is lacking even though it's the long-awaited exhibition.

Putting Ban aside, Yuika 3's assessment is strange.

Perhaps, she's a shota-lover like Arisa.

It seems she's noticed my line of sight, Yuika 3 who's touching my body all over shouts out, "T-this isn't what you think noja!" and separates away.

I've grown accustomed to Arisa's sexual harassment, so I tell her, "Please don't worry about it", and turn toward Ban.

"That's right, thank you for the Elixir earlier. I'm saved thanks to you."

"Do not mind it. I've said it earlier, that deadly poison is of no use for us vampires."

I guess it's like how healing magic damages undeads in games?

"Rather than that, about the silver skin you possesses.... By no means, have you fought the Great Monstrous Fish (Tovkezeera) dearuka?"

"Yeah, it was summoned by the yellow demon in the sky of Oyugock City, so I exterminated it."

Ban and Yuika stop moving after hearing my affirmation.

After a while, Yuika 3 opens her mouth, moving like a broken doll.

"E-exterminated that Great Monstrous Fish (Tovkezeera)? Did you seek help from the heavenly dragon and the Gods--no, it's possible with that level isn't it..."

"Yeah, with light magic--"

"Magic you say? A forbidden magic that could shoot down that aerial fortress, that means together with the city that it appeared in huh.... Satou, you've been through quite a gruesome battle...."

Yuika 3 whose expression turns to look like a loving mother's gently hugs my head on her chest.

Her gestures are like a mother, but the fluffiness is slightly lacking.

"By Oyugock City you mean the Duchy Capital right? There was no scar from any battle in the Duchy Capital dearu."

"What? Did you deceive me Satou?"

After hearing Ban's quizzical muttering, Yuika 3 pulls herself away from me.

"I'm not lying. I shot the magic toward the sky in order to prevent damage on the ground."

It was an intermediate light magic, not a forbidden spell though, but I keep that a secret.

"I see, I'm sorry for doubting you noja."

"Please don't mind it."

I accept Yuika 3's, who honestly apologize, apology.

"Since that's the situation, I have a lot of materials from the Great Monstrous Fish (Tovkezeera), so I can give them if you need anything."

"Then, I'd like a little of the silver skin, outer skin and subcutaneous fat dearu."

Ban jumped on my suggestion, so I ask him how much he needs.

"Alright, how many tons do you need?"

"I only need the silver skin as grindstones, so the piece earlier is enough. I'd like just enough outer skin for making protective gears for the vampire princesses. I'll be using the fat for the forge fuel, so if it's alright, I wish for around 500 kilograms dearu."

....What a modest guy.

They're huge 300 meter creatures, so even now I only have used around 1% of the materials from one of the seven, he really should've asked for more.

For this occasion, I also give him around 10 kilograms of the whale meat.

"They are too many considering the value of the Elixir dearuna.... Please take all the Elixirs from my Item Box dearu."

"No but, aren't they usable for Yuika and the others?"

Ban who looks overjoyed suggests me to take all the Elixirs.

"Right, can I have three of them? I'll be happy to have the oldest and the newest."

"That's easy. The oldest one was from 250 years ago dearuna. I have disposed the older ones, so there is nothing besides that remaining."

I've learned the Elixir's recipe from Yuika, but I want to confirm the performance of the ones from the labyrinth and my self-made one, so I decide to gratefully accept it.

◇

"Is there anything Yuika wants too?"

If Yuika 3 didn't give the information, Shin boy might have died.

"Normal sushi roll--"

"I'm sorry, I've actually gotten my hands on the bottle gourds, but I don't know how to process them so I can't move forward."

I got the bottle gourds for the dried gourds when I went to Muno territory back then.

I had given some to Lulu and Nea-san, the cooking researcher of Boruenan Village, for them to research, but since Arisa's and my memories about it are vague, there's no favorable result at present.

In addition, Lulu has obtained the freeze-dried tofu-like ingredients and cucumbers in the marketplace of the Royal Capital.

"Unfortunately, I do not know the recipe either noja. If hero Watari who taught me the way to make pickles and Japanese cooking was still alive, he might be able to teach you the way to make dried gourds, but I do not think he, who was already an old man 120 years ago, would still be alive now."

--Hm? Watari?

The date is slightly off, but I wonder if he's Watari-shi, Lulu's grandfather?

Although, even if that's true, he didn't hand down the recipe to Lulu, so there's no meaning to it.

"If you have the rare『Past Seer』skill and『Lost Knowledge』skill, you could get lost techniques though...."

Yuika muttered so in grieve.

I'll search if there's anyone with those skills when I get back to the royal capital.

I'm in luck if there's a hit.

As an apology for not being able to prepare sushi roll, I decide to present pizzas and hamburgers I've made in advance from the storage.

It seems Ban has safely obtained tomatoes too, there are tomatoes used in the dishes taken out by the castle cook.

"Satou's pizzas are really the best after all nanoja."

"Umu, I cannot help but admit that it's slightly superior to our castle's cook."

I saw the onee-san cook gripping her hand in frustration in one corner of the room after Hearing Yuika and Ban.

I approach her using Ground Shrink and hand her the recipe.

"....N-no need for pity."

"This isn't a pity you see. This recipe is--a challenge I guess? I'm expecting pizzas more delicious than this recipe the next time I visit here."

There's a sense in hiding the recipe if this is a business, but as for me, I'll be happy if various variations get developed from the recipe I gave instead.

The onee-san cooks holds the recipe on her bountiful breasts, and promise, "I'll prepare a plate that will make Satou-sama groans without fail", I'm looking forward to the next visit from this time forward.

Incidentally, I also give her several bottle gourd fruits.

If she's of an inquiring mind, she might discover the dried gourd recipe that we couldn't find after all.

Now then, I'll be a bother if I stay too long, so I promise to have the shogi match with Ban later when I pick Shin boy up, and then teleport to the Royal Capital.

◇

Everyone besides Hikaru is present in Pendragon Mansion.

Looks like Hikaru is still in the King's office in the royal castle.

For some reason, Arisa is lying in the bed.

"Huh? Have you caught a cold Arisa?"

"Uy, I've got a fever...."

Arisa's state is [Sick] so it's probably a symptom of cold.

Arisa who has an ice bag on her forehead looks painful, so I use water magic [Cure Disease] for her.

"Fui~, thankyou. Feel better. Gonna sleep for a bit."

"Yeah, good night. I'll make you some rice porridge when I get back."

"Rather than rice porridge, chilled syrup is better~"

That's a hard request.

I did make some when we opened a food stall in my university days though, it should be made from ginger, honey and starch syrup, I should be able to make it somehow.

"Okay. I'll make some delicious one."

"Un, I'll be waitin'"

Arisa falls asleep after muttering so.

She still looks a bit painful, so I only go to the royal castle in Nanashi clothes after making the chilled syrup in the mansion's kitchen and delivering them to Arisa's bedside.

At this time, I didn't know about Shin boy attacking the royal castle with Meteor and Arisa preventing that by excessively using her Unique Skills.

....I only knew that after I had finished my business in the royal castle.

13-34. The King's Request

Satou's here. Your viewpoint changes when your standpoint changes, when your viewpoint changes, the people who's doing the talk will also change. When a senior who complained about his boss got promoted, the boss who was the target of the complaint said the same lines as the senior.

◇

While the optical camouflage skill is active, I move to the king's office with Unit Arrangement.

In this room, there are the king, the prime minister and Hikaru in Nanashi clothing.

I thought that they would be with Sir Julberg, the first seat of Shiga Eight Swords, but it seems he's waiting in the next room.

That's good and all, but Hikaru has taken off her mask.

Apparently, she has talked that she's the Ancestor King to her descendants--wait, they're not her direct descendants is it?

Well, let's not worry about the minor details--.

For now, I'll confirm it with [Telephone].

『Has your identity been exposed already?』

"Un, I didn't want to deceive him after seeing Sharlick-kun's visage.... I'm sorry?"

That can't be helped then.

Moreover, now that I'm able to use magic and skills that need chanting, there's no need for me to be that highly strung in hiding my identity.

Of course I'm not planning to recklessly expose myself and put a wrench on our sightseeing tour.

I undo the optical camouflage and show myself before the three.

"Yahoo"

"Two Ancestor King-sama?!"

"W-what does this mean?!"

Unlike Hikaru who's waving her hand, the king and the prime minister stop moving.

Huh? Did the fact that I'm a different person not exposed?

My way of talking and behavior should be quite different though.

Moreover, Heim of Shiga Eight Swords should have seen me together with Hikaru who was disguised as Nanashi, I wonder if he hasn't reported yet?

"I did say that I'm not the Ancestor king from the beginning right? I corrected you several times didn't I?"

Rather than the king and the prime minister, Hikaru reacts more exaggeratedly to my words.

"Pu, kukuku, w-what's with that way of talking--mou, you're not a character from an otome game, you should just speak normally."

Hikaru begins to laugh out loud.

No, leaving aside the intonation, my lines aren't that strange right?

I wonder if it touched Hikaru's switch or something?

Well fine. Using this occasion, I'll change my way of talking from the hard-to-speak Nanashi's tone to the haughty Kuro's one.

"Then I'll straighten my tone. As you can see, I'm not Yamato. I'll let you know that Yamato and me, hero Nanashi, are cooperating with the same goal in mind."

Afterwards, the king and the prime minister understand the situation after several questions and answers.

When I was explaining that I don't have any ambition to rebel toward Shiga Kingdom, I was told off, "We do not have such a worry", in stereo.

Also, I told the king that there's no problem in him not using polite speech, but he rejected it saying, "As someone who's respected by

Ancestor King-sama, there is no need to be considerate to us."

I feel that they've misunderstood that I am a God's apostle this time.

◇

"--I wish to request something to Hero Nanashi-sama."

When I had finished reporting the matter about the false king disturbance, the king cut in.

He's still calling me with [Sama] even though the misunderstanding about Ancestor King thing has cleared up, perhaps because they think I'm a God's apostle.

As a side note, I hid Shin boy's name and the fact that he's still alive.

I'll refuse the king's request if he's asking me to suppress the rebellion in Bishtal Kingdom.

If I go to the war ground, I have no choice but to see people killing each other after all.

"Say it--"

"We are aware that the current『Demon Lord Season』is different than usual. Great disturbance like from the era of Ancestor King-sama when she defeated the『Golden Wild Boar King』and the time when the first Hero-sama of Saga Empire was facing off against the『Onifolk King』probably will begin."

--King, the preface is too long.

"Many large countries waned during the time of the great disturbance, and numerous small tribes and countries perished without any mean to protect themselves, such things are written in the history book. There is no doubt that even our Shiga Kingdom would have been on the verge of ruin like the old kingdoms were not for the assistance of Nanashi-sama."

I think that analysis is correct.

Demon lords at the level of [Golden Wild Boar King] should be manageable if the Heavenly dragon and Hikaru are there, but in case of the Dog-head, I don't think they can win.

"Enough with the preface. Cut to the chase."

The king probably wants to ask Hero Nanashi to stay in the Royal Capital in order for the kingdom to weather that [Age of the Great Disturbance].

I have the Unit Arrangement, and am now able to use convenient magic anyway.

Even during my sightseeing tour, I can protect Shiga Kingdom just fine.

Above all, Echigoya Firm is here, and I have acquaintances in the Royal Capital.

Besides, the Royal Capital's Sakura Salmon and Oumi beef are delicious, and the royal capital's Sakura trees and the field of milk vetch are splendid.

After all is said and done, it's our duty to protect tourist attractions.

"If I'm allowed to--"

After the preface, the king speaks of something unexpected.

After contemplating for a while, I confirm to the king.

"--Are you serious?"

"Yes."

The king assents with a rock-like face, and then repeats his talk in different wording.

"Please leave Shiga Kingdom as is, and depart to the places where demon lords will appear on the oracle and eliminate them."

"Certainly, the demons that attacked the Royal Capital have been dealt with, and the people involved in the demon's plot have all been removed, but that doesn't mean that Royal Capital is completely safe now you know?"

"Of course I am not optimistic in that regard."

It appears the prime minister isn't disagreeing with the king's decision, he's silently listening to our conversation one step behind the king.

I'll ask his real intention for the time being.

"Don't you have to prioritize the interest of your own kingdom as a king? What is the true meaning of exposing Shiga Kingdom to danger?"

"'Save the suffering of the neighboring countries, help to preserve the peace of the continent', that is the national policy since the founding of the kingdom."

I send a glance to Hikaru who's related to the kingdom's found.

"No well~ the world had became a terrible place at that time. Every country was dying, pillaging and aggressions were rampant everywhere. Due to seeing such things, I was slightly too fired up when we were deciding the founding slogan with my friends at the time."

I see, she couldn't retract it after letting it out of her mouth huh.

"Please do not worry, Nanashi-sama. Shiga Kingdom has Shiga Eight Swords and Shiga 33 Wands. Moreover, Mithril explorers should be able to win against demons and monsters. The new heroes, Viscount Pendragon and his Seven Braves will also support the kingdom in crisis, even though they belong to another fiefdom."

<TLN: hero as in war hero, not superhero kind.>

Oh? Looks like Satou is evaluated well, I wonder if it's because of Liza.

"It's alright. I'll be staying in the Royal Capital, Ten-chan is also watching over from the top of Fujisan Mountains, she'll be coming to save us if Shiga Kingdom receives large damage like the destruction of its cities."

--No, no, go help before the destruction!

I retorted to Hikaru in my mind.

Geez, please stop playing around in the middle of a serious talk.

"Understood. I'll take on the task of destroying the demon lords."

It'll be troubling if the tourist attractions become empty plot of lands before we come visit them after all.

◇

"Right! Creeping in every time is annoying, so can't you give me the pass to go here?"

When I was thinking that it's about time for us to leave, Hikaru said such words.

"Certainly. Ancestor King-sama's peerage will be... 『Great King』 if it's alright with you?"

With a serious expression, the king told a joke to Hikaru.

The prime minister is all smile too, so it must be a joke.

Good grief, please stop with the hard-to-understand joke.

"Eh~, I don't wanna something like 『Great King』. Just a simple pass is enough."

"H-however! We can't allow Ancestor King-sama to be a common citizen!"

Fumu, if being a common citizen is not good, then--.

"Then, I'll hand over the house of Duke Mitsukuni to Yamato."

"H-however, that's the peerage that has been given to Hero Nanashi-sama."

"I don't mind. It's fine as long as Echigoya Firm can use the name during our business transactions."

I'm not going to socialize in Duke Mitsukuni's name after all.

"Is it alright?"

For some reason, Hikaru is asking me with upturned eyes, so I assert.

The house of Duke Mitsukuni is originally a peerage for Hikaru. There's no need to hesitate.

"Then, please call me Duchess Mitsukuni in public. The name is Mito, please take care of me."

"Congratulations, Ancestor King-sama."

"Then we will announce it in today's evening party."

Mito spoke of it joyfully, the prime minister and the king replied with smiles.

The prime minister's words slightly bother me, but since it's normal for the prime minister who likes the Ancestor King to be strange, I splendidly ignore it.

With this, Hikaru should be able to freely interact with the descendants.

By the way, despite the demon lord incident, it seems the evening party tonight is enforced.

Apparently, there are a lot of nobles who have evacuated their families from the royal capital, the party is probably for soothing the nobles who remain in the capital.

I need to prepare for the evening party, so I teleport to Pendragon Mansion with Hikaru.

◇

Looks like Arisa is still not feeling well, she's sleeping in the bed.

"So she's really...."

Seeing that, Mito muttered.

"What do you mean?"

"Do you know that that the demon lord tried to drop a huge meteor on the royal castle?"

"No, I don't--"

Replying reflexively, I understand what Hikaru is trying to say.

"Don't tell me, that Arisa. Did she remove that huge meteor with teleport magic?"

"Yes. I think she was using her Unique Skill, she was too reckless. Do you know what will happen if you use Unique Skill too excessively?"

"Yeah.... I know."

Even while feeling surprised to my own shaking voice, I can't hold back the unreasonable anger that's welling up from the bottom of my heart.

Of course I can easily imagine that there would be enormous damage in the royal castle and the royal capital if Arisa didn't overdo it.

I also understand that at that time, there was no one but Arisa that could remove the huge meteor in the Royal Capital.

--However.

Nevertheless, I never wanted Arisa to use her Unique Skill.

It's still fine if it's just making her turn into a demon lord.

I've confirmed the way to turn her back thanks to Shin boy.

If she just dies normally, she can be revived at the Duchy Capital's Tenion Temple.

However, the stage after the demon lordfication, the complete breakdown of the [Soul Vessel] means the annihilation of the soul.

A complete annihilation, impossible to be reincarnated or revived--.

Only that is unacceptable.

"U-um, Master, a-are you mad about something?"

Lulu who's on Arisa's bedside let out a frightened voice.

Frightening my ward like this, I'm a failure as a guardian.

"It's alright. I'm not angry."

--To Lulu that is.

Enlisting the aid of Poker Face skill to erase my expression, I tell Lulu in gentle tone.

And then I gently lift Arisa in my arms.

"Munya?"

In my arms, Arisa looks up to me with vacant eyes.

Looks like she's still half-asleep.

I take out a red bottle from Storage to my right arm, and lightly pour magic power into it.

I open the bottle's cap with my finger, and put the liquid inside my mouth.

And then, I make Arisa drink the Elixir by mouth-to-mouth transfer.

"Mu, fugaaaaa"

Arisa who's suddenly being made to drink the Elixir from mouth-to-mouth struggles violently in my arms.

As always, her resistance is low when she's the receiver.

I pour the Elixir slowly.

Of course I also use magic healing simultaneously, just like the time with Shin boy.

This is a punishment which also serves as a treatment.

Before long I've finished feeding her the Elixir as Arisa loses her resistance.

When I separate my arms, Arisa edges back to the back of the bed and holds her chest with her thin arms.

Her face is bright red.

"E, Er~rr, r-right! I-it's better with just us two for our first time!"

As I was slowly drawing near, Arisa who ducked her head spoke such

things.

Looks like she's at her wits' end, her voice is trembling.

I put my hands on Arisa's cheeks and then pull them.

"Fuga, if huft"

"It's a punishment. Didn't I tell you not to use Unique Skills in rapid succession?"

"But! The people(feofle) of the royal capital(ro'al cafifal) would have been flattened!"

It's hard to understand her words, so I separate my hands from her cheeks after pulling them.

"Still. Stop trying to save others by exceeding your limit."

Even though this world has a mean to revive people from dead, there is no way to restore a broken soul you know.

"B-but! That'll means I will not be me anymore! I can't abandon them when I have the power to save!"

Teary eyed Arisa hits me with words containing passionate indignation.

Yup, Arisa's character is orientated to allies of justice like always. I think it's truly a honorable nature.

"That's why, Arisa. I'm not saying that you should not save."

While staring at Arisa's eyes, I continue to persuade her.

"It's about exceeding your limit."

"About not using my Unique Skill?"

Arisa asks my true intention with voice shaking with indignation.

"That's right. Don't use Unique Skill 『As much as possible』--"

She normally use them recklessly, so it'll be troubling if her soul is chipped little by little.

"--And, 『Absolutely』 never use Unique Skill in rapid succession."

Arisa who's fallen silent contemplates on my words.

"Even in a situation where our acquaintances may be saved if I use it in rapid succession?"

"That's right."

I immediately answer Arisa's nasty question.

"It's possible to revive them as long as the corpse remain. If there's no corpse, I'll make a clone body from the hair and piece of meat using the power of science and magic."

I don't know how long it'll take to actualize that, but since they won't be deteriorated by time inside my Storage, I'm confident that I can accomplish it eventually.

"Un, I understand...."

Looks like my thought has reached her, Arisa agrees in a low voice.

"...show...."

Arisa mutters while getting up on the bed.

Her voice gradually becomes loud.

"....I'll become strong and show you! Enough to overcome difficulty without using Unique Skill! I'll be strong enough to become an embodiment of absurdity standing on Master's side!"

Arisa who's returned to her usual state declares so in an imposing stance.

Yup, truly like Arisa.

"Tama too will become strong~?"

"Pochi too will become strong enough to defeat enemies with『Wan Pan』nodesu!"

<TLN: wan is the onomatopoeia of dog's bark in Japanese, or 'one'. You should know the reference for this.>

"Yes, everyone will become strong."

"Yes! I'll do my best too."

"Nn, work hard."

The girls who have come through the door and watched the course of events also seem to have regained their usual mood with Arisa's comeback.

"Master, is it alright to set the target level to 100, so I confirm."

Nana announced so with a serious expression.

The one who answers that is Arisa who's completely recovered.

"Too soft, Nana! It's obvious that we're aiming for level 310! Aim high! Toward the absurd level that exceeds the strongest!"

The other girls are giving an applause to Arisa who thrusts her fist toward the ceiling while breathing roughly.

Only Hikaru understands the absurdity of what Arisa is saying, but she's also clapping while smiling bitterly.

We'll be going back to the Labyrinth City soon, maybe I should work hard at power-leveling them with the middle and lower layers monsters as their opponents then.

But, Arisa.

Please stop calling me absurd so many times.

--It's truly regrettable.

13-35. Escort

Satou's here. In foreign dramas, there's often a scene where young people go to a dance party. In Japan, I only ever saw it in school festivals, but I really liked the simple feeling of extraordinary days.

◇

"Duchess Mito Mitsukuni is, it?"

"That's right."

"Please take care of me~"

The Manager and Tifaliza were awfully surprised when I introduced Hikaru to them.

Tifaliza didn't raise her voice, but I know that she's surprised from the subtle change in her expression.

"Ku-Kuro-sama! D-did you get married to Nanashi-sama?!"

"--married?"

The Manager changed her expression and inched closer, but I don't understand what she means.

How'd it end up in Kuro marrying Nanashi--.

After thinking that, I somehow understand her misunderstanding.

She probably misunderstood that Nanashi is a woman after seeing Hikaru.

"Calm down, Manager. I have not married anyone. For an unspecified reason, Mito has become Duchess Mitsukuni, but in a way, she's also Nanashi."

"What does that mean?"

I explain it in simpler term to the Manager who seems puzzled with my explanation.

"Nanashi's body double--she's assumed the position of Duchess Mitsukuni in Nanashi's place, and will be in charge of socializing with the upper nobles and the king."

"Then she's one of the golden knights is she."

"Something like that."

I have to make Orichalcum armor for Hikaru soon.

"Then, from now on, Mito-sama will manage Echigoya Firm--"

I hold back the manager who's jumped to conclusion with one hand.

"I entrust Echigoya Firm to Manager from now on. Mito is only going to carry out the socialization duty with the king and the prime minister."

I don't think that Mito who's more careless than me can manage a firm, so the management of the firm should be left to the Manager from now on.

"I'm counting on you."

"Yes! I will meet Kuro-sama's expectation!"

While feeling overawed by the manager who declared so in high tension, I called the other executives and introduced Mito.

It seems the executives have misunderstood like the Manager too, but I'll leave it to the manager to clear things up.

In addition, we're planning to hold a celebration party for the auction tomorrow evening.

I've been making them work hard everyday, so today they'll get plenty of rest and tomorrow we'll have a party in perfect conditions.

Mito had finished her introduction, so I was going to go back to Pendragon Mansion with her so that she could change to the party dress, but I was called by the Manager.

"Kuro-sama, there is pressing matter that I want to talk about before you go back."

"Let's hear it--"

I send Mito ahead with Unit Arrangement, and then listen to the Manager's talk.

"The prime minister has requested a remodeling of a newly made small airship."

"To Echigoya Firm?"

"Yes, the firm's workshop doesn't have the facilities to remodel an airship even if it's a small one, so I had refused the request at my own discretion, however, the prime minister ordered us to have Kuro-sama and Trismegistus-sama examine it...."

I receive a resume from the apologetic Manager, flipping it to see the content.

By the way, Trismegistus is my alias for when I'm making magic tools.

"Adding defensive shields, crash prevention mechanism, and guest seats with shock absorber huh. No matter how you look at it, the output from the magic furnace is--they're offering a Philosopher's Stone?"

Looking at the words written at the end of the letter, I almost rub my eyes thinking that it's a mistake.

In my case, I have a lot of Philosopher's Stones I got from the elves and the Crimson Treasure from the [Dragon Valley], but it's generally an item that's hardly ever appeared.

Even for a large country like Shiga Kingdom, it's treated as a national treasure class [Artifact].

"The purpose isn't written, but I wonder if they're making a pleasure boat for the royalty?"

"The prime minister didn't say anything about it."

It might be an escape ship for the royal family in case of emergency.

Since we're talking about that king, I think it's probably not for himself, but his children and grandchildren.

I'm thinking of making small airships for Echigoya Firm use anyway, I'll make two or three with similar specs.

Now that I'm able to use magic, there's no need for me to ask Arisa and Mia to learn new magic, so I should be able to make the airships quick.

"Inform the prime minister that we will accept the matter about the airship."

"Certainly."

Right--.

"Is the professor's aerodynamic engine development going well?"

"Y-yes. The professor had come to ask for the budget, materials and the place for the experiment since the design has been finished."

Oops, he's finished the design already huh. He's awfully fast.

Tifaliza who guessed my surprise supplements with a cold voice.

"It should have been in the documents that I had given Kuro-sama the other day."

"Sorry. I haven't look at them yet. I'll prepare the budget and the material. As for the experiment's place, cooperate with the counterintelligence to get the prime minister prepare it."

"Understood. There is the matter of remodeling too, they should be able to prepare it immediately."

I left some monstrous fish's fins and bags of gold coins in the underground vault and then returned to Pendragon Mansion.

◇

"Ooh! Well--you look great."

I almost said, "Clothes do make the man", to Hikaru whose charm value has increased by 1200% after dressing up and putting some make-up and accessories, but I somehow succeeded adjusting it.

"Wait.... I'd have liked you to praise me in different wording."

"No well, you are beautiful enough that I couldn't recognize you."

The impression from the last time I saw her in Japan remained in me somehow, so I was surprised to see her looking like a real princess.

At that time, on top of not using make-up, her outfit was also shabby, so it might be rude to compare it with this expensive clothes.

"Ja, ja~n!"

"Jan~?"

"Ja ja ja, ja~n, nanodesu."

"Praise me."

The four dressed-up youth troupe appeared.

The four of them are turning around to show off their dresses, really cute.

Mia straight up asked for a praise, so I said some standard praise, "Everyone looks pretty."

There were many more cancellations of the evening parties than expected, so everyone's dress today is a new work.

"I think such good clothes don't suit me...."

"It's alright, it suits you well, so I praise Liza. Master, requesting evaluation of the evening party's equipment."

"Nana is right. It suits you well, Liza. Of course, Nana's dress is pretty too."

I praised the chic Liza and the sexy Nana.

The valley of Nana's breasts is too wonderful, so I order her to guard it with her laced shawl. Some strange bugs would come if she's too sexy.

In addition, I've put a touch of gimmick to Liza's dress so that the sleeves won't get dirtied when she's eating meat dish.

Shiro and Crow aren't here since they're staying at their schoolmate's house.

Come to think of it, I can now use [Contract] skill thanks to the chant, if Nana agrees with it, it might be a good idea to release them from the slavery and change it to a non-disclosure contract.

If it goes well with the two, I should change the contract with Tifaliza and Nell too.

"U-um...."

Lulu who's peeking with half her face from the dressing room's door let out a voice bashfully.

"Mou! I've been saying that it looks good on you since awhile ago! Believe in Arisa-chan's sense!"

"A-Arisa, don't pull me so much."

Pulled by Arisa, Lulu entered the room while entangling her leg.

With her body wrapped in a white dress, that figure is truly--.

"--An angel."

Hearing my honest appraise, Lulu's face reddened too much, she got a nosebleed.

Fortunately, I was able to quickly guard it with a handkerchief, so Lulu's dress is safe.

While nursing her, I noticed something bold for Lulu who looks docile.

On top of the cut from the area on her armpit to her waist, the dress part on her back is also cut. The smooth line on her scapula and her velvety white back are bewitching.

"You're staring too much!"

"Guilty."

I couldn't take my eyes of Lulu's back until Arisa and Mia's impregnable guard blocked me from it.

--Lulu, what a fearful girl.

Now then, putting aside the joke, I sent Hikaru, who had finished her preparation, to the king's office, and then we went to the entranceway to get on board a carriage that goes to the evening party.

It seems there's going to be a special dish in the evening party tonight, so I'm glad that it's not been called off.

Worried about Zena-san, I check her location, the four people of Zena Squad are moving frantically in Earl Seryuu's mansion.

They're probably meeting Earl Seryuu's excessive demand.

Do your best, Zena-san.

◇

Before going to the evening party's venue in the royal capital, I visited the guest house where Earl Muno is staying.

I'm going to see if anyone is feeling unwell due to anxiety from the meteorite uproar at the day time.

When I entered the guest house, I found some unfamiliar young nobles who are relaxing like they own the place in the salon in the first floor.

Their levels and skills are low, but all of them have good faces.

Their looks are of the type that was popular in shoujo manga long ago.

"Oy, that--"

"Viscount Pendragon huh...."

"So it's not just the princess and the noblewomen, Karina-sama too--"

I'm being scrutinized with unfavorable glances.

They're talking in low voices that can't be heard here, but I've heard it all with Attentive Ears skill.

There are some plants and distance between the salon where they are located and the entrance where I am, it's a bit too far to greet them.

"Viscount-sama, please pardon me for not meeting you sooner."

"Good evening, Lina-sama. I'd like to have an audience with the Earl, is it alright?"

"Yes, I was ordered to immediately guide Viscount-sama when you've come."

The apprentice maid, the daughter of Viscount Emlin who has appeared to meet me, leads me to the Earl's room.

It seems she's going to the evening party with Lady Karina, she's wearing a lovely dress that I haven't seen before.

After praising her dress, I ask her about the young noblemen in the salon.

"Was it alright for me not to greet the people in the salon?"

"Yes, please don't mind it. Every one of them is the second son or lower from the houses of unranked associate barons, or associate chevaliers. They're all people who only think of either trying to curry the favor of Karina-sama in order to become a retainer, or marrying Karina-sama and obtain the status of Baron or Viscount."

Apparently, Viscount Emlin's daughter hates them.

Muno Earldom is lacking human resources, so I feel that Ms. Nina would employ anyone as long as they're educated enough.

When we're in front of the Earl's room, the door opens, and then Lady Karina appears.

The demonic breasts that I haven't seen for a while are spreading impressive force and charm like always. Truly a sight for sore eyes.

"Ara, Sa--Viscount Pendragon. P-perchance, have you come to be my escort?"

Lady Karina's accent is strange.

Since it's been awhile since we've meet, maybe her shyness of stranger is activated even with me?

"No, I was only visiting as a courtesy to see whether Earl Muno is feeling unwell due to the disturbance at the noon."

"--Eh?"

I tell Lady Karina so, and then walk into Earl Muno's room.

Of course with everyone who's come with me here.

"Arisa, I want to talk for a bit."

"W-wait. I'll listen to you, so don't pull me with that stupid strength."

Lady Karina detained Arisa while Raka was glowing.

I'm a bit worried but it'll be boorish of me to interrupt a conversation between girls.

"--This is different from what you said."

"That's strange~, even though it was written that『A man who escapes when you woo him will chase after you if you take some distance away from him』in the『Love Master~ You too Can Get a Lover with This!』.... I guess there's really no choice but to creep in?"

From the voices on the other side of the door, I confirmed that Lady Karina was under the influence of the knowledge from Arisa's previous life. Best of all, looks like I am not hated.

Now then, leaving these two aside, Earl Muno and Ms. Nina are waiting in the room.

"Earl~"

"It's been awhile nanodesu."

"Umu, good to see Tama-kun and Pochi-kun are energetic like always."

Tama and Pochi greeted the Earl with shutan poses.

The others and me also greeted and asked for his condition afterward.

Looks like there isn't anyone who's hurt or collapsed from anxiety from the uproar.

"Earl Muno and I are going back to the territory after the ceremony tomorrow."

Substituting Earl Muno's place who's playing around with Tama and Pochi, Ms. Nina told me about their plan.

"It seems the airships that are going to be distributed to the territory lords are given in turns from the most distant land first, our turn is in half a year. We're going to send some people from the territory in order to learn the way to operate an airship in the month after the next, if the situation allows, you should take the training too."

I already know how to operate an airship, but I don't know the airship driving rule in Shiga Kingdom, so I'd like to take the training.

"And then, Karina-sama was throwing a tantrum asking to train in the Labyrinth City."

Ms. Nina shakes her head as if no way around it.

"Can I leave her to Satou-kun?"

"Yes, certainly."

I have promised Lady Karina to help her get back to Labyrinth City, so I readily consent Ms. Nina and Earl Muno's requests.

Still, is it alright for him to send his daughter to a place like the Labyrinth where monsters are running rampant?

"To tell you the truth, I was called by His Majesty earlier and told about the『Great Disturbance』."

"Do you know what the『Age of the Great Disturbance』is?"

"No, I do not."

I was told about it by the king yesterday afternoon, but it's an information that's unknown to me as Satou, so Ms. Nina explains it to me.

"In other words, dangerous time will happen in this world whenever you go. If it's all dangerous, then isn't it safer to be with you guys in the labyrinth?"

Just as Ms. Nina has said, as long as it's within my arms' reach, there's no danger even inside the labyrinth.

Moreover, Zena-san and her friends are going to raise their levels anyway, preferably, meeting them as Kuro and doing power-leveling with the Manager and the others should be less laborious.

--Well, I won't do it though.

"I'll prioritize her safety scrutinizingly in order to meet your trust."

"I'm counting on you, Satou-kun."

"It's fine, Earl. Satou would accept Karina-dono if she got damaged."

I told the grinning Nina-san, "It's alright, Raka is with her too", her safety which had a double meaning. Of course, it's about physical injury and chastity.

"And, did the scouting for talented personnels in the Royal Capital went well?"

It was troublesome, so I didn't touch it, but under Nina-san's leadership, they should have scouted officials and former officials.

"Yeah, thanks to you and Liza-dono, we could choose as many as we liked."

Apparently, commoners and demi-humans were flooding for the application for the chance of becoming Liza's apprentices.

Moreover, since I, who was a commoner with foreigner's face, was able to become a Viscount in one generation, there were a lot of officials and honor students of the Royal Academy who saw the chance to rise up higher showed up, so many that they couldn't all be interviewed.

"That must have been difficult."

"Not really. We reduced their number with a test before the interview."

Wait--that means the young nobles in the salon are my future colleagues?

Thinking so, I asked Ms. Nina.

"Ah, those are idiots who follow Karina-dono around even though they failed the test. They're teaching materials to make Karina-dono learn how to deal with shameless men."

That's why you can drive them away if you find them annoying, so said Ms. Nina.

I feel sorry for them after hearing that much.

"Right, you'll be staying in the Royal Capital for awhile right? The Earl Muno's house has received a site in the Royal Capital from His Majesty. There's a plot for your new home too, so you should go see it when you're still in the Royal Capital."

I thought it was quite sudden, turned out that the bestowal was decided this morning.

The manager of the plot of land is Ms. Nina, but it was Earl Muno who decided the breakdown of the land.

Looking at the diagram, it seems half of the plot of land that was emptied during the sakuramochi demon's rampage from the other day, has been given to Earl Muno.

It might sound small since it's an area cut in half, but it's big enough to have three domes on it, it's quite wide.

Around half of the given land will be for Earl Muno's mansion, and the other half will be distributed to his retainers.

Looks like I'll be given one of the lands for the retainers.

The current Pendragon Mansion is a small mansion for lower noble use, I can't invite noble guests or host a party in it, so I gratefully accept the offer.

I feel bad if I just receive it as is, so I'll be paying the cost for building a small lodging house for the supervisor.

The discussion ends fast with Ms. Nina as the other party.

◇

"Sa-Satou, escort me."

Behind Lady Karina who ordered me while behaving suspiciously, I see Arisa begging me with a face that looks like it's saying, "Please."

It can't be helped, it's the guardian's responsibility to clean up his ward's mess.

"Yes, by Karina-sama's command."

After Lady Karina thanked pompously, I put out my elbow so Lady Karina can easily grab it.

At first Lady Karina didn't understand, but it seems she's grasped it after the daughter of Viscount Emlin whispered something into her ear.

With a reddened face, Lady Karina timidly reaches her hand to my elbow.

When our arms are linked complicatedly, with our arms like they're touching or not touching, I'm feeling nostalgic like I've gone back to my middle-school day.

"Then, shall we go."

Being Lady Karina's escort, we head to the evening party's venue followed by the other girls.

I'm looking forward to it since it seems that there are going to be some unusual feast today.

"O-oy, that!"

"W-why is Viscount Pendragon escorting Karina-sama?!"

"For even Lina-sama to be with him.... Damn you!"

"Having our goddess and lovely angel in both arms?!"

When we got to the entrance hall, the young men who were waiting for Lady Karina glared at me while looking like they were going to shed tears of blood.

There doesn't seem to be any fool who's going to pick a quarrel with me, so I'll just ignore those glares.

Looks like some of them are aiming for the daughter of Viscount Emlin too.

◇

We head toward the hall that's exclusively for evening party inside the royal castle.

There are several halls for evening party in the royal castle, but this is the first time I'm entering this one.

It's not far, but we moved to the parking lot of the hall with a carriage.

From the parking lot, we're going to move to the hall with floating boards made from Force magic.

The magicians who are mobilized to pick-up the guests and then return here seem to have it hard.

"Pretty~?"

"The flowers are shining nodesu."

We pass above a flower garden on the floating board's course.

The flower of this flower garden are emitting faint light like fireflies from the inside, they're extremely beautiful.

"It's wonderful desuwa."

"Beautiful."

Lady Karina and Viscount Emlin's daughter let out a sigh from being deeply moved.

For such an occasion, I tell the two, who are captivated by the flower, the standard praise, "You two are more beautiful."

Arisa and Mia were saying, "Guilty", but it's not like I'm seducing them, this much lip service is fine isn't it.

The floating boards stop, and then we get down to the blue carpet extending on the corridor.

After advancing the corridor for a bit, we came to a huge entrance hall of the evening party hall.

The hall is split in three; the one for upper grade nobles, the one for lower grade nobles, and the center hall where both sides can interact with each other.

"Nice smell~?"

"There's a wonderful smell nanodesu."

"It does smell nice, but the smell of meat is mixed among it."

"Really~?"

"As expected of Liza nanodesu!"

Looks like the beastfolk girls quickly picked up the scent of the dishes drifting from beyond the perfume scent of the nobles.

....Rather, Liza could discern the scent from this mash-up scent better than Tama and Pochi huh. She's amazing.

"Master, um, that person over there is--"

Lulu pulled my sleeves, and told me that a gentleman in butler clothes had called me.

He looks familiar.

If I'm not mistaken, I've seen him several times inside the prime minister's room.

"Sir Pendragon, I have been entrusted with a letter from my master to you."

Rather than a letter, it's a message card, I open and read it.

He has some business with me, so I have to go to the prime minister's office, so was the content.

Well now, what kind of business is it.

13-36. Inauguration

Satou's here. Getting a position means having more responsibilities, and with that position, things that you could do for the first time also increase. In case of the modern Japan, there are some situations where a section chief has no subordinate in order to cut overtime pay.

◇

"Some business came up, so please enjoy yourself in the hall ahead of me."

"Satou! Are you going to leave your escort pa-partner?"

"I'm sorry. I've been summoned by the prime minister. Lina-sama, I'm sorry, but please take care of Karina-sama."

"Yes, please leave it to me!"

Lady Karina complained because I was leaving her behind, but I'll leave the rest to Viscount Emlin's daughter.

"Liza, and Lulu, please watch over the girls so they won't make any mistake."

"Understood."

"Yes, I'll do my best!"

"Waait, you should've asked Arisa-chan there."

"Nn, objection."

After deceiving Arisa and Mia, who showed their dissatisfaction, by patting their head, I followed the gentleman who had been waiting for me to the prime minister's office.

◇

"I'm appointing you to be the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry."

The matter for my summoning to the prime minister's office could be summarized in those words.

"With all due respect, it is far beyond my ability."

Of course, I rejected immediately.

The 'tourism' word is attractive, but in actuality it's just a nice way of saying the prime minister's secret service activity.

Moreover, I remember they wanted Satou to protect the royal capital when I was talking with them as Nanashi, I wonder what's happened with that?

"Rather than someone like me, the people of noble birth with more experiences are--"

"You're fit for it."

Interrupting me, the prime minister declared.

No, I understand you're declaring and all, but please stop taking a strange pose while emphasizing your muscles.

"The Tourism Ministry is nice y'know. I am stuck in office works as a cabinet minister myself right now, but His Majesty will lend a small airship for the tourism activities."

I see, a provision to get around the tourist spots huh.

I have my own airship, but being able to move freely with a high-performance airship might be convenient.

The next lines is mixed with discrepancy from the conversation with Nanashi.

"This airship boasts the highest speed in the kingdom, and is equipped with the long-distance true magic artifact."

I see, so it's an equipment that enables us to save the kingdom from outside if anything happens.

I'm planning to clean up the obstacles ahead of time as Nanashi though, so it's not really relevant.

"Furthermore, by making use of Shiga Kingdom's prestige as a major power, you can tour facilities and events that aren't possible for a commoner, and taste the special dishes that are only served in the royal court in each country."

Mumumu, that's a bit tempting.

I can stealthily intrude off-limit places with Unit Arrangement and space magic, but that's a kill-joy right.

"And, I don't mind if you use the current 1000 gold coins fiscal budget of the Tourism Ministry like they grow on a tree. Of course, you'll have to report the spending, but that's simply a formality."

I don't care about money since I already have an income that far exceeds my consumption.

However, with these many baits, what is the prime minister trying to catch?

"--Of course, obligations goes hand in hand with those rights."

The prime minister switches the talk as if he's read my mind.

Now then, now's the real issue.

He's probably going to talk about secret intelligence.

Before it got too deep, I should skillfully change the subject and run away.

"Every time you visit a foreign country and a city, you have to make a report regarding their famous places and specialty. Especially in securing sample of the famous specialty products for the preservation, you have to absolutely make sure to bring them back--"

--Huh?

"In addition, make sure to either get the recipe of the local famous or special product, or guess the recipe by yourself or your chef and put it on the appendix of the report. In case of ingredients not being available in Shiga Kingdom, you have to consider the replacement too. If they're plants, then secure the seeds in order to grow them here."

Wait a minute--.

Prime Minister (you), since you can't freely travel outside the kingdom yourself, you want me to go in your stead?

Looks like my thought was perceived, the prime minister coughed once, and said his official stance as if he was trying to varnish over it.

"This is for the sake of protecting the cultures nurtured by each country from disappearing because of the『Age of Great Disturbance』. By no means this is for fulfilling my hobby and appetite."

You said appetite out loud.

The prime minister is probably serious, but it's possible that he's merely acting too, let's confirm it a bit more.

"Then, there is no need for me to gather intelligence in each country?"

"But of course. We have already dispatched spies dozens or even hundreds of years ago in countries that need them. There is no need in sending a hastily trained noble now. Moreover, it'd be a great loss to have the precious airship stolen under the pretext of you doing espionage activity."

I see, there are people who have fitted in the actual places just like Ninja's [Grass].

"I'm giving this position to you because you have the ability to efficiently collect cuisines and also the prowess to defend the airship from monsters and other countries."

As the prime minister has said, with me and my companions, the airship probably won't even get a single scratch as long as we aren't hit by a surprise attack from a demon lord or a greater demon.

Even if it gets broken, that means I just need repair it.

Right, I need to ask one more thing.

"What happen in case of monsters or a demon lord attacking the country that we were visiting?"

"Escape immediately if the opponent is a demon lord or a dragon. For any other opponent that you can win against, you can help them in order to demand gratitude, or you can abandon them."

The prime minister said it like that, but his way of speaking sounded like he believed that I would save them without fail.

That's true and all, but it feels like he's seen through me, it doesn't feel good.

"In case of cross-national war, you're forbidden to take side as a representative of Shiga Kingdom."

In other words, if I want to intervene a war between humans, do it stealthily without being known huh.

"Moreover, you're forbidden from visiting countries where there are oracle of demon lords reviving like Parion Holy Kingdom and Weasel Empire."

He did say that we should escape if we met a demon lord after all.

Moreover, I plan to visit those countries as Nanashi, so it doesn't hurt even if they're forbidden.

Oops, before I knew it, my thought worked as if I had taken the job.

As expected of the prime minister of a major power. He's good at negotiation.

"Is there a rule for resignation?"

"If you have written the report of the countries you've visited, then I don't mind if it's arbitrary."

Judging from the answer of this question, it looks like he seriously doesn't intend to make use of me as a secret agent or an agent for diplomacy.

"That is quite.... Doesn't the receiver side get way too much?"

The prime minister laughed off my question.

"His highness Soltrick has said it too, you really are too much of a good man. It's good that you're prudent, but if you don't have the guts to at least make use of your opponent's verbal slip, you'll get taken advantage of by old countries like Saga Empire or Garleon Union y'know."

Indeed. I remember Prince Soltrick saying the same thing when I met him in Princess Shistina's room.

"--Viscount Rottol and Duke Oyugock told me that you'd take actions that will profit the kingdom if I leave you alone without shackles after all."

The prime minister muttered in low voice.

I picked it up with Attentive Ears skill, but you wouldn't have normally heard it.

I can't argue back, since various things flashed in my mind.

"Then, let's hear your answer--"

I contemplate for awhile.

It is attractive, but there's too few advantages for me.

There's mostly no disadvantage in accepting it either though, but....

Let's decline since it's making me hesitate like this.

He probably won't force me to become the vice minister anyway.

The moment I was going to talk, the prime minister, seemingly perceived my disinterest, clapped several books that were placed on top of his office desk.

He presented the top book bound with thread.

"This is?"

"The thing that contains information about products and delicious gourmet food from each country that have been collected during my term."

--What?!

"For someone who like to travel like you, you should feel like jumping at it right?"

Kuh, to think he took out such a trump card in the end....

Prime minister, you're good!

"If you work as the vice minister, in addition to these books, I'll give you letters of introduction for the influential people in each country. This should save you the trouble even against a cook who's hard to please."

GJ (Good Job)!!

It can't be helped if it's this much.

The prime minister who's making an awfully bright smile is vexing, but I'll let him have his way here.

After contemplating for a bit--.

I answer the prime minister with my affirmation.

◇

We'll leave the details for later, so I follow the prime minister who ought to go to the evening party, leaving his office behind.

It seems the airship needs to be equipped first, so the delivery will be in one month.

During that time, I'll do what I need to be doing as Satou in Shiga Kingdom.

While I was walking and listing things that have to be done, the prime minister suddenly stopped.

Blue marker is reflected on the radar. It's Hikaru.

Looks like Hikaru is currently accompanying the king and the queen to evening party hall.

Looking at their harmony, it seems she's getting along with the queen too.

"If it isn't His Majesty."

I kneel together with the prime minister.

"Ara, Prime Minister. Is the child your son?"

Hikaru asked an artificial question.

"No, he is Viscount Satou Pendragon, one of my subordinates."

"Then, you've decided on the vice minister at last."

"Yes, I'm sorry to make your majesty worry."

It was the king who first reacted to the prime minister.

"Hm~mm. Subordinate of the prime minister huh~"

Hikaru is grinning with a face that looks like she's thought of a mischief.

"Then, I'll have Satou escort me to the hall!"

"I can be Ancestor King, no, Mito-sama's escort...."

"You can't, His Majesty must escort the queen."

Hikaru curtly refused the king's suggestion.

"Then I'll go in His Majesty's place."

"Ara? Didn't you say that your wife was coming to the evening party today? You said that you'd introduce her to me right?"

The prime minister intercepted but he got tragically sunk down by Hikaru's attack.

"Satou, your hand please."

Hikaru's triumphant face is irritating me, but I can't refuse Hikaru who has the higher position.

I should quickly fade-out once I escorted her to the hall.

Escorting Hikaru, a Duchess, sounds like it'll make me stand out, but I've stood out so much from Liza's matter and attaining Viscouncy, so it's too late now.

I took Hikaru's hand, and walked down the corridor after the king couple and the prime minister.

◇

I'll be omitting Hikaru's introduction scene.

Even though it had become a slight chaos, it was settled down by the prime minister's thunderous roar.

Entreated by Hikaru, right now I'm dancing with Hikaru in the center of the hall like we're the leading part of the evening party as the surrounding people get pushed by the atmosphere.

The tune ended before long.

"Hmm, I sure am satisfied to be able to dance with Ichirou-nii to my heart's content."

"What? If you wanted to dance, I would dance with you as much as you like in our mansion's hall."

"Not like that~ it's nice since it's during this kind of party."

I led Hikaru who was sighing in satisfaction away from the dance space.

After this, Hikaru is going to have some chat with the princes and the princess, so I part way with Hikaru and head to where Arisa and the others are.

However, someone appeared and blocked my way.

"Good evening, Satou-san. Where did you get acquainted with Duchess Mitsukuni at from earlier?"

"G-Good evening Sera-sama."

Sera who's smiling even though her eyes are not is scary.

Why do I feel like a man who's cheated.

"Satou! After leaving me behind like that, why did you become the Duchess's escort?"

"....Satou-sama, I believe in you."

Then, Lady Karina who looks angry and Viscount Emlin's daughter who looks anxious also appeared.

"Oy, look there. It's shuraba."

"That's the new viscount right?"

"That's how you'll end up when you put your hands everywhere."

I could hear some unwilling rumor mixed with envy from the young noblemen.

I didn't put my hand on anyone though, what a cruel talk.

"Satou! I have come noja! Together with Maryann too!"

"Please excuse me for my long silence, Viscount Pendragon-sama."

Turning my head to the energetic voice, I saw Princess Mitia of the small Norooku Kingdom and the daughter of Barone Dyukeli, Maryann, who should have been in the labyrinth city.

I saw Baronet Dyukeli over the crowd too, so I saluted to him.

Maryann has become an adult this year, perhaps she's come her to look for a marriage partner.

"Satou-sama! Please hear me out! I've gone through something really terrible today."

Princess Menea of the small Rumooku Kingdom with her disheveled pink hair is also present.

She has just been attacked by Demon Lord Shin this afternoon, what a tough girl.

I catch sight of noble princess whom I'm acquainted with starting from Ririna, the daughter of Gururian City's viceroy, coming here from a distance.

Somehow or other, the place became chaotic.

Usually, I would be having some pleasant chats while dancing sometimes, so why did it became like this today.

Well, I guess it's fine.

It's probably just my hallucination, but let's taste how it feels to be a popular man once in a while.

The members are mostly loli-loli though, but expecting luxury is not good right.

◇

After dancing with the girls until they were all satisfied, I succeeded running away by saying I wanted to see my companions.

"Stuffef~?"

"Pochi's stomach is full and round nanodesu."

"It was truly delicious. I won't ever forget the taste of the whole roasted Ecu."

The beastfolk girls are relaxing with satisfied faces in one section of the buffet space in the center hall.

I was interested in the whole roasted dish that sounded like the name of some currency, but there was nothing left. Truly regretful.

"Master, you're late."

"Nn, tardy."

"Welcoming Master's return."

While listening to Arisa and Mia, I drink the fruit juice that Nana gave, quenching my throat.

"Welcome back, Master. Although there's only a few, I've put aside various dishes."

"Thank you, Lulu."

Receiving the plate from Lulu, I enjoy various tastes.

As for the whole roasted Ecu that Liza highly praised, it tasted slightly gamey with rich flavor that was unlike of beef or pork, and there was also the chewiness that she liked.

Since it seems that it was Liza who suggested the dishes on the plate, I also thanked her for it.

Feeling full, I decided to take a walk in the garden to help digest the food.

The dance is nice and all, but I take everyone for a stroll until the shining flowers path.

I saw Zena-san on the radar, having come to the party hall. Let's meet her there after taking a lap back.

Checking on the map, it looks like she's with Miko Auna-san, Earl Seryuu's daughter.

"Hey, isn't that Mito-cchi?"

Where Arisa pointed, Hikaru was standing alone in the flower garden while looking up at the sky, looking like she was enduring not to cry.

"Mito."

"Ah, Ichi--Satou."

When our eyes meet, Hikaru made a forced smile.

"Did something happen?"

"Un."

Hikaru shakes her head to my words.

"Were the king's family being mean to you?"

"Ahaha, nope. Everyone is a good child."

Hikaru laughed and denied Arisa's question.

However, it seemed her smile was forced, she quickly stopped laughing and looked languid again.

"But, they are all really good children, it makes me remember Sharlick-kun and the others--"

--Hikaru who was able to cry muttered.

I hug Hikaru's head, and let her cry as much as she wants.

Sensing the scene, Liza took the girls besides Arisa to the nearby arbor.

It seems Arisa is on a monitoring duty so that there won't be a strange mood happening between Hikaru and me.

I felt the presence of the wind when I was calming Hikaru.

It was not a poet, it was probably the wind magic [Wind Search].

"Ah, Zena-san and Liza-san."

And then, Zena-san appeared from the arbor when Hikaru had wiped her tears.

"Satou-san... Huh? You're with Mito-san today?"

"Yes, she was feeling unwell from the crowd, so we were just enjoying the night wind for a bit."

Right, I introduced Hikaru as my childhood friend to Zena-san.

It seems Zena-san had left the earl and Auna-san in the hall to search for me alone.

Liza who found Zena-san showed the way here.

And then, Liza wasn't only the one who found Zena-san--.

"Satou?! Yo-you were flirting again in this place."

"Huh, aren't they Karina-tan and Sera-sama."

Lady Karina who's together with Sera is walking here angrily. Sera is smiling, but I feel that her cheeks are twitching.

'There sure is a lot of shuraba-like situations today', perhaps thinking like it was none of my business was bad, even more bomb got thrown into the scene.

『Yamato? Shiga Yamato?!』

That voice came from Raka the <<Intelligent Item>> that was emitting blue light from the direction of Lady Karina's forehead.

13-37. Inauguration (2)

Satou's here. When it turned out that my friend was acquainted with my other friend, I feel that it often ended it with, "the world sure is small huh". However, it seems that it's a bit different in another world.

◇

"Huh? Is it Mastill? Is that beautiful girl your current master now?"

『That's a nostalgic name. If you know that name, then you're really not Yamato's descendant, but Shiga Yamato herself?』

--So Raka and Hikaru were acquainted?

Mastill is probably Raka's old name.

I block Hikaru's mouth before she could affirm it.

"U-um! Wasn't Mito-san Satou-san's childhood friend?"

"You there, is that true?"

"Ye-yes."

Sera-san keenly heard Zena-san and asked her.

Come to think of it, these two weren't acquainted huh.

"Raka-san, is she your acquaintance?"

『Yes, she was the king whom my master served many generations ago. I occasionally talked about her to Karina-dono, the Ancestor King Yamato is this girl.』

Raka answered Lady Karina's question.

There's no meaning in me blocking Hikaru's mouth now.

"You're too close."

Arisa who was watching the situation a step away pulled me and Hikaru apart.

For some reason Hikaru's face is red, but there's something that needs to be done first right now.

"Satou-san, I have a question--"

Sera-san started to speak with a serious face, but I put my index finger on her mouth to stop her.

It's possible for me to befuddle these three here.

Admitting that Hikaru is the Ancestor King Yamato, I can just tell them, "She has been tempered since she was little and becomes strong."

But now that I'm able to chant, have secured bases of operation, and able to manipulate the mind of someone who opposes me, there is no need to lie to my close friends.

"--You cannot turn back once you heard it you see? Yet, do you still want to know?"

Though that's only if the other party is aware of the disadvantage and wants to know the truth.

"Yes."

Sera-san answered without any hesitation.

Unlike her graceful looks, her character is straight-forward.

Even though Sera-san might dislike it if she heard it, but on this point, she might be similar to her older sister, Lady Ringrande.

"I want to know too."

Zena answered next.

It seems she was hesitating for a bit, but then she said those words with a clear expression.

"--I, I too, um.... I want to know about Satou too."

Lastly, Lady Karina answered with a shaken voice.

◇

"Well then, let us have a talk."

I asked Arisa to take care of Hikaru, and then brought the three to the [Mansion of Ivy] in Selbira the labyrinth city.

I couldn't go to Pendragon Mansion and Echigoya Mansion, and I couldn't think of any other place where there were illumination and complete protection against espionage.

"Th-this place is?"

"It's the 『Mansion of Ivy』 in Selbira the labyrinth city."

I told the truth to Zena-san who was the first that came to her sense.

"N-no way! But we were just in the Royal Capital!"

"Is it true, Raka-san?"

『I'm sorry, Karina-dono, even I am not that almighty.』

In order to calm them, we left the entrance hall for the parlor.

Leriril with sleepy looks appeared from the manager room when we were walking.

"Satou-sama! You have (haft) come!"

"Hey, Leriril. I'll be borrowing the parlor."

"Then, I'll get (gef) the tea (fea) ready."

Leriril sleeps early, so it's already hard for her to speak properly.

"Don't worry about the tea and sleep, I'll have the tea tomorrow."

"Fuai, goof nifht."

I put Leriril who was tottering to sleep on the manager room's bed, apologized to the three who were waiting, and settled down in the parlor.

"Um, who was the child earlier?"

"Ah, she's the manager of this mansion, Leriril a house fairy (brownie)."

I answered Zena-san's question briefly.

"The『Mansion of Ivy』of the sage, Trazayuya.... Then Satou-san is...."

Sera-san is muttering in low voice, scary.

I take some tea and cakes from Storage and line them up on the table, then begin the talk.

Looks like they were surprised with Unit Arrangement, they didn't even retort about the things that appeared out of nowhere.

"Then let me show you my true identity."

I might as well do this in chronological order.

"Once, I was the Silver Mask who exterminated the greater demon in Seryuu city."

I put on a blond wig and a silver mask while saying that.

Zena-san looks surprised.

Since I also wore them in Muno City, Lady Karina reacted the same too.

"Another time, I was the White Mask who exterminated the revived『Golden Wild Boar King』in the Duchy Capital underground."

This time I changed into a white mask with a smile on it.

Sera-san is hardened with startled expression.

"And, my true identity is--Hero Nanashi. I'm someone who was summoned from another world just like the heroes of Saga Empire."

Lastly I put on the violet wig, and bowed like an actor.

The three listened until the end without laughing.

"Thank you for listening to me. Do you have any question?"

I changed back into Satou and lightly asked them.

My mind felt lighter after revealing my secret.

"Satou-san."

Sera-san was the one who spoke first.

She takes my hands and continues speaking while shedding tears from her eyes.

"You saved me from the demon lord's hand."

'Save' is incorrect.

Because I had let her die.

"At that time, my power wasn't enough--"

"No!"

Sera-san interrupted me from denying.

"No, I am here because Satou-san took back my body from the demon lord's hand and lent your power to the『Artifact of Resurrection』."

Then, Sera-san stopped talking and stared at me.

I understand that her lips are trembling since our bodies are close to each other.

"That's why, let me say it. Thank you for saving me."

Looks like she was overcame with emotion from expressing her gratitude, Sera-san kissed me passionately.

It's just an innocent kiss where our mouths touch each other, but I can feel the passion of her feeling.

Being kissed by a pretty girl doesn't feel bad, but I'd like this kind of thing in 5-10 years.

Zena-san and Lady Karina looked like they were about to cry, so I lightly hit Sera-san's shoulders and separated our faces.

"I-I'm sorry, Satou-san. Suddenly, doing such a thing--"

"Please don't mind it."

I won't get angry from just a kiss as long as it's not like Arisa's style, aiming during a chance.

I'll get mad if it's done when I have a lover though.

"Do Zena-san and Karina-sama have any question?"

While apologizing to the two whose eyes were moist, I asked them.

"Sa-Satou-san is. No, is the name Satou an alias?"

"Right.... It is indeed an alias. My name when I was in the other world was Suzuki Ichirou."

"Suzuki Ichirou...."

Zena-san murmured my name sadly.

"However, my name when I got summoned to this world was『Satou』. Therefore, I think that my real name is Satou with this body."

It's a bit far-fetched, but I don't know the reason why my body got younger after all.

Arisa and the others call me [Satou] anyway, I think having Satou as my real name in this world is good.

Hearing my explanation, Zena-san nodded and said "Yes" while wiping her tears.

I'm glad that she understands.

"U-Um..."

Looks like this time it's Lady Karina.

"Will Satou return to the other world once you defeat all demon lords in the world?"

"I do not know that."

I replied Lady Karina who asked hesitantly with a vague answer.

"In the first place, I don't know why I was summoned to this world."

According to Hikaru and the others, the eighth person who was summoned by Princess Menea's kingdom was not me, but Shin boy.

Thus, the one who summoned me might be the Gods besides Parion, or perhaps even the Demon God.

The Dog-head mistook me for the Demon God, so there's a possibility that I might be the Demon God's offshoot (wakemitama), or an anti-dragon anti-god weapon.

This is just a supposition, so I haven't told it to anyone.

"Is that true?"

"Yes, I appeared near seryuu city several days before I met Zena-san after all."

I plainly answered Lady Karina.

I had talked about this to Arisa and the others, but Zena-san's reaction was a bit different.

"Then that『Stars Fall』was?!"

"Yes, that was a magic I used. I caused some uproar because of it."

I apologize to Zena-san since it caused an uproar in Seryuu city.

Afterwards, I answered several questions of the girls--for some reason, they asked whether I had girlfriends in the former world.

I thought it was a meaningless question since right now I have Aze-san as someone in my mind, but I answered properly regardless.

I also touched my relationship with Echigoya Firm just like with Hikaru. Zena-san who learned that the identity of Kuro was me was surprised with rounded eyes, but she didn't react in an extreme way like Sera did.

After answering many private questions, and when we were going back to the royal castle's garden, I remembered one thing I forgot.

I have to ask them to promise not to tell anyone my secret.

"--This is all of my secret. Would you promise me keep them a secret?"

"Yes, I will absolutely never reveal it."

"I'll keep it a secret even if I have to defend it with my life!"

"I-I also won't tell Satou's secret to anyone."

『I too pledge that I will never disclose it.』

The three people consented with sincere faces.

Normally, I should have used [Contract] skill chantlessly here, but I don't want to do something that looks like a sneak attack on my friends, I'm thinking of believing their sincere friendship.

--Lady Karina seems like she would say it out loud inadvertently.

There are plenty of ways to deal with it even if that happens though.

If the other party has bad manners, then that means I just need to erase their memory with mind magic.

◇

And then, the day after the people who were aware of my secret increased by three, my companions and I got to receive rewards from his majesty for the [Floormaster] subjugation.

The rewards are the money from the auction of our loot though.

"Viscount Pendragon, as a reward for subjugating the『Floormaster』of Selbira Labyrinth Upper Layer, I grant you with 3500 gold coins."

"I will respectfully receive it."

Around 10% of the magic swords' sales huh--wait, my sense of money turned a bit strange.

I want to split the money to my companions equally. There might be times when they need money when they've become an adult after all.

Come to think of it, I don't think I've gotten the payment for the aerodynamic engine.

Well it's fine. There's the amount anyway, I'll make it a loan for 1000 years with no interest.

The team that subjugated the Middle Layer [Floormaster], Jeril's party, is on the campaign to Bishtal Dukedom, so the second position of the party, Mamoth-shi the scout received the rewards instead.

When I was going to step back after getting the reward certificate, the prime minister told me to stay.

"Next, announcing the new vice minister of the Tourism Ministry."

--No wait, you're virtually announcing that it's me by making me stay.

Sure enough, I could hear the nobles gossiping with my Attentive Ears skill.

"I-it can't be. An upstart viscount is the vice minister?"

"Impossible! Giving such a responsibility to someone with suspicious origin!"

"But I can tour the best!"

"Has his majesty lost his mind?"

Oy oy, putting me aside, if the last one was heard, you'd be executed for lese majesty y'know.

Moreover, what the heck is [Can tour the best]?

I'll befriend him if we can get along well later.

"I inaugurate Viscount Pendragon to be the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry."

"I will respectfully accept the responsibility."

I knelt before the king, and respectfully received the inauguration for the vice minister position.

I received the seal for the proof of the position, a scepter, and some medal-like thing. Looks like every one of them is a magic tool.

"We will bestow you attendant for it is a rigorous mission."

<TLN: It's not specified whether there are more than one attendant in the raw.>

--Eh? I never heard about this?

Attendant is just a nuisance though.

13-38. Inaguration (3)

Satou's here. Having [Great Surprise] situation when I was working was an everday occurrence. Even so, I don't think that's an excuse to abandon the endeavor to improve the present situation. Mainly for myself.

◇

At the same time the king announced about the attendant, one of the chamberlain signaled to the entrance of the audience hall.

The one who appeared from that entrance was a woman in dress--.

The nobles in the audience hall rustled when they saw the girl.

"I believe you are in good term with Sir Pendragon."

"Yes, we are familiar with each other."

The girl answered the king while smiling.

"I appoint Sera Oyugock to be Vice Minister Pendragon's attendant."

"I respectfully accept."

--Oyugock?

As I was surprised, I checked, Sera's name had a family name on it.

Apparently, she was secularized this morning.

While kneeling, Sera-san glanced at me and showed a playful smile. It's a rare expression for the serious Sera-san.

"If there is someone that can receive the『Oracle』, you will be able to quickly sense it when the kingdom is in danger. If it's come to that, abandon everything and rush here."

"Understood."

I see, certainly they've been saved many times by Sera-san's [Oracle], so making her into a staff member is surely a good choice.

At the very least, it's better than having miko Auna-san, the daughter of Earl Seryuu, as the attendant.

I've confided her my secret just yesterday anyway, so there's no problem in having her in our journey together.

"And, we will announce the second attendant."

--Eh? It's not just Sera-san?

◇

I turned my head toward the entrance where Sera-san appeared earlier following the prime minister's words, but there's no one appearing.

Yet, the nobles around me have all been looking ahead since awhile ago.

When I timidly looked to the front, Princess Shistina had walked ahead of the royal family's line up.

--That can't be.

That wish of mine is unfulfilled, and the king says some heartless words.

"And, my daughter Shistina will accompany Sir Pendragon as a special envoy of the tour."

You serious?

Apparently the other nobles thought the same too, the place got filled with objection that bordered on being disrespectful from the nobles of pedigree centered around the young ones.

Unfortunately, I didn't take any notice of them, so I can't remember the details.

I only remember Princess Shistina sending ice cold glances toward the nobles.

"Be quiet! ■"

The king's words were tremendous, the nobles shut their mouth like their hearts had been gripped.

Oops, [『The King's Roar』 resisted] came out on the log.

Judging from the fact that I didn't get the skill, it was probably a magic originated from the City Core or an effect of a magic tool.

"I had intended for Shistina to just be an attendant in the journey, but I changed my mind after looking at your attitude. I will make Shistina be Sir Pendragon's fiancee."

Oy oy, how about my consent?

Please stop making a hasty decision like a young man who has no resistance against agitation.

Still, making a hasty decision is rare for the king--it can't be, but was it an act?

Perhaps by doing this rather than announcing her to be my fiancee from the get go, there would be fewer people complaining?

Either way, it's won me the animosity....

The silver lining is the fact that it's only an engagement, I'll reject it through Nanashi later.

Yup, that's good.

That's why Princess Shistina. Please don't show such a happy look on your face.

And also, Sera-san. Please don't look at me with those eyes. I only knew about it just now.

"--Sir Pendragon. I entrust Shistina to you, but the formal marriage will be in one year during the new year gathering. Until that, I ask you to act like a gentleman with moderation."

"At your will."

After a long winded talk typical of a parent with a daughter of marriageable age, I replied back with a short consent.

◇

I was caught in a barrage of questions from acquaintance nobles and my companions after the audience.

I only got released after the date had changed.

"Gueeeez, master (masfer) is too soft."

"That's right! I think not allowing me to take a bath together after I became of age is cruel! I also want the opportunity to appreciate Master's collarbone!"

Putting aside Arisa, Lulu who's also drunk grumbled some incoherent things.

I can see how they are sisters when they're like this.

"Master! It is possible for humans to mate with homonculus so I inform, inform, inform...."

"....Kuh"

Nana repeated words like a broken record toward Liza.

Looks like Mia was fast falling asleep.

"Unyu~?"

"Pochi wants to be a bride too nodesu."

I pat Pochi and Tama's heads who were sleep-talking.

"Arara, everyone is asleep?"

"Isn't it because you let the children drink the sake?"

As a punishment, I made Hikaru to do the clean-up.

"It's fine. If you don't let them moderately loose for such a dissatisfaction, they'll fall out of the cogs of human relationship."

Oh, Hikaru is an adult.

"Fufuhn, are you surprised? After all, how many years do you think I was a hero?"

'It's okay to fall for me', she boasted, I lightly hit Hikaru's crown of head with a chop, and then went to sleep for the day.

Good grief, it's like there are two Arisa now.

◇

Afterwards, I spent busy days for half a month.

"Can I leave it to you?"

"Ou! I take pride in tempering spoiled children like him. Moreover, Semeri is having fun too."

Two days after I was inaugurated as the vice minister, I went to Armor's place in the lower layer of the labyrinth.

Shin boy who's just recovered is running in the site for military drill in the area that Armor rules.

"Damn it, why do I, have to do this!"

"Oh, you're still energetic huh. Tsuntsun-maru, ya can raise the speed a bit more."

『TWEEEEN』

The vampire princess who's in her rebellions phase, Semeri, is chasing Shin boy while riding on a multi-legged sea anemone.

Looks like she has a sadistic tendency, she's training Shin boy while looking truly happy.

When I was thinking of punishing Shin boy who almost did a genocide in the royal capital as a demon lord, Armor who came visiting Ban's castle took up the job to reeducate him.

"This was my specialty in the former world."

Accepting Armor's suggestion, I decided to entrust Shin boy to him.

I gave materials and food together with a refrigerator magic tool needed for the reeducation from the storage to Armor.

In addition, as a thanks to Armor whose figure is that of a full-body Orichalcum armor, I plan to present him with a full-size replica of the mecha ridden by the protagonist of an anime that he liked in his former world.

Furthermore, I was able to make sushi roll with dried gourd for Yuika after getting the recipe through [Lost Knowledge].

◇

And, the majority of the members of the carefree occult group [Wind of Liberty] that assisted the disturbance in the royal capital ended up in the prison.

Through the inquisitor, the ones who were found guilty were executed for the crime of treason, ones who weren't were charged with harsh punishment like stripping of peerage or assets confiscation.

Of course, the house of Souya boy who sheltered the person who was the epicenter of the red rope monsters in a detached building was to be disposed of.

As Nanashi I was able to somehow save their life besides the head of the house, though I couldn't say that it was because he's my acquaintance.

It doesn't end up in their acquittal though--.

"Kuro-sama, my name is Yui Akasaki. Please take care of me and my husband, Souya."

"....Pleased...to...."

Souya boy who has been deprived of his recognition as an illegitimate child of the late king has become like a cripple.

As long as an existence like Yui is beside him when he's at the rock bottom like this, he's probably going to move forward before long.

Their positions are that of crime slaves, but they're going to get an amnesty from the king in a few years, at that time I plan to release them from slavery.

It's a bit hard, but I've employed a lot of people with similar situation as them, so they should be able to get accustomed with it before long.

◇

"Are you firing me ssuka?"

That reluctant words hit me when I called Nell, the life magician of Echigoya workshop, and told her, "I'll release you from slavery."

I deny it as Kuro.

"Don't be foolish. I've heard from the workshop manager Porina that you're working well, so it's a reward. Work as the section manager of the life magicians from now on."

Porina has gathered around 20 life magicians, so she's going to work them.

"I'll work as hard as the legendary『Corporate Slaves』ssu."

After tearing off Nell who clung to me during the confusion with hardships, I told her, "I'm counting on you", and then left the workshop.

I wonder if that 'corporate slave' thing are words left behind by some past hero or reincarnated person?

I'd have liked if they didn't brought the term from hard life.

As for the workshop, they're currently increasing production line for the instant food suggested by Aoi boy.

Copy products of the kickboard will appear in the market sooner or later, so I'm thinking of making the instant food as our top product.

The powder soup is especially popular among peddlers, I plan to sell them in the branches office in Shiga Kingdom next time.

The woman underwear suggested by Arisa is also doing well.

Right now, stockings can only be made in the workshop of the Ivy Mansion or with my magic, so it's going to be awhile before we can commercialize it.

In addition, knowledgeable slaves of Echigoya Firm increased explosively in the Royal Capital, so the lack of personnel in the branch offices and the workshop is getting better.

The manager told me that we have bought the ruined workshop in the downtown and are currently enlarging the venture and building Royal Capital's orphanage at the same time.

I'd like them to work hard but not to the degree of overworking.

◇

"Viscount-sama, this is the site of the House of Earl Muno."

"It's quite wide."

Lady Karina and I have come to the site of the House of Earl Muno where the mansion is going to be built.

Today, we're planning to create the mansion's wall with a famous construction magician.

"Then allow me to begin. ■■■■...."

I memorize his spell with ear copy.

It's quite long. Remembering it is going to be difficult.

"....■■■■ Create Fort Wall"

The construction magician swings his wand, and then a wall is appearing from every direction of the site with great speed.

Advanced magic is quite amazing. The construction magician has used up all of his MP with that one.

"Fuuh, next is the decoration, but since my magic power has ran out, it is for later--"

"Here you go if you would. It's a magic power recovery potion from Echigoya Firm."

I, who couldn't wait until later, took out a magic potion from my bag and presented it to him.

The magician hesitated, but when I was going to put the potion into my chest while muttering, "It's a intermediate level magic potion of Trismegistus....", he agreed to continue even while his face was looking truly complicated.

The race called magician can't hold back their curiosity after all.

That day, I got all kinds of magic; wall creation, ornament creation and a small detached building creation that's for the manager, so I was quite pleased.

These magic are fruits of individual research, so I put a note reminding me not to teach it to others. Copyright is important.

As a thanks, I gave him a lot of magic potions to the magician.

◇

Even ignoring Hisui who raided during the mealtime, I didn't expect the truck-sized infant dragon would come visit the royal capital too.

I'm glad that it was when I was doing some work in Echigoya Firm.

The black dragon Heiron would eventually come to visit here, so it might be a good idea to create a secret base somewhere.

Let's postpone the construction of the aerial city.

I suspense my thought, and return my attention to Arisa and Mia who are running from beyond the hill of the Royal Capital's outskirt.

"Master! Athena had came to call us."

"Nn, Synchronous Magic."

Following Arisa and Mia, we're going to visit the royal court magician--Shiga 33 Wands during the magic practice.

Shiga Kingdom has been really peaceful for the past half month.

The Royal Capital reconstruction has also been completed thanks to Echigoya Firm bringing a large amount of material.

It'll be nice if the peace continues on like this--.

Intermission 1 : Want to Practice Magic [Orb Arc]

Satou's here. Mistakes of youth, anyone has done it. Use that experience to leap and fly toward the future. Although there are also lessons that are too painful in the world.

◇

"■■■ Breeze"

Storm rages in the narrow alley, sweeping the fainted subordinates of the phantom thief to the berm along with garbage.

Kukukukuku, I couldn't suppress the overflowing delight welling up from my body.

I carefully put the [Chant Orb: Used] that had lost its transparency to my Storage.

I want to immediately use thi~s, or tha~t spells I've finished developing, but it'll be a great disaster for sure if I do it in the royal capital, so I restrain myself.

In order to chant without reserve, I went back to the auction hall with Unit Arrangement to settle my business.

"Kuro-sama, welcome back. How is the--no, I couldn't help asking."

It seems the Manager guessed the result from my look.

Ignoring the people in the auction hall behind the Manager who are being surprised, "Teleport magic?", I return the stolen Orbs to the man in charge of delivering them.

"T-this is the Orbs!"

"I got them from the phantom thief. I've taken the orbs that I've won in the bid.

I tell the bidders and the staff members who are thanking me, "It's unnecessary", over my shoulders, and then teleport to Echigoya Firm together with the Manager.

I forgot about Female Executive A, but well, there's the carriage anyway, she probably will go back alone.

"Kuro-sama, we're going to celebrate tonight."

"The preparation has already been completed."

Tifaliza continued for the manager who spoke with a lively voice.

"I'll be going out for some business. Begin the party ahead of me, if it looks like I'm returning late."

After telling that, I moved to the desert to the west of Selbira city with Unit Arrangement.

Oops, before absorbing myself in the experiment, I have to contact Arisa and Liza.

"■■■ ■ ■■ ■ Short Message"

Unlike the [Telephone] that I usually use, this is a space magic that can send one-way short sentences.

The magic can only send up to 128 characters, so it can't convey intonation of words. It's similar to phone mail.

Even though I only sent, 『Succeeded bidding the Chant Orb. I'll be late returning home since I'm going to experiment with magic, so go ahead and eat dinner first.』, for some reason Arisa replied, [You're too frolic (lol)].

I wonder if I used to many emoticons?

I don't understand--.

Well fine. Now it's free time until sunset!

◇

I picked the vast desert to the west of the labyrinth city as the experiment site.

There wasn't any direct damage to the surrounding countries during my fight with the Dog-head, so using advanced magic here should be fine.

--No, the people of the Royal Capital were panicking since they could saw the Meteor Shower from afar.

I choose the most suitable magic in the magic book.

Using, the forbidden spell of space magic [Another World], I create a copy of the desert in the sub-space.

The size seems to depend on the magic power used, so I make it 10 kilometer wide for the experiment. If I use holy swords as battery replacement, it seems possible to create the whole desert for the maximum size.

I won't have to worry about damage in a sub-space, and there won't be any witness.

When I entered through the Gate, I reflexively thought that the magic had failed since the inside wasn't any different at all to the desert just now.

Even the sun is in the sky.

According to AR, that sun seems to be a picture.

Confirming on the map, it's read as [Satou's Sub-space: Desert]. Looks like it's not an [Area without Map].

Confirming on 3D reading, the sub-space's shape is spherical.

Now then, now that I've secured the place, let's begin the experiment.

Whirling sands would be a hindrance, so attack type magic would be for the last.

First, let's go with Creation type magic--.

".....■■■■ Create Golem"

The ground of the desert is rising, forming a doll (human).

Before long, a Golem that looks similar to Mia's Sand Giant complete with the decoration is finished.

The Golem's height depend on its level if you don't specify it. It's possible to create a high-level small Golem, but the less mass it has, the weaker the Golem becomes.

According to AR reading, the Golem's level is 50. According to magic books, the created Golem will be 70%-80% of the user's level, but it seems there are other conditions besides that.

--Too bad.

Many things would be easier if I really could create level 249 Golems....

"Perhaps the maximum level is limited by its material?"

It's a game-like way of thinking, but it sounds normal in this game-like world.

I tried sand, wood, stone, bronze, and iron in turns, but their maximum levels weren't much different. Unexpectedly, only iron had low maximum level.

When I checked the wreckages of Iron Golem inside my storage, turned out that it was a stone Golem with iron plates plastered on it.

Checking the magic books I have in hands, it seems that the level changes depending on how well the material can channel magic power.

When I tried using magic metal and material from Jewel Golem that Nana gave me, I found out that it could go up to level 99.

Looks like Golems created from magic stop operating in two hours after their magic power supplies are cut, but you can make them permanent if you use magic cores as the power source when using [Create Golem].

When the magic core method is used, the Golem's level is dictated by the level of the monster the magic core comes from and the magic core's grade.

It might be usable for power-leveling, I'll do some experiment with it later.

Nevertheless, magic is convenient.

I can make Golems in an instant from now on.

The Golems in the underground vault of Echigoya Firm were created by diligently making their magic circuits, and it took even me three days to make one. It took me 10 days to make the Orichalcum Golem....

It seems the Golems created by magic can only move sloppily and can only perform simple orders though.

While healing my gloomy heart with those words, I began the next experiment.

◇

When I release the sealed Spirit Light, colorful spirits gather to me from the surrounding.

There are fewer spirits than usual, perhaps because it's inside the sub-space. Around 20% of the usual number.

"....■■ Beast King Creation (Create Behemoth)"

--PUWAOOOOWWNNN！！

I tried calling Behemoth using the spirit magic Mia taught me.

Its level is 52, slightly stronger than the Behemoth that Mia and Aze-san summoned.

As a test, I made Behemoth lightly battle against the Golem army I had just made earlier.

The lightning that Behemoth preemptively shot rushed down the Golem army with a roaring sound while spreading ozone smell.

However, it only damaged the surface of the stone and sand Golems, they didn't get any serious damage.

The Golem army is approaching Behemoth while raising cloud of dust.

Behemoth raised a war cry, and then stretched its elephant-like nose, attacking the Golems like a whip.

The sand Golems were torn in two with a hit, but they regenerated in the next moment, returning to their original forms. They're quite tough.

And then when the distance was enough for close combat, an uncouth exchange of blows like a confrontation between kaijus began.

Behemoth's hoofs, tusks, and long nose tore, stabbed, and struck, and the Golems regenerated every time.

The Golems struck the large indomitable building-like body with their machine-gun-like fists, but since Behemoth's body was only semi-materialized, their attacks never reached it.

I continued to chant many magic, registering them into my Magic Column while this seemingly endless battle continued on.

At first, it looked like it was a close battle, but ultimately it was a complete victory of the Behemoth.

Having diverse way to attack, and an AI that fights by utilizing attacks that are effective, the artificial spirit is stronger.

However, the advantage of the Golem is that you can create an army beforehand as long as you have a lot of magic cores.

Use Golems if it's against a lot of weak enemies, and the artificial spirit if it's against a few powerful army, that should be the correct way.

Next, I tested Soul magic.

I'm not good against zombies and grotesque things though, so I only took out bones and shells from the leftover of dismantling jobs from my Storage and used [Create Undead].

With this magic, it seems that the level of the undead depends on the original level of the remains, the stronger the monster of the remains the stronger the undead becomes.

Just like the Golems, they become permanent servants if you use magic cores.

The stench is unbearable if it's anything besides the ethereal body type and bone type undeads though, so I probably won't have any use of them.

Rather, [Summon Skeleton] and [Summon Litch] magic that don't need corpses to use seem more convenient.

>[Summoning Magic] Skill Acquired.

For some reason, I got [Summoning Magic] skill even though I used soul magic.

I don't understand, but well it's good.

For the occasion, I wanted to summoning magic that humans use, but the ones in the magic books I have only have the inferior version of the spirit magic ones, so for now, I only registered the useful-looking, [Summon Messenger Pigeon] and [Summon Spy Rat] into the Magic Column.

I can freely move these servants with Unit Arrangement.

I peeked at [Unit Creation] with some expectation, but it was grayed out and unusable like usual.

Really, I wonder what's the release condition of [Unit Creation]?

◇

I got tired of watching servants war, so I decided to try using peaceful magic this time.

".....■■■ Create House"

After finishing chanting a long spell, sands rise up from the ground, creating orcher structure in a flash.

Magic is nonsensical like always.

When it's finished forming, the sand harden into stone-like wall, and there are even some parts that have changed into marble-like things.

At first I thought the windows were transparent, but then they changed from fully transparent to semi-transparent frosted glass-like.

I understand after entering the house that I can look outside through the glass window from inside.

The appearance is simple, so I'll need to take extra steps for the decoration and outer appearance.

"However, you can't call this a house eh--."

I murmured alone while looking up at the completed fort.

I deem it good as it's convenient.

This gets me interested, so, after confirming that the advanced magic earlier has been registered in the Magic Column, I try chanting [Create Village].

After I've finished chanting the spell that's as long as a novel's chapter, the ground is rising at a grander scale than the [Create House] earlier.

The area is about as big as a city.

I can't see the magic process well since a lot of sand is dancing in the air, due to using the magic in a desert.

I thought of using wind pressure magic to scatter away the sand, but it looked like it'd blow away the building that were under construction of [Create Village], so I endure it.

Eventually, a lot of houses divided by Igo board-like grid's alleys appeared beyond the cloud of dust.

"This scale isn't a village, it's a city...."

However, unlike [Create House] which upgrades a house into a fort, in [Create Village]'s case, the [Number of House] increases instead.

The countless houses that are lined up all look similar, boorish-looking one-story house of hollowed cuboid shape.

"Let alone a castle overnight, it's a city overnight huh."

While talking to myself, I take a stroll in the city.

Of course, I continue to register low grade battle-type magic and life magic into Magic Column while taking the stroll.

It seems I can't suppress this efficiency maniac habit when I'm not with everyone.

After taking the stroll, I understand that this [Create Village] magic has a fault.

There is no infrastructure that's necessary for a city, perhaps because it's based on village.

There would be many problems as it doesn't have gutter to drain rain water and sewage.

On the other hand, I was surprised to see that water could be drawn from the well even though this desert was made.

The water vein should be considerably deep as I understand, so it seems the magic has interfered into the underground too.

I'll remodel this with [Create House] later.

Right.... Naming it [Create Kingdom] sounds fun.

◇

When I had finished registering non-battle type magic into Magic Column, I proceeded to the real advanced magic experiment, but--.

『....■<<White Inferno>>』

With dazzling flash, and speed that exceeded the speed of sound, the white glittering flame evaporated the desert's sand.

The flame reached the other end of the sub-space, and went back to me along the wall.

--CRACK.

The sub-space was broken together with the sound of cracking glass.

The flame trampled the dimension fissure, wrenching open the gate that connects the sub-space, spouting out to the desert of the original world.

"This is bad--"

I hurriedly canceled the magic, and erased the white flame with [Neutral Magic].

Even though it was one of the strongest advanced magic, I didn't expect that it would burn even the sub-space wall.

Let's test it in a safer place.

I teleport to the tree house in Boruenan Forest.

"Hello, Aze-san."

"Satou!"

While having my cheeks loosened from seeing Aze-san who broke a smile when she saw me, I greet Lua-san and the cooking researcher Nea-san.

Including them, there are a lot of elves preparing for banquet in the living room.

It's a [Congratulatory for the Chant] party mentioned by Aze-san when I visited yesterday isn't it.

"Can you use chanting now?"

"Yes, fortunately--■■■ Breeze"

Minding not to obstruct the preparation, I went to the balcony and used a magic.

Of course, I paid attention so that the wind wouldn't turn up the one-piece dress that Aze-san wore.

However, I paid too much attention in that point--.

"Uwaa~"

"I'm blown away~"

"Halp~"

The pixies who flew to the balcony were blown away.

I quickly rescue the pixies with [Magic Hand].

"--Sorry sorry"

"There's no sincerity in that y'know?"

"That's right, my hair is a mess now."

"Geez"

Boo boo, the pixies were complaining, but they completely changed when I presented them with a newly developed sweet.

"Alright!"

"As expected of Satou."

"It smells sweet."

"Looks tasty."

They're truly energetic.

"Long candies right?"

"It's hard to eat them. Cut it~"

I cut the kintaro-ame, and then the pixies grabbed the cut and flew away somewhere while dancing around.

They probably want to show it off to the other people.

"It's mysterious isn't it? Why do the same face always appear no matter where you cut it?"

Seeing the cross-section of the kintaro-ame, Aze-san tilts her head seriously.

She's cute like always.

--By no means do I think that she's at the same level as the pixies.

A great person of the past said that cute is justice after all.

◇

After getting congratulated by Aze-san and the others for acquiring the chant skill, I talk about my real objective.

"Aze-san, I want to go to the void sky through the observatory of the World Tree, is it alright if I use it?"

"Yes, it's fine. Satou doesn't have to ask every time, you can use the observatory whenever you want."

The World Tree's observatory should be an important secret area, but Aze-san readily gave her permission.

Her supervisor, Lua-san beside her nods too, it doesn't seem to be a problem.

"Then, I'll go out for a bit."

I wave my hand to Aze-san and the others and then move to the observatory with Unit Arrangement.

I apologize to the engineer Gia-san who was surprised at my sudden appearance, and then jump out to the void sky--the space, through the pressurized observatory dome.

I've used the newly developed [Astro Suit] magic this time, so it's comfortable even in the void sky.

It's a low grade magic, but since it's a composite magic that needs several elemental magic skills, only Aze-san and I can use it for now.

Now then, leaving that aside, let's start registering advanced grade and higher attack type magic to the Magic Column.

The world should be fine, but the world tree might be damaged, so I'm going away a bit more.

It seems there's little resistance with Flash Drive in the void sky, I've reached the satellite orbit in a flash.

Flying a long distance with Flash Drive consume a lot of fuel, so making an exclusive high-speed movement magic for use in the void sky might be a good idea.

Aze-san taught me during our stroll in the void sky that there is this Ether Stream which is the bare form of the Dragon Vein flowing from the direction of the sun, and it's possible to restore your MP as much as you want if you can ride on that stream.

This time my objective is to test fire attack magic and confirm their power, so I've picked some place away from the Ether Stream.

I'm on to the noon side, but flashy light might be seen by the people below, so I create a jet black wall with shadow magic's [Shadow Wall] between the planet and me.

--Big.

A several kilometer long wall appeared.

I use advanced grade attack magic behind the shadow wall.

Chanting several spells from every elements, I register them into the Magic Column.

I don't really understand their power since there's no target for them to attack on. Perhaps I should make a magic that can create targets for test firing, like [Remote Decoy] or something.

When the registration had been going well for about 30 minutes, a World Phone call from Aze-san in the ground came up.

『Satou, how is it going there?』

"It's going well here. Did you see the flash of light from the ground?"

『--Light? Wait a minute.... I asked Lua about it, she said that it could only be seen if she strained her eyes.』

It should be fine if it's just that much.

Unexpectedly, the shadow wall seems to be invisible from the ground. I thought something this big would have been seen, but considering the background, the void sky, is black, it probably doesn't stand out.

『And also, actually--』

『Mou, how irritating. Satou, been awhile. Can I have your time for a bit?』

Interrupting Aze-san who seemed hesitant, the one who intruded in the World Phone is the high elf-san of Biroanan clan.

Besides her red hair, her face looks completely the same with Aze-san.

『Actually, an exploration scarecrow found a crowd of [Evil Jelly] in the deep area, we dispatched a phoenix to exterminate them, but it was exterminated instead you see. It'd have been a different story if they were near the World Tree, but the phoenix that could exert its full power shouldn't have lost to [Evil Jelly]....』

The high elf-san's voice had a tone like she couldn't accept it.

『So, I have a request for Satou. Could you defeat them for a bit? The reward is, right.... You can sleep together or get a kiss on cheek from me--』

『--Wa-wait!』

『It's a joke, Aze. You don't have to be that flustered.』

Aze-san is embarrassed with her frantic state.

Having drawn out such Aze-san is quite enough for the reward.

I'll vaporize those jellyfish, bring tens of thousands of them.

High elf-san continues the call before it's cut.

『Here's the real reward. I'll teach you the special Phoenix and Ifrit spells of Biroanan clan. They're far stronger than the standard Boruenan type.』

『Mwu.... Boruenan's Behemoth is more amazing mon.』

Aze-san who opposed like a child is cute.

While getting healed by the two's conversation, I head toward Biroanan's World Tree on the other side of the planet by going around it through the orbit.

A large amount of jelly fish are reflected on the radar as red dots on the verge of the map.

The range of the void sky map extends until the orbit of the moon but not the moon itself. Even though it's smaller than the earth's moon's orbit, the distance is still 30.000 kilometer long, so the extent of the map is an order magnitude higher than the ground's map.

It'll be troubling if there are a lot of them outside the map's range, so I head there with Flash Drive.

It's a bit too far, so I evaporated all the jellyfish on the map using advanced light magic [Photon Laser].

The flow of the log is too fast, I mask off the jellyfish defeat on the log.

>[Unidentified Object] defeated!

--Huh?

Apparently, there was another specimen mixed among the jellyfish.

I try to search the map by excluding the jellyfish.

An [Unidentified Object] is moving like it's chasing the jellyfish mass.

Its speed is equaling my Flash Drive.

I activate [Clairvoyance] from the Magic Column, that [Unidentified Object] comes into my view.

When it was suspending, it looked like a white spherical object with some strange protrusions, when it was chasing the jellyfish it was moving like a comet leaving a trail behind, and when it was predating, its pointed ends split into the shape of four feelers, attacking the jellyfish.

--It's totally like a kaiju.

Since we're in void sky, void sky kaiju? Or maybe we should call it a space kaiju?

I don't think that that thought is a flag, but that [Unidentified Object] found me, and came closer.

Fast. It was only a blink of an eye until it got here.

--Big.

It's at least bigger than the jellyfish.

I splendidly evade the feelers its extending to try to predate me.

Thinking that it might be able to talk, I tried to send some signal light with life magic's [Light] following after a masterpiece story, but it was no good.

I cut the feelers that persistently tried to predate me with Flexible Sword.

Holy swords don't have enough reach.

It was softer than I thought, but the cut part turned into a sphere and then reunified with the main body.

I wonder if it's a kind of slime?

Looking at the AR information, there's no new information besides its name changing to [Space Kaiju].

I don't mind it if it predates the jellyfish, but it'll be troubling if it pushes itself into our daily life.

It seems to be a primitive life form impossible to talk with anyway, let's exterminate it along with the jellyfish.

I use [Photon Laser] to annihilate the space kaiju and the jellyfish.

There's a bit of distance, so the Space Kaiju quickly moved erratically to avoid the laser.

--Nn?

Just now, the diffused light from the laser illuminated something.

When I concentrated the laser there, I could see a dark grey lump in the profound dark depth.

Looking at it relatively, its diameter seems to be around three kilometers.

Its mobility is low compared to the white ball Space Kaiju, but my laser can't hit it.

Looks like the surface of the dark grey Space Kaiju is distorted tight.

....I made light of the distance of the space.

Just when I thought that the dark grey Space Kaiju had become big before my eyes, it attacked at a speed I couldn't evade.

In a hurry, I evade it with short distance Unit Arrangement.

Fortunately, the Space Kaiju didn't seem to be interested in entering the planet's atmosphere as it corrected its orbit, but it'll be bad if that gigantic mass falls to the ground if I fight it leisurely.

I'll go with the strongest forbidden spell here.

I can't use the Meteor Shower since I can't make use of the planet's gravity.

Among the spells I have, there is one spell that exceeds the Meteor Shower.

It's an unfinished spell, but its immensity of the range and effect emulated in my mind is the strongest.

Theoretically, I'm also currently developing an Annihilation type magic, but it hasn't taken form yet. Moreover, Annihilation magic feels too SF, its fantasy-ness is insufficient, I don't really want to use it.

<TLN: Annihilation can also be translated as 'decomposition'.>

We have magic and all.

I think it's important to be particular about the fantasy.

While thinking such a stupid thing, I evade the mysterious jagged light shot by the dark grey Space Kaiju.

Now then, let's prepare the forbidden spell chant.

This place is far away from the planet, but this distance is still close.

In order to prevent damages on the planet, I use the remodeled version of the space magic [City Guard], [Planet Guard].

After consuming magic power from two casted holy swords, the planet is wrapped in a huge defensive membrane on the low satellite orbit.

A light veil that looks like something I saw in an anime of the past spread as if wrapping the planet, creating a colorless and transparent dimensional gap wall.

Alright, the ground should be fine with this.

While chanting the unfinished forbidden spell that hasn't been named yet, I lead the dark grey Space Kaiju far away from the planet with Flash Drive.

Apparently, the dark grey Space Kaiju is a rare POP-up monster that only appears as one.

The white ball Space Kaiju's number has increased since then, but the dark grey Space Kaiju hasn't.

When I've come to halfway through the satellite orbit, I invoke the magic with the planet on my back.

The activation range is 12 kilometer forward, truly space scale.

Flash of light is born together with the invocation.

While protecting my eyes from light so intense the Light-intensity Adjustment skill couldn't catch up, I grasp the situation around me with the Radar and Map.

The Flame of Genesis overflowed in the void sky, getting the dark grey Space Kaiju and the nearby jellyfish and white ball Space Kaiju indiscriminately eliminated.

It's useless no matter where you go. There is no escape from the vastly expanding flame.

The distorted defense of the dark grey Space Kaiju got thoroughly burned, and then it disappeared from the map in zero point several seconds.

--The convergence isn't too good.

The flame should have been extending in front of the invoked point in a cone-shaped form, but it spread in every direction instead.

Moving in accordance to Crisis Perception, I escape to the other side of the dimensional gap with Unit Movement.

I observe the flame from the other side of the dimensional gap that cuts everything but the visible ray.

Concerning the mystery as to how visible ray can permeate even though it's a dimensional, I'm thinking of analyzing it since it looks usable for many things.

Looking at its speed that's far slower than when it's spreading forward, the flame coming here seems to be only the waves from the after-effect.

The flame that touches the dimensional gap spreads on its surface.

With a snap, the location where the flame hit the dimensional gap cracked.

It'll take a long time from the time of invocation to its completion if I create another dimensional gap, so I directly put magic power into the dimensional gap to restore it.

Although, the Flame of Genesis's burst is limited to one millisecond long, so the flame quickly lost its momentum.

--Good grief, I'm relieved now.

『Satou! What was the flame earlier!』

『Hey, Satou, are you alright?』

"Yes, I've cleared up the things here--"

I lightly replied the World Phone calls from both Biroanan and Boruenan sides to ease their anxiety, and then ask the two a little request.

"I'm sorry but could I borrow the figure of you two?"

『Eh? Yes, it's fine but?』

『What do you want to use it for Satou.』

"The flame was a bit too flashy, so I wanted to borrow your mystical appearances to tell the people of the ground 『Don't worry』."

『Ehehehe, mystical~』

Damn, you cute thing.

『Ah, that's easy.』

『Un, I'm fine too.』

They both agreed when I was in agony, so I go around to statesman and patriarchs of the area where the flame could be seen, telling them『Evil was destroyed through the works of gods』.

Of course, I showed the towns that were in panic the 3D vision of the high elves, calming them down.

It was good that my map range had increased, but because of that Arisa and the others' predicament reached me regrettably late.

From now on, I have to think more carefully when I'm doing magic experiments.

Intermission 2 : John Smith

[※This story is after [Intermission: Zena Squad's Journey (3)]

※For people who don't remember John Smith, please read [Intermission: The Agony of a Transported Person]]

After separating from Mito and the others in Zetsu Earldom, I went toward the Royal Capital by mixing myself among the walking refugees.

I thought I would accomplish my goal there, but--.

"We cannot let you see Master if you don't have a letter of introduction. Go back to downtown at once, commoner."

I was driven out by the mansion's servant in a brusque manner.

The master of this mansion is a famous expert of magic tools--especially artificial limbs, I've come as far as the Royal Capital to replace my arm which was eaten by that damn mantis.

"Damn you gorilla, you'd look better in military uniform than a butler's."

After confirming that the gorilla had disappeared beyond the door, I stood up while cursing him.

"Letter of introduction huh...."

I try remembering my acquaintances in my mind.

Soutari, the long elf-kin who taught me the language of Shiga Kingdom. She's a beauty, but she's an undercover agent, no way she would have noble acquaintances.

Next is the old man innkeeper of Puta town. I was able to continue my journey after teaching mayonnaise recipe to that old man.

He bragged that he was friends with the lord of the town, but it was probably just a big talk, I can't count on it.

Come to think of it, after that, I journeyed together with a female guest of the inn....

Haah, that guy was the worst. She almost sold me as a slave after getting me drunk.... Haah, it'd been possible to buy noble position if I just had my smartphone and memo pad at that time.

I try remembering the people of Ash Rat Principality too.

That red helmet said that he was the elder brother of the chief, so he must have been of ruling classes, but the distance is too far, and even if I got a letter of introduction from them, I don't know how effective it is in a kingdom that discriminates demi-humans like this.

Next, I try remembering the people I met in Seryuu Earldom and Lesseu Earldom.

Wasn't Lilio's plain beauty captain-san a noble. I can't quite remember her name.

She looks like a softhearted person, I think she would write a letter of introduction for me if I ask through Lilio.

I recalled Mito who was sleeping in a mysterious ruin, but she said, "I'm not a noble", and in the first place, it's questionable whether she's a human or not, counting on her is fruitless.

Lilio and the others said that they were going to Labyrinth city if I'm not mistaken.

I vacate the restaurant that I lived-in, and board the stagecoach heading to the labyrinth city.

The old man who owns the restaurant told me to stay and marry his daughter, but I refused since it's not possible for me to cook.

I keep the fact that Lilio's face flashed in my mind when he talked about marriage a secret.

◇

"Is one-arm nii-san going to the labyrinth city too?"

"Yeah, I want to meet an acquaintance."

A kid who's sitting beside me in the coach talked to me.

Breaking my [Don't Talk to Me Aura] while I was blending in the background, he's got quite a communication force.

"I thought I should stop you if you said that you wanted to be an explorer."

The kid smiles befitting of his age while looking relieved.

I thought of getting a job in the labyrinth after meeting Lilio, but it looks like I shouldn't bring up that subject.

"A lot of my acquaintances went to the labyrinth city too, but it became half in a year, and there wasn't any one left in three years."

"....T-that sure is harsh."

"Yeah, it is. But, I'm different y'see? I was taught the way to fight by the town's gatekeeper. Defeating a goblin is easy as pie."

I said, "Is that so, do your best", to the boasting kid and shut my eyes.

What the kid was saying felt like it'd be a flag, so I talked to no one until we arrived in the next town.

◇

"Sorry, but this is as far as I can take you. From here on, you can walk to the labyrinth city on foot."

"Oy! What does this mean! Didn't I pay you to go until the labyrinth city?!"

"It's the viceroy's requisition. Give it up."

A man and the kid who were riding with me pressed on the coachman, but there's no way that a noble decision could be toppled in a kingdom that prefer nobles like this.

The reason for the requisition is probably the swarm of meteorites that could be seen in the western sky this afternoon.

The passengers were frightened, but judging from the time of the flash and the sound getting to us, the falling point should be more than 1000 kilometers away, so it was a needless fear.

It'd be a problem if the meteorite is as huge as the one that made dinosaurs extinct, but if that happened, no use in running anywhere anyway.

I got tired of seeing the passengers harassing the coachman.

After asking for the reimbursement, I try to look for a wagon heading toward the labyrinth city.

Fortunately, within an hour I was able to ride on a wagon that was carrying shafts of spears, axes and hatchets.

It seems growing plants is hard around the labyrinth city, so these kinds of woodworks are carried from the neighboring cities.

It might be a seasonal thing, but there's a lot of young people heading to the labyrinth city.

From children younger than even junior high school students to ones who are of high schooler age.

"There are many explorer applicants this year."

The peddler who's driving the wagon talked to me while gazing the young people walking on the street.

"--Is that so?"

"At this time of the year, it's usual for many youngsters who aspire to become explorers to come out of the woodwork every year, but this year there are some people who defeated『Floormaster』and became nobles. A lot more kids are probably inspired by it."

I see, not American Dream, but Labyrinth Dream huh.

While thinking such a thing, the wagon entered a village protected by barrier pillars. When the wagon stopped at a square, a village-head like man in good clothing negotiated something with the peddler.

Judging from the pattern of our lodging in villages so far, he's probably negotiating the rent for the wagon, water well, and selling woods for the fuel.

The price for these is just several big copper coins, but it seems to be an important income for the village.

The peddler traded some things required by the village like ointment and nails to decrease the cost.

I watch the back of the wagon for thieves while the peddler is negotiating.

According to the peddler, the danger of thieves is more prominent inside such a village than during the journey.

During the season where a lot of youngsters are heading toward the labyrinth city, the Royal Capital's knight order regularly patrol the highway, so thieves and such hide themselves far away.

Besides us, there are a lot of youngsters in traveling clothes doing preparation to camp in the square.

That said, their 'preparation' only consist of them putting their mantles on the ground and napping on it, or preparing for meal. There are a lot of people who are only making bread porridge that consists of dried vegetables and black bread stewed together.

It seems to be normal around here, but I was surprised when I saw black bread being stewed for the first time.

"Thank you for waiting. Let's have a dinner. Can I leave it to John today too?"

"Yeah, leave it to me."

I draw water from the nearby well, and then put it on the pot on top of the stove the peddler put.

When I have the fund, first thing first, I'll make hand pumps and spread it to villages.

The moment bubbles came out in the water in the pot, I put cereals and jerkies to make a risotto. The lump broke when the hot water boiled, and good smell from the spice overflowed.

The other people in the square are looking here with envious look, but we don't have enough to split for them.

It's the peddler's job to put the cooked instant risotto to the bowls.

It's troublesome with just one arm you see. I'd eat directly from the pot when I was alone.

"Yup, it's good. Don't you want to sell this? I think it'll sell well."

"Sorry, but it takes too much effort to make them."

I bluntly declined the peddler's offer for the umpteenth time.

I do want to mass produce it and get some nice profit, but I just don't have enough fund.

There's no doubt that I can profit a lot if I cooperate with someone, but I can only see the future where my partner runs off with the profit afterward, so I don't intend to cooperate with anyone.

I once heard that Echigoya Firm in the Royal Capital is buying idea, but I don't want to get close to it.

Someone who named his firm like the name of a [corrupt merchant in a historical drama] can't be good.

From I heard in the rumor, the firm seems to be peerless even against nobles, there's no doubt that he's probably a reincarnated or a transported person with administration cheat.

Sooner or later, it looks like I'll clash with him, but if possible I want to do it after gaining enough power to.

◇

After crossing the mountain range before the labyrinth city, I saw the labyrinth city and the bald mountains behind it beyond the wasteland.

There are more mountains even beyond that, and it seems to be the desert after that.

Now I can finally rest easy from any more mountaineering.

As we get closer to the mountain foot, the temperature gradually rises.

Sheesh, the climate of this world is too free. It makes me doubt whether it's round.

The temperature rose every time we got closer to the labyrinth city.

It's almost unbelievable that the other side of the mountain is in spring climate.

"Geh, my water bottle is empty."

"No wonder when you drank that much. There's a well at the rest station you can see over there."

"You serious."

I feel like I'll lose to the thirst.

Sheesh, there should have been some vending machines if this is really a highway.

I miss being in Japan.

I look at the airships flying in the sky over head, trying to forget my thirst.

....Impossible. It won't be hard if I can forget my thirst by just doing that.

"If you're thirsty enough to look like you'll die, why don't you just drink from the beria over there."

"--Beria?"

"You don't know? It's the one growing along the highway with spines for leaves. You can pluck off its long thin body or the leaves."

I nod to the peddler, and collect the aloe-like succulent plants nearby.

Following the instruction of the peddler, I cut off the top tip, and then eat the emerald green flesh with a spoon.

"Yuck."

"Is it that bad?"

It's slightly sour on top of smelling grassy.

The coconut milk-like texture isn't so bad, but it's not something you'll eat by choice.

It feels like I'll get diarrhea if I eat too much of them, so I throw them away to the side of the road after quenching my thirst.

◇

The next day, we got into the labyrinth city after passing through a gate protected by huge stone statues.

I part way with the peddler on the main gate, and head toward the west Explorer Guild to see if Lilio and the others are there.

"Huh? Isn't it John."

"Lilio."

Looks like I have a good fortune.

The person I was looking for found me instead.

"What's wrong? Didn't you run after that beauty-san and went to the Royal Capital?"

"I have some business with Lilio--"

I told Lilio about the letter of introduction.

After telling me, "I think it's no good", Lilio brought me to Marientail-san, the captain.

"Letter of introduction?"

"Yeah, I can't ask them to make me an artificial arm without a letter of introduction from a noble."

Marientail-san's expression darkened after hearing me.

"I'm sorry. I am a member of nobles, but a letter written by a noble who isn't their relative will only get laughed off. It has to be at least written by the head of the house with baronage peer or higher..."

--No good huh.

"Can't Iona-san do it?"

"I'm from the house of a baron, but we're a branch family. If I wrote a letter of introduction carelessly, I might be scolded by the head."

Lilio tried to talk with her sexy-onee-san co-worker, but it was quickly shot down.

It's understandable, it's like asking a job from a former boyfriend of your friend if this were in the modern japan.

"Geez, you're really unlucky. It'd have been better if you came before Satou-san departed."

--Satou?

"What kind of person is he?"

"U~mm, you see--"

I'm convinced after hearing Lilio's story.

That guy is either a reincarnated person or a transported one. Moreover, judging from the story of Marientail-san's beginning of romance, the identity of the silver masked hero who had a fist fight with the greater demon in Seryuu City must be that Satou guy.

Considering it's said that he has black hair and plain Japanese-like face, he must be a summoned hero.

The current hero of Saga Empire should be called Masaki, so this Satou was probably summoned by another country.

From the story of Saga Empire's spy, Soutari of the long ear-kin, the people who were summoned by Rumooku Kingdom didn't have any cheat just like me, therefore, that cheat guy must have been summoned by someone else.

Suddenly, I'm reminded of the meteor swarm from the other day and the [Stars Fall] thing that I just heard.

Did that Satou guy use it by any chance?

If that's true, then who the heck summoned Satou?

If he was summoned by a country, then that country would have used that power to unify the whole world.

It seems wars are happening on the eastern and western parts of the continent, but there's no sign of it in the center Shiga Kingdom and the neighboring countries.

Therefore, the summoner should not be a country.

Since he's fought against demons, it doesn't seem like the demons or the demon lords did it too.

....Perhaps, the summoner was the God?

I imagined such a baloney.

◇

Marientail-san offered to ask for the letter of introduction from that Satou guy, but I flatly refused.

Satou must be a cheat main protagonist type of man.

There's no doubt that disturbances will happen in the places where he's at.

I don't want to approach such a dangerous place.

Moreover, Satou's girl--Marientail-san is in this labyrinth city.

Applying tales to real life is dangerous, but from my experience, this world has high affinity with tales. This place should be safe as long as she's here.

Even if anything happened, Satou probably would appear to remove the danger before she got into crisis.

I remained in this labyrinth city with a reason unsupported by anyone.

Of course the reason is not just that.

"John, are you delving alone again?"

"Yea."

"Won't you go with us?"

"Sorry."

I refuse the invitation of a rabbitfolk who's wearing a blue mantle, and delve into the labyrinth alone.

My objectives are treasure chests.

Recently I've found pieces of magic recipe using beria's fruit inside treasure chests in shallow floors.

My intuition tells me that this is Satou-shi's doing.

From the rumor I've gathered in this labyrinth city, this Satou-shi guy is a [Good-natured Japanese]. That guy probably prepared the treasure chest event.

Putting that aside, searching for this recipe pieces is attractive.

Certainly the recipe will make me some profit, but there's another point to be excited about.

Several days ago, the viceroy of Selbira city announced that the explorer who found the last piece would be given the chevalier peerage.

According to the rumor in the city, this was initiated by the viceroy's follower, Baron Dyukeli, but even if they can't give me a peerage, a Marquis should be able to write a letter of introduction.

While checking my home-made map, I break through unexplored area.

It's going to be difficult for the day trip soon.

That said, exploring the labyrinth alone overnight is nonsense.

I can declare that continuing the exploration without sufficient sleep even in the best condition is impossible.

When I was thinking that I should go back soon, the stone monument in the passage began to blink.

--This is bad! It's a Gushing Hole.

I throw the stink ball to the ground, and run away from that place.

However, I was too impatient and didn't mind my steps.

The moment my foot stepped on a large slate on the ground, that slate broke, and a pit appeared.

I immediately threw the rope on my waist, but I had no hero revision that would make it coil around the passage's lumps.

The fact that it was not a vertical pit, but a sloping one was my sole help.

--I have a good fortune.

I wonder how many days have elapsed since I thought that.

It looks like I've fallen to the passage just after the Gushing Hole where monsters appeared.

According to the rumor in the labyrinth city, in 100 years, the only people who treaded upon the end of a Gushing Hole and came out alive were Satou-shi and his companions.

At present, every time I met a monster, I sneaked past ones I couldn't win against, and only fought against ones I could win like goblins and mock-wolf, while advancing through the underground passage.

This underground passage continued deep until a large room filled with spider webs, a dead end.

Of course, there's probably a passage on the other side of the large room, but I know that the goblins presiding in the large room would be my end, I couldn't bring myself to recklessly challenge them.

I was able to survive thanks to mayonnaise jar and rock candies that I always brought just in case, and water trickling on the passage wall.

However, it's getting bad.

I had ran out of mayonnaise on the second day, and the rock candy that I just ate was the last.

Above all, a mantis bastard got stuck on the trap right beside the water source. My life would be in precarious state if I couldn't drink water.

The special bullets, three remaining.

Although, even if I use the gun, there's no way I can win against that mantis bastard.

"Aah.... this is the checkmate huh."

A bullet for the death with dignity--.

"You half-dead person over there, can I have your time?"

--Is it an auditory hallucination?

"If you can give me the knowledge I seek, I can grant you one wish you see?"

--Or perhaps the devil?

Even the devil's fine.

Cure me from this thirst.

"Give me water."

"Here you go."

The water I got was a cold water that was so good it couldn't be expressed in words.

It feels like it's penetrating deep into my body.

After escaping from the extreme situation, I talk to the man with my brain that finally starts to work a bit.

"What do you want to know?"

It's fine if it's just the way to make smokeless gunpowder or internal combustion engine, but it'd be bad if he asked the way to make nuclear weapons.

It'd be the worst if he asked the way to make potassium cyanide or sarin.

"Teach me how to make dried gourd."

"--Ha?"

I unintentionally let out a stupid voice.

What, did he just, said?

"You don't know how to make『Dried Gourd』?"

"No, with bottle gourd, you--"

I teach the man the way to make [dried gourd] while recalling it from my memories.

"I-it is that simple?"

"Yea, the『Dried Gourd』that you want for sushi roll should be with that recipe."

Apparently, he really wanted to know that.

I can't see well with my hazy vision, but the man's delight didn't sound like an act.

"Thank you! D-don't tell me you know how to make cola too?"

"Y-yea..."

I answered the questions the man asked.

I feel like I even answered knowledge that I shouldn't have known too, but that must've been my imagination.

◇

"Kuro-sama, this boy is?"

"Treat him like a guest of honor. I've promised him to grant his wish, so call me when he's awoken."

"Certainly."

I feel like I've heard those while being half-asleep.

The next morning, I woke up in a canopy bed that looked like it was made for nobles, and had a superb feast prepared by a beautiful maid-san for breakfast.

--This is a dream.

I should have been in the bottom of the labyrinth with no way to escape.

--This is the revolving lantern seen before you die.

I mean, my arm which should have been bitten off by that mantis bastard one year ago has been regrown.

I move my fingers and ascertain its touch.

It's fine even if this is a dream.

With both hands, I can create administrative cheat items that I couldn't create up until now as much as I want.

I noticed a letter by the pillow when I was trembling with delight.

Parameters like from Yamato Stone are written on the letter.

John Smith. It's my name in this world.

Level 13. It seems my level has increased by one during my exploration.

I recognized my skills too like, [Skill: Burying, Concealment, Evading], and the last was an unfamiliar one, [Lost Knowledge].

Looks like I got the skill in the labyrinth.

It seems my another world life has turned upward somewhat.

After leaving a thank you letter and a letter written with knowledge of cooking for my lifesaver, I left the mansion behind using [Burying].

My story in another world starts now!

SS 1 : Liza the Magic Spear

[※A short story in Liza's point of view.]

Shiga Eight Swords--.

They're the strongest swords of Shiga Kingdom that eliminate demons.

I was taught those words by my father since I was small.

I would have never imagined that I would have a bout against that Shiga Eight Swords--much less, winning against one.

I, who still can't make Master go serious....

"Liza the Magic Spear, I'll let you serve under my earl house. I'll give you the same salary as a human knight."

"Liza-dono, I wish for a match. Oneself is Kajiro of Jii Gein style--"

"Are you interested in becoming a knight of the kingdom army? We'll welcome you not as a retainer but a holy knight."

Invitations for matches and solicitations came to me one after another.

I troubled Master each time that happened, I felt as thought my body shrunk.

I wonder how will Master think about it this time?

I'm worried Master who hates to be lionized by others would hate me.

Calming my upset mind, I practice the way of spear alone in the mansion's courtyard.

The Magic Edge lights up the dark garden.

Magic Edge that was once something difficult is now as easy as breathing.

If I told this to me from one year ago, there's no doubt that I'd be laughed off.

I shake off such an idle thought and concentrate on the basic form.

--Pierce, sweep, hit.

After finishing the basic form, I continue with the self-taught style I learned during the labyrinth city's battles.

I turn my body aside and then make a leg sweep with my tail.

I sink my body with not just my leg, but also my tail, making use my whole body as a spring, and then stab with my all.

Ending the form, I felt a presence appeared in one corner of the courtyard after I made the motion of returning the sword to its scabbard.

"It's wonderful as always."

"Master--"

Our Master appeared from behind a grove of tree where no one should've been.

I could faintly feel Tama's concealment technique, but Master's concealment is too natural I can't sense it at all.

"Was I a bother with the sound?"

"Not at all. The other girls are sleeping with such happy faces after all."

Master talked gently to me who was being timid as if reassuring me.

And, I put out cruel words to that kindness.

"If Liza is interested in Shiga Eight Swords, it's fine if you want to accept it okay?"

"Am I already unneeded--"

--How cowardly of me.

To think I said something like that while anticipating the gentle Master to deny it.

"No way. It'd be lonely if Liza wasn't here."

I let out a sigh of relief after hearing that.

"Nevertheless, I want to prioritize what Liza wants the most. If that's what Liza really wants, then I will respect that decision."

Kindness may sometimes becomes poison.

I understand that Master does not need anyone in the truest sense.

--Even so.

Even so, I want to be with Master.

I swear to my partner, magic spear, who's glowing red receiving my determination.

Someday, an existence that can be relied upon by the aloof Master, I--.

--Will become one.

I don't remember whether I was able speak those words in the end.

However, surely.

My spear knows.

SS2: Satou's Inspection

With a cage filled with house mice that Tama and Pochi caught in the royal capital on one hand, I teleport to the epidemic prevention laboratory using Unit Arrangement.

This place is completely isolated from the outside world, so I can only enter here through teleportation.

I put on a white lab coat, and then take out one of the mice inside the cage with [Magic Hand].

The mouse looks around the room restlessly while squeaking.

"Chu?"

"Sorry, but I'll have you go along with the experiment."

I open the unwary mouse's mouth, and make it drink the upper grade potion mixed with my blood--Nectar with a bulb syringe.

The house mouse screamed and then it fainted.

Its small body looks like it's gotten a bit stronger, its health and stamina are about to run out.

I put some sugared water in the mouse's mouth, and then put it in a different cage than the first one.

The sleeping face of the mouse looks somewhat happy, but that must be my imagination.

I dilute the Nectar with water 10 times its concentration, and then make the next mice drink it.

There wasn't any who disliked it, but several of the mice collapsed.

After trying it with around 10 mice, I ended the experiment and put them in the third cage.

When I was about to continue the next experiment, I noticed that the mice in the cages had gotten up and were staring at me.

I wonder if it's just my imagination, I can feel intelligence in the mice's eyes.

The AR indicator showed that the first house mouse that I experimented with had its race changed to [Sage Mouse].

As for the rest of the mice I experimented with, three out of the ten changed into [Sage Mouse (Low)]. The other seven mice remain a mouse.

I let the other mice that haven't been experimented with to drink my blood.

They lick my blood with their small tongues, but their body aren't changing.

Next, I drip my blood into a new upper grade magic potion with various ratio, and then give it to the rest of the mice.

The house mice aren't changing just like with my blood.

Apparently, the problem is with the blood coming from the arm that has been encroached with the divinity from the Divine Sword.

I'm relieved that I don't have to worry about something like high human appearing after having some night life.

Now I can visit the pleasure quarter during the journey without hesitation.

◇

The next experiment is with the [Evil Philosophy].

I want to test what'd happen if I make a creature get close to a crystallization of miasma.

Of course, I'm doing it in a laboratory located on a different area than the earlier.

I'm using a small fly for this experiment.

When I took the small fly close to the Evil Philosophy, it quickly transformed into a huge monster.

It looked like it was going to attack me, so I created an elongated magic edge on my fingertip and cut the monster in half.

A whitish Magic Core dropped down from the cross-section.

Looks like there's no doubt that the miasma is the main cause of monster transformation.

I put the Evil Philosophy into my Storage, finishing the dangerous experiment.

There's no doubt that the ingredients of Fiend Drug, Ruin Grass and Decay Stem, are plants that attract miasma.

In other words, in the place where Ruin Grass and Decay Stem are being cultivated, wouldn't the number of monsters increase?

I'd like for someone to investigate it, but the Ruin Grass and Decay Stem are poisonous even in their raw forms, so it's dangerous for a normal farmer to grow it.

Moreover, someone could potentially misuse it if they knew that they're ingredients of the Fiend Drug.

Looks like I need to uproot these characteristics, and create ones, perhaps by selective breeding, that can't be misused.

It'll be hard if I can't find a researcher I can trust for this.

Princess Shistina probably would gladly do it, but there's no way I can let a princess of the whole kingdom to deal with poisonous plants.

It might be a good idea to ask the elf botanists.

◇

I head to the next laboratory with Unit Arrangement.

After using space magic [Extend Space] to secure the space, I lay out three-meter thick humus on the ground.

Normally I should've created a ridge, but I don't have any knowledge in that area, so I do it like this.

The experiment this time is the cultivation of the potato that's turned huge after absorbing the blood soaked in divinity.

Even though it's a giant potato, its species is neither [High Sweet Potato] nor [God Potato], it's still a potato.

I use the leaf of the giant potato I took out of the storage as a seedling.

I plant it in the soil, and sprinkle water on it.

There's no particular change.

Looks like it's not a strange seed like the giant potato that suddenly grew big.

In order to observe it, I made a Wood Puppet with magic and ordered it to watch over the cultivation, I decided to leave it for a while.

I've put up a light source with light magic, so there should be no problem with photosynthesis.

◇

『Master, where are you?』

"I'm in the lab."

Arisa contacted me with [World Phone].

I'm surprised that she could reach me at this distance without any relay. As expected of magic.

『Hm~m, can we go play there?』

"I don't mind, but it's a bit far, so I'll teleport you myself."

『Alright! I'm with Mia, so teleport us together okay.』

"Okay."

I move to the observatory room used for resting, and then bring Arisa and Mia there.

"Eh? Awawawawa--"

"Satou."

I receive Mia who jumped three-meter long.

I catch Arisa who's surprised with the sudden zero gravity, and lead her to the attached sofa.

"W-why is it zero gravity."

"Void sky."

Mia who was staring outside the observatory room shortly answered Arisa.

Yes, this is a laboratory I've built in the outer space to prevent disaster.

The laboratory where I was earlier is at 1G like on the earth by using gravity magic, but this is the lounge for receiving guests, so I've left it at zero gravity.

"Uhya, where can I see the earth?"

"I don't think you can see it since there's no planet in the visible distance."

I gave Arisa a drink in a tube while answering her.

"Hey hey, can I take out the juice from the tube and then drink it with a straw while the juice ball is floating in the air?"

"Yeah, there's no precision instrument here, so it's okay."

"Alright!"

This experimental satellite is a simple structure of a mass of rock I made on the ground, put in the storage, taken out in the space, so there's no danger with just moisture.

Arisa floated the juice ball, stabbed it with a straw and then began to drink it gleefully.

Seeing that, Mia imitated her.

"Haa, with this I can cross out another one from the things-I-wanna-do list."

Arisa who had finished drinking the juice satisfyingly leaked out a sigh.

Arisa requested, "Another one!", while grinning and sending a peace sign, so I take out my latest creation, fruit milk.

I actually wanted to take out the cola, but it was a big failure when I experimented on it alone, so I took this one out instead.

As we're at it, I invite the other girls too.

While swimming in the air, everyone is drinking the juice, or playing with the zero gravity, each of them are enjoying the unusualness the way they want.

I also played around with childish innocence after a long time.

Doing something like this once in a while is nice!

SS3 : The Phantom Underground Empire

[※ It's not in Satou's point of view.]

I am Chuu Fat. <TLN: Call itself using 'Wagahai'>
An excellent name given by my great master.

I said, 'chuu chuu', to gather my followers.
I distribute the cheese soufflé that the black-haired celestial maiden-sama has bestowed me to my followers.

The celestial maiden-sama is a retainer of my great master, she's an expert cook.

I take a bite too.
It's truly delicious.

This clear rich flavor melts my thought with my instinct.

--Cheese is dangerous.

When I came back to my sense, the cheese soufflé in the large plate had disappeared, and there were the figures of my followers sleeping with full bellies while looking satisfied.

I was thinking of using their favorite food to raise their morales....

Well fine, it's natural to sleep after eating something good.

I will also sleep for a bit.

◇

It has already been 10 days since I was given intelligence by my great master.

The three of my wives who evolved together with me have all delivered children.

It is good that the Sage Mouse species increases, but I ought to increase my servant followers too.

Fighting is all about number.

Because my mission is building an underground empire in this Royal Capital and presenting it to Master!

◇

The green devil hunted my servants yet again.

After having a fierce fight with the sewage rats in the underground tunnel, the expansion of our newly built underground empire on the surface was hindered by that guy.

In front of the devil that came sweeping down from the sky, even I, who's overflowed with intelligence, am not able to do anything.

--No, 'was not'.

It'll be different from now on.

Swoosh, I froze when I heard sounds of flapping wings, but my fear went away when I heard the 'chuu' afterward.

When I turn around, I see the figures of my sons.

I'm fascinated by my gallant sons who are riding on the back of the ravens.

They, the Raven Riders, are the elites of our underground empire.

There will be nothing that can stand against us who have attained mobility in the sky.

◇

--How could this be!

I can't believe that more than 10 strong Raven Riders got easily crushed!

If this keeps up, my charisma as the emperor will dwindle.

I cannot fail here.

I have to offer everything in this Royal Capital to my great master.

Chuu chuu!

I make a speech in front of my followers and servants.

Gununu, looks like it was too difficult for them, not only the servants, even the followers have fallen asleep.

These guys can't understand at all that the existence of this underground empire hangs on this battle.

I have my followers who are equipped with spears and shields to ride on giant ravens, and then I order us to take off while sitting on the throne installed on a giant raven.

The green devil quickly showed itself the moment we left the chimney.

Even while flinching to the sound wave attack, pirupiru, we gallantly stay in the battlefield without fleeing.

The magic spear long chopstick didn't faze the devil, and even the magic shield pot lid couldn't withstand the devil's beak.

Before I knew it, all of my followers have been defeated by the devil, my life is only a matter of time.

How could this happen.

To think I, who have been created by my great master, would lose my life in such a place!

--Piruru?!

The devil who had caught me in its talon looked up to the sky and cried.

--KYEWWROUUUN.

A giant monster bigger than the green devil fell from the sky.

The creature who landed before the devil, sat down in front of it, the reverse of what happened with me and the devil earlier.

How pleasant.

My life would end together with the devil, however, my descendants will inherit the empire.

Now, giant monster.

Eat the devil.

Covering my frightened heart with haughty words, I close my eyes and wait for my end.

"Huh? Why is the infant dragon in a place like this? What's this, Hisui is here too huh?"

This voice is of my great master!

--KYEWWROUUUN.

--Pipiru! Piru! Piru!

For some reason, the giant monster and the devil were delighted like me when they saw Master.

We look at each others....

Apparently, these guys are servants of my great master too.

As expected of my great master.

I will give my all along with Royal Capital to you.

Joining hands with the green devil the ruler of the sky, and the giant monster that resembles the legendary dragon, we will dominate all.

Please wait for a little bit of time, my great master--Satou-sama.

My loyalty will forever be with the great you.

SS4 : Excursion

[※ This time it's in Pochi's point of view.]

Today we're having a fun excursion nanodesu.

Once this excursion is over, Pochi is going back to the labyrinth city, she will part ways with Mabudachi and Shatei, it's sad nodesu.

That's why, Master and Liza said, "Make a fun memory", while sending Pochi and her friends off.

"March stop! We will take a break here. Upperclassmen of the knight school are to take care of their underclassmen."

When the lance corporal-san with blue beard shouted out loud, Mabudachi and Shatei fell down on the ground and made huff puff gasp noise.

"Huff, I never thought that walking in a forest would be this hard."

"You're really raised in the royal capital...."

"Look at Pochi-san and Tama-san. They're fine right?"

--Pochi and Tama?

It somehow felt like we were being praised, so together with Tama, Pochi took a shakiin pose.

"Oy, first year! Don't play around and rest properly. We're going to walk in the forest until the evening. Rest your body a bit now."

The head of the upperclassmen hit Pochi's head, giving her advice.

--Pochi is still quite alright nanodesuyo?

So I thought, but Pochi saw Tama made a [Don't say it] pose on her mouth, so Pochi kept her silence.

◇

Pochi can't get tired walking on the soft ground of the forest.

When Pochi played hopscotch, the upper class onee-san who acted as the rear guard scolded her, "Be serious."

--Something's strange?

Pochi listen with her ears twitching.

Pochi can't hear anything.

"Pochi~?"

Looks like Tama noticed the oddness too nodesu..

"It's strange nanodesu."

Pochi noticed too, she nodded to Tama.

"What do you mean by strange, dogfolk first year?"

Pochi answers since the upperclassmen head-san asked her.

"The forest is quiet nanodesu."

"That's because there are a lot of us moving in it, isn't it natural?"

"It's different nodesu. The presences of the pack of wolves that were tailing Pochi and the others, and the Eyeball Hopper that was looking here from beyond the forest both disappeared nodesu."

Even though Pochi properly explained, the upperclassmen head-san whacked Pochi's head nodesu.

"Don't say stupid things--"

The one who said stupid is the stupid one nanodesuyo?

"--If such packs of monsters were really there, the knight escort-sama and the corporal-dono should have told us."

Classhead-san whacked Pochi's head once again.

"Ouch nodesu."

"Stop being rash if you don't want to get hit."

Classhead-san muttered, "Dang stone head", with teary eyes while patting the hand which whacked Pochi.

"--Coming~?"

Tama noticed it first nodesu.

As expected of ninja!

◇

"Soldier Mantis appeared!"

"Damnit! It was hiding in a hollowed tree!"

"This is bad, the mantis's eggs have hatched! It's a flock of Child Mantis!"

"Students, make a circle and protect each other's back! Concentrate on defending, do not ever go on the offensive!"

When Pochi was going to eliminate the monsters, the blue bearded corporal-san ordered her not to.

Pochi turned around, Tama wasn't there.

"Pi~ Pu~"

Tama who had come back before Pochi noticed mimicked a whistle.

--Pochi knows.

That Tama is doing some ninja thing.

The presence of the War Mantis who was stealthily creeping from behind has disappeared, so there's no mistake about it nodesu.

"Corporal! Leave the small fish Child Mantis to us!"

"Understood! Us ten will protect the students even if we were to die here!"

Don't die.

Master always said so nodesu.

"Three Soldiers, 57 small ones~?"

"There are three Soldiers, but the small ones are 59 nanodesu. The two other children are being carried on their backs nodesu."

Pochi checked her answer with Tama.

There are too few enemies, the short sword on Pochi's waist feels lonely nanodesu.

"It's not use..."

"We can never win with just 8 knights and 16 soldiers."

"It would be a bit better if there were eight upperclassmen and 16 underclassmen."

Either Pochi or Tama can win alone nodesuyo?

Shatei who noticed that and said, "If it's Pochi-san and Tama-san", but he was scolded by classhead-san.

"First year! Did you forget corporal-dono's instruction? The only thing we can do now is by not being a burden!"

--He's tingling, scary nodesu.

"Senpai! We should ask the help of Kishresgalza sisters"

Classhead-san is glaring at Pochi with scary eyes.

Did Pochi do something to be scolded of?

"Hmph, not all Mithril explorers are strong. What are baggage carriers good for?"

Baggage carrying?

"Pochi is good at carrying baggage nodesuyo?"

"You heard that. First year be silence and sit down."

Even Master praised Pochi, "Pochi is really strong", nodesu.

"B-but, if this keeps up!"

"If you really want to be a knight, then know that your superior's order is absolute! Prepare to get expelled from the knight school if you get involved!"

Scolded by the classhead-san, Princess Kelten fell dejected.

"Students! Sorry! Five Child Mantis are heading there! We can't afford to turn our back to the Soldiers. You guys survive until we can help you!"

--Prey?

Pochi matches her eyes to Tama's and nods.

And, when Pochi was going to jump out with Tama, classhead-san glared.

"Underclassmen are to remain in the circle! Azzo, Orus, Urutz, Efna, gain some time by going one-on-one against the Child Mantis. It's alright, you guys can do it! Leave the rest to me! I'll reduce their number one by one!"

--No turn?

A shame nanodesu.

◇

Child Mantis's small sickle ripped the upperclassman's leg.

Blood comes out, it looks really painful nanodesu.

"Dame Pochi Kishresgalza and Dame Tama Kishresgalza."

Princess Kelten looks at Pochi and Tama with a serious expression.

"I ask you in the name of the sixth daughter of Marquis Kelten, Dyumorina. Please save senpais and the kingdom's force."

Pochi also wants to help, but the order is absolute nodesu.

"Senior's order is absolute~?"

Looks like Tama is the same too.

"Please yield on that part. I will bear all the responsibility. That's why, please--"

Tears from the princess eyes are...

"Please, Pochi. I'd take the expulsion too if it meant that."

"Please, Pochi anego, Tama anego! I will also go with you!"

Mabudachi and Shatei also asked together.

--This is the time to decide.

Arisa said nodesu.

Faced with what is right, zaru soba is courage nanodesu.

<TLN: Pochi made a mistake citing Confucius's quote, should've been: "Faced with what is right, to leave it undone shows a lack of courage.">

Pochi will help everyone and get scolded by Master nodesu.

Three days without meat will be days of hell, but Pochi can't refuse Mabudachi and Shatei's plea.

"Pochi, let's do~?"

"Yes nanodesu."

If Pochi is with Tama, they're the invincible and the strongest nanodesu.

"Pochi will leave the many to Tama nodesu."

"Aye aye sir~"

Pochi will defeat the big Soldier Mantis nodesu.

"Uwoh, Pochi-san disappeared?"

"Tama-san too--there!"

"There's a lot of Tama-san?"

The voice from behind quickly drown out by the sound of battle.

"What? There's a small one!"

"Is it a new enemy?!"

"Red light?!"

"Don't tell me, it's a magic sword?"

The equipment today is the short sword [Bamboo Sword], so it's not a magic sword.

Pochi's magic bag has been left behind in the mansion.

But, it's alright.

Because Soldier Mantis is soft.

"As expected of magic sword. That hard Soldier Mantis's head was cut in one slash."

The knight person is surprised, but the only one who uses a magic sword is the knight's biggest-wig. Pochi is not.

Slipping through the second Mantis's sickle, Pochi cuts its legs, like zunbararin.

Pochi runs up its slanted body, and then pierces its head from behind, like doshu, ends.

Lastly, heading toward the hiding Assassin Mantis on top of the three, ju~mp and splash.

Green blood spreads out.

Pochi kicks the tree's trunk toward the safe area.

Pochi is already not the same from Pochi who cried from being covered in octopus's ink.

◇

There was a bit of trouble, but we had a barbeque with the wild boar Tama caught on the camp site, and defeated flame bug and had a camp fire, it was a really fun excursion nodesu.

Pochi wants to do it together with Master and everyone next time nodesu.

SS5 : Southern Island

"Eh~, the southern island isn't at the sea?"

"That's right. I haven't finished the reclamation, so if you wore swimsuits there, you'd have a bad time dealing with the bugs and the beach creatures."

When I told Arisa who came in swimsuit and swim ring like I was threatening her, the youth troupe who entered the room following Arisa turned right back to change their clothes.

I could use magic to defend against it as much as they like, but I decided not to say it.

We can play on the shore after I've prepared the sandy beach.

"Boo boo!"

"Don't complain with boo boo, go change your clothes. Once the reclamation is over, I'll prepare it so that we can have a vacation with swimsuits there."

"Ho~i. ....Don't forget your promise okay?"

Arisa went out of the room unwillingly.

It's unfortunate that I can't see the charming swimsuits of the youth troupe, but there will be many chances from now on, so let's postpone the fun for later.

◇

"--hot."

"This is the southern island after all."

I think it's around 38 degree?

It's only like an extremely hot day in Japan, so I think it's actually rather cool for this equatorial island.

"I feel like eating watermelon."

"Nn."

Arisa who's wearing explorer-like clothes made a request while looking like a dog during an extremely hot day.

I have a lot of watermelon stocked up from Boruenan Village, I'll take some out once the preparation for the reclamation is complete.

"Banana~?"

"Pochi wants to eat pineapple nodesu."

Tama and Pochi point their fingers to different directions while their noses are sniffing.

Looking at the map, I saw that Tama pointed at bananas, and Pochi was toward pineapples. Both of them have good noses.

"Private Tama, Private Pochi!"

"Aye!"

"Yes! Nanodesu"

When I called, the two saluted back in military style.

"Using mowing equipment, constuct the Banana Highway and the Pineapple Line!"

"Aye aye sir~"

"Roger nanodesu."

The two took out huge orichalcum sickles out of their magic bags and equipped them.

They were spirited enough it was as if there was a clink sound.

"Charge~"

"There is no road in front of Pochi as it will be behind Pochi nodesu."

Moving at a speed that would put lawnmowers to shame, the two began to make way while pushing their way through the jungle grass.

"Isn't it faster if Master does it with magic?"

Arisa's opinion is correct, but using magic is too easy it's boring.

◇

While chewing the cooled watermelon and pineapple, we go around the unpopulated island on an open-type flying board.

At first we were exploring on foot, but on top of not having fun obstacles like bottomless swarms or wild beasts, there were a lot of mosquitoes and bugs in the thickets, so Arisa snapped.

It would have been fine if she was just making noise while grumbling, but we had to stop the on-foot exploration since she was going to burn down the whole island.

"Swish swish~. Summer means watermelon after all."

Arisa who's spitting the seeds while biting the red watermelon has a smile on her whole face.

Looks like she's back in good mood.

"Agreeing with Arisa, so I declare. Launching the seeds is fun, delightful."

Nana bites the watermelon with a serious face.

The fruit juice running along her cheeks to her breasts looks sexy.

"Master, please wipe it, so I appeal."

"Sure thing."

Looks like she doesn't like sensation of the fruit juice, Nana asks while pulling her front neck with one hand.

I readily consent and take out a handkerchief from the Storage--.

"Sure thing. NOT!"

Arisa barked toward the sky while repeating my words.

"Arisa, you'd fall down if you stood up suddenly. Master, I'll do it for you, so please lend me the handkerchief."

While scolding Arisa, Lulu quickly took the handkerchief from my hand and wiped Nana's chests on my place.

Lulu was between Nana and me when she was wiping it, so I couldn't peek at the fascinating valley.

--Lulu, what a frightening girl.

When I was imitating Arisa in my mind somehow, Mia came to me.

"Satou, a~n."

"Thank you, Mia. The pineapple is good too isn't it."

"Nn, good."

I chew the pineapple that Mia fed me.

The pineapples in this island have pretty good balance between sourness and sweetness. I feel that it's far more delicious than the pineapples circulating in the Royal Capital and the Duchy Capital.

"Pineapples are delingerous nanodesu!"

"It is, isn't it."

I agree to Pochi who's delightfully holding pineapple skewers on both hands.

Apart from that, Pochi. You mixed up delicious and dangerous you know?

The bananas that Tama brought were still green, so I made it ripe with an original customized version of the darkness magic's [Decay]. Magic really is convenient.

"Ooh, the green banana became yellow?!"

Seeing that, Arisa raised a surprised of voice with round eyes.

She likes to exaggerate like usual.

"Delish~"

"Pineapples are tasty, but so do bananas nanodesu."

"Nn, agree."

Beside everyone who's eating the bananas, Arisa made a cliche gag, "Do bananas count as snack?", and failed hard.

Since eating them just like that would be tiresome, I tried making banana shakes.

The shakes were very popular, but I ended up having to make watermelon shakes and pineapple shakes too.

◇

"By the way, is it alright to leave Liza-san alone?"

Arisa asked while looking at Liza who was playing around with the sea monsters.

Looks like Liza is making use of magic armor to create magic snow-shoes to float on the sea.

It seems Liza will master Sky Drive before long.

"Strange. I asked Liza to help power-leveling Zena-san and the others on the shore."

There's no way that Liza would get tired and went to play around, she must have a reason for it.

"Ah, look look! She's waiting until Zena-san and the others have finished defeating the monster on the shore, and then lures another to them."

Arisa told the situation while pointing below.

I see, she's managing the monsters to make them fight Zena-san and the others in turn.

Liza is fit to be an excellent manager.

On the shore, Zena-san and Sera-san act as the rear guard while Lady Karina is the vanguard.

The front line can't be hold by just Lady Karina who's an attacker alone, so I've deployed 10 sand golems as their shields.

After encouraging Zena-san, Sera-san and Lady Karina who were doing their best on the ground, we went back to go around the island, I made the reclamation plan while holding the map on one hand.

There's an island as big as Awajima island in the large inlet, I'm planning to make a harbor and dwelling houses near the inlet.

"Might as well make a palace! One that's like the one in the Arabian Night."

Fumu, the one with fresh cream on top of it?

I'll ask Arisa to draw it later.

The other girls also give their varying opinion.

"House of cake."

"House of meat~?"

"House of hamburg steak is nice nodesu!"

"Master, house of stuffed toy is good so I appeal."

It's not clear which remark is whose, but they're imaginative ideas befitting of children.

"I'd like to have an oven and a steam cooker in the kitchen. I don't mind if there's no washing machine, but I'd be happy if there's a garden with roof so I can air laundry even during rainy days."

Only Lulu gave a realistic opinion.

She's as reliable as a housewife who's buying a house.

When we went back to the shore to meet Liza and the others as the sun fell, Zena-san and the others were lying on the shade of trees.

It doesn't seem like a heat stroke, it's probably the level-up intoxication.

"There's a lot of meat, it's exciting nanodesu!"

"I'll help~"

"Pochi will also help with the dismantling nodesu."

Tama and Pochi ran toward Liza who was draining blood and dismantling the large amount of monsters in the shore.

Today, the dinner changed to barbecue in the shore, we ate the fresh seafood and the marine delicacy with relish.

Thus, we forgot about the busy days in the royal capital, and fully enjoyed the vacation that harked back to summer holiday.

Now then, it's back to work tomorrow.

I'll get fired up and work hard!

SS 6 : Tifaliza

"Tifaliza, has Kuro-sama contacted yet?"

"Not yet."

Elterina seems strange today.

She's usually the calm, cool, collected and commanding manager of Echigoya Firm, yet today she's humming unconcernedly like she's going to dance.

For her to be this merry, something really good must have happened.

I wouldn't have fallen into a slave if I had the inter-personnel skill to ask her, "Did something good happen?", but it's quite hard to change my personality and sense.

Someone appeared in the center of the office--it's our master and the owner of Echigoya Firm, Kuro-sama.

"Kuro-sama! Welcome back."

Elterina quickly rushed up to our white-haired Master.

I and the executives favor Kuro-sama, but I don't think it's at her level.

However, suddenly grasping Kuro-sama's hand, I think she lacks moderation as an employee.

Even though Kuro-sama doesn't mind it, your fingers! Having your fingers entwined is just too much!

The fingers that Elterina holds are moving toward the chest--I have to prevent it!

"Kuro-sama, this is the high-priority report. Please confirm it."

"Okay."

Kuro-sama breaks loose from Elterina's hands and receives the documents I presented.

Elterina glared at me reproachfully, but this can't be helped--you were too much.

◇

"Kuro-sama could I have your time for a bit?"

When the report reached a point where we could take a break, Elterina asked Kuro-sama while blushing.

"What is it?"

"Forgive me for talking about my personal affair, but I want to inform Kuro-sama about the matter of my engagement."

The engagement that Elterina talked about is probably about the one with the neighboring Viscount Satou Pendragon.

He's a Mithril explorer and also the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry that the prime minister founded. He's also engaged to the biological little sister of the crown prince Soltrick, the sixth princess Shistina, a promising young noble.

"It's about Sir Pendragon isn't it."

"Yes, it was safely broken off!"

She was always melancholic ever since the engagement was brought to her house by an upper noble.

It seems she was that frolic because it was called off.

"I'm happy that you're pleased."

I slightly frowned hearing what Kuro-sama had said.

That's as if--.

"Did Kuro-sama do something to it?"

"That's right."

My chest feels fuzzy even though it was a good thing.

--This is perhaps jealousy.

The things that happened during the first day of labyrinth training flashed in my mind.

At that time, I felt the same thing when I saw Elterina and the other executives being held in Kuro-sama's arms.

And, embarrassment that made me feel like running off and delight, when I was being embraced.

--It looks like I'm really also in love with Kuro-sama just like Elterina.

"Kuro-sama!"

I caught the waist of Elterina who was going to hug Kuro-sama with her arms open.

"--Tifa?"

"Kuro-sama is still talking."

Toward Elterina who turned to me looking wondering, I told her that as if that was the reason all along.

"Have you noticed that this appearance is not my true figure?"

Elterina and I affirm Kuro-sama's question.

It was usually perfect, but when he was looking sleepy during the end-of-year, the cheeks part was slightly loose, the number of seam was different, and there were some times when his speech was different.

I think only Elterina and me noticed it.

"This figure was something I made so I could act without being tied."

"So Kuro-sama was really the same person as Hero Nanashi right."

"That's right."

Elterina trembles in delight hearing Kuro-sama answer.

I understand how she becomes like that hearing the one you love is the kingdom-saving hero.

However, I think that Hero Nanashi is also a temporary figure just like Kuro-sama's usual appearance.

"And, this figure is my true appearance."

"Wha! N-no way!"

Elterina opened her eyes wide and inched back.

Of course it's not that he's ugly.

His face is a bit plain, but a face is just a piece of thin skin. It's nothing but something used to attract the opposite sex.

In place of the shocked Elterina, I speak the words that she wants to say.

"So Kuro-sama is Viscount Pendragon."

"Yeah, I'm sorry for being like I fooled you."

Viscount Pendragon appeared under Kuro-sama's mask.

There are certainly too many common points between the two.

Distinguishing themselves in a short amount of time, having no greedy desires, and no political aim, yet they became the center of the authority, and, that their strength seemed bottomless.

--The fact that he's surrounded with only women is also the same.

"Ku-Kuro-sama.... S-since the engagement was called off, um, th-that mean, I'm--"

"It's not because I don't like you. I'm currently courting the queen of the fairy, so I don't intend to go forward with other marriage proposals."

Queen of the fairy?

Starting with the elves, most of the fairykin have parliament system with their elders, so the only ones that are monarchy are the Spriggan and Leprechaun kingdoms.

Either way, since they're not of the same race, the possibility of the other party agreeing with the proposal is nil.

Although, even excepting Princess Shistina who was announced to be his fiancee, there are Sera-sama the daughter of a duchy house, and the daughter of Muno Earldom, the [Aloof Beauty] Karina-sama.... Elterina has a lot of rivals.

I can't help but sympathize with Elterina, but it has nothing to do with me who's a slave.

"--Do you hear me? Tifaliza?"

"I'm sorry, I was thinking about something else."

"Then, I'll say it again okay. I'm thinking of freeing you from slavery. I want you to work at Echigoya Firm as an executive."

--freeing from slavery?

"I'm a crime slave, so freeing me should be impossible."

"I've got the permission from the king. Of course, for Nell too."

Kuro-sama returned a smile to my panicked words.

"I-I--don't want to be freed."

Going against that smile, I conveyed my wish.

"Why, could you tell me?"

I shake my head to the bewildered Kuro-sama.

--I'm a coward.

Kuro-sama probably will do bigger and bigger projects from now on, getting to even higher grounds, expanding his places of activities.

Unlike Elterina who's resourceful, the only thing that I can do is filing documents.

Without the bonds of slavery, I do not have the confidence to stand beside Kuro-sama.

And, I cannot honestly express the favor I have like Elterina.

I'm a "coward" who couldn't even pull Kuro-sama's hands when he brought me to the bed.

"Right now, not yet. Someday--"

--When I have enough confidence to tell my feeling straight.

Once I cross that, I will discard my slave position and tread my foot on the battlefield called love.

Someday, standing in line with Elterina who should be respected, I want to walk that road.

14-1. Sightseeing Base

Satou's here. When I hear about personal airplane, I imagine it to be a special high performance craft, but in actuality, I think that that person in question would have customized it so much that it'd be a [hard to use by other people] airframe. Mass-produced airplanes are the best after all.

◇

"It's the seaaaaaaaa!"

"Sea~?"

"Sea nanodesu!"

With Arisa in swimsuits leading, Tama and Pochi who are also in swimsuits run on the sandy beach toward the sea.

I see them while relaxing on a beach chair.

"Pochi Tama, Boost On!"

"Roger~?"

"Aye aye sir nanodesu!"

Pochi and Tama run on the sea surface while lifting Arisa from both sides.

Apparently, they've mastered the technique Liza used to walk on the water surface back then.

"Uhahahahaha"

"Nyahaha~?"

"This is fun nodesu!"

I reach my hand to the side table while looking at those energetic children.

I put the straw of the cooled tropical drink in my mouth and lightly suck it, the flavor of summer spreads in my mouth.

"Pochi, balance~"

"Ah, nanodesu."

"Uhhyaaaaaaa"

Over at the sea, Pochi couldn't maintain her water surface float, Tama and Arisa whose legs were entangled with Pochi's tumbled together, and lastly the three made a huge water splash.

"Are you alright?"

"Uy.... I thought I'm gonna die."

"Huhuh~?"

"It's Master nanodesu!"

Being called back by Unit Arrangement, the three are sitting under the beach parasol in their own style each.

Tama is wearing pink-colored separate swimsuits, Pochi's swimsuit has the same model as Tama's but they're yellow. Tama's is of the skirt type, Pochi's is of the short pant type.

Arisa is wearing an old school swimsuit model.

Of course, there's a tag written with [Arisa] sewn on the chest area.

She's devoted to the cliche like always.

In addition, their swimsuits are made from the newly developed expensive synthetic fiber.

Using the information I got from Lost Knowledge skill, I made it from crude oil found in the underground labyrinth.

It seems like it'd become the target of the god's punishment, so I don't intend to popularize it.

"Satou, look."

Mia appeared wearing white and light blue stripped bikini, and twirled once.

Her hair which is usually in twintail style is bundled like Zena-san's, it feels fresh.

"Yup, you look cute."

"Yay."

When I honestly praised her, Mia clung to my neck.

I put the glass on the side table.

Because--.

"Tama too~"

"Pochi wants to stick together too!"

"W-wait, that's unfair!"

--The children jumped at me mimicking Mia.

I stop their momentum with [Magic Hand], catching the three gently.

It goes without saying that I put Arisa in a position where she can't sexually harass me.

"Everyone, you're troubling Master you know?"

The one who told everyone to be prudent was Lulu who's wearing a monokini with a cardigan on the top.

Her back and shoulder line can't be seen due to the cardigan, but her belly button and cleavage are peeking from the gap, the immoral feeling is overflowing.

Yup, I'm glad that I stopped Arisa from making Lulu wear the [Maid School Swimsuit].

"Master, completed the transportation of the swim ring and the beach ball, so I report."

From behind Lulu, Nana appeared while carrying a large quantity of play equipment.

Unfortunately, due to the plot of the impregnable fortress pair, Nana is not wearing bikini but a one-piece type swimsuit.

Although, as the consequence of her plain swimsuit, Nana's breasts look like it'll burst open from the inside, asserting themselves.

I think they should assert themselves that boldly from now on.

In addition, Nana's slaves, Shiro and Crow aren't here since they've gone to school.

The plan is for them to commute to the school from Pendragon Mansion during our sightseeing tour. In the future, I want to establish schools in the labyrinth city or Muno city, and have those girls be the teachers.

"Ah, it's Liza nanodesu!"

Pochi who's checking the water spray at the sea shouts out while tilting her body.

Before long, Liza who's wearing a traditional sleeved swimsuit comes from the sea while carrying a yellow object. The stripe pattern of orange and white hurt the eyes.

"Master, I have completed the test run of the banana boat."

"Was there any problem with the operation?"

"Yes, despite its high speed, the retention force of the seat appears to be low. In case of a battle, I'm afraid that there's a high possibility the passengers get thrown the sea."

Liza.... That's an equipment for playing.

"Then would you like to examine it once again to improve its performance?"

"As you wish."

While giving another drink to Liza who looked satisfied, I gave her a new instruction.

It looks like she likes the banana boat, she should play it again.

"Master, hoping to participate in the valuation of the battle boat."

"Tama too~?"

"Pochi wants to participate too nodesu!"

Nana, Tama, and Pochi looked at me with sparkling eyes, so I took out the second banana boat from my storage and gave it to Nana.

"You're not going Arisa?"

"Hm~, playing with those four sounds thrilling in a different meaning, so I'll go at it later."

Lulu quietly refused while smiling, so I only asked Arisa, and got such answer.

"Satou! The maidens have arrived~"

When I turn around, Hikaru who had come out of the Arabian Night-like palace shouted out loud to me.

Hikaru is wearing bikini with pareo. The bikini chest part is strictly guarded by something called tiered frills.

"Oh, it's Mito-tan. Hiding her desolate chest like that is a good decision isn't it."

Arisa pompously criticized Mito over my shoulders.

Since she stealthily stroked my chest, I told her, "Sexual harassment is forbidden", and make her leave my shoulder.

"Arisa, come here. I have something to talk to you about."

"No nein, it was the evil concealed in this left arm..."

Led by hands, Lulu pulled Arisa away from the beach.

Recently, Lulu is strict with Arisa's sexual harassment, so she's probably going to remonstrate her.

I return my line of sight toward Mito, and greet Mito and the other four girls who came with her.

I had invited Sera, Zena-san and Lady Karina to the secret hideout before, but it's the first time for the last one.

The fourth person is not Aze-san, but Princess Shistina who's traveling together with us in the sightseeing tour.

Unlike Zena-san and the three other girls, I can't trust her unconditionally, so I've made her to rigidly keep my secret with [Contract] skill.

Actually I wanted the Princess to go indignant when I talked about [Contract] skill, but for some reason she gleefully accepted it.

Of course I haven't disclosed as much information as with the other girls.

I've talked about the fact that I'm a [Hero] and the [Owner of Echigoya Firm], so even though she's accompanying the tour, my movement shouldn't get annoyingly restricted.

In addition, about this [Contract] skill, the maximum punishment in case of violation seems to differ in accordance to the skill level, in the case of maximum level like mine, it seems that she could end up in dying state. I tried it with a death penalty crime slave, so there's no mistake about it.

Of course, I can adjust the punishment level, so I didn't set it at such a terrible setup.

While I was recalling such circumstance, a lone girl stepped out among the embarrassed group.

"Satou-san does it look good on me?"

The one who honestly asked was Sera with a slightly reddened face.

The white bikini with stringless shoulder is truly dazzling.

Her white legs that are usually hidden under the miko outfit are wonderful.

Even though they're hidden by a long pareo, they still give off neat and clean charm.

"Yes, they look really good on you."

As I praise her, her face reddens more, and let alone her ears, her shoulders even redden.

"It's a bit embarrassing, but I'm happy to hear Satou-san saying that."

If she showed such a bashful smile when it was just the two of us, I'm afraid that I'd inadvertently push her down.

Zena-san standing beside her was looking like she wanted to say something, so I praise her, "It really suits Zena-san too."

"T-thank you."

Seeing her fidgeting, trying to hide her body with her arms almost makes me feels strange.

Her swimsuit is the sharp-looking one normally used for swimming race. It looks like a high-leg leotard, so it looks really good on Zena-san and her beautiful legs.

Maybe it's my imagination, but I feel glancing eyes since awhile ago.

Apparently, these secluded young women have no resistance against males in their swim wear.

The reason why these girls look embarrassed is not because of their swimsuits, but the problem seems to be with mine.

"....I-it's shameful desuwa!"

Lady Karina who objected is not wearing a swimsuit but a normal dress.

It's a natural thing to say with the ethic of Shiga Kingdom.

However, due to the thin fabric, Lady Karina's splendid silhouette is transparent from the bright sunlight, since it looks more erotic than swimsuits, I think she lacks persuasive power.

"Yes, I only recommended it because they're convenient attires for playing by the sea. I won't force you to wear them, please don't worry."

I told so to Lady Karina who shouted more due to her shame than resentment.

Rather, I was surprised that Sera and Zena-san appeared wearing swimsuits.

"Ara? Exposing your body to your future husband is not a shameful thing to do you know?"

Admonishing Lady Karina is Princess Shistina who's wearing a silk-made long gown.

Her statement is slightly troubling, but following after deaf protagonists' step, I wonderfully ignore it.

"Fu-future, husband--"

Lady Karina whose face is as red as a lobster seems to have reached the climax of her embarrassment by muttering that much, she runs off to the palace while leaving dust of cloud.

Of course I use my magic to put back the blown sand so it won't scatter away.

Swish, hearing that sounds, I turn my line of sight back to the princess.

The princess untie her sash sexily, her transparent silk gown drops down to the sand.

What appear behind it are tube top separate swimsuits.

When a princess wears it, it gives off the immoral feeling of corset.

I say some words of praise toward the princess who's taking a pose while emanating the [Praise me] aura, and then offer her the beach chair beside me.

When I rang the bell on the side table, little figures jumped out of the palace.

"Have you called, Master!"

"How may I help you?"

"Please order anything you want."

The little girls who look like pre-school students are looking at me while waiting for the order.

"Please get enough drinks and assorted fruits for the people here."

"Yes!"

"Understood~"

"Please wait for a bit!"

The little girls who are wearing Arabian Night style servant clothes go back to the palace as fast as the wind.

Those girls are the brownies I've hired to take care of the palace.

They look like little girls, but every one of them is a fully adult woman.

They're of the same race as the manager of the labyrinth city's [Ivy Mansion], Leriril. Their performances are a bit below Leriril, but since there are a lot of them, I've left them to take care of not only the palace, but this whole secret hideout.

The facilitator of these brownies is Leriril's aunt, Loriril. She looks like a little girl outwardly, but it seems she's more than 100 year old.

And then, the last guest appears together with the addition of the tropical drinks.

"Satou-san. I've finished setting up the barrier."

Yuika in a white kimono walks on the white sandy beach.

The white skin that looks like snow peeking from the kimono sleeves and the nape is dazzling.

In addition, her short horn peculiar of a goblin is hidden behind a bandana.

"Thank you. I'm sorry for leaving it all to you."

I offered her a chair while apologizing.

I asked her to set up the barrier since I heard it'd take several days to do it and there wasn't anyone around me that could do it, but it completed faster than planned.

Leaving the job to other people while I'm having something like a vacation surrounded by beauties, I feel slightly awkward.

Although, Yuika herself doesn't seem to mind such a thing.

"This wand is amazing. The range expansion performance is higher than a holy wand."

"That's because it's a specialized wand--"

I stop Yuika who's submitting the wand to me with my hand.

"--If it's alright with you, please take it. I've adjusted it for Yuika-san, so I'd be glad if you use it."

"Y-Yes. I'll be using it regularly."

Yuika smiles while holding the emerald green wand, looking so happy.

I asked her to create the anti-god barrier for three areas of the secret hideout.

Every area is a sub-space created with my forbidden spell [Another World].

One of them is this southern island where everyone is right now as the base.

At first I planned to use the island itself as the secret hideout, but dangerous creatures of the sea never decreased no matter how many times we eliminated them, so I copied that island into a sub-space.

Thus, even a defenseless princess can enjoy this beach worry-free.

In addition, this sub-space only contain the island that's as large as the Awajima island and sea that's five times the island's size.

The second area is a farm area with Oyugock Dukedom's terrain as the base.

This one has virgin forest besides the center part where the portal is, so it needs to be developed from now on.

The size is as big as the original dukedom. It also has the sea, so cultivating marine products seems possible.

And the third one is the desert area for training and experimenting.

It uses the desert to the west of the Labyrinth City Selbira as the base, so I can test magic as much as I want.

There's only a few magic among the forbidden spells that I can't use there.

Having such circumstance, we don't have to worry about the god's punishment even though we're wearing swimsuits made from synthetic fiber of modern age.

I can't thank you Yuika enough.

After introducing Yuika to everyone, Hikaru asked her doubtfully.

"I probably mistakes you with someone else, but are you maybe the 『Queen of Onikin』 Folnis?"

"Um...."

Apparently, Hikaru seems to know an old personality of Yuika who has multiple personalities.

Looks like that remark became the impetus, Yuika's oldest personality, Yuika 3 appeared.

If I'm not mistaken, Folnis is the chuuni name of Yuika 3.

"--What's this, aren't you Yamato? Have you come out of the barrier already? Didn't you say, 『I'll sleep until my destined person wakes me up with a kiss』?"

"De-destined person--"

Looks like the barrier that protected Hikaru's cold sleep was Yuika's handiwork.

Leaving that aside, Hikaru. Don't say that troublesome remark while pointing your finger at me.

See, everyone is looking at me like I'm a cheating man.

I felt like it'd be dangerous if I left it alone, so I told Yuika, "She's a childhood friend and a co-worker of mine", and ended the strange conversation.

"Fumu, if this keeps up, the current Yuika would be at a disadvantage noja."

Glancing at Lulu and Sera, Yuika 3 asked, "Satou, give me swimsuits", so I gave several that looked like it'd fit Yuika.

Yuika 3 used her barrier skill to make a substitute locker room and changed her clothes.s

"How do I look, Satou!"

"It really suits you well."

"Alright--"

Her chest covered in a halter neck top looked clearly more filled up than her real body I saw back then, but I don't have any intention of pointing that out.

It's done naturally, so the other girls don't notice it.

"--H-huh? Eh?! Why am I in this outfit? D-don't tell me it's the first generation-sama's doing?"

It seems her personality has returned, she's trying to hide her body with her arms in panic.

I don't blame her for panicking considering the degree of exposure suddenly rose.

I put on the parka that I wore to Yuika.

....I felt that the pressure from behind rose at that moment, but it must've been my imagination.

◇

Including Yuika who had calmed down, everyone enjoyed the swimming and the sensation of the sea waves.

For some reason the sea has waves even though this is in the sub-space.

It must be like the image of the sun in the sky, it must be a part of the magic that composes the sub-space.

In addition, according to the head maid Loriril, Lady Karina came several times until the palace's entrance while wearing swimsuits, but it seemed she couldn't make her decision, and now she's curled up in her own room in the palace.

I plan to be in the beach in front of the palace for the time being, so I expect her to show off her swimsuit sooner or later.

"U~n, when you're playing on the beach, you'd crave not only the shaved ice and soft cream but also the [Garnish-less Curry], the [Stretching Ramen], the [Violent Roasted Squid with Burning Soy Sauce Smell], the [Immoral Yakisoba], and the [Sacrilegious Roasted Corn]."

Arisa declared so while eating the shaved ice with strawberry syrup.

There were some weird ornaments in the end, but since it's Arisa, there's no deep meaning to it.

Pochi, Tama and Mia ate too fast, they're holding their foreheads in agony.

Since Lulu has warned it beforehand, the other girls are enjoying the coldness slowly.

"I didn't prepare them since they don't match the vacation in the southern island. Why don't we play in 『Beach House』 set next time?"

"Un, then, let's do watermelon breaking!"

That sounds really fun.

Some tactless beeping interrupted such fun time.

The communication linked on the Menu is coming from the trial unmanned airship.

I tap on the caller's mark and connect the call.

『Master. The target point, Labyrinth City Selbira has been captured in the visual. We will arrive in 30 minutes. Requesting your return to the captain's seat.』

"Okay."

I shortly replied to the [Scarecrow 10] the cruise golem that's steering the airship.

The scarecrow's voice is like the old voice synthesizer software, the intonation is awkward.

I compiled the source of the scarecrow's voice by asking one of Echigoya Firm's slave maids.

I thought of using Lulu's or Tifaliza's voice, but they were too busy it was not possible.

"It seems the airship is going to arrive at Selbira soon. Please change your clothes and wait at the entrance."

I tell so to everyone and then go back to the captain seat with Unit Arrangement ahead of them.

"Give me the steering report."

『Cruise test all green. Recorded maximum speed is 300 KM/H. It could reach higher speed, but taking account of the remaining magic power, I ended the test there. Continuing on--』

While listening to the scarecrow which I had left to take care of the bridge, I clean the ocean water with purification magic.

This personal airship is installed with the new type of aerodynamic engine that Prof. Jahad has developed, it's equipped with the function to alter the aerodynamic engine's buoyancy into thrusting force during the cruise.

Its only flaw is that the mileage is bad, so it can't be installed in an airships that use the general-purpose magic furnace.

In addition, it can go even faster if it uses the booster, but since it needs magic power supply from me, I didn't use it during the automatic test.

I change to my usual noble clothes with Quickdress, and look outside through the window that's made of a thin piece of glass-like object.

"It seems there were some bird strikes, but the window doesn't seem to have any scratch."

『Yes, Master. I recommend deploying the defensive curtain [Screen Shield] during the flight.』

"Okay. I approve it."

I approved the scarecrow's suggestion.

This window is made of synthetic diamond, so it'd be fine even against normal bird strikes, but it's probably going to get damaged if it runs into beetle type monsters.

Diamond is weak against heat though, so it might be a good idea to shave the whale's crystalline lens and turn it into the canopy.

In addition, this window was made using the original magic [Charcoal to Diamond] that I remodeled from the advanced magic [Flesh to Stone].

Creating diamonds from charcoals without high temperature-pressure, truly magic.

There's also [Sand to Glass] magic sub-type.

There were glass windows in the house created by [Create House] back then, I made the magic from that code library.

Making use of this code, I also made transparent corundrum from aluminium oxide from bauxite.

Securing the bauxite was annoying, but since it's possible to mine it in the island where the palace island is modeled after, it should be easy from now on.

I should be able to make sapphire and ruby if I can add color to it.

The composition of emerald is complex, so I haven't started on that one.

『Master, entering the landing sequence. Please give me the instruction as soon as possible if you wish to change the landing site.』

"There's no change. Confirm the topography of the landing site."

『Aye aye sir.』

While confirming the ground's undulation, the airship lowers its altitude.

It's quite an excellent automatic navigation program.

Its experience level doesn't seem like it has crashed seven times near the Royal Capital.

There wasn't any dangerous scene for the past 10 days after all.

『Master, there are people in the landing site.』

It seems a lot of people have gathered to meet us before the Labyrinth City's Pendragon Mansion.

I order it to land on the farm near the mansion.

I peek at the ground using [Clairvoyance] and [Clairhearing].

"Uwah, it's an airship!"

"It's a small airship."

"I wonder if master is riding in that?"

"It's landing here instead of the usual place for the airships, so that must be true right?"

"Then, Arisa-chan is in there."

"Nana-shama too?"

"She'll call us young organisms?"

"She will surely hug young organisms."

"I'll ask Pochi-san and Tama-san for the souvenirs from the Royal Capital."

"I'll get knocked down silly by Liza-san after a long while!"

"Ah, I can finally listen to Mia-sama's music."

I'm glad that they're all welcoming. There was one strange thing mixed among them though....

There were many "Young Master~" for me too, but I'll be intruding them in the night anyway, so there's no need to pick it up.

◇

I went back to the secret hideout's palace to pick everyone up.

Initially I planned to link the gate to five places, [Palace Island], [Workshop Satellite], [Echigoya Absolute Secret Control Room], [Labyrinth Villa], and [Personal Airship], but since I haven't completed making the golem that would controls them, I'm working as the temporary transporter.

The reason why Boruenan Forest isn't included among them is to prevent the pixies from intruding in.

And then, the airship lands in the meadow.

The plan is for the Pendragon Team and Lady Karina to get off at the labyrinth city.

After finishing our business in the labyrinth city, I, Sera, the princess, and Zena-san are going to depart for the journey.

Of course that's the official story.

In actuality, we can come and go freely using the gate, so everyone is going to raise their level during the journey, and once we arrive at the touring spots, everyone is going to enjoy the sightseeing together.

The labyrinth group will be in two different places, but this world has no real time information network like in the modern Japan, so even if the rumor spreads, using the airship to transport them during their labyrinth exploration should work as an excuse.

In addition, Hikaru, or rather, Duchess Mito is staying in the Royal Capital. Her setting is that she's a frail woman living in the Duke Mitsukuni mansion in the Royal Capital, so there will be almost no problem even if she's absence.

Since the king and the prime minister know Mito's true identity, they should understand it all as "As expected of Ancestor King-sama."

"Welcome back, Viscount-sama."

While greeting Ms. Miteruna and little girl maids, I salute to my acquaintances flooding the mansion.

I'd take the whole day if I were to great everyone, so I greet them adequately, and then go to where the authorities of the labyrinth city are gathering while only bringing Sera and the princess.

Since we're only going to stay for two days in the labyrinth city, let's do this quick!

14-2. At the Labyrinth City

Satou's here. When I saw the unusually realistic animal toys sold with food on a convenience store, I remember secretly wanting to collect them all. It's the same thing with gacha in recent the social games.

◇

"Your Royal Highness Shistina, it is truly an honor to be graced with your presence."

Marquis Ashinen said such words to us who visited the viceroy mansion.

The people present here aren't only the Marquis couple, the nobles of the labyrinth city with peerage are also lined up in the entrance.

Usually it's the maids and the butlers who would meet the guest, but as expected of a princess, moreover, since she's the little sister of next king from the same mother, the treatment is different.

After princess Shistina greeted them like a royalty would, Sera and I also greeted them and then we were guided to the usual salon.

The salon that usually felt too large now feels a bit cramped due to the amount of guests.

Coming here bringing a lot of sweets as the souvenir is good decision.

"Sir Pendragon, this is a present to celebrate for you climbing the peerage rank and your inauguration to be the Tourist Ministry vice minister. This is not just from me, but all 17 noble houses in the Labyrinth

City."

Marquis Ashinen is giving me a small box that has careful craftsmanship.

Following after him, the other nobles also congratulated me.

"May I open it?"

"Umu."

Opening a present like this immediately after receiving it is the proper manner in Shiga Kingdom, but I inadvertently asked due to my Japanese nature.

--Geh, are you serious?

My surprise surpassed the Poker Face skill as I stared the content of that small box.

"It was worth it getting that by exerting all means, seeing you be that surprised."

"...T-thank you very much."

I take out the [Chant Orb] from the small box and smile at the Marquis and the others.

According to the AR beside the orb, it seems to be something from Saga Empire's [Bloodsucking Labyrinth].

There's a [Light Magic Orb] beside it.

The Chant Orb must be an extra.

They should be quite rare, but getting abundant of drops right when you don't need them happens in games and another world.

It was quite unusual for me to show a worldly desire, so it seems they asked the merchants to look for them as a surprise present.

I'm very grateful. It's not like the thought, "just what was all of my hardships for", didn't flash on my mind, but grumbling after they have gone through a lot of trouble for my sake would make me get hit with a divine retribution.

I feel bad for only receiving things, so I signal the marquis house butler and make him take out the souvenir I've passed on to him earlier.

"These are the tiara and the emerald I saw back then! So you remember."

"Yes, they're articles befitting of Marchioness after all."

I'm indebted to the Marchioness for helping me making the personal connections in the Royal Capital, so I got her the [Tiara] and the [Egg-sized Emerald] that she wanted.

I've sucked up a lot of money from the Royal Capital's nobles, so buying these were no problem at all.

"My! What a beautiful glass-work."

"Satou-sama, is this handicraft the work of a Royal Capital's workshop?"

"Behold! This small handicraft looks as if it's alive."

In addition to that, I presented other things like ancestor king glass statue and small-sized animal glass statues for the servants.

The former was well received as planned, but it seems the marchioness and the noble wives like the latter too.

These were easily made with my original magic [Glass Art], a spell created from [Mud Art] and [Sand to Glass].

At first I made this magic since I wanted a bowl for the shaved ice, but it looks like I can use this for many other things.

"Marquis, I've left the new work to the butler, please enjoy it."

"....B-by new work you mean a work of art?"

"Yes."

It'd cause discord if I only gave the present to the Marchioness, so I haven't forgotten the Marquis's share too.

His present is not my own work, but a [Nude Statue of Man] I got from the Duchy Capital using Unit Arrangement. The Marquis once said, "My friend obtained the new work in the Duchy Capital."

I gave an Echigoya Firm-made set of [Vitality Medicine], [Gloss Skin Medicine], [Hair Growth Formula] to each head of the noble houses. It seems they're hard to get in the labyrinth city, so they were exaggeratedly pleased.

After we had finished exchanging souvenirs, it was the pleasant chat time like usual.

The one that was different was that they wanted me to talk about the gist of the sakuramochi demon attack on the Royal Capital, and Hero Nanashi and the Golden Knights.

It has already been half a month since the incident, so the details should have circulated in the labyrinth city too, but they probably want to hear the raw story from people who were there.

"--The the Royal Capital reconstruction is going well isn't it."

"Yes, it is the result of Hero Nanashi's effort."

The princess replied to the Marchioness with a clear smile.

Please stop glancing at me when you were saying Hero Nanashi.

After that serious talk was over, this time it moved to love story.

"I want to hear the beginning of love of the princess and Satou-dono."

"We met by accident--"

One of the countesses from the Marchioness's circle asked about the topic.

The princess then talked about how she met me with Arisa and Mia as the intermediary, and how I saved her when a monster attacked like it was some sort of heroic story.

Of course she had shrewdly cut the matter about Hisui and my senseless action.

"I want to hear about the start of romance of『Oracle Miko』Sera-sama. You're an entourage of the vice minister, but in actuality, you're the candidate for the second wife right?"

The viscountess asked about Sera's real objectives.

"Yes, you may take it as so. I have acquired the permission from grandfather and father after all--"

After saying so, Sera turned toward me while smiling.

....It's the first I've heard of that though?

"Sera-sama, I think it's better if you talk about that once it's official."

"Yes, that's right."

I warned Sera since it'd be troublesome if some strange rumor circulated.

She obediently assented, and closed the uncertain talk.

Whenever Sera fixes her sitting, she gets closer to me, I wonder if it's just my imagination....

I feel like she's burying the outer moat bit by bit.

Still, I'm glad that I've left Lady Karina in the mansion.

I have a feeling that it'd have been more troublesome if she were here.

◇

After finishing the tea party, we went to the Labyrinth Army garrison.

"""Young Master! Welcome back!"""

Those greetings came from some unfamiliar townspeople and explorers when we passed through the food stall for explorers and the street in front of the Explorer Guild.

For now, I wave my hands through the window.

"You're quite popular."

The princess looked lightly surprised to my popularity.

"They probably remember my face from the『Floormaster』subjugation parade."

"Satou-san, you don't have to be so modest. Satou-san's achievement is famous even in the Royal Capital."

"You're exaggerating."

Replying Sera with a wry smile, I turn around to see some little cheering outside the window.

"Viscount-samaa"

"Young masterr"

"Satou onii-chaan"

Outside the carriage window, I saw little girls and children running after the carriage.

--Are they children of the orphanage?

I stealthily supported a child who tripped her feet with [Magic Hand].

The traffic decreased before long, and the carriage arrived at the destination.

◇

Having arrived at the labyrinth army garrison, we greeted General Eltar and visited the soldiers.

I only brought some famed liquor and smoked sakura salmon of the royal capital as the general and the soldier's souvenir, there's nothing special to mention.

There were these conversations at most.

"You should have been offered a seat of the Shiga Eight Swords, why did you decline?"

"That is too much of a burden for me. Being one of the Shiga Eight Swords requires one's individual strength after all."

General Eltar nodded to my answer while brushing his beard.

In the labyrinth city, it looks like I'm known more as the proprietor who has established explorer training and an orphanage, and also a politician who aligned himself with the marchioness faction rather than an explorer after all.

"So, as you're going to go around the world as the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry, what are your retainers going to do?"

"Liza and the others are going to continue to explore the labyrinth."

"I see--"

Perhaps, he's going to invite Liza and the others to the labyrinth army?

Or so I thought, but General Eltar said some unexpected things next.

"--If you're going to establish a private knight order in the labyrinth city, you can consult me."

I won't make something like private knight order.

It's not like I'll participate in a war anyway, I don't need a private knight order right?

Or rather, if I did make one, that could be an excuse to start a war.

So I thought, but since he said it out of kindness, I replied like a Japanese who could read the mood.

"I haven't thought about it for the time being, but I'll be pleased if I can consult with you when that time comes."

"Umu, you can freely come here."

General Eltar nodded like he was satisfied with my reply.

If I do need to consult with him, I'll bring not a bottle of the dragon spring liquor, but a whole barrel.

◇

"""Young Master! Let's have a feast!"""

When I went to the western Explorer Guild to visit the guildmaster, the drunk staff members and explorers greeted me unanimously.

Looks like they've opened the liquor barrel I sent to the guildmaster and the staff members, and have started a drinking bout already.

The sun is still high, they put the dwarves to shame....

"Ou! Satou, this is some good liquor! It'll disappear if you don't come soon!"

The guildmaster shouted out with a smile from center of the drinking bout.

I'd like to participate if I was alone, but since I'm with the princess and

Sera, that'd be bad.

"Satou-sama, let me take part together with you."

"Eh? Y-your highness?"

It seems the princess is a regular drinker, she pulls my hands and walks toward the guildmaster.

"Oh? Are you already kept on a short leash? First time I meet ya I guess, your highness princess?"

"No, I once took a lecture by the fire magician during a ball in the Royal Capital."

"Ah! That little princess huh! I thought you were a strange princess, but you sure have good eyes for men!"

"Yes!"

Looks like the guildmaster is acquainted with the princess.

The princess drink the liquor that the guildmaster poured. She's quite a good drinker.

The movement of the throat swallowing the liquor looks captivating.

While I was being captivated by the princess, Sera who was sitting beside me pinched my lap.

Sera drank the liquor cup given by Staff Member A with a prickly expression.

"Satou-san! Satou-san is--"

Having drunk the liquor, Sera vigorously said as much and then she suddenly leaned on my shoulder as if her battery was cut.

Apparently, Sera who's been raised in the temple is weak to liquor.

On the other hand, the princess is drinking equally with the guildmaster.

"That was some good drink."

"I drank a lot in the evening parties to excuse myself out, so I became strong at it before I knew it."

I see, it's very like the princess.

"Satou is a bottomless pit too, you two will be a good couple."

"Thank you."

Without minding the guildmaster who called her with [You (anta)], the princess's red cheeks from the liquor reddened even more and she thanked her.

Looking at her, the men said out loud, "Riajuu explode!" with deep resentment.

The one spreading "riajuu" word must be Arisa.

During the drinking bout, I talk with the elf Ms. Sebelkea and the guild manager about their works.

The subject is about the guild administration as asked by Earl Seryuu.

"The compensation?"

Ms. Sebelkea asked shortly like an elf would.

"Please look at this."

"Hou? They'll give the priority for the commerce of the wyvern material and steady supply of the dragon white stones huh..."

I hand over the documents from Earl Seryuu to the manager.

Ms Selbera showed the shadow of a veteran suitable for her age on her young girl-like visage.

The dragon white stone which is the material for making the all-purpose antidote and the light yet highly defensive wyvern material are something that advanced explorers desire regardless of expense.

The all-purpose antidote especially, nobles who have a lot of enemies constantly seek for it, so the demand for it is unending.

At first there were also some medicinal herbs needed for stamina recovery medicine, but now that they can produce beria magic medicine locally the demand had abated, I canceled the plan.

"Looks like Earl Seryuu has quite an excellent adviser."

"Some benefactors and acquaintances of mine are in the Earldom after all."

I eluded Ms. Sebelkea's teasing without a fuss.

"Very well. I'll have the guildmaster sign it later."

I was finally able to get her consent.

"Can we use temporary employees from the explorer school to teach the management course?"

"Yes, I'll bring them tomorrow to visit here."

"Understood. Aside from that, Satou."

Finishing the work talk, Ms. Sebelkea who loosened her firm expression, changing back to party mode, talked too me.

"Our High-elves-sama frequently inquired about you, do you have any idea?"

"No, I don't."

If they have some business with me, they can always call me through Aze-san, and the elf forest that was in danger of the Space Kaiju was of a different clan from Ms. Sebelkea's, so I really don't have the slightest idea.

"Just in case, Satou is a human right?"

"Yes, of course."

Even though I immediately replied to the puzzling question, I was puzzled myself in my mind.

There were many cases where that confidence was lost recently, but my race is still written as human on the status screen.

Ms. Sebelkea nodded to my answer like she was satisfied, and drank the fairy wine on her hand.

There's going to be a banquet in the viceroy mansion tonight, so I excused ourselves from the drinking bout before the princess got downed.

It seemed the princess was envious of Sera who was carried by me with a princess carry, she leaned her head on my shoulder while behaving like a spoiled child during the short time the carriage was returning, and let out a happy sigh.

◇

There were still some times before the dinner, so I went alone to the mansion where people from Earl Seryuu were staying in the labyrinth city.

It seemed the earl had told them about me, they easily received me.

"--training for management?"

"Yes, the guildmaster has kindly agreed to it. Of course, the advisor, Ms. Sebelkea, and the manager have pleasantly replied too."

The civil official opened her eyes wide when she heard about the management thing.

There were also some people who said, "Just how", or "Did he use the Marchioness's connections?", in low voices.

I plan to introduce the civil officials to Ms. Sebelkea tomorrow morning.

"And for the on-site unit, the Mithril Explorer party, 『Blue Flame Axe』 is going to teach them."

"Mi-Mithril?!"

The captain of the on-site unit, Knight Henz, stood up and kicked the chair down due to his surprise.

The soldiers also began to rustle.

The [Blue Flame Axe] that I mentioned is one of the parties that subjugated the floormaster together with Jeril and his party.

I tried negotiating with all prominent parties during my stay in the Royal Capital, but the Blue Flame Axe was the only one who willingly consented.

Their reward is an introduction to Echigoya Firm.

Using the letter of introduction I got from the first prince Soltrick back then, it seemed the members of Blue Flame Axe party ordered magic weapons and wands they wanted.

I only intermediated them and loaned them money for their fund shortage.

On top of securing personnels, I got them to experiment--er, comment on the new weapons, there's no loss for me.

"Yes, let's have a formal introduction tomorrow morning."

After telling so, I explain the route for the exploration with a map and the program to the Knight Henz.

Recovery potion made from beria has been popularized, so there should be no problem even if we choose a slightly dangerous route.

They have strong entourages too.

"Viscount-sama, we're lacking one magic soldier in this plan?"

Captain Riro who's checking the documents beside Knight Henz asked about Zena-san who wasn't included in the program.

If I'm not mistaken, he's the direct superior of Zena-san.

"She's transferred over to the Tourism Ministry to act as a guard and also a secretary. Earl Seryuu and Marientail-san have consented to this, so please don't worry about it."

Even though I told him so, captain Riro's face still looked gloomy.

Right then, Zena-san appeared along with the members of Zena Squad.

The girls had horse transports so they went back through the land route, looks like they got to the labyrinth city at a good timing.

"Zena Squad's vice head, Iona and three members, have returned to the labyrinth city!"

Ms. Iona reported not to Knight Henz but Captain Riro.

I wonder if it's because he's their direct superior.

After thanking them, Captain Riro confirmed Zena-san who's in military uniform about the thing earlier.

"Y-yes. There is no mistake. I was in the place when Earl-sama approved it."

"I see--"

Captain Riro is finally convinced after Zena-san assured it.

Some noisy voices sounded behind him.

"Is Zena-san alright alone?"

"Do you want to go too?"

"You did it, Zena-cchi! Now the mistress seat is certain for you!"

Every member of Zena Squad called out to Zena-san.

"Amazing, Viscount-sama is as great as Viscount Belton isn't he?"

Responding to Lilio, a soldier girl called Gayana made a fuss.

"It's marrying to a rich man!"

"Awesome"

"Treat me something next time okay!"

The other female soldiers also cheered on Zena-san.

On the other hand, gloomy mood of grudge and depression came flowing from the male soldiers.

So there were really a lot of hidden fans of the plain cute Zena-san after all.

◇

Four of us including Lady Karina went to the banquet and relished on the elegant dishes made by the viceroy mansion's chef.

When I left my seat during the chat for the nature's call, the Marchioness informant contacted me, wearing maid clothes.

"So it seems you're engaged with the princess. I'm jealous--"

"Leaving that aside, do you have any new information?"

I stopped the informant's lip service and urged her to cut to the chase.

Some bad rumor would float around if I looked too close to a maid in the viceroy mansion after all.

"Have you heard that three kingdoms neighboring Holy Kingdom Parion united and attacked it two days ago?"

"No, first time I've heard of it."

As usual she got information from the western countries fast.

"It was a large army totaling at 60.000 troops."

--Past tense huh.

"According to the information that just came in, that large army was trampled down by the 10.000-strong Holy Kingdom Parion so-called 『Army of God』, and they were repelled back to their own kingdoms."

Good grief, please stop using such dangerous words like [Army of God].

I'm afraid that it'd really end up setting up a flag for a fight against the God's Apostles.

--However, there's something I want to know first.

"By the way, do you know the reason why the three kingdoms united?"

"It's an absurd story--"

The informant is hesitating to answer my question.

After hesitating with suggestive behaviors, she opens her mouth.

"They claim that the pope of Holy Kingdom Parion, Zazaris, is a demon lord."

....Apparently, my sightseeing tour won't start for a while.

14-3. At the Labyrinth City (2)

Satou's here. "Incidents and plots are interlinked", so said the protagonist with unparalleled intelligence from a story. Just reading it is good and all, but when I'm actually getting rolled up in one, I'll go and strike the chain's chock.

◇

--A new demon lord huh.

I write the information I heard earlier, "The pope of Holy Kingdom Parion, Zazaris, is a demon lord", into the memo pad.

"Viscount-sama, may I continue the talk?"

The female informant timidly interrupted when I was thinking while staring at the memo.

It's quite rare for this my-pace person to confirm me first.

"--continue?"

"Yes, the matter on the western part of the continent has ended with the talk earlier, but I have two more information."

Huh? Wasn't this person only in charge with the information from the western part of the continent?

Thinking so, I urge her to continue.

"First, there's an eyewitness who saw demon in the labyrinth of a small kingdom located in the buffer zone of the Saga Empire, Yowok Kingdom. The explorer guild of that kingdom seems to have squashed the spread of the information, so the story hasn't reached the king and its neighboring countries."

--Oy.

Why do you know information that the king of this kingdom doesn't know.

It seems she has guessed my thought, the female informant grins and laughs, then she continues the talk.

"That is because Retel-sama is good at using money."

I see, someone that Marchioness Retel Ashinen has sent or bought on the site probably saw the demon in person.

"As Viscount-sama might have known, there's a high chance that a demon lord is the floormaster in a labyrinth where demons are infesting. I earnestly implore Viscount-sama not to approach Yowok Kingdom."

I feel that there was some subtle accent on her words.

It seems like she's somehow guessed that Nanashi and me are related.

"Yes, of course."

"Viscount-sama really doesn't show it on his face~"

It's all thanks to Poker Face-sensei.

◇

"And, the other one. This time it's a rumor from the buffer zone between the Weaselkin Empire on the eastern part of the continent and Shiga Kingdom."

Fumu, this time it's the eastern part huh.

The Marchioness's eyes and ears are too wide.

Her lineage nobility isn't just for show.

"Have the weasels started doing something again?"

"No, they haven't done anything on the scale like when they started using mount-type golems to go to war 10 years ago."

An unexpected information came out.

I wonder if it's like golem tanks or golem horses?

Don't tell me it's a manned mecha robot?

I must go see it at least once.

I write the plan with red text on the sightseeing tour plan.

"Do you know that the Weaselkin Empire destroyed the kingdom of the tigerkin and lizardkin, and enlarged their territory?"

"Yes, I know."

"The survivors of those ruined kingdoms have not only settled in the small kingdoms at the buffer zone, but they've also started to occupy the kingdoms' towns and cities."

Did they take over the buildings lent to them or did they invade them, I wonder which one is it?

I was going to go there first as the sightseeing destination after I've stopped by at the Duchy Capital, but I'll think it over if going there means seeing heaps of bodies.

"So far this isn't something unusual even excepting the『Demon Lord Season』, but invaders in one of those towns massacred the priests who refused to heal them."

To massacre priests in a world where gods exist, reckless people do exist.

"This also happen often in an occupied territory, but the next day, the great majority of those invaders were turned into salt pillars."

Salt pillars huh.... That's a divine punishment that appeared in the scriptures in my former world.

"A handsome man in white clothing appeared before the townspeople who were fearfully looking at those salt pillars and said, 『This is a divine punishment.』 The townspeople asked who that man was, and--"

The female informant pauses there and sees my reaction.

When I sent her a glance to urge her to continue, the female informant shrugged her shoulders uninterestingly and continued the story.

"--He introduced himself as an apostle of God Zaikuon."

God's apostle huh....

I've heard the name so many times before but the real [God's Apostle] or perhaps an impostor of the [God's Apostle] has finally appeared.

"But well, in all likelihood, he's probably an impostor though."

The female informant let out a sigh and shook her head.

"Do you have any basis for that?"

"Yes, it'd be a different story if it was of the other gods, but someone who calls themselves as the apostle of the God Zaikuon is definitely an impostor."

The female informant stopped talking as if that was already adequate as an explanation.

"I'm sorry, but I'm not too informed in religious talk. Would you tell me the reason?"

"It's not about religion, but the situation of the gods. 30 years ago, God Zaikuon made the Dragon God angry and was killed. In fact, the priests of Zaikuon temple can't use holy magic, so God Zaikuon shouldn't be revived yet."

I see, so the source of holy magic is the god themselves huh.

By the way they knew about [Made the Dragon God angry] part by asking the oracle miko from other temples to ask the gods about it.

It seems the gods' here can easily revive themselves if they die.

I finally understand how Aze-san could easily say, "There is no problem if you just kill the Dragon God", when I confessed about it to her.

Taking her longevity into consideration, it's probably like, "The god is sleeping after catching a bit of cold."

"If that guy is an impostor, how did he turn the invaders into salt pillars?"

There's no such spell in my repertoire at least.

"There might be a forbidden spell for it, but as long as he's the same level as Shiga 33 Wands, there are many other ways to easily make it happen."

I urge the female informant who declared so to continue.

"It's possible to make salt pillars that look exactly like real people with earth magic to control salt. Then they just need to bury the invaders deep underground and the divine punishment is complete."

Her reasoning is slightly forced, but it's certainly possible.

I'm slightly bothered with the man that call himself [God's Apostle], but he's only avenging the killed priests anyway, so leaving him alone should pose no problem.

I don't know whether the female informant's guess is correct or not, but even if he's the real thing, as long as he doesn't try to hinder my sightseeing tour or do the [Civilization Suppression], I don't intend to have anything to do with him.

If he get rid of demons and demon lords on his own, then that just means the decrease of the world's damage and my work.

◇

Leaving aside the fake apostle, I probably should investigate the demon in the Yowok Kingdom's Labyrinth and the suspicion of the pope being a demon lord.

Once my businesses at the labyrinth city is over, I should go check them out while also making moving points.

Once the Marchioness's banquet is over, I stealthily visit the house of an older acquaintance of mine whom I've made an appointment with.

"Now then, what kind of business for you to visit so late in the night? You had asked for the presence of my wife beforehand so I could roughly guess it, but I'd like to clearly hear it from your mouth."

Irritated with my late night visitation, Baronet Dyukeli said so.

His wife being beside him is as I've requested, but I don't know why Ms. Merian who's in dress is sitting between the couple.

Well, it's a family problem anyway, there's no need to send her away.

"Then, I'll get to the point."

When I said so, Merian gulped.

It's slightly immodest, but it's not an etiquette breach enough for me to point it out.

I take out a wood box from the magic bag beside me and present it to the Baronet Dyukeli.

"Please accept this. Don't forget to appraise it before using it."

"This is? Is this an engagement gift?"

--Ha?

Baronet Dyukeli asked while opening the wooden box.

Strange... I should have written them a letter about the panacea beforehand... Perhaps the loli maid whom I asked to deliver the letter had failed?

No, doubting people is not a good thing to do.

"Dear! Th-this is!"

The baronet's wife point her finger at the panacea bottle inside the wooden box with a feeble voice.

To be exact, she's pointing at the bottle's label written in Shiga language as [Panacea].

It's the medicine to recover the baronet's eldest son's Goblin Sickness.

"Panacea?! How did you get such a valuable thing?"

"I got it from a regular merchant."

Actually I made it myself. I asked the well-informed first-generation Yuika to teach me the recipe, but it was a simple recipe where you just need to dilute elixir with low grade magic potion for a hundredfold.

Normally it's impossible to get your hand on the Elixir, so it only appears as a rare drop in labyrinths.

"Sir Pendragon! W-would you be willing to give up this panacea?"

As expected, It'd be too brutal of me if I'm here only to show it off.

"Yes, of course. Please use it to treat your son."

"Thank you Sir Pendragon. I will compensate this even if it takes me dozens of years."

Baronet Dyukeli hugs me over the desk with his bony arms.

I'm glad that they're pleased.

However, dozens of years is too much.

Leaving that aside, I don't intend to ask for money for an item I've prepared on my own accord.

"No, you don't need to pay for it."

"Then, it really is an engagement gift! Then, my daughter--"

"--No, my fiancee is enough with just her highness princess."

It was a bit rude but I quickly interrupted Baronet Dyukeli.

Using the princess as an excuse is too almighty.

Using it too much would really force me to marry her though, so I have to be prudent with it.

"Is that so--. Sir Pendragon has been intimate with my daughter, so I misunderstood."

The mood feels like a funeral a bit.

Does he really want her daughter to marry a viscount that much?

It looks like Merian wants to be an explorer, so I think he shouldn't carelessly offer her for a marriage, but she looks dejected like her parent.

Perhaps her maiden pride was hurt because of the rejection.

As an apology, I'll give her the leather armor mark 1 which is of the same type as Zena-san's.

That armor is fashionable, and an equipment specialized in defense despite looking like a normal leather armor, so she shouldn't worry about getting injury that would prevent her getting married.

In addition, Baronet Dyukeli insisted to compensate the panacea no matter what, so I decided to borrow his personal connection for a bit.

It's about the connection with the labyrinth city's merchants not the nobles.

Among them, I'd ask him to introduce me to the retired old merchants who like children, I'm thinking of regularly holding an event for them to play and teach the children the way to make building blocks and knitting baskets or the likes in the food distribution square.

Once the children become a bit skillful, they probably won't have to wait for the food distribution with hungry stomachs anymore, and they get the alternative of going into dangerous labyrinth.

The next morning, an invitation for celebrating Baronet Dyukeli's son recovery came.

Unfortunately, it'll be in five days, I won't be present in the Labyrinth City so I won't be able to participate.

Leaving that aside, it seems there are a lot of nobles' children who are suffering from the goblin sickness, I'll have Echigoya Firm to sell the medicine for a large sum of money.

There's no need to hesitate with people who aren't acquaintances and have a lot of money.

◇

After writing a celebratory letter to Baronet Dyukeli, I went to greet the promised partners yesterday while bringing along Seryuu Earldom's civil official and military personnels.

I had made the necessary arrangement beforehand, so the contract was completed without problem.

I gave equipment that are of the same class as Merian's to the three people of Zena Squad.

Zena-san should now rest easy with this.

When I got back to the mansion, several maids and orphanage children were looking up at the airship without getting tired.

"Do you want to get in it?"

"Viscount-sama!"

"I want to!"

"Get in!"

I'm going to depart this afternoon, so people rushed to that suggestion.

"It's a ship."

"Will it fall?"

"It's okay."

"Line up~"

"Line up properly nodesu."

"Young organisms, follow after me so I command."

Tama and Pochi made the children to line up, and then Nana led them to the airship.

The airship has [Force Web] to prevent people from falling, so there is no problem even if the children hang out on the top deck.

There were a lot of them, so once the airship went around the labyrinth city once in a sightseeing flight, I instructed Nana to change them with the next children, and then I went back to the mansion.

"Master, the children on the list have gathered in the living room."

"Ah, thanks. Have you explained it to them?"

"But of course!"

Bringing along Arisa who replied reliably, I walked toward the living room.

The children inside the living room are wrapped in tensions not unlike job-hunting students.

"You may relax. I think you've heard from Arisa already, I'm thinking of having you study in the childhood school of the royal academy if you wish to. Of course, Pendragon House will provide the tuition and living expenses during your stay. After completing the childhood school, I'm going to ask the ones who continue to the upper school and have good result to assist and become the model for the future children."

In this place, there are three children who have succeeded to learn magic under Arisa and Mia's guidance, and nine children who have learned to read and do basic arithmetic from among the orphanage children and the maids.

As a reward for accomplishing that much in just several months, I suggested them to go study in the Royal Capital.

"Viscount-sama! I want to be a magician like Arisa and Mia-sama! Which is the shortcut, going to the Royal Capital's school or working hard in the labryinth with Pendora brothers?"

The boy who used magic to turn up skirts asked without being affected by the tension in the place.

"If you want to polish your skill in magic in a short amount of time, the shortcut is by going into the labyrinth. However, if you want to be a magician that's on the same level as Arisa and Mia, I think it's better if you properly study the basic in the Royal Academy before going into the labyrinth."

If he wants to be a magician that can only use attack magic like in a game, then he should just raise his level in the labyrinth, but if he wants to use magic that are usable outside battles, it's better for him to study magic structure and the way to read spells.

"Okay! I'll go to the Royal Academy!"

"I will go too."

"Me too!"

Once the boy who turned up skirts powerfully declared, the other children also expressed their will one after another.

They will be going to the Royal Capital by riding a stagecoach in half a month.

The enrollment for the childhood school was during the new year, but it's possible to accept new students as first years if they show results above a certain level.

Moreover, I think the elf-loving headmaster will somehow help if they bring a recommendation letter written by Mia.

After sending the children home, I call Ms. Miteruna and three senior maids among the loli maids.

"Master, have you called for me--"

"It'll be a bit long, so please have a seat."

I offer a seat to Ms. Miteruna.

I succeeded getting Ms. Miteruna who firmly refused to take a seat after saying, "My neck will hurt if I continue to talk like this."

I tell them that I want to dispatch several maids to the Royal Capital's mansion to learn more sophisticated maid technique.

"Of course, I don't want you to misunderstand that I have a problem with Miteruna's teaching. Training children who didn't know anything to become maids in short amount of time is quite an accomplishment."

I followed up like so since Ms. Miteruna's face stiffened.

In fact, it should have been impossible to raise them to this level with just the loli maids' motivation.

However, I've unexpectedly become an upper noble, so I'd like my employees to polish their techniques even more.

"--I understand what Master is saying. I think these three should be able to endure the training in the Royal Capital."

"""Head-maid!"""

The loli maids are looking at Ms. Miteruna with teary eyes.

"Miteruna, you won't go to the Royal Capital?"

"Yes, if Master permits, I'd like to take the role of raising the children that will be sent to the Royal Capital here."

I see, not improving her own skill, but becoming their educator huh.

She's quite the rare talent.

I'll increase her salary for her training role.

"I'm counting on you, Miteruna."

"Yes, I will be doing my utmost to meet Master's expectation."

--Moderately okay.

◇

Thus, after having completed the businesses in the Labyrinth City, we departed to the Duchy Capital where the cooking contest is going to be held.

Under the pretext of cheering for Lulu, the Labyrinth City group are also going to the Duchy Capital, and will be returning to the Labyrinth City through the land route once the cooking contest is over.

In actuality, they're going to go in and out of the labyrinth through the

Island Palace as the base, and then I will send them to the vicinity of the Labyrinth City after enough time has passed for the land travel to happen.

"Master won't participate in the cooking contest?"

"I've been chosen as a special judge you see."

Apparently, its name is [Pendragon Cup].

Even [Miracle Chef Cup] would have been better than that.

"Then there's no need to hold back! I'll think of a dish that will tightly grab Master's heart!"

"W-wait Arisa! Don't pull me that hard!"

"Tasting~?"

"Pochi will help with tasting too nodesu!"

Following after Arisa and Lulu, Tama and Pochi also went to Lulu's exclusive kitchen.

"Master, everyone has completed their preparation."

"Master, I want scarlet armor too, so I entreat."

Liza and Nana appeared from the living room having done arming themselves.

After the two, Sera, Zena-san, Lady Karina, and the princess; beauties wrapped in Hihiirokane-made scarlet armor showed up.

This armor has auto-fitting functionality, so I didn't do any attractive size measurement.

"Satou-san, thank you for waiting."

"I-is it alright for me to wear this splendid armor?"

"The pressure on my chest is suffocating desuwa."

"It's like the knight that appears in tales."

After praising the four ladies, "They look really good on you", I send them to the planned rearing site.

It's the power-leveling place where I raised Echigoya Firm's executives' levels to 30.

"I've connected this to the permanent gate, so let them rest in the palace when they fall from the level up intoxication."

"Understood."

"Yes, Master."

After giving instructions to Liza and Nana, I plug my ears from hearing the scream behind, and start the preparation to go out.

Right now, Mia should be enjoying herself playing with the world's largest pipe organ in the concert hall next to the palace.

Giving the children musical instruments to nurture their aesthetic sensitivity might be a good idea.

I choose [Equip: Kuro] magic on the Magic Column and transform to Kuro.

Using this original magic, it doesn't only equip the clothing and mask, but also automatically set every kind of information like my name, occupation, and others in the Exchange column.

It's quite a handy magic for a careless person like me.

Now that I've finished the change, let's check the two demon lords' places!

14-4. Yowok Kingdom

Satou's here. Exterminating pest in my grandfather's countryside was already hard enough, but in another world the pest can even rout an army, so normal people can't do anything about them. It's like challenging bears or dinosaurs with farming tools after all.

◇

At first I was hesitating to choose which of the suspicions I would go first, but after contemplating the ease of movement, I decided on it.

In Kuro figure, I went to a branch office of Echigoya Firm at the handy relay point in Kuhanou Earldom.

This place is a temporary building and no one from the executives is here.

"Uwah.... Wait, that white hair, are you Kuro-sama?! Oh please don't surprise me like that."

"Don't mind it."

The branch manager girl who just came into the room where I moved into with Unit Arrangement got surprised.

She's a slave that the Manager bought, but the Manager highly valued her business and negotiation talent and entrusted her to be the branch manager.

It seems she's been promised to be freed of her slave status if she can make this branch office prosper.

There are some people who don't want to be freed like Tifaliza, but most of them want to be released by working, there's some wide difference in their desire.

"What business do you have today? Or maybe, have the report that I sent yesterday arrived already?"

--Report?

"No, I haven't seen it, is it important?"

"No no, it's just that one of the liquor brewing winery is on the verge of collapse."

What, that kind of thing huh.... No, wait.

"Is that the content of the report?"

"Yes, it's of the liquor brand that the Manager regularly stocks, so I'd like to ask whether we should intervene or not."

"Is it the『Blood of Lesseu』?"

"So Kuro-sama is aware of it.... What kind of secret that cheap wine--"

I lightly threatened the probing branch manager girl, "Curiosity killed the cat."

This [Blood of Lesseu] is a wine that the True Ancestor vampire Ban who lives in the lower layer of the labyrinth likes.

Investigating the demon lord is important, but I shouldn't neglect this either.

He's a friend after all, and I'm indebted to him for many things.

"So, is it collapsing because of financial reason?"

If that's the case then Echigoya Firm can just buy them.

"No, the villages where the wine is brewed seem to be in danger of annihilation because of monster outbreak. The territorial army of Earl Lesseu only exterminate monsters in the highways and the mines, so most rural areas far from the cities are doing terrible."

I checked the map while listening to the branch manager girl.

There's a few monsters along the roads and around the cities where the kingdom army was said to be sweeping, but the rural areas where monsters are wandering about have become danger zones.

The monsters are all level 20 small fries, but expecting the villagers to exterminate them is impossible.

"The village's name?"

"They're Hosbed village and Suibod village."

Checking on the map, ant-type monsters have made a nest on the mountain near Hosbed village, while caterpillar-type monsters seem to have spread around the vicinity of Suibod village.

"Then I'll go exterminate them."

"Eh? Kuro-sama--"

After telling the branch manager girl, I moved to the mountain near Hosbed village with [Teleport] magic.

With this [Teleport] magic I can teleport to anywhere on the map that has been explored, it's extremely handy.

Of course, [Teleport Gate] is the same too, but that one uses too much magic power.

I think [Unit Arrangement] that can only be used in an area that I rule and places that I can see has its use case.

◇

"Damn you ant bastards! Our vineyard that we've put so much!"

"Tagwosa! Stop! You'll only die in vain fighting them with a hoe!"

I could hear such conversations from the wind blowing from the village.

According to the radar, it seems that the vineyard located on the mountain foot is being attacked by ant monsters.

I take out level 30-class magic orbs from Storage and throw them on the ground.

--[Create Stone Wolf].

10 bear sized wolf stone statues are created from the center of the magic cores on the ground.

These stone wolves are a type of golem.

"Eliminate the monsters attacking the village."

After I gave them an order, the stone wolves ran at full speed toward the vineyard.

Eliminating the monsters with Remote Arrows would have better cost/performance ratio, but thinking about the future, I decided to use the stone wolves.

The battle had already ended when I arrived at mountain foot by walking leisurely.

The ant monsters were only around level 10, they were no match against the stone wolves.

The stone wolves, that have assembled silently, put the magic cores they've collected from the ants near my feet.

There are 30 of them in total.

Even though they were small fries, this is too many near a human habitat.

Wouldn't the village get destroyed if I wasn't here?

"A-are you the master of those stone wolves?"

"That's right. The name's Kuro."

I gave the stone wolves the order to raid the ant nest while replying the villagers.

I do it just by designating the place on the map, it's truly easy.

"Magician-sama, where have those stone wolves gone to?"

The village mayor who has good attires that appeared from behind the men asked me politely.

"I let the stone wolves to go destroy the ant nest. I can't hand over these magic cores, but I won't take the materials from those monster bodies, distribute them to the villagers to use."

I point at the ant bodies that the stone wolves have destroyed and leave them to the villagers.

Protective gears made from ant shells have good defense despite being as light as leather armor, so they should be able to sell it at a good price to the arm dealers since the neighboring territory is having a civil war.

I use the magic cores that I've just got for the [Create Stone Wolf] like earlier, creating 30 medium dog-sized stone wolves.

They're inferior compared to the stone wolves from earlier, but they should be stronger than your average soldiers.

It should be enough for the village defense.

I order the stone wolves to protect the vineyard, and to patrol the vicinity and destroy any monster.

Just in case, I grant the village mayor a restricted right to command them.

"I'm giving you these stone wolves to protect the vineyard. Make use of them to exterminate monsters."

"S-such expensive magic servants, is it?"

--Expensive? Considering the magic core price, all of them aren't even one gold coin worth you know?

"Don't mind it. My acquaintance habitually drinks the liquor made from this village's grapes. I did this for that person."

"I-it wasn't an order from Earl Lesseu?"

"I have nothing to do with Earl Lesseu, but he's not small-minded enough to complain about a village being saved from a threat."

No, that restless youngster might loath it if the populace show gratitude to someone besides him.

"However, if Earl Lesseu complains, tell him to direct that to the house of Duke Mitsukuni."

"D-duke house?! I-if I'm not mistaken, it's greater than Earl-sama?"

Ignoring the surprised village mayor, I carve the stone wolves with the crest of Duke Mitsukuni house using magic.

The crest of Duke Mitsukuni house is two intersecting tennis racket.

Mito probably picked rackets from the [Teni x Hero] manga from where the name [Yamato] came from.

＞Stone Wolf Leaders have accomplished the order. Shifting to stand-by mode.

Log listed that the stone wolves have completed their mission.

This is quite convenient.

"Well then, good bye."

I expressly used [Fly] magic by chanting, went to the ant nest through the sky where the stone wolves were waiting, and collected the bodies and the magic cores.

When I was entering the cave, I invoked [Astro Suit] magic that I once used in the void sky, avoiding the stench. <TLN: TL mistake on Ch. 13 Intermission 1, should've been "Astro Suit" there.>

This magic has very good usability.

Using the magic cores I got here, I saved the second village and got a lot more magic cores.

Of course I also left the deployed stone wolves to protect the second village like the first, so the vineyards should be peaceful from now on.

◇

I slightly digressed, but since there's still some time before noon, I head toward Yowok Kingdom through the air lane.

I inadvertently got near the battlefield when I was passing through Bisthal Dukedom along the way and got chased by the Wyvern Riders.

I immediately lost them once I changed from [Fly] to Flash Drive, but I'll have to be careful in choosing my flight course next time.

Just in case, I searched Bisthal Dukedom, but there wasn't any demon nor Unique Skill user there.

There were unusually many Tamers and Beast Riders but, I couldn't find a particularly suspicious point, so it's probably a territory that offer those kinds of jobs.

There was a huge lake, five times the size of Lake Biwa near the duchy capital, I'd like to go visit there with everyone once the war is over.

And then, I finally arrived at the group of small kingdoms after crossing the border mountain range.

I made a slight error, as I didn't arrive at Yowok Kingdom but at a town of a mountain kingdom called Zareok Kingdom.

According to the Tourism Ministry's document, it seems to be an idyllic kingdom that specializes in wool products.

"Fumu, the specialty products here are the lamb steak and the sheep milk liquor huh...."

According to the prime minister's gourmet guidance, the lamb steak is superb, and once you get used to the quirky sheep milk liquor, you just can't stop.

I was slightly tempted to pick them up, but let's enjoy that for later.

For the re-visit purpose, I built a house in a desolate place deep in the mountain using [Create Safe House] magic.

It's an original magic created by remodeling the [Create House] magic from before.

The inside is a normal house, but it looks like a dilapidated house covered in ivy on the outside.

Moreover, it's hidden into the surrounding once you get slightly away from it, so unless you have something like my map, or are very lucky, finding this [Retreat] should be difficult.

Leaving behind the tempting memories of Zareok kingdom, I head toward the neighboring kingdom.

For some reason, there are areas that are ruled by monsters in the border or rather the gap between kingdoms.

Apparently, when a strong monster above certain level continues to rule the Source, the area becomes its dominion.

It's like a grand-strategy simulation game.

Passing through such monster domains, I enter the next kingdom.

According to the Tourism Ministry map, this is the Garuok Kingdom where a lot of woodworks and coals exist.

It seems that the furnitures made by master craftsmen of this kingdom are famous even in Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire.

"Furnitures huh--Touring the workshops of European-style antique furnitures sounds fun."

According to the document, this Garuok Kingdom has symbiotic relationship with the neighboring Deerfolk kin and Squirrelfolk kin.

Deerfolk kin offer military force to Garuok Kingdom, and get food supply as the compensation.

Looking at the map, it seems there's a lot of Squirrelfolk kin working away from home as furniture craftsmen.

There are monster-ruled domains between Garuok Kingdom and my destination Yowok Kingdom too.

This one seems to be a wyvern domain.

The wyverns that circle the sky near the mountaintop found me and raised vigilant cries.

A wyvern as big as a lesser dragon takes along several wyverns with it to ride the updraft air current heading toward me.

Its full of impact looks like one scene in a movie.

"Wyverns are bad news aren't they..."

I quickly exterminate them with [Laser] magic while leaving only a pair of young wyverns.

The reason why I didn't eliminate them all is because the monster domains might be helping in restraining war.

I was interested with the white peak near the wyvern nest, so I went to see it while also collecting the bodies in the air.

"--All of these white things are dragon white stone huh."

Apparently, dragon white stones are something created from wyvern's dungs that have undergone change.

It's interesting that the material that comes from wyverns that carry deadly poison is also an ingredient of the all-purpose antidote.

I use earth magic to roughly cut the dragon white stone and collect them into Storage.

With this many, it could last 1000 years for the labyrinth city use.

◇

After finally arriving at Yowok Kingdom, I use [All Map Exploration].

Since this Yowok Kingdom has absorbed Arisa's homeland, it's larger than small kingdoms I've been to so far, there are two cities and seven towns.

There's hardly any demi-human even as slaves, it seems to be a kingdom that's mainly of humans.

Just like the maps I've been through so far, let alone demon lord, there's not even any demon nor anyone with Unique Skill.

Of course, there's no one with possessed condition nor demon lord sympathizer either.

The eyewitness said that he saw the demon in the labyrinth after all, judging it as a false report is too early.

I built a [Retreat] in a mountain for emergency use.

I've already built some in the neighboring kingdoms and the wyvern domain, but just in case.

While under [Optical Camouflage] skill, I head toward the ruin of Kubooku Kingdom's royal castle where the Yowok Kingdom's labyrinth is.

"This is terrible...."

The main part of the royal castle has disappeared, and three towers next to the castle wall have collapsed.

The only tower remaining is destroyed on its base too and there's no one inside.

According to Arisa, it was a greater demon's attack, so the damage might be little considering.

Lesseu City was virtually destroyed by a mid demon after all.

Now then, there are a few presences of human in this ruined castle site.

According to the map info, those people have [Adventurer] occupation.

To be exact, they seem to be [Adventurers] that belong to [Yowok Kingdom Labyrinth Bureau Adventurer Guild].

It seems they're managing people who go in and out of the royal castle, or rather the labyrinth through the [Adventurer Guild] building located in one section of the castle site.

Observing them, I see that the staff members are checking the adventurer's badge in the labyrinth entrance.

I can enter the labyrinth if I just use [Optical Camouflage] and [Magic Essence Camouflage], but since it seems that the adventurer's badge is issued on the same day just like at the labyrinth city Selbira, I decide to go through the normal route.

I land in a shade near the ruined castle and release [Optical Camouflage] skill.

"Hey hey, onii-san over there, won't you play with Kuku?"

A little girl of middle school age tried to pick me up when I went out of the shade.

The power of foreigner celebrity's face is amazing. Handsome men go explode--it's at the level where you want to say that.

Just like what Arisa has said, the language of this kingdom feels like Shiga Kingdom's dialect.

"How about it? Just one small silver coin you see?"

Apparently, she's not picking me up, but selling herself.

I don't have this kingdom's currency, but Saga Empire's and Shiga Kingdom's one should be usable.

It's not like I can't pay, but the girl is a bit too young to sell herself.

"Sorry, but I have no interest in little girl."

When I was about to leave after telling her so, two bad-looking boys appeared from the opposite street.

"Ooh! Ya want to go for free after putting yer hands on our Kuku?"

"Hehhee, I'll let ya off with yer life if ya leave all yer money alright?"

They came out a bit too fast, but it seems these guys are playing the badger game.

"In other words, I can go if I beat you guys up?"

"Hmph! Ya think ya can win against this Jido Bado brothers--"

Since the two boys affirmed my question, I lightly kick them away.

They sunk into a deserted house's wall, but since the little girl called Kuku went to them, leaving them should be fine.

◇

"Registration is it? Then please put your hand on this judgment board and say your name."

When I asked the beautiful Adventurer Guild receptionist, I was made to touch a Yamato Stone they call judgment board.

I thought of using Kuro's level, but it seemed like level 50 would make them be on guard, so I lowered the level to 20 before touching the Yamato Stone.

I'd look unnatural if I was empty handed like usual, so I'm currently equipped with an iron short sword on my waist.

"Is this alright?"

"My! Level 20, you're amazing! Moreover, not only you have one-hand sword skill, you also have also magic skill!"

The receptionist said that in a loud voice at the same time my levels and skills appeared on the Yamato Stone.

--What about your duty of confidentiality.

"Oy."

"Aah, I'm sorry! Oh me."

Judging from the receptionist who doesn't look like she's sorry, rather than being careless, it seems that she did it deliberately to inform the spies of Yowok Kingdom in this place.

Even after taking the adventurer badge and leaving the guild, those spies didn't make any movement, so it seems that I'm off the hook from their vigilance.

I show the adventurer badge written with F at the labyrinth's entrance.

It seems that the adventurer's badge uses A-F alphabet due to the influence of the first generation Saga Empire's hero.

Apparently it's the tradition to use the "Alphabet" rank that he used in the first Adventurer Guild of Saga Empire he built.

"Hmph, F rank huh. Stop at the goblin in the first floor. Goblin mages and goblin riders appear from the fifth floor. Don't approach them ever, you'll die y'know?"

"Thank you for the advice."

The gatekeeper with arrogant tone offered a kind advice.

After thanking the gatekeeper, I set foot into the labyrinth.

Dark. It seems that the floor isn't emitting dim light here unlike the labyrinths in Selbira and Seryuu cities.

It feels like the ruined labyrinth in the Duchy Capital instead.

The labyrinth's name is [Goblin Labyrinth: Ruin] after all.

According to Arisa, it seems to be a labyrinth that once lost its

Dungeon Core and got revived, there are probably many functions that haven't been restored yet.

After walking for a bit, I obtained the labyrinth's information with [All Map Exploration].

It seems there are around 51 floors. Each floor is about three times as big as the narrow Seryuu City's [Demon Labyrinth]'s.

--Found it.

There's a demon lord in the lowest floor as the [Dungeon Master].

Now then, let's get it done quick!

The lunch that Lulu especially made would get cold if I don't clean this up quick after all.

14-5. Yowok Kingdom (2)

Satou's here. Meeting relatives during homecoming after a long while is fun. However, according to my childhood friend, it was the penance time for marriage bashing, she grumbled.

◇

I investigate the detailed information of the demon lord that I found in the [Goblin Labyrinth] under Yowok Kingdom's royal castle.

Besides the [Demon Lord] title, the demon lord has some other strange titles, such as [Gambling Addict], [Debt King], [Good-for-Nothing Father].

His race is [Great Oni Kin (Ogre)], level 55 and only one Unique Skill, [All-or-Nothing].

I've heard that having only one Unique Skill rarely turns one into a demon lord, so he probably had two initially, one which was given to Shin boy, [Master Wizard].

Liza alone might be able to defeat him right now.

In addition, I don't see any greater demon and there's only one mid demon on stand-by near the demon lord.

There are lesser demons situated in labyrinth management rooms located in floor 10 to 30, with each room having one demon. It's like a masterpiece dungeon game from years ago.

This labyrinth is mostly occupied by demi-goblins and rat-type monsters, there are also demi ogres, first time I've seen the type, prowling in the deeper floors.

Looking at it from an explorer's point of view, this is an extremely unprofitable labyrinth. You can only get money from magic cores and hides from the rat-type monsters.

Perhaps it's because of that the adventurers in this labyrinth generally have low levels.

Most are less than level 30, and the only ones higher than that is the party that have gotten to floor 48.

It seems that other parties besides that one are only on par with up-to level 20 enemies in floor 29. The reason is probably the level 40 Demi Ogre Rift mid boss in floor 30.

"There he is!"

"Are we really going to kill him?"

"Of course! He almost killed us y'know?"

I heard familiar voices of boys and girl from behind.

Apparently, they've resentfully chased after me.

It's probably the effect of the girl's [Pursuit] skill.

They could just have become guards.

A strong-sounding monster, Demi Goblin Berserker, is approaching from the front, but it's only one monster and its level isn't that different from their levels. They should be able to do something about it if they're really adventurers.

I teleported to floor 48 where the farthest adventurer party is before both sides could get to me.

I want to recommend them to evacuate since there's a possibility they get swallowed up in my battle with the demon lord.

The party's leader is a level 53 magic warrior with [Hero's Attendant] as the title. I didn't know that there was such an old woman among Hayato's companions who are all young beauties.

Her companions are one level 36 holy knight, six heavy knights, two magicians, two priests, one scout and four baggage carriers. Leaving out the baggage carriers ,the average level is 31, quite high.

Looks like the top rankers are reasonably high leveled even though it's a labyrinth of a small kingdom.

They'd be surprised if I suddenly teleported in front of them, so I went to the room two rooms away from them.

The reason why I didn't go to the adjacent room is because the slave baggage carriers are there.

"Monster?!"

"Did it break through master's monster barrier?!"

The moment I stepped into the room where the slaves were, I got attacked with small fireballs as though I was a monster.

Looks like they have fire wands for self-defense.

I ignore the fireballs, move before the slaves with Ground Shrink, and take the dangerous toys away from them.

"Calm down. I am a human."

Hearing me, the slaves promptly jumped back and took the short spears leaning on the mountain of baggage.

Since their levels are more than 20 and they have spear and life magic skill, they're probably reasonably confident with their skills.

I can beat them up first before talking to them, but I'd feel guilty like I'm taking their spoils in the labyrinth.

"Show us your adventurer badge."

"Here."

I followed their demand and threw them the adventurer badge I just made.

"F rank adventurer?!"

"Tsk, a fake adventurer badge huh!"

Looks like they've become needlessly more wary even though I followed their demand.

--Oh?

The luminous point of a heavy knight in the next room has disappeared.

There were only one Demi Ogre Lord and two Demi Ogre Guards in the room they were in before but now 30 Demi Ogre Executioners have appeared before I knew it.

It's probably the demon lord's doing as the [Dungeon Master], but he's too eager to kill them.

"Sorry, but there's no more time to play around."

While saying that to the slaves, I neutralize them with the inter-personal suppression magic, [Sound Pressure].

I instantaneously move to the locked door that connects to the next room, and forcefully kick it.

It was a bit rough, but using unlocking magic would be too slow, so there was no helping it.

◇

"Zana, withdraw while protecting Jeff's back!"

"Understood!"

"Blum-baasan too, quick!"

"Who's a baasan!"

<TLN: Baasan means old woman.>

They're still struggling hard even while being surrounded by three-meter tall demi ogres wielding pitch black axes. Unfortunately, another one of the luminous points disappeared.

The old female magic warrior called Blum aims for the demi ogres legs' tendon to slow down their pursuit using a greatsword with blue blade.

I thought it was a holy sword for an instant, but since it's emitting red light, it's probably a kind of magic sword.

"Torin and Silje, fight with me against these axe monkeys."

"You serious."

"I got the short end of the stick."

"I'll give you one bag of gold coins for every ogre you defeated, get on to it!"

Now then, I'm sorry for them who have gotten fired up, but I'll clean this up quick.

I mark the positions of the demi ogres on the map.

Invoke intermediate earth magic [Iron Toss].

Telephone pole-sized iron cones appear from below the demi ogres, skewering them one after another.

Hoarse screams of the demi ogres are echoing in the hall, but it doesn't look like I'm getting any language skill.

"Wha, magic?!"

Looking at the screaming demi ogres that raised cloud of dust and the iron cones beyond the dust, Ms. Blum turned to look behind while voicing her surprise.

Yet none stops their feet moving toward here, probably to get themselves away from the carnage.

The screams disappear before long, I see skewered bodies behind the cloud of dust.

....Gross.

It's not a scene I really want to see, so I extend my [Magic Hand] and collect their bodies along with the iron cones into the Storage.

I left the bodies of demi ogre guards that they've defeated and demi ogre lord that should have been defeated alone.

"Did you defeat them?"

"That's right. It might have been an unnecessary meddling, but I have some business here you see."

"No, you really saved us."

Ms. Blum Julberg talks like a man, but she's quite a beauty.

She's more than 88 years old, I'd have loved to meet her 60 years ago.

According to the map info, it seems she's the mother of Zeff Julberg, the chief of Shiga Eight Swords.

"Are you the new apostle or the new hero of Saga Empire?"

"No. I have a question too, are you not the attendant of Hero Hayato?"

"Hahn? Me, that brat Hayato's attendant? What a joke."

Apparently, I've guessed wrongly.

"I'm an attendant of the previous hero."

By previous, that means the one who fought the demon lord 66 years ago.

Still being in active duty when she's nearing her 90, that's amazing.

"Hou, one of the heroes who exterminated the demon lord huh--are the others still active too?"

"No way. The only ones alive are the saintess Riri and the elf Sea. Riri has grown old that she rarely goes out of the holy sanctuary, Sea is fine but she's retired now and should be working to earn her keep. That girl never liked fighting after all."

By Sea I wonder if it's Sebelkea of the labyrinth city?

The head miko of Tenion temple said that she was an attendant of the previous hero, so the saintess Riri must be her. She probably got the name, [Yu Tenion] when she became the head miko.

When I was considering such a thing, one of her companion reservedly called her.

"Blum-baasan, Kiru and Gotz couldn't make it."

"I see.... Those two were excellent shield users."

The young male scout who checked their death companions reported with a grim face.

"There's no way we can challenge the『Dungeon Master』without any shield user."

"Right, even if Blum-baasan is strong--"

Two spear users made timid remarks, but I think their levels aren't enough to challenge the [Dungeon Master] even if they're at full party.

Before all that, the opponent is not a common [Dungeon Master] but a demon lord though.

"Zana, use the『Teleport』scroll and take everyone back."

After contemplating, Ms. Blum ordered one of the knights.

Looks like they're preparing to escape from the labyrinth.

"What's Blum-baasan going to do?"

"I'll go see the『Dungeon Master』with this white-haired nii-san."

"Don't be absurd, Blum-baasan. You can't win with two people no matter how powerful of a magician that person is."

Somehow they're continuing the conversation without me.

"Wait, I do not intend to take you along."

"I'm useful you know? My swordsmanship is as good as a Shiga Eight Swords, and my lightning magic won't lose to the old man Lightning from Seryuu Earldom. In addition, I can even use holy magic up to intermediate level."

Does a level 50s have that many skills?

....It might be possible with blessing orbs or gifts.

"That's amazing, but you're just a drag."

"You want to see my skill?"

She's quite quick to snap.

"Why do you want to see the『Dungeon Master』that much?"

"In order to ascertain whether this labyrinth's master is a demon lord or not--"

"What are you going to do once you're certain?"

"Isn't it obvious. I'll send that information to the current generation Hero."

I see, she's not someone suicidal who wants to seek her place of death by fighting the demon lord.

Looking at her level, it should be quite a close battle, but since demon lords use unreasonable cheating techniques, you can't fight them unless you have a certain leeway.

However, she did arrive here, right before the battle site after all, she has the qualification to at least see the demon lord.

"Very well. I will take only you."

"Thank you. I'm Blum Julberg. I'll thank you plenty once we get back on the ground."

Once it was settled, her companions teleported away one after another, leaving most of their baggage.

Due to the limit of the scroll, they didn't teleport to the ground, but to the safe area in floor 29.

◇

"Now then, let's--what're you doing?"

"This is a scarecrow for scouting a bit."

Blum-baasan who came back from taking some baggage outside the hall tilted her head in puzzlement looking at a full body armor in front of me.

This armor is a spare from the time when I was making bronze golems.

I use this with [Create Golem] magic to turn it into a golem.

In addition, I put a disguise mask and a casted holy sword on it, complete.

I'm thinking of teleporting this to the Dungeon Master Room where the demon lord is with the space magic [Teleport an Object] to check the demon lord's Unique Skill.

It might be too cautious against a level 50 demon lord, but his Unique Skill's name [All-or-Nothing] sounds ominous, so this is just an insurance.

"■■■■■■■ .... ■■ Teleport an Object"

Once my long chanting is over, the scout golem disappared from the room.

Next, I use [Clairvoyance] and [Clairhearing] magic chantlessly to share the scout golem's sight and hearing.

There I see--.

◇

"--Uwaaaaaaaa. G-go away! You damn hero! I-I'm--AAAAAAAAAH!"

I can hear the demon lord who sounds like he's gone mad through the magic.

I saw a Japanese-style ogre (oni) with violet-colored body hair shrinking away as if he was afraid of the bronze scarecrow. The demon lord's eyes are fixated on the casted holy sword.

The demon lord's body is wrapped in violet light--.

Afterward, light covers my view through the Clairvoyance, and a bursting-like explosion can be heard through the Clairhearing.

"W-what? This sound and vibration--looks like there's really a demon lord here."

Ms. Blum shows a fearless smile and then she begins to put support magic on herself and me.

However, that was a pointless action.

I look at the sentence that appeared on my log.

>Title [Demon Lord Slayer『Great Oni King』] Acquired.

Apparently the demon lord has blown himself.

Since I saw a violet light through Clairvoyance, I hurriedly jumped to the Dungeon Master Room with [Teleport] magic chantlessly.

『Tat' old fart dun' and blew 'imself. Ya can't win if ya ble』

I cut the [God's Fragment], who was floating away toward the roof while grumbling, with the Divine Sword.

After confirming that the violet light has been absorbed into the Divine Sword, I put the sword back to the Storage.

The mid demon that was in this room seems to have been killed in the demon lord's explosion, a broken dark red magic core is lying on the corner of the room.

Two huge spheres are lying on one part of the room.

According to AR reading, they're a [Fake Core] and a [Doom Core].

Since the Fake Core is scattering sparks like it's going to explode and the Doom Core begins to spill black mist that looks cursed, I quickly stow them away into my Storage.

If I'm not mistaken according to Arisa a [Dungeon Core] should be in the room of the [Dungeon Master], but it doesn't seem to be here.

Right when I put the [Doom Core] into the storage, red luminous points lit up in the next room.

According to the map, they're a [King Mummy] and several [Mummies].

Even though it's a King Mummy, it doesn't seem to be related with Corpse who's living in Selbira labyrinth's lower layer.

....Arisa's family huh.

I set foot into the next room.

UOWOOONUWOOOORWEYEEEEE !

<TLN: Written in latin on the raw, it sounds like "damn you" in Japanese.>

The mummies are approaching me while letting out voices of resentment.

Unfortunately, conversation doesn't seem to be possible even though he's a King Mummy like Corpse is.

I thought of cremating them with fire magic [Fire Storm], but I should ask Sera to purify them with advanced magic.

After reporting to Ms. Blum and taking her to the Dungeon Master Room through the normal route, she believed me just like that.

She was surprised to see me using magic chantlessly, but she was convinced that I'm a reincarnated person by her own volition.

I sent her back to her companions now that she had completed her objective, and then I went away to handle the remaining business.

Now that I've defeated the demon lord who was the [Dungeon Master], it seems I've become the ruler of this labyrinth, and I can move here with Unit Arrangement.

Taking advantage of this, I eliminated the remaining lesser demons and collected the documents written in [Devil Language] that were in their rooms.

Using Unit Arrangement, I move to Selbira's labyrinth where Sera and the others are.

"Satou-san!"

Sera who's noticed me gracefully steps toward me.

The princess and Lady Karina are sitting on simple chairs being exhausted from level up intoxication, while Zena-san is looking after them.

"Master, we have completed the quota of this room."

"Master, hoping for supply through magic power circulation."

Liza who burned the hiding cockroaches with magic edge cannon and Nana who smashed them with shotgun-type acceleration gun reported back.

"Thank you for your work. Let's have a lunch."

After telling that, I take everyone back to the solitary island palace.

I canceled the permanent teleport gate.

Without telling what happened in the morning, we all enjoyed a delightful lunch.

"Arisa, Lulu, and also Sera-san, can I have your time for a bit."

"This is quite rare of Master."

I show the adventurer badge to Arisa who looks curious.

"T-this is an adventurer badge! I want one too! Hey hey, where--"

Her expression froze when she saw the branded mark [Yowok Kingdom Labyrinth Bureau Adventurer Guild] behind the badge.

"So you went there. To that labyrinth..."

"Yeah, and I have something to talk about that--"

I tell her about the mummies.

"So I'd like to ask Sera-san to purify them."

"Yes, please leave it to me."

Sera who guessed the mood purposefully said it in a bright tone.

"Arisa and Lulu, what do you want to do? I'll take you along if you want to see them, but if it's hard for you, you can just visit the graves once it's all over."

"Un, I'm going. It's the duty of the living to mourn the dead."

"I'm going too. I had only ever talked with the king a few times, but he's still Arisa's and my father."

Arisa clearly asserted her wish to go with us after wiping her tears with her arm.

Lulu who comforted Arisa nodded while supporting her.

"Then, let's go."

I take the three to the labyrinth's underground with Unit Arrangement.

"Hey, Sera-sama. Could you please recite the『Requiem』spell once?"

"Why? I have to use a lot of magic power for 『Requiem』, so I won't be able to use it until tomorrow if I use it even once you know?"

Sera frowned to Arisa's sudden question.

"I'm asking you too."

"I cannot refuse if it's Satou-san's request."

I somehow understood what Arisa wanted to do, so I asked for her too.

Even if it doesn't turn out as Arisa wishes, I can just supply magic power and ask Sera once again.

Sera ends her requiem-like long spell.

"--Un, I've memorized it."

Arisa sheepishly muttered.

"Then, let's go."

I hold Arisa's shoulders and go to the room where the mummies are waiting.

"It's been a while Father. --Not like I've ever called you that. However, I want to call you 'father', not 'your majesty', in the end. Onii-chans too, forgive me for being late."

I hold back the mummies with the advanced force magic [Magic Arm].

I drain magic power of the mummies who are going to use magic sometimes, and destroy the attack magic that have been successfully invoked with Break Magic.

"It's fine today right?"

"Yeah."

After finishing her farewell, Arisa looked up at me to check.

When I consented, Arisa muttered "Thank you".

Two violet light ripples ran on Arisa's body.

It's probably the Unique Skills [Never Give Up] and [Over Boost].

I also choose some support magic like [Magic Boost] and [Magic Quality Up] from my Magic Column, and use them on Arisa.

"....■■ Requiem"

The room is basked in blue light once Arisa finishes the long spell.

The mummies stop moving and begin to fall apart, turning into golden sands.

I somehow see smiles on the mummy faces.

"--Arisa"

"Ah, father, mother.... Onii-chans too..."

Figures of the king, the queen and the princes that resemble Arisa can be seen overlapping the crumbling golden sands.

A kind-looking and a cheeky-looking princes wave their hands toward Arisa and then disappear.

I couldn't hear them, but I understand that they were saying that they love Arisa.

Thet king patted Arisa's head with his transparent hand, and then extended that hand toward Lulu.

"--Your Majesty?"

The king's soul showed a slightly lonely expression hearing Lulu, but he gently patted Lulu's head.

"Lulu, say Father."

"Y-yes. Father.... It feels strange somehow. Father, I and Arisa are living happily, so--"

"That's right! We're lovey-dovey with our beloved person everyday, so wait in heaven in peace!"

Joining Lulu, Arisa put up a bravado without even wiping her flooding tears.

The bodies of the two people are becoming more transparent while looking relieved.

Before they disappear, the king made a tapping gesture on my shoulder.

As their current guardian, I nodded to the king, and then the king and the queen disappeared while looking content.

"I wonder if they get to rest in peace?"

"Un, I'm sure that they're in peace. Mother is also waiting over there, so they must be alright."

Lulu nodded to Arisa's words.

Come to think of it, they told me that Lulu's mother, Lili died protecting them when the castle was attacked.

◇

Arisa wanted to stop by, so we teleported to the public cemetery where Lulu's mother is resting with [Unit Arrangement] by seeing it through the retreat.

After praying and offering a bundle of flowers on the public cemetery where Lulu's mother is resting, we moved to one of the ruined windowed tower of Kubooku castle.

Apparently, Arisa was living in that tower during her imprisonment.

"Then I'll go to the tower, you can stroll the town. I'll contact you with 『Telephone』 magic once I'm done."

"Should I help you carry them?"

"You can't. The tower is full of a maiden's secret."

Arisa disappeared into the tower with a bravado smile.

Her teleport destination is probably the tower's window.

I'm interested in what is left in the tower when she's down like that, but since she doesn't want to show me, I'll let her do what she wants.

"Now then, why don't we take a stroll in the town around the castle while waiting for Arisa?"

"Yes, allow me to guide."

Lulu begins to walk while leading my hand.

Sera who's grasping my other hand asks me with a low voice.

"Satou-san, is it alright for us who should be moving in the airship to show ourselves in front of people?"

"Don't worry about it."

I casually reply and pass recognition inhibition veils to Sera and Lulu.

I'm wearing a recognition inhibition bandana as Satou myself. Sera doesn't like to go with me when I'm Kuro.

"Master, this is baked soba."

"It looks like galette doesn't it."

It's a dish where soba flour is baked and then added with finely chopped pickles.

I don't think it's that tasty, but since Lulu is eating it while looking nostalgic, let's not fuss over minor details.

It doesn't seem to suit Sera's palate, her face looks complicated, so I give her leftover to a little girl who's looking at it enviously.

When I look closer, there's a lot of dirty children here.

Come to think of it, this is the capital of a defeated country huh.

I ask Lulu to guide us to the nearby temple.

"Like I said! We'll donate the pay later!"

"You can't. All adventurers are people who shirk payment, so we won't heal without an advance payment."

The badger game girl who chased me to the labyrinth is disputing with a priestess in front of the temple.

The bleeding boys who are with her looks like they don't have the willpower to participate in the dispute, they're just limping on the ground.

Looking at the AR reading, their life doesn't seem to be in danger.

"....Kuku, Jido, Bado."

Lulu muttered beside me.

I thought she knows them and was surprised when I saw the girl's detailed information. Looks like she's the little sister of Lulu's male cousins.

Since Lulu's face looks pale behind the veil, I judge that they don't have a good relationship, so I pass through them and go to the receptionist for donation.

"Oh my, to give this much donation!"

The priestess whose cheeks are loosened grips my hands and cries tears of joy.

I feel ashamed seeing her to be that happy receiving several gold coins. I'm planning to donate to other temples and orphanages, so I only give a few in each places.

"O pious people, may the god bless you! ■■■ Bless"

The priestess gave blessing to me and Lulu while shedding tears.

Sera didn't come with us due to religious reason.

>[Holy Magic: Garleon Belief] Skill Acquired.

I got a new skill thanks to the priestess's bless.

I have no plan to use it, so the point assignment is for later.

"Wait! The rich guy over there! Give some to us too!"

When we went out of the temple, the girl called Kuku who was disputing with the priestess in the entrance grasped Lulu's shoulder. Her finger caught Lulu's veil, removing it.

"--Ah"

"Eh? Lulu?"

The two look at each other.

However, that didn't lead to a conversation.

Boom, Kuku was thrown to the ground.

Lulu whose shoulder was caught threw Kuku away with the support from her [Self-Defense] skill.

I retrieve Lulu's veil from the fainted girl and put it on Lulu.

"U-um! Any injury? Are you injured anywhere?"

"No, this girl excels in martial art you see."

The priestess from the donation desk rushed out and asked if we are injured.

She did not take any notice to the fainted Kuku and the fallen boys below.

I bid farewell with a smile and toured the town while donating.

Along the way, we heard a thunderous roar from the direction of the castle, but I could somehow guess the reason, so we continued without minding it.

『Thank you for waiting~ I've done the clean-up.』

"The roaring sound earlier was really Arisa huh?"

『Ehehe~ Cleaning up my black history was too much work, so I erased them all together with the tower with [Disintegrate]』

"No one got injured right?"

『But of course. Arisa-chan never make a blunder.』

After receiving Arisa's report, we continued the tour with four people and then we went back to the solitary island.

"It's home sweet home."

"Oh Arisa. We've only stayed here once."

Lulu retorted to Arisa's cliched words.

They looked like their usual selves, but they somehow seemed like they were forcing themselves, so I lent my chest for the two to sleep on today.

"Arisa--"

"Zzz zzz"

I catch the head of Arisa who's trying to slip into my shirt.

"--I won't sleep with you if you're going to sexually harass me."

"Non nein."

Apparently, Arisa is tougher than I thought.

After lightly whacking Arisa's head, I strongly hug her to sleep so that she won't harass me.

During midnight, Arisa and Lulu sleep talked while shedding tears.

I use mind magic's [Good Night] on them and then wipe their tears with my finger.

I send [Don't worry] hand signal to Tama and Pochi who looked really worried.

The two nodded and then sent [Understood] signal.

Judging from the futon movement, the other girls seem to be worried too.

I'll be investigating the demon lord in the Holy Kingdom Parion tomorrow, I should get some sleep soon.

I'd like to go to Holy Kingdom Parion without any trouble.

14-6. Holy State Parion [Revised]

<TLN: Changed Holy Kingdom to Holy State, it's more correct.>

Satou's here. Crisis comes when I've forgotten about it. Things like finding myself not being able to answer the last question of a test that should have been easy, it was quite unnerving.

◇

Arisa wasn't there when I woke up in the morning.

Lulu who should have been sleeping beside me is also missing.

"Ah! Master, you woke up?! And I was just going to give you a wake-up kiss!"

Arisa showed up wearing an apron on the entrance.

She looks more cheerful than usual.

"Nice smell~?"

"Smells sweet nanodesu."

"Hot cake."

The youth troupe raise their bodies on the bed.

"Ehehe~ I made hot cakes today with Lulu's help!"

"Good job~?"

"Arisa is amazing nodesu!"

"Nn, respectable."

"Now, wash your faces. Let's have a breakfast."

Arisa urged everyone to get off the bed with a theatrical tone.

"Nana, you should get up."

"Master, another five minutes."

I shook the shoulders of Nana who was still sleeping even then.

She hugged my arm to her breast while saying another five minutes.

She was clinging to Mia just awhile ago, she probably missed her body warmth.

"Guilty."

The sullen Mia quickly snatched away my happiness.

Mia mercilessly shakes Nana to wake her up and then pulls her arm toward the washroom.

Liza did a morning practice so she looks like usual.

I fix my appearance with the personal grooming advanced magic and report the yesterday's detail to my connections.

I had conveyed "A demon lord got destroyed" to Echigoya Firm and the royal castle when I defeated the demon lord, but I didn't touch the detail.

I connected the king, the prime minister, Echigoya Firm, and me with Telephone.

The sound mode is of Nanashi. Since I previously changed my tone to sound arrogant like Kuro, I have to be careful not to mix them up.

"--Thus, the demon lord who was also the dungeon master of Yowok Kingdom labyrinth had blown himself. There were something called 『Fake Core』 and 『Doom Core』 inside the labyrinth."

『I can understand the Fake Core, but what kind of thing is Doom Core?』

<TLN: TL Mistake last chapter, 'Dummy Core' should have been 'Doom Core'.>

The prime minister asked.

I answer while reading the document I've confiscated from the lesser demon on the menu.

"Doom Core is an apparatus that can effectively produces monsters by gathering curses and grudges."

I convey the information written in the demon document.

"It seems that it had collected grudges from the former royal family before it was installed in the labyrinth. This might be groundless, but perhaps the royal capital was left in poor state in order to collect negative emotions from the surface."

In addition, it seems the Fake Core was used to cultivate Gabo fruits which were needed to breed demi goblins.

The demon document also details about the re-installation of traps inside the labyrinth, "Demi Goblin Trappers work independently."

It seems the demi goblins and the rats in that labyrinth were not all produced by the labyrinth, but some were brought in from outside.

Although it's not written in the demon document, it seems the demi ogres in the lowest floor were brought in from outside too.

From now on, Yowok Kingdom's labyrinth is most likely going to gradually decline, and will eventually wither.

I tell them my plan today once that matter is over.

"--I'm thinking of investigating Holy State Parion today."

『Then we will the necessary documents for the investigation.』

"Thanks. I'll stop by and take it later."

The prime minister said these when I was going to cut the talk after finishing the report.

『Nevertheless, it's such a pitiful end for the great demon lord who plunged the Royal Capital into chaos and created a new demon lord. As expected, there should not be multiple demon lords hidden in one country, the ploy must have been planned by the senior greater demon.』

Those words stay in mind like a thorn.

Certainly, it's quite unlikely for two demon lords to be in the same country, but if they search a reincarnated person that fits the requirement, and forcefully make them use too much Unique Skill after giving them the intended title--.

It's not impossible.

--However, that's a bit of a stretch.

I laugh away my mind that was on the verge of becoming a conspiracy theorist, and then went to the dining room with Arisa who had came back to call me for the breakfast.

"So? So? How is the taste?"

Arisa peered to my face while looking worried.

The bottom is charred black, and I can see semi-liquid dough when I cut it with a knife.

I can stealthily use heating magic here, but I'll appreciate Arisa's hard work here and put the half-baked hot cake to my mouth with a smile.

"Yup, it's good."

"Ehehe~ well~yes. This is Arisa-chan's true ability."

Arisa twists her body bashfully.

This feels like a father with a daughter who just cooked her first dish.

"Delishlish~"

"Pochi's is honey-syrup-clad special nanodesu."

"Tasty."

Looks like these girls' shares were baked by Lulu.

◇

"Um, hey, Satou. Are we doing it too today?"

"Should we stop if you don't like it?"

"I-it's not that I don't like it."

Although this would create a misunderstanding if you only hear it, this is just a morning conversation with the princess who's reluctant with going to the labyrinth.

"That monster has the optimal reproductive power, however, should we use different monsters if you don't like it?"

"...Is it alright with different monsters?"

"Yes."

I affirmed the princess's question.

"Marine products~?"

"Meat is better than fish! Pochi likes the jungle area where she can collect dinosaur meat!"

"The dinosaur is good. They're rich in variety, and we can enjoy both chicken and beef flavor."

The beast girls' standard is a bit odd.

"Ara? Tama and Pochi, are you not going to the tasting festival today?"

"Aye~"

"Pochi will go on a hunt nodesu. It's absolutely not because she's tired with Lulu's omelette rice nodesuyo?"

I see, looks like Tama and Pochi had enough of omelette rices that only provide little chicken meat.

The dishes for the cooking contest should be rice dish, meat dish and soup, so the test today is probably for the soup.

Lulu, Arisa and Mia are going to the experiment for the cooking contest.

The other girls are going to power-level in the labyrinth.

I tell Echigoya Firm to buy ingredients that Lulu requested, and send the labyrinth group.

The jungle forest has been revived in just half a month even though it was half-destroyed back then.

"Ah! There's a Tricera nodesu! The helmet grill is really delicious nodesu."

"Chief is there too~ wrapped roast~?"

"There are raptors and archaeopteryxes too. The hunt today is worth it."

The beastkin girls are staring beyond the fern forest with drooling faces.

I told them, "Don't be too hard okay", used long-lasting continuous support magic on them, and then left the labyrinth.

Zena-san's wind magic skill should be high enough soon, I'll present her with a magic book that has [Fly] magic after today's dinner.

◇

Now then, I'm going to visit Holy State Parion, but going there through the air lane from the great desert would take too much time, so I decided to take a bit of shortcut.

First, I changed into Kuro, and moved to the relay satellite located at the geostationary satellite orbit with Unit Arrangement.

Next, after using [Astro Suit] and [Barrier of Resist Fire] magic together, I dived into the atmosphere.

It might just have been my imagination, but since I felt that the descent velocity was slow, I used Flash Drive to accelerate more.

It felt a bit hot, but since my clothes aren't burning, it should be fine.

I've never done sky diving in the former world, but this is too fun, I'll get addicted to it.

Tama and Zena-san should be willing to sky dive with me together if I invited them.

When I'm about 10.000 feet above Holy State Parion, I move to the ground with Unit Arrangement by sight.

I made use of Unit Arrangement's inertia reset characteristic.

I use [Cold Wind] magic to blow off the heat accumulated from the descent.

Due to the time difference, its still right at dawn around here, I can see the Holy City Parion wrapped in morning fog beyond.

Now then, let's gather some intelligence before the native people come here.

I get Holy Parion Kingdom information by using [All Map Exploration].

As for the highest priority question, [Holy State Parion's Pope, Zazaris, being a demon lord], it turns out to be a false info.

The pope has a Unique Skill called [Heal All], and two titles, [God's Agent] and [Saint].

Since he has Unique Skill, that means he might be a reincarnated person with violet hair like Arisa.

I'm slightly interested with him, but I can just visit Holy City cathedral later.

I tried searching for other people with Unique Skill or demons, but it seems they don't exist here.

This kingdom has no labyrinth and there's no blank zone on the map of the area that's under direct control of the pope.

At most there's only the City Core room under the Holy City cathedral, but there shouldn't be a demon lord lurking in the center of the country.

Next I search powerful people whose level are 50 and above.

Excluding Pope Zazaris at level 51, it's only the Inquisition Bureau director and chief who are both at level 50.

I'm bothered with the Inquisition Bureau executors who have many and varied skills in spite of their relatively low levels.

Perhaps, Holy State Parion has a peculiar way to teach them skills.

In addition, I've also searched people who belong to the demon lord believers, [Light of Liberty], but there are only around 100 people in the whole territory, unexpectedly it seems they don't have much influence.

It seems that the whole Inquisition Bureau including the cardinal who commanded the sabotage in the Royal Capital and the chiefs are all members of [Light of Liberty].

Their number should not only be 100, they might be in other parishes of Holy State Parion. Apparently the territories in Holy State Parion are called parishes.

According to the document from the prime minister, the parish under the aforementioned cardinal is suspicious, thus I'm thinking of going around all the parishes with that one as the last so I won't miss anything.

Lastly, I searched for [Army of God] but there wasn't anyone like that.

They're probably in the middle of the reversal invasion campaign against the three country union.

◇

I'd like to sightsee the Holy City but I need to investigate the other parishes first.

I make a teleport point with [Create Safe House] in an undeveloped area near the holy city for when I'm going back here.

I get away from the point with sight-based Unit Arrangement, and then go around the parishes with Flash Drive.

I noticed that a lot of the populace here are afflicted with [Overworked], [Malnutrition], and [Illness], when I used [All Map Exploration] in each parish.

In contrast, the majority of the parishes' priests and the Holy City's populace are in good health.

It bothered me so I looked at the fields, most of them were infertile.

Looking at the split field with clover and root crops, I understand that they're using four-wheeled farming method, but both the wheat and the barely are hollow.

As an experiment, I went to an abandoned farm village, and used the advanced earth magic [Cultivation].

It's the same synchronous magic used by the royal court magicians to fix the land devastated by the heavenly dragon back then.

As the magic showed its effect, the reddish dried field turned into humus-like black soil in a blink of an eye.

Apparently it's not because the lack of magic essence (mana), but that this country lacks earth magicians.

And then after five more parishes, when I was investigating the last parish, I finally found a town that looks like it's being used as the base of the [Light of Liberty]. The majority of the inhabitants seem to be its members.

And, there are seven level 50 strong people in this parish.

The parish head, the temple knight leader, and five priests of this town seem to be members of the [Light of Liberty].

There doesn't seem to be any demon lord here, but just in case, I'll check this town's City Core.

I made a teleport point in the outskirt, and went to the town's sky through sight-based Unit Arrangement.

Of course I've hidden myself with optical camouflage skill.

"What a gray town..."

I got such an impression since the plaster used in the town's buildings are of gray color and the townspeople are all wearing undyed simple clothing.

That impression is also fostered with the gloomy expressions of the residents.

The only color comes from the colorful belts of the priests and the ornaments and the clothes of the women who walk with them.

I lower my altitude and check the downtown's condition.

"●●●、●●"

>[Western Regions Language] Skill Acquired.

Even though I've got a skill, I can just use the force magic's [Translate].

I choose [Translate] magic on the Magic Column.

"--The wheat price is raised again."

"Again?! Wasn't it raised just three days ago?"

"Sheesh it's disgusting. It's going to be three times the last year's price soon right?"

The people who are rustling bags on a cart seem to be a wheat merchant and his customers.

I don't think it's strange for the staple food to suddenly raise in price during wartime.

When I randomly looked at the bag of wheat, it showed, [Wheat, low quality. 20% of the weight is of impurity.]

Looking at the price using Estimation skill, it's almost four times the price of Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital expensive variety.

"Looks like there's little impurity this time, I'll buy one jar much."

"Ey, come again!"

Apparently, it's normal for impurity to be mixed in the wheat of this country.

I'm glad that I didn't come to this country when I first came to another world.

As I'm nonchalantly looking at them, the wheat gets exchanged for mahjong stick-like things.

That seems to be the currency of this country.

"I wonder if the living condition would improve a little once we won the war."

"Haha, only pastors-sama and priests-sama will."

"I'm alright as long as my husband who's gone to war is safe."

"Hee, wasn't onee-san's husband one of the『Army of God』? Then there's no way he'd lose."

"Wait there, my husband and my brother who have gone to the war front won't lose too."

"Hehe, please don't compete on it."

The other wife protested to the wheat seller man.

What.... So the [Army of God] is just militia men.

It's good that they're not some dangerous folks.

"Thank you. Currently, they should be attacking the tuban guys country with the northern Magic Turtle Fortress."

"That's amazing. Doesn't it take a lot of money to move that fortress?"

"That's why we gave a lot of charity to the church, I'm worried whether we can make it through the next winter."

Found some new keyword, I tried searching the so-called [Magic Turtle Fortress].

One of it remains to the east of the Holy City.

Since [Northern] was mentioned earlier, I investigated more and found three of it including the one I found earlier protecting the Holy City at the four directions.

It looks like a gigantic turtle magic beast fitted with countless magic cannons on its back.

It seems the turtle magic beasts are not tamed, but being controlled with some kind of magic device. That control unit probably needs a lot of money to be operated.

They're level 50s magic beasts, so they're just right to become prey for our girls, but as expected, breaking military equipment of another country would be bad.

However, I wonder if these [Magic Turtle Fortress] and the militia men really pushed back army six times their size?

It seems God Parion bestows power to Saga Empire Hero, perhaps the [Army of God] also received blessing from God Parion and became six time stronger.

◇

While thinking such a thing, I intruded Parion Temple in the center of the town.

I didn't use the mana camouflage which has bad fuel consumption, but I used every hiding skill I have.

Level 40 male and female temple knights are guarding the door that leads to the City Core.

I feel that these class of temple knights are too much as gatekeepers.

I can't teleport to the other side of the door since it's of a different map.

I think I can just beat them up and enter since they're [Light of Liberty (Terrorist)] people anyway, but let's think of other methods first.

Magic that I can spontaneously use have increased ever since I gained the ability to chant, so there's a lot of magic that I don't remember on the Magic Column.

And, I found the most appropriate magic on the Magic Column.

It's the intermediate force magic [Through Eye].

It was quite handy during the initial stage of the casted holy sword production, but recently, I haven't used it at all.

When I pick [Through Eye] on the Magic Column, I gain the ability to see through the magic metal-made door.

Before my line of sight could wander to the female knight's breasts, I teleported into the room with [Unit Arrangement]. Looks like it's usable with sight through magic.

I use [All Map Exploration] in the room.

As I thought, this area is the [City Core Space].

There's mostly no one here, but there's a person of interest in here.

--It's the demon lord.

I never thought that I would meet another demon lord in two consecutive days.

The demon lord this time has [Transfer] and [Familiar] Unique Skills. The titles are [Demon Lord], [Devotee], and [Calamity Saintess].

It's a woman, her original race is [Long Earkin]. She's 24 year old, she's young.

In addition, she doesn't have even one normal skill, only gift-like skills; [Self Status] and [Hide Skill]. Her level is only 50 too.

It can be said that she's the weakest demon lord I've ever meet.

If she's a demon lord that can be reasoned with, now is the chance to persuade her when there's no familiar.

I'm quite bothered with her [Sickness: Depression] condition, but I can just cure it with [Cure Disease] and [Spirit Exaltation] magic.

Thinking so, I changed into hero Nanashi and walked to her room.

Of course, I won't plunge recklessly.

I've taken a little "Insurance".

"Good evening, demon lord."

"Holy sword? Then you must be a hero right? You came to kill me didn't you."

When the beauty with a gloomy smile stood up, her long violet hair flowed back.

I wonder if she doesn't wear underwear below her silk priest clothing, her body line is slightly tempting me.

Looks like she's maintaining her normal ego.

It's troubling that she looks like she wishes for death, but I feel that we can negotiate peacefully.

"But, I'm sorry. I must kill you in accordance to the order."

--Order?

While deriding herself sadly, she slowly lifts her arm toward me.

As if telling me to kill her first before she could finish.

"Perish..."

When the bracelet on her arm shined, hero Nanashi and the ground he was standing on turned into black dust.

Since the City Core behind her throne lit up when the bracelet shined, it's probably a kind of ceremonial magic through the City Core.

I'm glad that I used a phantom.

I release the mana camouflage, and hit the depressed demon lord on her vital to make her swoon.

I took her bracelet the moment she fainted.

Next I'll see what I can do with the City Core.

I tried touching the City Core to see if I could gain control of it, but it was denied with, [An Exclusive User already Exists].

--Luminous point behind.

"Obey me!"

When I turned around, I saw a black clothed person casting violet light.

--Violet light?

It might be an omen of Unique Skill.

Maybe I should fall back with [Unit Arrangement] now and confront it again later?

My thought revolves during that instant.

"■"

Hearing the chant leaking from the black clothed person, I threw away the evade option.

If the person was really a reincarnated person or a teleported person that can use Unique Skills, there should be no need to chant.

"■"

Then there's a high chance that that violet light is simply a bluff.

Moreover--.

"■"

--I can just interrupt it if it's a chant.

I go before the black clothes with Ground Shrink and throw a kick to the person's stomach to interrupt the chant.

The black clothes tried to evade with a speed faster than Tama, but I'm not gentle enough to let it avoid easily.

"■"

Sliding using Ground Shrink while kicking, I hit the black clothes just right.

"Compul(Ge)"

While in the middle of the Command Word, the black clothes sank into the wall with the speed of a cannonball.

Looks like the last Ground Shrink was too much, the black clothes was thrown into the wall with a higher force than I expected.

The arms and legs are bent in the wrong direction, must be my imagination.

The person must be of a race who has a lot of joints.

However, that was my blunder.

"sion(ass)"

The Attentive Ears skill picked up the activation of the remaining Command Word from the man's mouth.

--Geass?

The skill that bounds Arisa and Lulu?

I choose the countermeasure while being surprised in my accelerated mind.

I scroll the Magic Column, and pick up the [Spirit Guard] in the mind magic category.

>Unable to resist Geass effect. Dominated.

>[Geass] Skill Acquired.

>[Geass Resistance] Skill Acquired.

Right before I can select the activation of the countermeasure magic, such logs flow in the corner of my view.

At the same time, red cobweb-like pattern emerges on top of the AR reading, my consciousness becomes turbid.

"Kneel, my servant."

Black cloth--er, the person wearing black clothing--no, my great master.

"Yes, my master."

Abiding my master command, I knelt down.

Various AR information are showed next to master.

The red cobweb displayed on my vision is bothersome, but it's not enough to hinder me from reading the information.

His title is [Dark Sage], [Ruler], [10.000-shape Magician], [Master of Demon Lord], [One who Reaches Man Limit], and [Lord]. A level 99 magic warrior with more than 100 skills, including [Geass], [Pain Resistance], and [Chanting Interruption Resistance].

He's an unrivaled being who has [Counter] and [Soul Shot] Unique Skills.

I long for the next order from my great master.

14-7. Holy State Parion (2)

Satou's here. There are times when I act on impulse without reasoning from myself, but when that happens I decide to obediently entrust my impulse. It's boring if it's all with reason after all.

◇

"I can't read the name--you, speak your name."

My great master bestowed me the first order.

I cannot see his countenance below the same black clothes, but it must be a face full of dignity.

I want to apologize for my barbaric act earlier, but I must prioritize obeying the order.

I also wanted to heal his wound, but it seems he's healed himself with his magic--I mean, master has healed the wound with master's own magic.

"My name is--"

When I was about to say it, I faltered since I remembered that it's an alias.

I have to manipulate the Exchange column and change it back to Satou.

For some reason it's been locked and I can't change it--I wonder why?

"Hmph, as expected of someone at level 99 like me. I can see how you've reached the limit of men. To think that you resist my Compulsion (Geass)...."

It seems my great master has misunderstood because I faltered.

He's unexpectedly thoughtless--I mean, wary.

I negated my arrogance thought and opened my mouth to correct master's misunderstanding, but unfortunately, master continued the talk, so I hesitated to interrupt.

I wait for master to finish talking.

"I add another order! Bow before me, and speak your name! ■■■■■ Compulsion (Geass)"

After master was tinged with violet colored light like the activation of Unique Skills, master's skill was invoked.

The log said that it was resisted, but I'll keep it a secret to protect my master's honor.

Now then, it looks like it's alright to tell my name now.

Before I could do it, I should toss my violet disguise wig.

For some reason, the red cobwebs intensify in my view.

They're obstructing me from seeing my great master....

Before I take off my disguise mask, I lightly wave my hand to brush away the cobwebs--.

◇

--I see.

"I'm Shiga Kingdom's Nanashi."

"My power finally gets through huh--that was some trouble."

While telling my name to the black clothes, I allocate points to Geass Resistance skill and Geass skill.

With clear mind after having negated his [Compulsion(Geass)] skill, I begin to check the situation and plan the countermeasure.

It seems the red cobwebs on the AR earlier were showing the [Geass] effect.

I got a terrible headache like my braincells were wounded when I negated the effect earlier.

I look at my Stamina Gauge after confirming that my Pain Resistance skill is turned on.

It's been completely recovered due to the effect of [Self-Recovery] skill.

The reason why black clothes was able to ignore our level differences and had its skill reached me is probably because of the effect of his Unique Skill, [Soul Shot].

It must have similar effect to Arisa's [Never Give Up].

Looks like I got careless since Arisa was the only one who could affect me with abnormal status so far.

After I've finished my business in Holy State Parion, I'll create some permanent defensive equipment like Raka, and for everyone's shares too.

Oops, let's think about that later and cast [Spirit Guard] that I was going to use before getting manipulated.

With this, I should be fine against his [Geass] and mind magic.

He also has troublesome sounding skill called [Counter] that I should be careful with.

It's probably the Unique Skill version of [Counter Magic] and [Counter Shell] magic in my magic line up.

It probably needs to be re-chanted every time he uses it just like with the magic, so there should be a chance I can use.

--That's right, re-chant.

Even though he has Unique Skill, he chanted it just like he did the first time.

He doesn't have [Demon Lord] title, and his name sounds like this world's name, [Sorijero].

According to labyrinth lower layer Corpse's story, reincarnated people are named by the god, and they should be named with their old name when they're born.

Therefore, he's probably neither a reincarnated person nor a transported person.

"Demon lord! Absorb this guy's skill and level, and make him into your familiar!"

Black clothes--Sorijero ordered the demon lord, but unfortunately for him, she's still fainted from my strike.

"■■■■■ Compulsion (Geass)--"

Violet ripples appeared on the body of Sorijero who heard me chanting [Geass].

He's probably invoked [Counter] Unique Skill.

Looks this skill doesn't need to be chanted.

I give him the order after confirming that state.

"--Click your fingers once!"

>Resisted Geass Effect.

Such is displayed on my log when I gave him the order, but the violet light that was running on Sorijero's body disappeared.

Apparently, [Counter] is a type of skill that doesn't need to be chanted, but it needs to be re-set every time you want to use it.

Alright, if I can resist my own skill that was countered, I should be fine against Sorijero's Geass.

I just need to be careful with the [Soul Shot].

I pick [Geass] skill and activate it.

Just like skills and magic that need to be chanted, I don't need to chant it anymore for the second time and beyond.

I saw Sorijero lifting a scepter that seems to be the City Core's terminal.

--Oops, it'd be annoying if he uses City Core to teleport away.

"I forbid teleportation."

"Impossible! ■ Guaaaaaaaaa"

Sorijero was trying to chant while holding the Scepter on one hand, but he screamed halfway through and stopped.

He's vomiting blood and his condition becomes [Weakened: Violation of Order].

Looks like [Geass] skill is quite dangerous.

I choose [Geass] skill once again from the skill column and activate it.

"I forbid the use of every skill"

"I-if I can't teleport then--■ nuoooooo"

Sorijero who was going to use some magic skills rolls over from the acute pain.

....This guy never learns.

I can finally see his face from the unfolded hood.

He's an old apefolk kin with golden colored body hair mixed with gray hair, the left half of his face is burned, while the right half of his face has violet colored specks on it.

His right arm shown from the rolled up sleeves has dark violet hair from the wrist up.

"What's wrong? Do you find me ugly? How would you, who have been granted with god's blessing from birth, understand our craving? This color I got as the compensation for seeking god's power is the proof of my belief!"

Umm--.

In short, I guess it's like, "I was jealous with people with Unique Skills, so I snatched it away from other people and got my body hair turned into violet color."

I checked just in case, but he doesn't have [Snatch]-type skill.

"Don't think you can win with this!"

Sorijero lamented while shedding tears of blood.

Matching that scream, two violet light ripples appeared on his body.

Apparently, Unique Skills aren't included in [Skill].

"I forbid the use of Unique Skills."

I impose Sorijero with another prohibition.

Still, leaving aside [Counter], I don't think there's any meaning in using [Soul Shot] when you can't use any skill.

Sorijero muttered [Sword] and swung the Scepter, and then it transformed into a thin one-handed sword in the blink of an eye.

That's quite a fantasy-like weapon.

I blow away Sorijero, who appeared in front of me with a speed that rivaled Ground Shrink, with a front kick.

It seems he reflexively used evade skill, he bounced on the floor while bleeding from from his ears.

I touch the one-handed sword that got separated from him with [Magic Hand], and put into the Storage.

With this he can no longer use City Core even if he violated the order.

Sorijero who staggeringly stood up takes out a scroll from his chest while drinking a magic potion he took out from the pouch on his waist.

"If it's scrolls--"

"I forbid the use of magic power."

"--Damn"

He finally learned after the third time, he throws away the scroll he took out.

"I forbid you to act."

Sorijero stopped moving after I gave him the last order.

....I feel like I've become kotodama god or yokai you know.

When I was walking toward him, Sorijero spat out a needle-like dark thing.

Of course I lightly evaded it, but he started to run at top speed toward the exit using that chance.

Looks like he's resisted the last [Geass].

Despite its convenience, it might be a skill that's easy to resist.

"Action is--"

Sorijero's body got tinged in dark violet light just when I was trying to add another [Geass].

Looks like he's resisted the [Geass] of [Forbidden to use Unique Skills].

I stopped talking in caution of his Counter.

"Gwoooo"

Sorijero is bleeding from his ears and eyes, maybe due to the effect of violation of orders.

Nevertheless, he ran like the wind toward the exit.

Looks like he wants to escape using this chance, but I can't let him do that.

I choose [Remote Stun] from the Magic Column and strike the magic into him one after another.

"I-Impossible--"

Several of it were countered and came back to me, but if it's just Remote Stun, I can deal with even thousands of it no problem.

BAKUWANAAAAAAAAAAH !

<TLN: Written in Latin on the raw. From "Baka na" meaning "Impossible", "No way", or "I can't believe this" in this context.>

Sorijero who screamed in a strange voice transforms into a distorted form.

Oh no--He has turned into a demon lord after using too much Unique Skills.

He's about two times as tall and looks more like a monkey.

"I forbid you to take any action."

Looks like it's not effective against Sorijero who has become a demon lord.

Even though the depressed female demon lord was able to be ruled under [Geass], this is somewhat unreasonable.

--Well fine.

It just means that I can't use the easy method, I can just thoroughly beat him like the usual.

It seems he's already broken off from the geass order, he can use magic and skills.

Looks like he's lost his ego, doesn't seem like he's going to teleport.

I vaporize the barrage of flame balls and lightning spheres with a holy sword.

Even if they're powered up with Unique Skills, it's useless if the magic are destroyed.

I physically knock down the demon lord who's screaming gao, gyao around and then cut his limbs to make him stop resisting.

"Demon lords really are tenacious."

The demon lord regrows his limbs even though he doesn't have regeneration-type Unique Skill.

Sometimes he used [Counter], but I tore them off just like with the attacking balls earlier.

The most dangerous one is when he used [Soul Shot] and [Geass] together, but since I could see the activation timing from the violet ripple, I evaded them by using golems and illusions as the scapegoats the moment they were activated.

It's not that scary when you know the trick.

When the monkey demon lord has been weakened enough, I scoop out the [God's Fragment] using the [Black Arm Encroached with Divinity].

After doing it for the second time, his [Demon Lord] title changed into [Former Demon Lord].

『Gonosen, haa, ultimate techniquee』

『Hmph. Hanging it all in one attack. I don't care what'll happen next.』

I cut the [God's Fragments] who were playing around with the Divine Sword, eliminating them.

There wasn't any drama but, he should turn back into the apefolk--.

He should have, yet for some reason he's turning into black sand-like mist.

It's like with the demon.

It had strange influence on his body after all, perhaps unlike Shin boy, old Sorijero had no qualification to host the [God's Fragment].

◇

"Now then, do you want to fight me too?"

I asked the Depressed Demon Lord who had woken up before I knew it.

After glancing at old Sorijero who was turning into mist, she slowly stands up.

"Yes, I cannot disobey the order...."

The Depressed Demon Lord affirmed while unsteadily walking to me.

"Are you still under the influence of Geass?"

"It won't disappear even if the caster is killed--"

The Depressed Demon Lord shook her head while looking like she has given up.

"What are the orders you got?"

"I was ordered to『Do not go out of the room』,『Do not use your power without permission』,『Report any intruder』, and also,『Arrest the intruder if possible, if not kill them』, those four--"

I see, it seems she has no choice but to fight me with that last order.

Come to think of it, why was my condition like I got brainwashed?

I was ordered to vaguely [Obey me], I wonder if that turned me into something like a slave?

The Depressed Demon Lord is reaching toward my neck slowly.

"--That's why kill me. If possible, I'll be thankful if you can do it without too much pain."

Even if I'm asked to, it's hard to kill a fleeting beauty who isn't even resisting.

....Right.

"You do not need to kill any intruder."

I try to overlap the [Geass] as a test.

"It hurts, it's like my head is split."

The Depressed Demon Lord sits down on the floor while suffering.

I draw close to her and heal her with anesthetic magic and healing magic.

"A-are you going to torment me with torture?"

"I'm sorry, I didn't intend to.... By the way, is it alright for you not to kill me?"

"....Eh?"

Looking puzzled, the Depressed Demon Lord looks at her own hands.

"No way, the order has been canceled."

Just as I've guessed, it seems to be possible to cancel [Geass] by overwriting it.

"I have a suggestion--"

I begin to persuade the Depressed Demon Lord while eliminating the [Light of Liberty] guys who showed up on the entrance.

I somehow succeeded persuading her thanks to sacrificing the enjoyable lunch I should have had with everyone.

"Then you're fine with『Do not make any familiar without permission』,『Do not act like a demon lord』,『Uphold Japanese moral standard unless it is unavoidable』?"

"Yes, it's enough if I can uphold that much."

I tie a [Contract] with her.

"I have another request, is it alright?"

"Depends on the content."

I listen to the Depressed Demon Lord.

"I'd like you to please help me getting back Norio's Unique Skill that I had given to the pope of this country."

"Norio?"

"Yes, the boy who was reincarnated in the neighboring country...."

Summing up the Depressed Demon Lord's story, it seems the Unique Skill of a kidnapped panther-head kin, Norio-kun (9 year old) was given to Pope Zazaris through the Depressed Demon Lord's unique skill [Familiar] and [Transfer] by the Dark Sage's order.

Looks like Norio-kun whose Unique Skill was taken by the Depressed Demon Lord got beheaded by the Dark Sage afterward and died.

The Unique Skills that the Dark Sage used were also gotten from two reincarnated people whose Unique Skills were robbed and then killed.

While silently praying for the people who were killed for their Unique Skills, I have a little question.

--Does that mean the one who forced Arisa and Lulu with the [Geass] is not the Dark Sage, but a different person?

Arisa's Unique Skills are useful without a doubt.

There's no doubt that your force will be more powerful if you give them to your subordinates.

Apparently, there are other people who can use [Geass] beside the Dark Sage and the weaselkin emperor.

It's quite a rare skill, so I was under the impression that the royal court magician who forced the [Geass] to Arisa and Lulu was the same person as the Dark Sage.

I'd better prepare the way to cope against it for my companion.

"Secondly, I want to hold a memorial service for the people who got discarded in this castle's underground."

"Is it Norio-kun earlier?"

"There's a lot others too...."

The Dark Sage kidnapped people who were hindrances and high leveled ones, and used the Depressed Demon Lord's skills to level up and give skills to the [Light of Liberty]'s executives.

After absorbing them, he tortured them and used tools to create malice out of them.

They're quite inhumane.

Let's hold a memorial service and offering to not only the pope's Unique Skill, but also to the people whose skills and levels were robbed by the [Light of Liberty].

"Understood. I'll grant your wish."

"Thank you.... Hero."

The Depressed Demon Lord who showed her smile nodded powerfully.

Now then, let's commence the punishment.

14-8. Holy State Parion (3) [Revised]

Satou's here. When a punishment went too far, it became a lynching. It's important not to lose your calm in order to keep it from going too far.

◇

"Now then, first I'll seize the City Core."

There are probably other people who can use City Core's power besides the Dark Sage Sorijero after all.

I reach my hand toward the City Core that's floating in the air while emitting blue light.

『Welcome, king of the higher domain. Would you register this land as a satellite city?』

Unlike before where it said "An exclusive user already exists", a voice that's hard to distinguish as either male or female spoke.

--Who the heck's a king.

>Title [King] Acquired.
>Title [Anonymous King] Acquired.
>Title [Hero King] Acquired.

Ignoring the retort in my mind, system messages displaying title acquisitions appeared on the log.

These [Anonymous King] and [Hero King] are probably due to my name being a blank space and my title [Hero].

The higher domain must be about the [Dragon's Valley] Source. It's a Source that was ruled by the Dragon God after all.

"Register it."

『Acknowledged--』

>Title [Land Lord] Acquired.

『--Do you want to let the other supporting wardens to succeed?』

"No, I don't."

『Removing supporting wardens. Do you want to retrieve the terminal interfaces loaned to the supporting wardens?』

"Please do."

After agreeing to the City Core's suggestion, seven bracelets that look the same as the one the depressed demon lord wore appeared before me.

『Unable to retrieve the first terminal interface loaned to an individual named Shizuka. If you'd like to create a new one, 20000 MP is needed.』

"No, there's no need to make a new one."

Shizuka that the City Core mentioned is the depressed demon lord's name.

Apparently, it can't retrieve items in my Storage.

『Do you want to carry over the environmental setting?』

Setting huh.... I don't want to tamper that, but--.

"Display the setting difference between the previous lord and the one before that."

『Acknowledged. Red indicators are of the previous lord, blue indicators are of the lord before that.』

It seems the Dark Sage had changed it arbitrarily, there are some large differences between the red and the blue indicators.

The magic power that should have been originally used to stabilize people's life is diverted to the lord, the Dark Sage, to strengthen himself and for his experiments.

"Change the setting to the blue ones."

『--Completed the change. Due to the insufficient magic power, the climate setting change will be reflected in the land after 21 days.』

With this the neighboring agricultural life should be better I'm sure.

Now then, it's about time to get back from the digression.

"Can you close this room?"

"It is possible. Do you want to execute it?"

"Do it. I'll be ordering it from the terminal if I want to cancel it."

I ordered the city core after collecting the seven bracelet-shaped terminals from the floor to my storage with [Magic Hand].

Now then, there's a reason why I seized the City Core.

It's in order to freely move in the city with [Unit Arrangement].

Now that I've completed the preparation, let's begin the punishment.

◇

"Damn you false god's fanatic!"

"W-why is the『Demon Lord of Blessing』following the hero?"

When I went out of the room accompanied by the depressed demon lord--Shizuka, the combatants of the [Light of Liberty] were waiting as expected.

I made low leveled people to faint with the anti-personal [Sound Pressure] magic, and beat down the people who withstood that and people who were pretending to be unconscious with [Remote Stun] magic.

"Oy oy, what the heck is this?"

"That white mask looks to be the culprit."

"Can I eat that? I'm hungry."

Three men and women who acted like some big-shots appeared on the entrance of the hall filled with agonizing cries.

"I-it's the four kings!"

"T-that hero will meet his end now."

"After all the Lightning Speed--"

The mobs who were still conscious had begun to explain about the people who appeared.

It seems they were going to tell their names and nicknames, but since I don't intend to remember them, I'll make a short work out of them.

It looks like they can evade magic, so using the combination of Ground Shrink and vital point strikes, I knock down the three four kings.

Only the man called Lightning Speed tried to make an evasive maneuver while grinning, but he still couldn't avoid my combo techniques, and fell down to the floor.

I completely neutralized the tumbling man and the remaining mobs with [Remote Stuns].

Then, the last of four kings made a surprise attack.

"Got youuuuuu!"

I knock down the [Light of Liberty] executive who has appeared by smashing through the wall with [Magic Arm].

He was in plain sight since the radar had caught him.

Since there's no [Light of Liberty] magician that can use teleport here, I throw them in the [Desert] sub-space after binding them with magic.

The sand might be a bit hot, but they shouldn't die with just that much.

◇

"I knew your skill from defeating the Dark Sage, but you're really ridiculously strong."

Demon lord Shizuka crosses her arms like she's astounded.

The hills that are probably of F cups are getting emphasized, but it doesn't seem like she's trying to tempt me.

Together with her, I advance through the corridor heading to the underground tomb.

Countless torture devices were put in a hall along the way.

"Fuhahaha, masked man! You have a bad luck coming to the room of this Bazef-sama! I'll show you the thing called true pain--"

I neutralize a suspicious looking macho who appeared between the torture devices with mind magic [Pain].

I thought he would scream, but instead he's convulsing while discharging various body fluids.

Apparently, he's not strong against pain himself.

I imprison the fainted macho to the same place as the people earlier.

Then I purge the torture devices in this room with [Disintegration].

They wouldn't be put to good use even if I left them, and I wouldn't have any use of them even if I put them in my Storage.

Demon lord Shizuka is staring in amazement at the torture devices disappearance.

While ignoring her words that are mixed with awe and shock, I go to the altar beside the pit inside the mausoleum.

"What an ominous place. I feel like I can hear the grief of those who were given unfair deaths."

An item called [Curse Pot] is left on the altar.

According to the detailed information on the AR reading, it seems to be a magic tool used to collect grudges and negative thoughts.

--KWONOURWAAAAMYUUUUYEEE.

<TLN: Written in Latin on the raw. Means "This grudge".>

>[Soul Hearing] Skill Acquired.

Sorry but I can't stand horror, so I don't intend to activate that skill.

"I can hear the voices of souls--"

Yet, demon lord Shizuka heard some unnecessary voices.

"It seems they want to seek revenge."

I guess that's normal for people who died unnaturally.

However, I don't intend to help them in the mass slaughter--no wait.

Perhaps I can control the apparition created from soul magic.

According to the magic books I've read, it's possible to control the ghost as long as the user has higher level and high soul magic skill level.

Then maybe I can grant them the revenge while also easing my work.

I locate the spell I need from the soul magic book.

"....■■ Create Lich Lord"

『Our master, please bestow us the opportunity for revenge.』

"No."

A Lich Lord wearing a worn-out brown robe floated up from the pit.

It raised an echoing voice that chilled me to the bone, but since I don't intend to take part in murder, I rejected it.

Defiant thought flowed from the Lich Lord, but it immediately quieted down when I denied it.

I got it easily suppressed, but it feels like a balloon that's on the verge of imploding.

"I'm only ordering you to take away the skills and levels from people who killed you guys."

『....That is amusing. Truly thrilling. Pushing people who reveled in splendor down to hell on earth. Our master truly understands what revenge means.』

I'm a bit opposed to the Lich Lord's valuation, but now it should go on neutralizing the [Light of Liberty] bunch without killing them.

◇

"Y-you damn apparition! I'll purify you with my holy magic!"

"Such thing like an apparition is no match against me who have received blessing from demon god-sama."

"G-go away! Go away, you damn undead! I-I cannot die in a place like this!"

There were some people who resisted like such, but it seemed that it was impossible to block level 50 Lich Lord's level drain and skill drain when they couldn't move.

I entrusted demon lord Shizuka to supervise the Lich Lord while I concentrated capturing people whose level are higher than 20 in the city.

There were some people who went out of the city to seek help from their friends in the Holy City's Inquisition Bureau, but I made a surprise attack with space magic's teleport and let them join their friends to become the Lich Lord's victims.

Of course, I also handled the Inquisition Bureau guys and cardinals like so too.

Pope Zazaris is in fact not a member of the [Light of Liberty] so I'm not handing him to the Lich Lord.

I'm going to deal with him together with demon lord Shizuka later.

"--So, is it over?"

『It's over.... We deprived the power from all of the fanatics. O master, our gratitude for granting us the chance to get our revenge.』

After telling me that, the Lich Lord got wrapped in light and disappeared as if it was purified with magic.

"What is that I wonder?"

"Looks like the Lich Lord has left it."

An item called [Spirit Orb] fell on the place where the Lich Lord was.

I have a hunch that it's a crystallization of the levels and skills that the Litch Lord snatched, but since the detailed information on the AR reading is blank, I don't really know its true nature.

I'll keep it in the Storage for the time being and ask Corpse and Yuika about it when I visit the labyrinth lower layer.

◇

"You demon! You think you can invade the holy ground of this holy city parion! ■ Divine Punish"

Pope Zazaris cut me and demon lord Shizuka with an illusion of a huge sword of light.

This is the first time I've seen him, he looks very young you wouldn't have guessed he's 150 year old. His race is human, so he's probably maintaining his youth by using god's miracle or youth medicines. His long blond hair looks very glossy.

I've come to the great shrine in the holy city of the holy state Parion with demon lord Shizuka.

In order to collect [Heal All] unique skill from Pope Zazaris of course.

"--Accept the familiarization"

Using [Geass] on the neutralized pope, I made him accept the demon lord Shizuka's familiarization.

Next we transfer his Unique Skill to a small louse.

Of course the small louse couldn't hold the [God's Fragment] and instantly began to turn into a demon lord.

Its body turned violet colored, the transparent wings turned into dark violet color.

The louse demon lord's level is 50.

Apparently, once you turn into a demon lord your level becomes 50 at minimum.

The louse demon lord that has become gigantic breaks through the sanctuary's ceiling.

"W-what an abominably colored monster! Do you want to let that monster attack our holy city!"

Leaving alone the pope who's unable to stand up, I go to eliminate the louse demon lord before it could fly away.

I finely chopped the louse demon lord with a holy sword while leaving blue afterglow, and then absorbed the emerging [God's Fragment] by cutting it with the Divine Sword.

I cut it quickly, so I couldn't hear the [God's Fragment] muttering.

I was slightly hesitant removing the useful-looking [Heal All] like this, but since the former user had been killed already, and giving it to someone would lead them turning into a demon lord if they used the skill too much, we chose this way since handling it would be too troublesome.

"Answer my questions."

I interrogate the pope about the Dark Sage and the [Light of Liberty] after hypnotizing him with mind magic.

Guided by me, the pope answers the questions intermittently.

"....It is impossible for Dark Sage-dono to be a demon lord believer....You asked the same thing as my foolish treacherous retainers....Dark Sage-dono is a pious believer of our god who has helped raising our priests using unparalleled techniques....I gave him the great priest and landlord position for his achievements...."

Surprisingly, he didn't know that the Dark Sage is related to the [Light of Liberty].

Moreover, he looks like he doesn't know about the existence of demon lord Shizuka.

"Then how did you get the『Heal All』?"

"....The great god Parion must have bestowed it to me...."

It seems the pope doesn't remember demon lord Shizuka transferring the [Heal All] from Norio-kun.

After interrogating him more, I felt that he was like Baron Muno and the others when they were brainwashed by the lesser demon.

It seems his memories were tampered by the Dark Sage.

Disguising demon lord Shizuka's name and appearance as a caution was a good decision.

Right now she's wearing bull horns on her head and a blank mask. Her skin has also been made to look like a dark elf's.

It looks like the pope was also used by the Dark Sage.

"The interrogation is enough with these much right? What do you want to do demon lord?"

"I do not wish for anything more after taking the Unique Skill."

Then we can just leave it at this.

I cancel the mind magic for interrogation.

Demon lord Shizuka also releases the familiarization.

Managing the country should be difficult from now on since all of the high-leveled pope's subordinates are gone, but that's for the ruler, Pope Zazaris, to work hard on.

"So you won't kill me! Demon lord and his attendant!"

Leaving the screaming pope alone, I take demon lord Shizuka's hand and send her to a safe area with [Teleport an Object].

"My『Judge Eye』can see through all disguises! Demon Lord Ducky and his attendant Rasputin! I'll let all temples in the continent to know about you!"

[Ducky] and [Rasputin] that the pope spoke of are aliases that I just made up with [Name Order] earlier.

I have to change the demon lord's name back to Shizuka later.

Looking at him, it looks like even the rare skill [Judge Eyes] can't see through Mana Camouflage.

Feeling relieved, I moved to the desert where demon lord Shizuka was waiting.

After that, I threw the [Light of Liberty] members from this country to the underground prison of the Holy State Parion after taking away their disguise items.

Of course I've left a written board about their offenses and evidences of them being demon lord believers so that they won't be released.

The only person I've taken to Shiga Kingdom's underground prison is the cardinal who was involved with the sakuramochi incident.

◇

"Can I really live here?"

"Yeah, I can also prepare someone to take care of you if you need it."

"Don't need--but, I'd like to keep a small bird and a puppy."

I brought the depressed demon lord Shizuka to a place in the farm area that's been covered in Yuika's barrier.

Oops, she's recovered from the depression condition, and she's promised that she won't act like a demon lord, so I should call her Shizuka.

At first I thought of taking Shizuka to the labyrinth lower layer where the reincarnated people are living, but since she wanted to quietly live in a place with no other people for a while, I brought her here.

Of course it's not for the sake of keeping Shizuka but for her peace.

I feel that the demons would meddle if she were in the outside world.

"Okay. Do you have any request for the bird's and the puppy's types?"

"Right.... I'd like a java sparrow and siberian husky."

The java sparrow is not a problem, but I've never seen a siberian husky here.

I'll bring a kind of dog that's similar to it for the time being.

To make her secluded life easier, I've prepared a splendid house on the river bank of the farm area with [Create House] and an agricultural land nearby with [Cultivation].

Furthermore, I've left several Wood Puppets for the labor works.

"Hey, can I look inside the house?"

"It's your house, so you can do as you please."

I gave an answer to Shizuka who was curiously looking at the house.

After seeing her off, I installed a freezer, a refrigerator, a washing machine, an automatic bathtub and a flush toilet magic tools.

Once I've done the one-man work and comes back, Shizuka is currently looking at the clothing on the bed while frowning.

I've put some change of clothes when she wasn't present, I wonder if it's not to her liking?

"Are these underwear made in Japan? But, my classmate said that men would give underwear because they want to take it off themselves. I'm being protected by him after all, I can't refuse if he wants me I think. But, but, doing it with someone whose face I never see is."

She's quite talkative when she's talking to herself.

No she's been freed from her depressed condition, so this might be her true character.

On top of having big breasts, Shizuka is a beauty and I don't have any complain regarding her age, but I feel that marriage or mistress routes would certainly be waiting for me if I treat her like that, so I don't intend in putting my hands on her. I'm fine with playing around limited to the professionals.

I call Shizuka after knocking on the door.

"I've put magic tools, foodstuff and flavoring needed for your livelihood for the present. You use them like you use electronics in Japan, and if you want to eat other food, you can collect fish and shellfish in the river, and fruits in the forest."

Of course I've left three months worth of preserved food and daily general goods in the underground storehouse.

The only thing missing is liquor. I've left out the liquor since there's a danger of her falling into alcohol dependency.

"Okay. I saw some shrimp when I was looking at the river earlier, the nature around her is quite rich isn't it."

--Shrimp?

I caught something off from Shizuka's words.

"What's wrong?"

"No, I was just thinking where I could get a siberian husky."

"It's alright as long as it looks similar. I just want the warmth."

After telling her that I'd get it quick, I moved out of Shizuka's house with Unit Arrangement.

I did not teleport to the solitary island palace.

I went to the abandoned fort in Muno Earldom since there's something I want to investigate.

In order to check it, I cast [Another World] on the bank of a streamlet near the abandoned fort, creating a small sub-space.

"There are really small fish and shellfish in this streamlet too...."

Looks like living beings are created along with the sub-space.

I realized that I had the wrong idea when I thought that far.

"....I should've realized it when I saw that there were plants."

Moreover this country has the alchemy technology about human body to create homonculus like Nana.

Due to the moral value from my former world hindering, I've been thinking that creating living beings is something special.

Human body alchemy huh.... If I make use of the code that creates living beings in this [Another World]....

I shake my head to throw away the inquiring mind.

"No, I really should not."

Yup, for my mental health, let's stop trying to do that.

After nodding twice, I write a postscript on the taboo entry in the memo pad, "Forbidden from developing magic that creates intelligent life."

I should entrust creating intelligent life to the god after all.

◇

I tell the usual members about the extermination of the two demon lords and then head to the labyrinth where my companions are enjoying hunting the dinosaurs.

I've asked Tifaliza in the Royal Capital for the dog and the small bird matter.

"Sa-Satou-san! I-it's terrible!"

As soon as I arrived at the labyrinth, Sera who was resting in the shade rushed to me.

"There was an omen for the god's oracle! There might be a demon lord manifesting somewhere!"

"Not an oracle itself, but an omen is it?"

It's probably about the ape demon lord that I defeated two hours ago and the louse demon lord defeated one hour ago.

"Y-yes. In order to receive oracles, I need to be in the holy sanctuary where it's easy for god's voice to reach, or create a simple sanctuary and use a ceremonial magic."

I see. Looks like you can't receive oracle anywhere anytime.

For now, I'll calm her down.

"Two demon lords appeared in the Holy State Parion earlier, I think it must be about them."

"T-two demon lords?!"

Sera raised a voice of despair.

"Master, if they appeared in two different place, please leave one to us. We'll prevent any victim no matter what it takes until Master has finished with the other one."

"Master, permission to deploy."

"Tama too~?"

"Po-Pochi too! A de-demon lord is nothing nanodesu."

Before I could calm Sera down, Liza and the others drew close to me with determined expressions.

Zena-san and the princess fell on their knees without being able to talk.

Lady Karina looks like she's hesitating whether to participate or not.

"Everyone, calm down, I've already defeated the two demon lords, so don't worry about it."

"T-the demon lords have been defeated?"

"In such a short time, and two of them?"

"Admiring master."

"Goodjob~?"

"Very, very amazing nodesu!"

I lend my hands to Zena-san and the princess, lifting them up.

"A-as expected of my Sa--"

"Satou-san, you're amazing!"

Zena-san whose eyes' shines had recovered interrupted the princess and took my hands, swinging them.

Waiting until Zena-san released my hands bashfully, I took everyone back to the solitary island palace.

Now then, the airship should arrive at the Royal Capital tomorrow, I'll go visit some of my acquaintances.

The day after tomorrow is the appointed time for the contact from the hero's party, I have to ask about their progress with the demon lord extermination.

Recently, I've only conversed with the secretary lady who's house-sitting, I'll talk to Hayato directly through [Telephone] if he's still absent.

I also have to tell everyone about me sheltering demon lord Shizuka.

14-9. Racial Difference

Satou's here. 'There is no rule in war and love', an acquaintance from my college days said so. 'You'll need faithfulness in love at least huh', so I thought when I was visiting the hospital room after the guy got himself hospitalized by his five girlfriends.

◇

"Here I go okay?"

"Okay, come at me!"

"Yes, please."

After enjoying the delicious dinner, I called Lulu and Arisa to the soundproofed laboratory.

Of course it's not for some dubious reason, I'm going to release them from their [Geass].

I have a first hand experience in removing demon lord Shizuka's [Geass] after all, this should be fine.

Demon lord Shizuka complained about the pain when I released her Geass, so this time I've given them some painkiller beforehand and chosen a place where they won't be heard even if they scream.

I pick [Geass] from the Skill Column and execute it.

"You don't need to be a slave. I permit the cancellation of the slave contract."

After ordering them so, some red thorn-like effect appeared around Arisa and Lulu and then snapped.

At the same time, Arisa and Lulu scream and cling to me.

So the painkiller really can't completely prevent it.

And then after about one hour--.

"Fuh~, it was far better than the pain from Reset, but it felt as if my nerve had been pulled if I didn't take the anesthetic."

"I-I am also f-fine now."

After wiping their tears with a handkerchief, I canceled their slavery contract in turns.

"It feels like the coiled headband on my head has been unfastened. My head feels light, but something feels unsatisfactory."

Arisa told her impression while swaying her head.

"You're right Arisa. It feels lonely to have the connection with Master severed--"

In the middle of her monologue, Lulu noticed my line of sight and reddened.

I wonder why?

"--But on the other hand, it's possible for me to become a bride now. I'll become a good woman enough for Master to be interested in during the promised four year!"

Lulu declared to me with a captivating smile.

Come to think of it, I remember promising Lulu, "I'll marry Lulu if you don't have a partner in five years" when we were in the journey back then.

"Ah! Lulu's unfair! Me too! I'll also become a woman that will make 1001 people from 1000 people turn their head in nine years!"

"Aren't there more people who turn their head than the ones that exist."

"You see, I mean that the unborn baby in the mother's stomach even turns his head."

I'm glad that Arisa can already joke around.

After patting their heads, I brough the two to the living room while giving some vague answers.

◇

"""CONGRATULATIONS!"""

When I told everyone in the living room that Arisa and Lulu have been released from their [Geass], they congratulated the two.

And then the brownies quietly push a cart inside.

"Ca~ke?"

"It's true nanodesu! Moreover it's the five stepped cuisuasu version nanodesu"

Pochi, you mean [Christmas].

The cake that the brownies have brought is a celebration cake I've prepared beforehand.

They put blue tea in front of everyone.

It's not their birthday, but we ignited as many candles as their ages, and then let them blew it.

"Tama wants to do it too~?"

"Po-Pochi too, she wants to blow candles too nodesu."

"Do."

"Master, wishing for swaying the fire."

"M-me too, I want to do it too desuwa."

In the end, it's not only the youth troupe and the embarrassed Lady Karina, but everyone blew the candles in turns.

I invited the brownies since they looked restless, but they refused since they were in the middle of their works.

I'll give them some mid-sized cakes with candles on top later.

◇

"Sheltering a demon lord?"

"Keeping a demon lord just because she's a beauty, aren't you too lustful."

After the celebration, I called Arisa and Liza and told them about me sheltering a demon lord.

I'm actually confining her in a green prison, but since that sounds like a crime, I said that it's for protection.

"She's certainly a beauty, but not at Lulu's level."

"In other words, she's at Sera and Karina-tan's level right?"

Wonder why, Arisa is awfully sharp.

"A 24 year old long earskin huh.... Don't tell me she's Aze-tan's substitute?"

"No, I don't think that at all."

I denied Arisa's suspicion with a serious face.

"Is that really so? I thought you moved on to her from Aze-tan."

"There's no way."

I shrugged my shoulder and denied Arisa's continued push.

"I mean, usually we'd have done a celebration like earlier in the elf village right?"

"That's--"

I couldn't reply to Arisa's reasonable words.

"Something happened right? Why don't you talk about it with onee-san?"

Arisa who's kneeling on the chair beside me tells me while patting my head as if persuading me.

I recall the time when I told Aze-san about my engagement with the princess about two weeks ago.

◇◇◇◇◆◇◇【Two Weeks Ago】◆◆◇◆◆◆◆

"Satou! Is the Royal Capital alright already?"

"Yes, I've settled the problems, I plan to move to the Labyrinth City in half a month."

While saying that I put some cakes from Royal Capital in front of Aze-san.

The nobles of the Royal Capital have been giving me box of cakes recently, so I've brought some carefully selected ones from among them.

I tell her about my new position after we're about done with the peaceful tea party.

"Actually I've been appointed to become a vice-minister of the Ministry of Tourism, and I'll be going on a journey with several of my old friends who will be acting as the attendants."

"Satou, you're amazing! To be successful as a minister this young!"

Aze-san you forgot the [Vice] part.

"So I'd like to bring new friends here, is it alright?"

"Of course! Satou can bring anyone he's accepted as many as he wants."

Aze-san easily permitted my request.

She's quick to decide as usual.

Lua-san who's acting as the watchdog and looking like she'll vomit sugar in the room also nodded.

I'll bring Zena-san and the others when I come here again next time.

Finally, I speak frankly about some slightly difficult thing to Aze-san.

"One of those attendants is the princess of Shiga Kingdom you see, and for some reason she's been pushed to me as my fiancee."

I look at Aze-san in the eyes and talk with a nuance that tells her that's it not my real intent.

However, unfortunately, my thought didn't seem to reach her.

"My! Satou's bride! Let me hold the baby when Satou's child is born okay."

Aze-san spoke of congratulatory words with higher voice pitch than usual.

--WHY？

"But but, is it only one? One is not--I mean, nobles of humankin take a lot of wives right? If it's Satou, you should be able to marry 100 brides and make 1000 babies! And then Satou's descendants can visit here for around 10.000 years! But don't stop with just the wives and the children, once in 10 days--"

Unlike her usual self, Aze-san continues talking like a machine-gun.

Since my marriage proposal had been rejected for three times already, I should be able to laugh off only this much, but Aze-san's words shocked me more than I thought, and I couldn't listen to most of the latter half of her talk.

◆◆◆◆◇◆◆【Present Time】◇◇◆◇◇◇◇

"Haaa--"

After listening to my story, Arisa put her hand on her forehead and let out a grand sigh.

"Are you stupiid? If you talked about that to someone who's less than a lover, it's obvious that she'd reply like that."

"Arisa--"

"I'm sorry Liza-san. I'll hear your scolding later, let me talk right now."

Liza was going to scold Arisa for calling me with [Anta(you)], but Arisa continued her words while putting her hands on my shoulders.

"And then, even though you always took your time to visit the elf village once in three days no matter how busy you were, afterward you never go there, never even send short reports through [Telephone] and even when she contacted you with Telephone, you only replied curtly right?"

She's quite well-informed--.

"Aze-tan consulted me with [World Phone] this noon. She was crying, saying 『Satou hates me now』 you know?"

--Aze-san did?

"Master, it's presumptuous of me, but would you allow?"

"It's okay."

Liza unusually participated in love talk.

Naturally, Liza talks to me with a serious face without looking like she's making fun of it.

"Master is a human, Aialize-sama is a high elf."

"Yup, that's right."

"Human and high elf cannot make a child."

"I know."

I said it slightly displeased when the truth was directly presented to me.

I wonder what's Liza trying to say?

"It seems Master and Arisa's sense of value is different, but regardless of race, the general common sense in this continent is that breeding is a matter of the highest priority. The grace period for long-lived races is long, so it appears that there are times when they have relationship with other races, but even them always end up leaving descendants when they're of marriageable age."

"You're quite well-informed Liza-san."

"Yes, master Guya and ms. Poa sometimes talked about it when I was training in Boruenan."

I see, since it's from the elf master, this seems to be the common sense among the elves too.

"And, humans have short life. The period to leave descendants is also short--"

"In other words, regardless of feeling of love, it's a recommendation to marry people of the same race?"

"--That is right."

Arisa summarized Liza's words.

"Liza-san already said most of what I wanted to say, but stop getting into misunderstanding and being indecisive like some love comedy protagonist, quickly go to Aze-san and reconcile with her with a kiss."

Arisa motivated me with some gallant words.

"Wouldn't it better for Arisa if we break up?"

I said some bitter words to Arisa after getting irritated from feeling like an idiot.

There's a limit to being uncool.

I immediately regretted it the moment I said it, but Arisa laughed it off.

"Hahn! Don't make light of Arisa-chan! I don't intend to be a hyena who preys on people's misery! If I fall in love, I'd seize it with my own charm like a lion would!"

As always, I'm no match for Arisa serious mode.

"That sure is disadvantageous."

"I'm aware of it. But, I want to always be me! That's why--"

Arisa makes a charming smile unbefitting of her age.

"--You can push me down anytime you want."

She sent a clumsy wink to me.

The part where it fails in the end is very like Arisa too.

◇

"Good evening, Aze-san."

When I came to the tree house in the elf village with Unit Arrangement, Aze-san whose upper half of the body was sprawling on the table quickly raised her face.

"Zadou!"

"I-it has been a while."

With a teary voice, Aze-san's tackle-like intense embrace pushed me to the chair.

She's calling my name repeatedly while rubbing her face on my chest like a little child.

"Oh good, you've come at last."

Lua entered the room from the balcony while closing the window.

"It was terrible, Aze-sama kept saying, 『Satou won't come anymore』, 『Satou hates me now』."

"I'm sorry."

While brushing Aze-san's hair, I apologized to Lua-san.

"Does Aze-san love--"

This way of asking is cowardly.

I changed the way I spoke halfway through.

"I love Aze-san. There is no way I'll hate you. Does Aze-san love me?"

"Of course, I really love Satou."

--Really love. Really love. Really love.

The wonderful words become a refrain in my head.

It's enough as it is to keep me happy for three days, but I endure it and continue the talk.

"Then would you be my spouse?"

"T-that I can't do. Satou is a human, and I'm a high-elf."

So the bottleneck is the racial wall huh.

"Is it not possible with humans?"

"Un, not possible."

Aze-san flatly denied it.

"I mean, a human and a high elf can't make children together."

"Are children that important?"

I match it with Liza's story.

"Of course! Satou's children will absolutely makes the world prosperous. That's why Satou has to leave a lot of children. I mean that's the wish of Creator-sama."

Just like the monotheist of the former world, it seems the Creator that Aze-san mentioned ordered the gods dispatched to this world with, "Give birth, multiply, fill the land."

"Does that mean children from a woman other than Aze-san?"

"Eh? I mean.... I can't give birth to Satou's children. It can't be helped."

Good.

Apparently, it seems she's thinking it's good as long as I can leave children from the same race.

"Moreover, even though humans are short lived, their descendants resemble their ancestors. If you leave 1000 children, there might be one among them who's like Satou. After a long long time, wouldn't it be wonderful if I could meet a child who's exactly like Satou?"

Living at the same time as Aze-san who is 100 million year old is probably difficult even in a world with life extension methods like this.

However....

"That's why you were saying 100 brides isn't it."

"....Un, moreover even though I don't like it if Satou belongs to other woman, if Satou has a lot of wives, then I'll just be one of them and he won't be cold to me."

--How lovable.

Aze-san, can I push you down?

"I'll never be cold to you. Even if I really have 100 wives, I won't stop coming here. As long as Aze-san doesn't refuse it."

I make sure to mix the last words with a joking laugh so that it won't be misunderstood.

Still, I feel like a husband who has been permitted to have an affair by his wife.

I don't intend to use that permission though.

"I'm glad that you two seem to have made up."

"I'm sorry to have made Lua-san worry."

I apologized to Lua-san who was putting the tea cups.

◇

"--Marriage outlook of the elves?"

"Yes, for a future reference. Although it's fine if you don't want to talk about it."

I've learned that the trouble this time was because of the lack of mutual understanding, so I asked Lua-san about it at once.

"Right, even though it's quite different depending on the person, in general a pair who gets along with each other will be tied with『Conceiving Contract』 after passing the lover period for about 100 years. It's what the humans refer as marriage. No one shares the same bed until the contract."

As expected of elves. To spend 100 years as pure lovers....

"Even after the contract has been made, most give birth to a child in several decades or at most 100 years, and then they raise that child as a couple until the child grows up. Once the child becomes independent, most couples conclude the contract and go back to be single. Most elves make two or three children in their lifetime, but there are rarely children who have the same parents."

I thought it was quite a dry relationship, but in actuality, they still spend hundreds of years living together even after the contract is complete.

The reason why the elves have no family name but use "■■, the child of ●● and ▲▲" instead seems to be because of this custom.

"If a couple doesn't have a child in 1000 years, they'll be forcefully separated by the Clan Assembly, but that hasn't happened here in 5000 years."

"Isn't it about to become dangerous for Lua?"

"I'm young, so it's still quite alright. Yes, it is alright."

With a cool face, Lua-san answered Aze-san's interruption about her being unmarried.

I can see slight sweats from Lua-san's side profile, I wonder if it's just my imagination?

--Wait.

"Do high elves like Aze-san not get married in the million years time?

"I haven't you know? We high elves can make children among the same race, but the world tree will produce a new one when there's a vacant position, so there's no one who gets married besides the ones who are that whimsical."

"Is that so."

I sip the blue tea while feeling slightly relieved.

"I mean we high elves are to be the companion of the god when they don't get a consort."

Aze-san said the important matter casually.

"God's consort?"

"Un, the present god pantheon don't have enough power to form children though, so the call for it is a story from the olden age I think."

Then, in order to prevent them from thinking some unnecessary thing, perhaps I should visit the male gods and chip off their power?

"Satou-san, you're having a scary smile you know?"

"I'm sorry, I was just thinking of something stupid."

I shake my head to drive out the dangerous thought, and then eat the portion of the celebration cake reserved for Aze-san and the others.

◇

When I asked about it to the demi-god mode Aze-san--.

『It is possible for a god to make a child with a high elf, but it has never happened in reality.』

"Why is that?"

『When a god creates a child, they need to give a piece of their divinity to the child. If the partner is not equal, the formed child won't be able to hold the parted power, and only weak power will dwell on the child.』

I see, looks like it needs preliminary handling indeed.

I'm slightly relieved that the needs to revolt against the god has disappeared.

For the occasion, I try asking something that's been slightly bothering me.

"Is it possible for a human to become a god or a high elf?"

Aze-san softly smiles hearing my question.

『Satou, I'm happy about the meaning of that question, but do not aim to become an Ascended God.』

"Why is that?"

『There have been ten of thousands heroes and sages who tried to be an Ascended God so far in this world, however, not even one reaches the god's throne.』

"Is it absolutely impossible?"

If it's really impossible then the term [Ascended God] shouldn't have existed.

『From the memory of the world when Creator-sama came, there were three people who reached the god's thrones. However, there are only three of them in the span of three billion years. I extremely advise against it for the transient human race.』

It's such a disadvantageous talk huh....

『Excepting the ones who are created as gods by gods of the higher order and demi-gods who are bestowed divinity, it's such a tall order that it can only be described with the cliched word of 'miracle'.』

Perhaps, I'll be like a demi-god if I let the [God's Fragment] to dwell in my body?

So I asked since that gave me hope.

『Right, it is said that a demon lord whose power runs wild and has lost its mortal reason is of the lowest seat of the demi-gods. But it is only a broken inferior good. Unfortunately, even though the [God's Fragment] itself contains the divinity, someone who let it dwells on their body won't have the divinity itself. Satou, please do not take the [God's Fragment] into yourself and goes on a rampage in desperation.』

"Yes, I do not have such a suicidal wish."

Because the marriage isn't the goal, but a start of my love life.

If it becomes an obstacle in my life after the marriage, then there's no meaning in that.

"There's no use of me asking the way to train to become an Ascended God right?"

Demi god mode Aze-san falls silent to my dumb question.

『I do not mind teaching you the way.』

"Are you sure!"

I jump to the unexpected words.

I'm restless if I say so myself.

『However, I have a condition.』

"I'll clear any condition!"

The me right now should be able to clear most difficult problems.

『Then, please make children from 100 girls of the same race.』

"--Eh?"

『Of course you can't force yourself on them okay?』

"Is that the condition?"

『That's right. If you aim for the godhood, first you have to accomplish your duty as a living being.』

Looks like it's not a joke, she's saying it seriously.

『And then, please splendidly reach the god's throne, and take me as your wife. When that happens, let's make a child with me as Satou's wife, just as you wish.』

I promised, "Absolutely", to the demi-god Aze-san who's smiling sublimely.

◇

Now then, I promised her "absolutely" earlier, but I don't intend to do the, "make children with 100 girls" prerequisite.

In the first place, it's rude for the woman who's going to be my partner.

I myself intend to seek the way to reach the god's throne during my free time.

I'm going to travel around the world anyway, I have a hunch that I'll probably find the way during the travel.

If by any chance I can't find it until the deadline for my marriage with the princess, there is no choice but to brace myself when that happens.

The Unknown little girl from before is probably willing to tell me, but I feel that it'll be the direct flag for the bad end, so I don't want to choose it.

Thus, I'm thinking of struggling with the frontal attack until the time limit.

Now then, the airship is going to arrive in the Royal Capital soon, why don't I read some books in the Forbidden Library as a change of pace?

14-10. Rumor about the Apostle

Satou's here. Fulfilling the promise exchanged during childhood is the standard of childhood friends, but I think remembering the promise you've made in your childhood is a tall order.

◇

"My! You're all Satou's new wives right?"

Even though I'm aware of Aze-san's real intention now, her innocent words weight down on my heart.

With the matter yesterday, today I've brought the princess, Sera, Lady Karina, Zena-san in addition to the usual members to the tree house in Boruenan.

"I am honored to be graced with your presence, your majesty sacred tree Aialize-sama. I am Satou's fiancee, Shistina the sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom."

"U-um.... You don't need to call me 'your majesty' okay?"

Aze-san is bewildered with the overwhelming princess's greeting.

In contrast, Hikaru is acting like she's been friend with Aze-san for 10 years after she greeted her.

"That's right, Aze looks like she doesn't like such a stiff greeting, be more friendly!"

Right now she's sitting beside Aze-san, joining shoulders while being overly familiar.

--Change with me, Hikaru.

"My name is Sera, granddaughter of Duke Oyugock of Shiga Kingdom."

"I'm Ka-Karina, daughter of Earl Muno desuwa."

"E-err, my name is Zena Marientail, I'm working as Satou-san's escort."

The three girls introduced themselves after the princess, but Zena-san's introduction is too modest.

"Zena-san is the benefactor of Liza and the others, and my first friend in Shiga Kingdom."

Thus, I followed up slightly.

"If she's Satou's friend, then she's also my friend. Let's get along well, Zena."

"Y-yes! I-I'm honored to."

As Aze-san rode on it spontaneously, Zena-san rigidly replied in monotone.

"Mwu, wrong wife."

Arisa is looking at them pleasingly, but Mia began to lightly hit Aze-san with sharp eyes.

It's not like she's serious, but leaving it is not good, so I collect Mia with

[Magic Hand] and put her on my lap.

Tama who was originally sitting on my lap read the mood and smoothly slid to my side.

"Satou."

"Do you not like to be on my lap?"

"I don't hate it."

Mia is shaking her head, swinging her twintails making it hit the back of my head, but I'll receive this much contently.

"When I look at this, Aze-tan really does have the authority huh. Everyone is rigid."

Arisa comments on the interaction between Aze-san and the others while giving me a cup of fruit water.

That serious mode will soon collapse--.

"Dehehe~"

"What's wrong Arisa?"

Arisa who's letting out some weird laugh pokes my shoulder with her index finger.

"I mean, I heard about it from Aze-tan."

I can guess what she heard, but it doesn't seem like Arisa is going to say it out loud.

"U-um, I've heard about the 100 wives talk too."

Lulu who showed up beside Arisa said the thing that Arisa couldn't say while smiling.

I see, so that's why she looks calm....

I intend to seek the way to ascend the godhood during the grace period, I don't have any plan to get 100 wives right now.

However, seeing Arisa and Lulu looking so happy, as expected I couldn't say it.

Thus, the first meeting of the princess and the others with Aze-san that was filled with tension ended without any problem.

The princess and the others didn't seem like they could talk familiarly with Aze-san yet, but they're probably going to get used to it after seeing Tama and Pochi talk with her normally.

◇

"--Among the orphanages in the Royal Capital, Echigoya Firm has sent human resources and funds to nine of which aren't being supported by the Welfare Bureau. In addition, we've let the senior orphans to do odd jobs at the nearest Firm's workshops. The details regarding the downtown's [Hello Work] and the widows' home industry project are collected in these documents."

The day after we deepened our friendship at the elf village, I received a bundle of documents from Tifaliza.

It's quite thick. I've asked her about the summary, but I have to at least skim over it.

"Next, it's about the military unit deployed to subjugate the rebellion in Bishtal Dukedom. Three orders of knight from the kingdom military have liberated three cities from the rebel army, however...."

It seems the rebel army launched counteroffensives using monsters in order to drive them out of the cities, and got them to be on the verge of annihilation.

Only the order of knight that were accompanied by Jeril of Shiga Eight Swords and mithril explorers was able to successfully defend the city they were in, it seems they're the holding the war front at bay.

"Thus, Heim-dono of Shiga Eight Swords leading holy knights will be deployed."

"Then we should deliver the magic sword that he ordered."

The magic sword that was requested half a month ago has long been completed, but since we put on the official stance, "Built-to-Order needs time", we suspended delivering it.

Heim's personal magic sword is a great sword type that's like the holy sword Durandal, and has [Eternal Blade] command word that can be used to regain its sharpness.

If the blade was just chipped, then it would work somehow, but as expected, the sword couldn't be restored if it was broken.

It's made from adamantite so I can guarantee the toughness.

Since only that much didn't have enough romance, I also put an abridged version of Lulu arm's acceleration magic circle on it.

If you stream magic power into the circuit, it's possible to do super-accelerated slashes or stabs with extreme swiftness.

When I let Pochi to try it, it demonstrated enough power to pierce through a shield made from lesser dragon's scales.

The magic sword is hard to handle, but Sir Heim should be able to master it.

The ominous-sounding Command Word which I got from Arisa was suggested to be changed, but it was too late since I had already put the function.

"Deliver it to Sir Heim before he departs."

I take out the magic sword Heim from the item box and lean it against the work desk.

Coming up the name was troublesome, so I named it by the user's name.

And then, the manager asked me when I had finished talking with Tifaliza.

"Kuro-sama, what would you like to do with the plot of land that has been given to Mitsukuni Duke House? For a mansion that's befitting of a duke house, then a request for the suitable architecture magic for a noble is--"

"I'll do that myself. I'll leave it to the manager to prepare the furniture and the garden."

I want to get some feedback of the experience I've learned from building the solitary island.

"Kuro-sama, if possible we'd like you to build the research facility for Ann and the others who have moved from the junction city."

"Okay. I'll make it a bit away from the the professor's research facility."

Ann whom Tifaliza mentioned is the one who managed alchemists in the junction city, they're the female compounders whom I named from ABCDE.

The matter about the fiend drug should be about to cool down soon, so I've made them to join Echigoya Firm.

"If something happens, get in touch with Mito with the information magic device okay."

"Understood."

The airship where Satou should be boarding is going to arrive this noon, so I'm thinking of completing Duke Mitsukuni's mansion until then.

I've already made the blueprint together with Hikaru and Arisa, so I just need to actualize it.

"Ell-sama, today Kuro-sama is going to come here right--Uwah Kuro-sama!"

"Calm down Aoi. Kuro-sama, please excuse us. Aoi would like to suggest a new business, would you be willing to lend us your time?"

I'd like to quickly construct the duke mansion, but I endure it for a bit and accept Aoi's new business presentation.

"--I see, reformable undergarments made of fiber that can contract and expand with magic power huh."

"Yes, please do tell me if Kuro-sama knows any good material with good cost to performance ratio."

There are many material that can expand with magic power, but materials from plant-type monster deteriorate fast, so there are many which need extra cost to preserve them.

If the deterioration can be ignored, there's something like the [Crawling Ivy] that's used in making traps, but you can't use it for undergarments.

If metal is fine, then the material used for the princess and the others' armor can be used, but that one is too costly even for a noble.

After pondering for a bit, I recalled the thing I heard from Arisa before.

"The magic cloth taught in the magic school should have such a property. Ask the manager to arrange the related book."

"Understood."

A large scale facility will be needed for manufacturing magic cloth, but we should be able to do it with the workshop facilities that Echigoya Firm has bought.

I decided to pretend that I didn't hear Aoi boy saying, "Now we can make stockings."

It seems he has quite the profound taste.

◇

"Fumu, this much should be okay I think?"

When I had finished making the exterior of Duke Mitsukuni mansion, the small airship that Satou should have ridden arrived on the neighboring Earl Muno's Mansion.

I wanted to do the interior decoration too, but I can just do it after finishing my official business later.

After changing to noble clothes in the solitary island palace, I enter the gate to the small airship.

"Master! I saw it from the airship, was it alright do such a conspicuous thing like that?"

"Yeah, it doesn't matter. Kuro's and Nanashi's absurdities are widely known in the royal capital after all. That much is no problem."

Arisa asked about the magical construction of Duke Mitsukuni mansion, so I told her my opinion.

Unlike Satou, Nanashi and Kuro who have Shiga Kingdom backing them should have no opposition in wielding overwhelming power.

After showing that much magic, rather than trying to oppose Duke Mitsukuni house, people probably would try to gain their grace instead.

It should go well if I just leave the manager to deal with the aftermath.

"Leaving that aside, I'm going to meet with the prime minister, what's everyone's plan?"

"Mia and I are going to the library in the magic school."

"Nn, investigation."

Arisa and Mia answered my question first.

"I'd like to go with Arisa and Mia-sama, is it alright?"

"Yes, I don't mind. I can report to the prime minister alone."

"Then I'll go with them as a guard."

The princess is going with the library group, and Zena-san will be guarding them.

"Pochi wants to play in the knight school."

"Tama too~?"

"Okay. Don't make too much racket okay."

"Yes nanodesu."

"Aye~"

"Then I will accompany the two."

"Please, Liza."

Looks like the beast girls want to meet their friends in the knight school of the royal academy.

I was slightly worried with just Tama and Pochi, so I was glad that Liza offered to accompany them.

"Master, I want to go to the childhood school so I declare."

It seems Nana wants to visit Shiro and Crow's class.

She'll be happy with a lot of the young organisms there.

The people who aren't here, Lulu is currently testing the menu for the cooking contest in the solitary island palace, while Lady Karina is working hard at her battle training against the combat golems in the beach of the solitary island palace.

Exchanging places with us who have arrived in the royal capital, Hikaru has gone to Fujisan mountains where the heavenly dragons and the others are.

I have asked Hikaru to check the library in the heavenly dragon shrine.

"It wouldn't be good for a vice minister if he was without his attendants, so I'd go with Satou-san to the Royal Castle."

Sera whom I thought would be going to the Tenion Temple declared so.

For some reason, the princess and Zena-san who heard that had [Oh no!] expressions on their face, but I'm only going to report the result of the small airship's test flight to the prime minister, so there's no need to regret anything like that.

"Then, let us go Satou-san."

Together with Sera who was strangely cheerful, I got on the called carriage from Pendragon Mansion to the Royal Castle.

◇

"--Threatening mood is spread among the group of small countries to the east. Right now, we cannot confirm whether any demon is rampaging there, but someone wearing white vestment calling themselves [God's Apostle] has been making several incidents in the small countries."

While sipping the tea made from labyrinth-sourced moss, I listen about the situation at the east where I'm planning to go.

Before we got to this story, he had told me about other stories like the destruction of the demon lord and the war between Holy State Parion and its three neighboring countries.

"Is there anything in common between the incident places?"

"There is nothing that suggests it."

In addition to the [Priest massacre incident] that I've heard from the marchioness in the labyrinth city Selbira, the apostle seems to be doing actions with unknown purpose like destroying the royal villas of the small countries, or annihilating the mercenary groups who were wandering on the strife-laden lands of the small countries.

"The royal research institute and theologians of the temples think that the self-proclaimed apostle may be using the earth magic [Stone to Salt] or the ritual holy magic [Divine Retribution] to change people and building into salt."

Either of the magic has a long chant, and I can sense the magic wave from the sign, so it should not be possible to do a surprise attack on me.

There might be other people that can use ritual magic chantlessly like me though, so I should think of the countermeasure as an insurance.

I also asked the prime minister the way to get in touch with the spies who have infiltrated the countries I will be traveling to.

After leaving the royal castle, Sera and I went around to the royal research institute and met the theologians whom the prime minister referred to gather information.

At the royal research institute we found out that the ritual magic needs some prerequisites like offerings, stars lining up and such, and while we were at it, I also got them to show the latest research, permanent defensive magic.

Leaving aside the former, the latter is extremely helpful, so I presented them some scarce materials needed for their research as the compensation.

We didn't get any new information from each temples we visited afterward, but we were referred to a person called heretic theologian when I donated 10 gold coins to the Zaikuon temple.

We were referred to the edge of the slum in the downtown.

The one we meet is an old woman who has the alias of [Heretic Theologian] that doesn't suit her.

"--It might be a skill used by the demon god's apostle called 『Calamity (Clay Merry)』."

The old woman said some disturbing things while snacking on the tea cake I brought.

Please stop with the dangerous words like "demon god's apostle."

"Calamity?"

"Yes, I've only ever seen it in an ancient Furu empire document, it's said that anything touched by the hand changes into salt pillar."

Just touching means out, the hurdle is too high.

I have to think of the way to defend against it for my companion.

"Is there no way to prevent it?"

"The demon god's apostle excessively fears dragons, so they absolutely won't get near someone who has the presence of a dragon."

I got an unexpected solution when I asked while not expecting anything.

I should not blindly believe it, but we're lucky if it has any effect, I'll create accessories made of the heavenly dragon's and the black dragon Heiron's scales and give it to everyone.

Maybe I should try using the dragon scales to make some dye?

Using the fiber in the scales to create cloth might also be a good idea.

Later, I tried talking to the reincarnated people in the labyrinth's lower layer, but they never met this [Demon God's Apostle].

Corpse had met Urion's apostle, while Yuika had met Garleon's apostle, but they never saw any ritual magic that could change people into salt.

According to Corpse and Yuika, the apostles are only about as strong as a mid demon to less than a greater demon, they don't have Unique Skill, their magic are about the same as the demon and they need to chant to use it, so there should be no need for us to be that nervous.

◇

"--Zena-san."

Late at night that day, I called to Zena-san who was practicing magic in the beach of the solitary island palace.

Her power is far superior than when she was in the Seryuu city back then.

"Satou-san, were the sounds of my magic too noisy?"

"No, not at all."

I hand over a cup of fruit water to Zena-san who's gasping from the excessive magic usage.

Next, I take out a table on the beach.

"I've completed the present for Zena-san, so I've come to deliver it."

"--Present?"

I put magic books and several magic tools on the table.

"I-is this possibly the [Book of Wind] of the [Jib Cloud Magic Dictionary]?"

"Yes, it's something that Zena-san will need from now on. This thin book over here has selected spells of the flight magic and the explanation to control them."

This book is my own work.

"--Flight magic?!"

Hearing me, Zena-san raises her face like it was flicked.

"Yes, the Zena-san right now should be able to use it."

"W-with flight magic I--"

"Yes, once you're able to fly freely in the sky, we have to fulfill our promise don't we."

We exchanged a promise to take an [Aerial Date] once Zena-san has learned flight magic when we were in Seryuu City.

"So you remember it, Satou-san."

"Of course."

Overwhelmed with emotion, Zena-san wraps her delicate hands on mine.

Did she think that I completely forget about it?

After staring at each other for a while, Zena-san comes to her sense, separates her hands and jumps back.

"I-I'm sorry."

While her cheeks are reddening, she opens the thin book as if varnishing over it.

"There are three spells aren't there."

Zena-san muttered while turning the thin book's pages.

This book has [Practice Fly], [Automatic Fly] and [Fly] spells.

"The written spells have different degree of difficulty, so you should start with the『Practice Fly』. I'll do it with you together if you need a model."

I recite the [Practice Fly] spell.

"This magic can only do ascending, descending, advancing, and turning left and right. It's a magic to do floating movement rather than for flying like a bird."

If I talked with Arisa, I'd call it a magic that move like a drone, rather, I can immediately imagine it.

"I've mixed in the wind magic『Air Float』function so you don't have to worry about falling, please get used to flying with this magic."

"Y-yes! I'll do my best."

Zena-san looks eager while having a posture like she'll fall forward.

"These magic tools are precautions so you won't get hurt during the flying magic practice. Please be sure to wear it during your practice okay."

They're for absorbing impact in case of falls.

I've put the mechanism in Lulu's and Nana's equipment, so it has the stamp of approval.

"W-wearing this, is it...."

Zena-san picks up a magic tool and blushes, perhaps because it looks like a half-transparent leotard.

"I-It's embarrassing, but since it's clothes that Sa-Satou-san has made...."

--Embarrassing?

Apparently, Zena-san has misunderstood.

"It's thin, so please wear it between your underwear and your clothes."

"Th-that's right isn't it. A-ahaha, oh me--"

Zena-san cleared the misunderstanding with my follow up, but she tries to varnish over it with cheeks that are even redder than before.

"I-I'm going for a bit!"

It seems she couldn't bear her embarrassment anymore, Zena-san ran away from the beach after declaring so.

Due to her level up, her physical ability seems to have risen favorably well.

I send the equipment and magic books to Zena-san's room with [Teleport an Object], and leave a message ball for Zena-san in this place.

She'll be embarrassed even if I wait here after all.

◇

"--Hero, how's your situation?"

After separating from Zena-san, I contacted the hero's party with the telecommunication equipment in Echigoya Firm.

This time, it's the hero himself instead of the house-watching attendant after a long while.

『Yo Nanashi, looks like you're doing well there.』

"Well yeah. I'm good at finding enemies you see. Should I go help you if you need help in searching?"

『Ah your timing is bad. The engineers of the Weasel Empire have agreed to provide us a magic tool for tracking the demon lord you see. We asked it from our side, so we can't tell them we don't need it now.』

"I see."

--Oops, I'm too late huh.

『Sorry 'bout it. When we were fighting, the demon lord itself felt far weaker than the yellow bastard we fought in Oyugock city, so I'll show you that we can defeat it this time.』

Apparently, every time they were about to defeat it, the demon lord escaped by using a dummy as a scapegoat.

"Then I'll be waiting for good news in the next communication."

『Yeah! I'm not worthy of Saga Empire's hero if I can't defeat at least one demon lord!』

He's burdening the dignity of Saga Empire and God Parion's prestige, so it seems he's a bit eager.

"Hero, 『Cherish your life』 okay."

I sent a famous words from a super popular game to the hero.

<TLN: One of Dragon Quest's AI tactics, I think it's localized as "Focus on Healing".>

『I know. Not just me, I'll show you that I'll go back without missing anyone!』

"Un, I believe Hayato can do it."

I returned words of encouragement to Hayato's powerful words, and then we finished the regular communication.

◇

In the middle of the night, I made bracelets for everyone using the beautiful heavenly dragon's scales.

It'd be boring if they all looked the same, so I put different images as the carved seals on the plate part of the bracelets.

These equipment are countermeasures against the [Demon God's Apostle], so I've not put magic circuit on it.

For that, I've completed the simpler version of Raka's automatic defense system which is still under development, and I'm now thinking of putting space magic into it.

The next morning, my small airship departs from the Royal Capital, I choose the course that goes to Oyugock Dukedom through coastlands in marquis Ganika territory.

We're supposed to arrive in marquis Ganika's territory before noon, so we should be able to visit Capital of Ganika in the evening.

It's been awhile since we visit a new city, let's treat ourselves to a sightseeing tour together with everyone!

14-11. The Territory of Marquis Ganika

Satou's here. There is an unexpectedly large amount of omens of fall. But those many omens get overlooked until the fall.

◇

"Dried fish~?"

"They're aall fish nanodesu."

I brought Tama and Pochi along to one of the big fishing villages in Marquis Ganika's territory.

We came to this village to search for fish as presents for people who live in the mountain regions.

This territory of Marquis Ganika is in the middle of the air lane that connects the Royal Capital and the territory of Duke Oyugock, it's an elongated shaped territory that mostly faces the sea.

"Merchant-sama, would you buy our product nya?"

When we were walking along the dried fish racks toward the place where there was a lot of people, a girl with strange end word talked to me.

She's a catkin like Tama. Unlike Tama, her hair and eyes look bad, but it doesn't seem like she has an ill intention against us.

It's annoying to correct her that I'm a noble, so I decide to continue the talk while leaving her misunderstanding alone.

"You really saved me nya. We've been getting a whole lot of fish for a half of month, we couldn't eat them all, so we had to turn them into dried fish nya. Yet the usual merchants said, 'every fishing village in the territory is getting a good haul, the price has fallen', they were reluctant to buy them, it was troubling nya."

When I asked about the dried fish's price, it was bizarrely cheap at only 5% of the price in the Royal Capital, so I bought a lot as recommended.

This girl seems to be the boss of this village, catkins and gillkins people with big builds carry the baggage one after another when the girl orders them.

"Are you only going to buy the dried fish nya? We also have dried abalones and beautiful shell cratfs you nyaow?"

The shrewd catkin girl tried to sell some expensive products.

The shell crafts' craftsmanship were not quite that good, but since I heard that they were the handiworks of widows and girls from poor houses, I decided to buy them all as they weren't that much anyway.

I can just sell them in the inland branch offices of Echigoya Firm.

Another fisherman-like gillkin came to sell some fresh mackerel-like fish, so I brought a basketful of them.

When I bought one, more fishermen came to me one after another to try to sell their fish.

It seems the story about big haul is true.

"Octopus~?"

"The octopus outside the labyrinth are small nodesu."

Tama and Pochi who saw octopus among the seafood tilted their heads in puzzlement.

Of course they're small compared to the Dungeon Octopus that are more than 10 meter big in the labyrinth.

Even those are small compared to the Kraken that live in the open sea though.

While having that exchange, Tama and Pochi stuff the products that we've bought to their magic bags.

"Work~ work~"

"Pochi will work hard too nodesu."

"Magic bag nya! As expected of a great merchant, they're different nya!"

The catkin girl made a fuss when she saw that.

There were many merchants who have magic bags in the Royal Capital, but there's probably no peddlers going around fishing villages who have one, no wonder it's rare.

Then, a catkin old man wearing worn-out clothes appeared.

Perhaps it's just my imagination, but the surrounding people's eyes are steep.

"Hear me! Everyone! This big haul is an omen of the undersea people from the deep sea attacking! We have to abandon the seaside and run away to the mountain now!"

--Undersea people.

Without caring the atmosphere around, the old man makes his speech while scowling at the sea.

I tried searching the sea map just in case, but I couldn't find the thing called undersea people. Of course, I've also searched the seas outside the territory.

There was a lot of monsters, but that was just the usual so I ignored it.

"Bemud-jiisan, we have a customer right now nya. Talk your nonsense to your pet dog in your house nya."

Once the catkin girl did that, the villagers around also sneered at the old man.

U~n, I hate this kind of mood.

I urge the catkin girl to settle the payment, and lead the villagers' interest from the old man to me.

"Excuse me, how'd you like to be paid, with cash or jewels?"

"Of course cash nya! It'd be good if it's in copper coins so we can distribute it to everyone nya."

Even though we bought so much, I only had to pay with 73 copper coins. I've been buying things with gold coins so far, so this feels strange.

The villagers who saw the piled up copper coins made a fuss, "We're having a feast today!"

We were invited too, but since we needed to prepare the lunch, we refused.

◇

The thing that the old man earlier talked about caught my interest so I moved to the [Return Teleport] point outside the territory of Marquis Ganika and re-executed [All Map Exploration], but there was no new information besides the fact that there was an outbreak of monsters called Sea Orc that I saw for the first time in the bottom of the sea of the continental shelf.

I think being called 'deep sea' even though they're living in the continental shelf is a bit wrong, but I shouldn't mind the trivial.

<TLN: The sea orc's japanese name has "Deep Sea" on it, but the author only calls it "Sea Orc" as the "official" English name/katakana.>

For the time being, I pull one of the Sea Orcs with space magic and check it.

These Sea Orcs are basically a pig with fins as their limbs, and there's a swordfish-like horn on their forehead. Their average level is level 3, they're extremely weak. It seems there are various sub-species just like Demi-goblins.

There is a lot of them, but since they're so weak that the monsters in the sea could trample them down, they probably won't even get to the ground what's with the sea several kilometers around them containing many powerful monsters for them.

Right, there's no way that a world crisis will always be around the corner.

"Welcome back, Master."

"I'm back."

When I got back to the small airship, a brownie in flight uniform greeted me.

Even though this ship can be left unmanned, I let brownies who wish for it to handle the ship during the normal cruises in turns.

This flight uniformed brownie is an airship maniac even among those brownies, he's doing his duty while wearing handmade goggles and flight uniform.

Moreover, it seems he likes to steer the ship with the wheel on the upper deck that's exposed to the strong wind and sunlight instead of the one in the bridge.

Once the brownie got back to the steering wheel, I turned on the anti-wind magic on the rear deck, took out beach chairs from the Storage, and began to check the information in the tourist book and the one I got from the map.

This territory of Marquis Ganika is a long territory that's endowed with 1000 kilometer long coastline extending from the east to the west, there's only a few inhabitable area as it has four cities, seven towns and many villages around them.

There are inlets protected with barrier pillars every 40-50 kilometer of the coastline to prevent monsters from entering, they're used as evacuation sites for ships that are cruising on the coast.

It seems the fee for entering these inlets are the source of income for the territory of Marquis Ganika.

Looking at the map, it seems most of the villages in the territory are located along these safe inlets.

Looking things with the Senrigan (Extra Clairvoyance) magic, the big haul isn't only happening in the village earlier, but it's a common situation among the villages and towns in the territory.

This [Senrigan (Extra Clairvoyance)] is an advanced version of [Clairvoyance] magic, I can view anywhere on the map with it.

I contact Echigoya Firm's Manager through Telephone magic.

『Yes, Elterina speaking.』

"Manager, do you know about the big haul phenomenon in the territory of Marquis Ganika?"

『--Yes, we are aware of it. We have received reports pertaining it from the branch offices in the marquis territory.』

Tifaliza who heard about it from the manager recheck the report once again.

According to the report, the haul is 20% better than the last year.

"It seems the haul is exploding even more in the actual site than the report suggests."

『Should we instruct the branch offices to buy more?』

"Yeah, if it's something that can be preserved dry, then you can buy as many as you like as long as it's not higher priced than the conventional market price."

『Understood.』

I'm glad that she's quick to handle things, but I feel a bit lonely that she doesn't ask about the reason or the storage site.

The preserved foods that we'll buy can be featured on the branch offices in the inland.

◇

The airship that's arrived in the capital of Marquis Ganika's territory is met by the next marquis and the chief nobles.

This is probably because I'm accompanied by Princess Shistina.

Since this is our first city, I'd have liked to tour it with everyone, but we had to participate in the tea party sponsored by the marchioness until the evening banquet.

I gave the usual snack sets and magic-made glassworks as the souvenirs.

Since Marquis Ganika is a sailor, I had prepared a glasswork modeled after big caravel ship.

It was not hard to do since I only imitated the real thing. I picked it since I thought it'd probably look better than some glass sword.

"Oh! I have never seen such a meticulous glasswork even in Oyugock Dukedom. Wonderful! Truly a wonderful item! With such an item, I cannot return the favor without giving back our heirloom, the Sea King Five-Pronged Spear or the Twin Sea Dragon Wand."

It seems Marquis Ganika really liked it, he told a joke that made his wife and retainers to lift their eyes.

According to the tourist book, the Sea King Five-Pronged Spear that he mentioned seems to have the effect of flinching the widely distributed sea-type monsters in addition to being effective against them, so it's an indispensable item for the fleet.

The Twin Sea Dragon Wand is a magic wand that acts as auxiliary for water magic, it's a key item for using the forbidden water magic [Divine Tidal Wave].

There's no magician that can use forbidden magic in the territory of Marquis

Ganika but there's a lot of local water magicians here, so the item is an object of yearning in the territory.

"--Dear?"

"It's a joke of course. I will give my youngest daughter to the Viscount."

"Your excellency, if you joke too much, the snake king will change to the dragon king you know?"

"Princess Shistina is well-informed with our tradition. You guys, learn from her highness--"

I was hesitant what to say back to the marquis who was reminded by his first wife, but as usual the princess dealt with it before I could talk.

The 'you guys' that the marquis said are probably the daughters of his relatives who are in this place.

"Viscount-sama, what kind of place is the labyrinth?"

"Her highness, what kind of music is in fad in the royal capital?"

"Sera-sama, I will enter the temple apprenticeship next year. Would you tell me about the temple?"

When the marquis withdrew for governmental affair, the girls let out a barrage of questions like surging waves.

Most of them are asking the princess but since the princess has no interest in music or clothes that are in fad, they change the target to me so I don't even have time to drink the tea.

Every girl looks so happy, but there's one with a gloomy face.

She's not the marquis's daughter, but his niece, a daughter of an earl.

She's 15 year old, her physique is good and her shoulder-length hair leaves a lively impression. Her level is 10, her skills are [Water Magic], [Ship Handling], and [Etiquette].

"Nereina-sama, are the sweets not to your liking?"

"No, they're wonderful sweets that I've never tasted before."

I tried to talk with the earl's daughter in question, but since her nuance felt like she was annoyed, I stopped trying to talk with her in the tea party.

◇

After the banquet, I've got to enjoy some rum recommended by Marquis Ganika and liquor bragged by the upper nobles in a salon that's separated by gender. It seems there's a lot of heavy drinker nobles in this territory.

When I was sobering up on the balcony while feeling the wind, my Attentive Ears skill picked up a conversation between two women.

"Nereina, are the undersea people really going to attack from the bottom of the sea?"

"My lady.... I do not know either."

Apparently, it's a conversation between the earl daughter Nereina and the eldest daughter of the marquis.

"However, as checked by the retainers, there are many stories where fish and monsters that have never been before being sighted among the populace. Moreover, the fleet of Baron Donsuden that should have arrived last month hasn't arrived even now."

"Something might be happening beyond the sea--"

The marquis daughter muttered a sigh like it was not her problem hearing the fretting Miss Nereina.

Fumu, distribution huh.... I didn't check that.

I saw it on the map, but since I didn't know the previous information, I don't really know.

It seems interesting, maybe I should check it out a bit.

"--Tama."

"You called~?"

I didn't think that she would really come.

"Was the dinner good?"

"Ganika Shrimp was delicious~"

Tama who's in dress lets out a smile.

For today's banquet, I went with not only the princess but everyone including the beastkin girls.

"I see, I'd like you to do a little something--"

"Don't worry be happy~?"

A while after Tama had disappeared, several people came to the balcony.

I asked Tama to call Liza, Pochi, Nana, and Zena-san here.

"I'm sorry to interrupt you during the pleasant banquet, but I'd like you to gather some information in the town."

"Understood, Master. Awaiting your order."

Liza consented to my sudden request.

I want to know whether the conversation earlier is true.

"I'd like you to gather information from the sailors in the town's bar."

"Understood."

"Aye aye~"

"Roger nanodesu."

"Yes, Master."

"I-I'll do my best!"

Liza with Zena-san, Pochi with Nana, I open a gate to the nearby harbor for them to go investigate in groups.

Of course, they've changed to plain clothes.

I felt a bit hesitant sending them to harbor bar filled with rowdy people inside, but these girls should be able to repel some sexually harassing drunkards now. I hope they're careful not to overdo it at least.

"What about Tama~?"

"Tama has a special mission."

"Nin nin~"

Ninja has ninja's work to do.

"Leaving us behind, I can't let that happen!"

"Nn, same."

After Tama disappeared, Arisa and Mia appeared through teleportation.

"I've never intended to leave you behind. Arisa is to gather intelligence from Miss Nereina together with Sera, Mia is going with me to intrude the library and check the old documents there."

I should ask the marquis directly after checking for a bit.

"Eh~, I want to go with Master too."

"Then once Sera's investigation is over, ,contact me with [Telephone] and I'll summon you here."

"Can't be helped. Since Arisa-chan is a nice woman, I'll give you an okay."

It'd have left a good impression if she didn't click and wink in the end....

◇

"Mia, please check the books with chains over there. I'll look them all from the other side in turns."

"Nn, okay."

Once we arrived in the dark library through space magic, we immediately began the investigation.

I granted Mia with the dark magic's [Night Vision].

Looking up the book straightforwardly would be troublesome, so I put the books along with the shelves into my Storage and then searched the keywords [Undersea People], [Ravine], and [Disaster].

Even though I had checked half of the ten shelves, I couldn't find anything that matched them.

『Master, we've completed the inquiry.』

"Okay, I'll summon you here."

Sera is still with Miss Nereina and the marquis's daughters, so I only summon Arisa.

"Sera is still talking with Nee-tan and the others, so she stayed behind. Undersea people sounds like the prophecies of Nostradamus doesn't it. According to the marquis's daughters, there wasn't any story about whether the undersea people really attacked in the history books of the marquis house."

I see, it seems to be a so-called folklore huh.

According to the four people who investigated the town, one of the rumor circulating among the drunkard seems to be [Undersea people are attacking].

According to Tama who investigated the fishing village, fish that were usually only seen in the offshore getting caught on coastal waters, and a lot of cases where strong monsters rampaging on the coast seem to be true.

"Found."

Mia muttered.

The words [Undersea people] are certainly on the place where her fingers are pointing.

◇

"Hey, do they really exist?"

"Who knows, they may be if the thing written in that book is true."

I shrug my shoulder to Arisa's question.

These are written in the book that Mia found--.

『The ground shook like it was the beginning of the world continued on, people profited from the dried up sea taking the sea products by hands, killing sea monsters that couldn't move on the ground, getting their hands on seemingly inexhaustible magic cores.』

The tide abating after an earthquake happened in my former world too.

『Such blessings didn't last long, from beyond the parched sea as the abominable inhabitants of the undersea city Nenerie came attacking. Without even getting the chance to name the undersea people, the people of the fishing villages were bitten from the head to toe, devoured.』

I feel that it's an allegory of tsunami, but I also feel that it's a written work by a reincarnated person who's into Ctulhu myth.

『However, the cruelty of the undersea people didn't last long. The king of Ganika that was bestowed the Sea King Five-pronged Spear from the god drove away the undersea people from the shore, the queen carrying the Twin Sea Dragon Wand pushed away the undersea people to beyond the ravine.』

It seems the territory of Marquis Ganika was an independent kingdom in old days.

I'd probably have to find the Sea King Five-Pronged Spear and the Twin Sea Dragon Long Wand and avert the crisis if this were an RPG, but since it's troublesome, I won't ask the marquis to lend them to me.

--With that information, I came to the sky above the place where the Sea Orcs are.

Written in the book that Mia found, during that time, there was a large quantity of eaten corpses of Sea Orcs getting washed ashore.

I've only brought Arisa here after some fierce rock-paper-scissor matches.

"Then, let's go."

I pick [Sea Divide] from the Magic Column and execute it.

The MP consumption is high for an advanced magic.

The seawater got pushed aside, and a perpendicular water hole several kilometer big in radius appeared.

"Uoooo, are you some kind of prophet!"

Arisa who's surprised hugs my head.

It seems she doesn't have enough leeway to sexually harass me today.

Ignoring the group of Sea Orcs who are floundering on the dried bottom of the sea, I move with Sky Drive.

Since I am the point of the Sea Divide, the divided part moves with me.

Sometimes there were tasty looking level 30 and above monsters scattered about, Arisa defeated them with her space magic.

Maybe I should have brought Mia who needs more experience points to level up.

After a while, we met a vertical cliff that looked like an ocean trench.

When we descended a bit, the radar's scope narrowed down. The trench seems to be of another map.

After executing All Map Exploration from the magic column, I see that the bottom of the trench is the [Undersea City of Nenerie].

Moreover, there are several tens of thousands of monsters called [Neroid] inside the city. <TLN: Yes, Neroid, not Nereid.> Around 30% of those monsters have the condition of [Hunger] or [Starvation].

Perhaps in the near future, these Neroids would attack the group of Sea Orcs and might even reach the shore while chasing after them.

However, that will never happen.

Because--.

◇

"It's nice isn't it, finding another place to level up besides the labyrinth."

"That's right. They're too weak for Arisa and the others, but they should be good matches for Zena-san and the others' training."

I've completely enclosed them with space magic, so the Neroids won't be able to escape from the undersea city.

We tried to get in contact with them since they're called [Undersea People] for once even though they're monsters, but since they came attacking us with the intention to eat even without looking at us, we changed the objective to annihilation.

I also didn't get language skill, it didn't seem like we could converse.

Getting to tour and explore the undersea city while leveling up Zena-san and the others' levels is quite the bargain.

Along the way, I threw Sea Orcs that Arisa had defeated and unappetizing insect type monsters, so they shouldn't be annihilated due to starvation.

Nothing's happening in the world today too--.

There's no way that world crisis happens often.

14-12. Territory of Duke Oyugock (1)

Satou's here. There are many things with [Eternal] word added aren't there. [Eternal Love] is fine, but I sure don't want to get close to the [Eternal Separation] words.

◇

"--The winner is Lulu Watari! The pupil of the miracle chef, Lulu Watari has won the overall victory!"

Called by the host, Lulu who looks nervous gets up on the stage.

I, who was sitting on the special judge seat, also got called by the official to go up the stage.

I'm in charge of giving the trophy to the champion.

Since one of my companion is participating in the contest, I only had to give brief comments on the grading.

"You've done well Lulu. Congratulations for the victory."

"Yes, thank you very much!"

The venue is filled with applauses when Lulu receives the trophy.

This place is a big theater prepared by Echigoya Firm, so the guests should be able to see this scene from their seats.

There are a lot of people buying and consuming food, maybe because they saw some appetizing dishes during the contest.

"Next, the runner up, the chef of Echigoya Firm, Mr. X!"

On top of wearing a black mantle, his body is covered in bandages and he's even wearing sunglasses.

The only people who know the real identity of Mr. X in this place are Arisa and me.

"During the final, he was defeated with a very narrow margin by Lulu Watari, his cooking ability which he displayed up until that time had won him complete victories, it was truly miraculous! Together with Chevalier Lulu Watari, hone your skills and broaden the road of culinary in Shiga Kingdom!"

The host praises Mr. X with an awfully passionate speech.

When I gave him a trophy that's smaller than the one before, the applause from the judge's seats were more passionate than the ones from the audience.

From their point of view, the flavor cooked by Mr. X which was more attuned to the judges is probably better liked than Lulu's flavor which was more attuned to me and my companions.

If Lulu didn't notice that during the final, she probably wouldn't have won.

"--U-um! Mr. X-san."

"What is it, Lulu-dono?"

Lulu called Mr. X who came down the stage after receiving the trophy.

"Thank you for teaching me the point I was lacking at!"

"Hmph, it was you who noticed it by yourself."

"No! If you didn't tell me, 『Whom do you intend to feed those cooking for』 I might have continued making my mistaken self-conceited dishes."

"If you understand that, make more delicious cooking from now on. I look forward to the day we meet again."

"Yes! I won't lose next time!"

Lulu who should be the winner declared like she was the challenger toward Mr. X who went away while raising his arm.

After seeing that off, I gave participating medals and some brief comments to the participants who didn't won the third place.

The other six chefs' cooking were delicious too, but Lulu was prominent even among them.

Looks like preparing a rival so that she won't become conceited is a good decision.

"Lulu! Congratulations for your victory!"

"Congrats~"

"Happy nodesu!"

"Nn, great."

Lulu who came back to the waiting room got congratulated by the other girls one by one.

Then, the sound of rumbling stomaches resound.

The sounds of Tama and Pochi who were being carried by Liza on her arms were the loudest, but my Attentive Ears skill picked up the sounds from Liza's and Lady Karina's stomachs.

"There's still a long time before the meal, should we borrow the cookwares from the contest management to make something and eat?"

"""Ye~s"""

"Yay! Nanodesu!"

Tama seems very happy, she makes five clone bodies and dances.

One of that body is still being carried by Liza.

Unlike the kagebunshin that appears in manga, this must be a type of magic.

I'll study under Tama-sensei and try to become a genuine ninja.

And then, even though I only intended to make some light lunches for my companion, somehow or another it became a barbecue feast with the venue.

Since I had taken some [Digestive Medicine] and eaten a lot of cooking during the contest, I got to only work as a skewer turner, but since everyone was happy, I deem it good.

In addition, since remote controlling Satou's doll AKA Mr.X while doing another thing was quite difficult, I ought to think of another way before the next match with Lulu.

◇

"We bestow Lulu Watari with『Oyugock Dukedom's Special Grade Kitchen Master』Noren and supplementary prizes."

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/noren >

During the ceremony in the duke castle, Lulu was given a congratulatory address and Noren from the duke.

I've never seen any shop that hangs Noren on its entrance, it's probably some kind of good luck charm like when you give surume and kombu during an engagement gifts exchange.

The female executive branch manager of Echigoya Firm in Oyugock Dukedom, who came in place of Mr. X-sensei as he was "sick", received the [Oyugock Dukedom's First-class Grade Kitchen Master] Noren and the supplementary prizes with a stiff face.

I'll present her with some liquor for this hardship later.

After completing the ceremony without accident, we left the castle and went to one part of the noble district.

"Hee, so this is the mansion that Lulu got?"

"Y-Yes... That seems to be the case."

Viewing from the carriage that had stopped in front of the mansion, we saw a big mansion that Lulu received as the supplementary prize.

It's small compared to an upper class noble's mansion, but it's on the upper side of a lower class noble, a splendid mansion that look like it's for a baron.

It's located in the lower class noble district, but since it's facing toward the main street that connects the noble-use harbor and the duke castle, its location is quite good.

"I'm sorry to have kept you waiting, Viscount Pendragon-sama. The gate will open shortly, please wait a little."

A butler who ran from the mansion told me so and opened the gate.

I thought he looked familiar, turned out he was the butler who was managing the detached building of Earl Wolguck's mansion when we stayed there.

It was probably arranged by the previous Earl Wolguck who are in the duchy capital.

Around 30 maids are standing in line in the rotary before the mansion's entrance.

Everyone is wonderfully wearing a maid uniform.

Looks like it's finally begun to spread in Shiga Kingdom.

"""Welcome back Master."""

When I got off the carriage, the maids bowed their heads all at once.

According to the AR readings, it seems they're employees dispatched by Marquis Lloyd and Earl Houen.

"The master of this mansion is not me, but Chevalier Watari over here you know?"

"P-please excuse us."

The butler apologized while bowing his head.

It seems there's a discrepancy in the communication.

Not only the mansion has been cleaned, fine furnitures that are usually found in the mansion of an upper class noble have also been prepared inside.

Moreover--.

"It's amazing! It's completely equipped with magic tools for cooking."

"They are items from Earl Houen's magic tool workshop which are coveted among the merchants. My master would be pleased if Chevalier-sama would use them habitually."

A veteran maid dispatched from Earl Houen house answered Lulu who was gleefully looking at the brand new magic tools.

We're not going to permanently stay here, so I tell her not to bring things like microwave oven, steam cooking and IH cooking heater.

Lulu wanted to cook with the mithril kitchen knife set she got along with the Noren, but since we're invited to a banquet in the evening, there's no time for it.

Lulu was longingly watching at the kitchen, but when Arisa called her, she went to the closet room to dress up while looking like her back hair stood up.

◇

"Now my lady, allow me to take your hand."

"Eh, um? Is it alright for me to be escorted?"

Lulu happily takes my hand even while looking hesitant.

Lulu is the lead role today, so there's no need to hesitate.

"Sir Pendragon has come!"

"Viscount-sama! Do you remember me?"

"Satou-sama! Please dance with me."

When we entered the assembly hall, some familiar loli noble daughters and unfamiliar young ladies met me.

I don't know the reason why I'm this popular, but thanks to Sera and the princess's guards, I escorted Lulu without any interruption.

"C-can I really dance in such a prominent dance party?"

"Please don't worry. Zena-sama looks beautiful even compared to the other ladies."

Liza backed up Zena-san who was getting anxious.

I think the parties in the royal castle were more flashy, but it's probably just a rounding error of the refined Zena-san.

In order to make her get accustomed to this early on, I'll let her participate in this kind of events more.

"Meat tasty~"

"This meat here is delicious too nodesu."

"Cut fruit."

"Mia! This fruit is a rose, so I report."

"Nn, pretty."

Tama, Pochi, Mia and Nana are engrossed with the dishes together with Lady Karina.

"It seems you add this sauce to the meat."

"The sauce is spilling~?"

"If you put another meat above the meat, it won't spill nodesu."

"As expected of Pochi desuwa."

"Nice~"

Glad that they're enjoying it.

"Did you not know? Sir Orion has gone back to visit his hometown."

When I asked a familiar-looking young noble about Lady Karina's little brother, Orion-kun, I was told that he's currently visiting Muno Earldom.

I haven't got any mail from Muno Earldom since I've been traveling with an airship recently.

"Satou-dono, I've collected the pedigree of the eastern small country group."

"Thank you."

Toruma gave me a booklet that contains the condensed information of the eastern small country group.

I only skimmed at it, but I saw that it had information about the tastes and the ways to negotiate with important figures, even better than the tourist book.

He'd have been successful if he used this talent in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs....

"Satou-dono! Why didn't you invite me to the barbecue meeting!"

"Truly truly! It was already over when I rushed there after my retainer informed me about it!"

Marquis Lloyd and Earl Houen who were usually always smiling pressed me with menacing looks.

These two should have eaten a lot as the judges, I never thought that they had enough willpower to eat more.

"I'm very sorry. I was worried about your stomaches so I kept it a secret while intending to invite you two for another day."

"I-is that so! As expected of Satou-dono."

"U-umu! I'm looking forward to the next barbecue meeting!"

The barbecue meeting is already decided huh.... These two's stomaches sure are youthful.

Afterwards, Viscount Shimen, Viscount Emlin, and even the previous Earl Wolguck couple wanted to participate too, the scope of the barbecue meeting was getting bigger.

I intended it to be a small meeting, but since the invitee had increased too much, we will open the meeting in two days, borrowing the duke's castle open space.

The retainers of Marquis Lloyd will handle everything besides the cooking, so I only need to tell the required ingredients and tools to him.

"Head Miko-sama is?!"

Sera who was talking with a priest of Parion Temple leaked out a voice of surprise.

I had a bad feeling when I saw Sera running toward me with a pale face.

◇

"Head Miko-sama!"

Together with Sera, I visited TenionTemple, and the two of us were led to the sanctuary where the Head Miko was.

They might misunderstood that I was Sera's fiance since everyone including the princess had stayed in the parlor.

"....Sera, I'm happy to see you in the end...."

"Don't say the end! Please don't say the end...."

When we met the Head Miko in the sanctuary she feebly lied sideway.

She has [Infirmity] condition.

"....You've brought Nanashi-san along too."

"No, this person is Satou-san."

"The child back then....Come...."

Beckoned by the Head Miko, I sit down beside Sera.

"....Please take care of Sera."

The Head Miko's shaking hand puts my hand on top of Sera's and then she puts her own hand above them.

Thin, light hand....

"....Sera you've overcome your fate."

Light is lost in the Head Miko's eyes.

"That's why....Find your happiness...."

"Head Miko-sama!"

Sera clings to the Head Miko who has lost her consciousness.

"""Head Miko-sama!"""

The priests make Sera fall back, and then they begin to heal the Head Miko with holy magic.

Sera wanted to participate too, but since the boost effect from the sanctuary would decrease if people without priesthood participated, she was rejected.

Before long, her condition stabilized with the effort of the high ranking priests, priests and miko, we left the sanctuary.

Sera wanted to stay, but since she looked like she would be a hindrance, I took her back.

In addition, I gave a lot of recovery magic potion to the temple.

◇

....Life span huh.

I think about the Head Miko's condition while patting Sera's head.

Sera who was crying while clinging to me until just a while ago had cried herself to sleep.

I lightly put her under mind magic [Quiet Sleep]. She should be able to rest until tomorrow now.

I change into Nanashi and then head to Tenion Temple's sanctuary.

Head Miko's [Coma] condition had gone away, so I visited her as Nanashi.

The inside of the temple was not under my dominion, so I didn't use Unit Arrangement, I intruded using Sky Drive after getting near.

There was a miko on guard duty inside the room but since she looked like she was sleeping due to tiredness, I let her sleep under [Quiet Sleep] magic like Sera.

"....Nanashi-san?"

Head Miko's transparent voice reverberate in the moonlit room.

"I'm sorry for the late visit."
"It's okay....You came after all...."

I catch the hand which has extended to me.

"....The heaven has called for me."

The Head Miko calmly shook her head before I could deny it.

"It's alright....I know my own condition well...."

It's exasperating that my experience is lacking.
Unable to say even a word to soothe her at a time like this--.

"Hey, I have one last wish....Take off your mask and please show me your face...."

Since the Head Miko requested for it, I took off my white mask.

"So you really are Nanashi-san...."

Head Miko let out a smile that looks like it'll disappear.

"Please take care of Sera...."

The light on Head Miko's eyes decrease like during the daytime.

I use the same [Awaking] magic that the miko on duty uses.

"Head Miko!"

"Please call me by my name....I'm Lily...."

<TLN: Was translated as Riri before, either way's valid.>

I hold her in my arms and call her name, but Head Miko closes her eyes after fleetingly smiled.

Her life wavelength is disappearing in my arms.

The miko on duty went to call the priests in panic, but they had also fallen from the overworked condition.

I have to do something until they come.

"Lily!"

I use the forbidden magic [Life Force Transfer] while calling the Head Miko's name.

Her stamina stopped decreasing for only a moment, but it quickly began to decrease again.

I took out a holy sword from the Storage and repeated [Life Force Transfer] for as long as the magic power continued.

Aside from magic power, I don't have enough Blood Beads needed for the [Life Force Transfer].

It seems the priests seem to be in a hurry too, but their conditions are worse than during the day.

Even if they could make it, I don't think they can do anything about it.

I've used up all the Blood Beads.

There's no time to get more from the True Ancestor Ban.

100...90...80, Miko Head's life is running out while I'm thinking.

--Not yet!

I open the [Life Force Transfer] code and modify it so that it uses higher grade item than the Blood Bead, Blood Sphere.

...70...80....

My over-abused brain complained about the burn-like pain, but I don't want to hear it.

...50...40....

I did it!

However, there's no time to chant the [Life Force Transfer Rev] spell.

I decided to use a trick. I overwrite the registered [Life Force Magic] in the magic column with the revised version.

...30...20....

I feel twice the pain from earlier and has almost fainted from it, but I get ahold of myself somehow.

--Invoke [Life Force Tranfer Rev]

Alright! Head Miko's stamina has stopped decreasing.

It went back to a fixed value no matter how many times I repeated it. If this keeps up, it'll be just like earlier.

Compared to the Blood Beads, I have a lot more Blood Spheres, but it's not unlimited.

Is there anything I can do....

I recall my memory.

Anything, if I just have some kind of hint....

I felt a weak touch on my face.

The Head Miko has extended her slender hand, wiping down the tears streaming down my cheeks.

"Nanashi-san, thank you.... It's fine already."

The Head Miko who has regained her consciousness string soundless words.

Light does not return in her eyes.

"This...Aged body...Let it rest...."

Is there nothing I can do against aging....

Even though I have the power to overwhelm demon lords, am I powerless against providence of nature....

Can't I do anything but crying, praying for a miracle....

--Is that really true?

『You can't wait for a miracle. You have to make it yourself!』

Arisa's laughing face that was like the sun floated in my mind.

You're right, Arisa.

--I'll create a miracle.

Remember Satou.

I should have a way remaining.

If it's possible to create trees and fish, people should not be an exception.

Like I care about taboo.

--I open the source code of [Another World]. I look for the code I need.

I keep using the [Life Force Transfer Revised] in order to keep Head Miko's life, so the parsing goes too slow to advance.

Don't complain, Satou.

If a cheap CPU can do concurrent processing, there's no way that I can't do it.

If Multi-Core is not possible, then I'll do at least Multi-Threading.

With a reckless thought that's unbelievable for the usual me, I split the processing time.

>[Parallel Thought (Thread Think)] Skill Acquired.

>[Parallel Magic Usage (Background Cast)] Skill Acquired.

Cheers for Easy Mode.

When I activated the skills, the processing became remarkably easier.

--I can make it!

I've ran out of magic power from the holy sword, and the Blood Sphere that has lost its power turned into dust on my hand.

--So what.

I take out a spare from the Storage and continue the healing and the remodeling.

Well prepared means no worries.

I smash the malicious flag and I finally complete the new magic.

"■■■■■ ■ …… ■ 『Generate Life』"

The Head Miko's body is wrapped in rainbow colored light.

I couldn't see her from the light, but the AR reading showed that her condition changed from [Infirmity, Verge of Death] to [None].

"Are you crying Nanashi-san?"

I can hear a clear voice from inside the light.

Hands wrapped in light wipe my tears.

"Head Miko-sama!"

The fastest priest finally jumped into the room.

Slightly later after him, priests and miko rush one after another.

Everyone has uniformly stopped at the room entrance, it seems they're surprised at the rainbow light that's wrapping the Head Miko.

I put on the white mask and turn around toward them.

The rainbow colored light disappears behind me.

"....Head Miko, sama?"

The Temple Head who looked dumbfounded asked like he was bewildered.

When I turn back toward the Head Miko, I see a six year old little girl who's wearing oversized bedclothing putting her hands on her cheek while looking perplexed.

>Title [One who Creates Miracles] Acquired.

◇

"Are you really Head Miko-sama?"

"Sera, this is the third time you know."

Loli Head Miko looks at the surprised Sera gleefully.

She's slightly fatigued similar to Sera when she was revived with the [Revival Artifact] back then, but besides that she's exceedingly healthy.

"But, how?"

"I was bestowed with a miracle."

Loli Head Miko looks at me and smiles profoundly.

We have decided that her rejuvenation is to be a [Miracle of God].

God Tenion will likely not complain since it means that there will be many more people who will pray to God Tenion from now on. Probably.

I didn't intend for her to become this young, but let's consider it a good thing since her life is not in danger anymore.

Even Loli Head Miko herself is delighted, saying, "I can pass as Sera's little sister now."

Outwardly, she's going to be introduced to the public as an apprentice miko.

As the postscript, Loli Head Miko is also participating the barbecue meeting happily.

14-13. Territory of Duke Oyugock (2)

Satou's here. I like my barbecue medium rather than rare. I thought anything but well-done was impossible when I was small, but it seems my way of thinking changed with my age.

◇

"Here's the barbecue."

"We've put some vegetables too."

Arisa and Hikaru presented me a plate with some food.

Before my eyes, Lulu and the participants of the cooking contest are currently grilling the barbecue like they're competing while treating the meeting participants in this barbecue meeting.

"Are you still worried about it?"

"What is it about?"

Arisa and Hikaru exchanged words while taking seats besides me.

"There's a loli girl eating meat between Pochi and Tama right?"

"The girl in high spirit who's really enjoying herself is it."

"Right that's her, that girl is 80 year old you see."

"Hmm, and?"

Is there any problem, Hikaru said while looking puzzled.

"'And', aren't your reaction too light to see someone who looks 70 younger than she is?"

"I mean, since she's a level 50 saintess, it's not strange for the country to assist her in prolonging her life isn't it. Looking at her skill composition, she probably can use Prayer magic too."

Prayer magic is a magic that can grant every kind of wish, its user is extremely rare.

According to Hikaru, there was a time where the user even successfully revived someone.

However, the criteria for the prayer magic to be granted by the god is unsettled, the combination of the praying clergyman and the granting god and the situation seem to be changing.

It'll be hard for the wish to be granted if you keep asking for the same thing or something selfish.

"By assist-- you mean something like the『Rejuvenation Medicine』?"

"Un, that's right. Most Selbira explorers don't do it, but explorers in Saga Empire regularly get ahold of several pieces of Blood Beads every month from the [Bloodsucking Labyrinth], so it's not something that rare."

Yet I think they're not circulating in the market.

When I asked about it to Hikaru, she said, "One of the beads only rejuvenates several years of your life. Maybe the nobles of Saga Empire bought them all up?"

During the time when Hikaru was excessively hunting the [Rejuvenation Medicine], she often disputed with the retainers of the lineage nobles too it seems.

Come to think of it, the pope of Holy State Parion was youthful even though he was 150 year old.

I wonder if he's keeping his youth using [Rejuvenation Medicine] and [Prayer Magic]?

"So, what's the relationship between that loli girl's rejuvenation and Satou's listlessness?"

"That's--"

I stop Arisa who was going to answer Hikaru and talk about it myself.

"I've ended up reviving someone who should have died a natural death."

"Hmm? It was before she died right? Prolonging your life with [Rejuvenation Medicine] was normal during my nation founding time you know?"

From Hikaru's perspective, it doesn't seem to be different than healing a sick person with magic potion.

However, that's not the problem here.

"Even though the person herself had accepted her death, I acted contrary to that and kept her alive out of my selfishness."

It was before her death to be exact, but there's no mistake that I had twisted the Head Miko's will.

"But, you know."

Hikaru pats my head.

It seems I've lowered my head due to the remorse before I realized it.

"The person herself looks really happy you see?"

Arisa pushed her flat chest to my head, and turned my head toward the venue.

There's the figure of loli Head Miko happily racing toward a whole roasted haired cow together with Pochi and Tama at the place where Arisa is pointing at.

"Wait, Arisa. I was about raise my affection level, don't steal the march."

"Fuffuun, first come first served!"

Affection....

"Moreover, it seems Satou regards life span as a sacred thing, but isn't that the sense of value from earth?"

"--What do you mean?"

I don't think that I regard it as sacred though....

"Life is absolute on earth. There's no human who doesn't die after all, things like human clone and copying consciousness to a computer to prolong life only exist in SF type literary works right."

I agree with Hikaru.

It's natural for living creatures to die a natural death.

"However, it's different in another world (here). Even if we regard the eternally living immortals, or elves who live a long seemingly-eternal live as special cases, there are many fairykins who live for thousands of years, and there are even normal humans who live for hundreds of years by continuing consuming Rejuvenation Medicine."

--The sense of value is different from the earth's because the premise is different.

It seems that's what Hikaru wanted to say.

"Besides, I know that there's an preconception of someone forcing someone else to keep living against their will on earth, but isn't it different in this case."

"That's right. There are probably not a lot of people who would refuse getting rejuvenated to their young body, though there are probably going to be a lot who would if they have to keep living in their aged body."

"Even if there's some, it's probably due to religious reason right?"

"Yeah, like refusal of blood donation or something."

I wonder how is the doctrine of Tenion Temple?

"Master~?"

"We've brought the most delicious meat nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi brought a bulging steak on a large plate.

Together with loli Head Miko.

"Satou-san, are you not feeling well?"

The Head Miko who totteringly walked to me, climbed on my lap and peeked at my face.

"He's worried as to whether he has obstructed Lily's natural death."

"--Obstructed?"

Hearing Arisa, loli Head Miko looked puzzled.

"Ah.... The words from that time is it? You're cruel--"

Loli Head Miko swelled her cheeks and glared at me.

As I thought, what I did was just imposing my hypocrisy....

"Telling everyone about my embarrassing words like this!"

"--Eh?"

What does she mean?

"I was just slightly enraptured by the situation. Being embraced by a gentleman who had good will during your death's bed, wouldn't that tickle your maiden's heart?"

--Head Miko-san?

"I understand!"

"Ah, nothing you can do about that."

Arisa and Hikaru also agreed.

"...Do you not hold a grudge?"

"Ara? I had conveyed my gratitude that day though?"

It did feel like she said, "Thank you, Nanashi-san."

"There is no falsehood in my words that day. Furthermore, I'm even more thankful now."

Loli Head Miko sits on my lap and stretches her hands toward the sun.

"Being young is wonderful. I can freely move my arms and legs, my joints aren't aching too. I can run without running out of breath, I can immediately stand up when I sit. I can even eat again the meat dish that I liked. Moreover! I had completely forgotten that food have such rich flavors."

The Head Miko's smile that won't lose to the sun is dazzling.

Although there's a feeling like she's trying to cheer me up, there is no fabrication in that smile.

"Right now, I'm really happy you know? That's why please don't look so gloomy okay?"

I was feeling gloomy until just a while ago, but I felt as if her smile washed that away.

As expected of Saintess-sama.

"But, where did Master and Lily get acquainted?"

Arisa talked like she was a wife probing her husband's affair.

"I think it was in Tenion Temple's sanctuary?"

Since loli Head Miko looked troubled, I told them that we met for the first time during Sera's revival through the [Revival Artifact].

I've talked about it with Arisa before, and Hikaru seems to know the existence of the [Revival Artifact], there should be no problem.

In addition, Tama and Pochi have gone to refill the emptied platter, so they're not here right now.

"Even though we talked a lot, we had only met three times huh."

My interaction with Head Miko-san can be counted with one hand, but the times I had with her were comfortable.

As for the reason why I was so upset when she was dying, I don't know whether it was because I didn't want to lose those comfortable times, or because I saw the death of my companion on her.

During that time, I felt a mysterious uneasiness in my mind, "I can't let this person to die here."

I don't have [Foresight] or [Prediction] skills, but when I think about it in hindsight, there's no doubt that my uneasiness was the reason why I denied her death.

"Now now, let's end the difficult talk. Satou-san, let's enjoy the barbecue meeting with everyone!"

"Yes, let's go."

While holding Loli Head Miko, I go to the venue together with Arisa and Hikaru.

Let's enjoy today too.

◇

"--To everyone who's gathered here. Yuu Tenion Head Miko has gone to God Tenion's side."

Several days after the barbecue meeting, we went to the funeral service of Head Miko at the Tenion Temple's cathedral in the noble district.

"It sure feels strange to go to your own funeral."

"Head--Lily-sama, I don't care if anyone heard it okay."

Interposing between Sera and me, loli Head Miko--Lily dangles her legs while looking at the funeral.

"From now on, the title of Yuu Tenion will be succeeded by assistant head miko Neyuna to assume as the new Head Miko."

Looking at Lily who's clapping her hands the foremost, Ms. Neyuna smiles bashfully.

The day Lily was rejuvenated--.

At first they were going to announce that Lily was rejuvenated by god's miracle, but in the end, it was decided to announce that the Head Miko had passed away and passed the baton to the assistant head miko, Ms. Neyuna.

The reason was because there was a high possibility that old people in the continents would flock here to seek for the rejuvenation miracle.

It seems that loli Head Miko is going to support Tenion Temple as an apprentice miko Lily.

Further, the duke, the king, the king's body double who are all Lily's old friends have been informed about the rejuvenation via Hero Nanashi.

Lily's acquaintance during her time as a hero's attendant--the warrior, Mrs. Blum Julberg and Ms. Sebelkea in the labyrinth city--are going to be informed gradually, so I didn't help contacting them.

◇

"Nana and Nana's masita!"

"Nana, play!"

Nana and the sealionkin's children who are playing with her wave their hands toward me.

The girls are wearing uniforms of Echigoya Firm's spinning mill.

Of course they're not formal staff members, but they're hired to work on odd jobs.

"My, how cute."

"Cute? Miko is cute too."

A sealionkin child who's being held by Nana is looking at Lily adorably.

They look of the same age outwardly, so it's somehow heartwarming.

"Master, requesting the ultimate colored lunch box for the lunch."

"Since I didn't prepare any lunch box, should we buy from the stalls?"

"Masita, sardines tasty."

"Masita, octopus skewers tasty."

As requested by the sealionkin children, we head toward the shop which sells octopus and dried sardines skewers.

"Do they suit your palate?"

"Yes, I often ate them ever since I was small."

Lily who's holding a sardine skewer and an octopus skewer on both hands bragged a little.

She's probably enjoying her return to child's mind.

"Oba-chan, buy me some food."

"You, are you out of job again? Eat these pickles if ya like."

"Waa, thank you. Oba-chan I love you!"

I heard a deja vu conversation from the crowd.

"You seem busy nowadays."

"Un, the girls who couldn't stand working as prostitutes have all gone to work on the spinning mill, so I got a lot of customers, my waist hurts."

"To hire people without letters of recommendation, Echigoya Firm sure is generous."

"Ahaha, at first everyone gossiped that they were a new fraud."

"You don't want to go there?"

"I can only work as a prostitute, I won't go there. I have some regular customers too."

"I see, then do your best kay."

"Un, that's why please give me a bit more pickles!"

It's the combination of the oba-chan and the prostitute onee-san who taught me about Kuhanou Pickles before.

It seems they're as energetic as ever.

I was thinking of calling them, but stopped since I was with children.

After sending the sealionkin children to the spinning mill, I joined everyone, and enjoyed the singing of Cyriltoa the diva.

We stayed longer than planned, but since we're not in a hurry in this trip, it should be fine.

Our airship flies away while being seen off by the people of the Duchy Capital.

Next, we'll be going to the self-governing dominion of the dwarves.

Let's go meet Elder Dohar in Bolhart city!

14-14. Bolhart (1)

Satou's here. Meeting a friend in an unexpected place makes for a lively conversation. There were even times when the day ended before you realized it even though you met at noon.

◇

"What a wonderful scenery."

"Yes, this must be the famous great river of Oyugock Dukedom."

Princess Shistina replied to Zena.

Our small airship is currently going upstream in the sky above the great river.

The other girls are also enjoying the scenery from the viewing deck.

This place is protected with [Canopy] magic, it's a safe design that won't even let their skirts flipped by the wind.

"Nice view~?"

"Tama, that place is dangerous nodesu!"

"It's awright~"

While that may be so, Tama, doing a daunting pose on top of the thin railing is a bit.

"Master, it's a flock of migratory birds so I report."

"Nn, flamingos."

Nana and Mia are pointing to a flock of fatty pink colored birds that are crossing the large river.

They're a bit different than the flamingos I know, but they're probably the flamingos here.

Arisa who was looking at the spectacle listlessly suddenly looks taken aback and then she swings her arms.

"Those who are free, look to the port side!"

"Arisa? That's the starboard you know?"

Lulu corrected Arisa's mistake.

Looking at Arisa's awkward expression and her theatrical tone, it must have been some kind of parody.

<TLN: Apparently, a gundam's reference. Episode 31 of the original anime.>

"Master, I caught two birds for now, I wonder if they're delicious roasted whole?"

There are two flamingos with wired harpoons on Liza's arms.

--Liza, too quick.

"If I'm not mistaken, it tastes like chicken, should we barbecue it?"

"Yes! Once I've drained the blood, I'll strip off the beautiful feathers."

"Yeah, I'm counting on you."

I've eaten some flamingo in a trip abroad back then, but I never thought that I would get to eat it in another world too.

We arrived at the grapevine mountains in the evening of the day.

There was still some time until the ships cruising the large river stopped coming, so we went to the herd of Sky Deers in the neighboring summit to kill time.

"Prey~?"

"Pochi will catch them this time nodesu!"

"You can't."

"Pochi can't nanodesu?"

"Yup, you can't."

The beastkin girls wanted to hunt the sky deers, but since I had a little debt with the Sky Deers, I told them not to.

The slightly downhearted Pochi looked cute, but I can't yield here.

Afterward I negotiated with the management of the Phantom Firefly Cavern's service and got the permission to directly cruise in the cavern by half-submerging the airship in the water.

"Oh my! This place is the famous Phantom Firefly Cavern isn't it! Mrs. Litmaiya boasted about it when she got married."

"Hee, that stiff principal did huh~"

While the princess who came here for the first time and Arisa were conversing about a common acquaintance, they look around the Phantom Firefly Cavern.

Zena-san who also saw the cavern for the first time looked at the ceiling too much, she lost her balance and fell back.

"Kya"

"Are you alright?"

"Y-yes! Thank you Satou-san."

Supported by me, Zena-san seems to be embarrassed with her blunder, she looks really bashful.

"Kuh, he naturally raised a flag!"

"Mwu, guilty."

Arisa and Mia muttered something, but everyone was able to thoroughly enjoy the Phantom Firefly Cavern without any trouble.

It's possible to enjoy the time here no matter how many times you come here huh.

◇

After we had done greeting the viceroy of Gururian city, we changed our clothings to commoner clothes and took a walk around the city.

We're split into several groups since it'd be too conspicuous if we were in one large group.

The ones who are with me are Arisa, Lady Karina and Sera.

"Is this gururian? I like ankoromochi more desuwa."

We got some huge adzuki beans after defeating plant-type monsters [Adzuki Shooters] during our leveling in the labyrinth, so there was a time when I made some koshian and ankoromochi.

That reminds me, her face was full of bean jam along with Pochi and Tama wasn't it.

"Y-you're eating it with bare hands?"

"That's right! You don't split them with chopsticks, the right manners to do it is by heartily biting them whole!"

Arisa instills some manners to the bewildered upper-class Sera.

She pushes her face asking for me to wipe the bean jam around her mouth.

Geez, what a hopeless girl.

"I did this to service Master."

....Don't lie.

I stopped Sera who looked like she was going to follow Arisa's nonsense, and wiped Lady Karina who was too late to be stopped.

For some reason, Sera who should be spotless looked vexed. It's a mystery.

"Ah! Noble onii-chan!"

A little girl who was cleaning a hardware store found me and then happily ran to me.

....Who is she again?

"Look, she was one of the girls who rode in our carriage when we came to the city back then."

I recalled her with Arisa's help.

Ah, come to think of it, we did let a pair of villager sisters who were looking for employment to ride in our carriage.

"Is your big sister healthy?"

"Un, she is!"

The little girl's line of sight was locked on to the gururian that I was eating, so I let her eat it.

She's in the middle of her work, but a mouthful should be fine.

"Yummyy!"

I intended to only give her a mouthful, but since it looked like she was even going to eat my hand, I gave her the whole gururian.

"Now then, Master, your hand please."

I pinned and stopped Arisa who was going to lick the remaining red bean paste on my hand.

Sera presented a handkerchief, but I used life magic [Soft Wash] to clean the paste instead of dirtying the handkerchief.

The little girl and Arisa said, "What a waste!"

The two must have different meanings of that.

An acquaintance showed up from the hardware shop that the girl was working at.

It's Galhar-shi, the dwarf magic shop manager who helped me in defeating the [Golden Wild Boar King], I'm greatly indebted to him.

The big sister villager girl came out from behind him, but I'll leave it Arisa to talk with her.

I lightly put up my hand to respond the villager girl big sister who bowed her head.

"It's been awhile Galhar-san."

"If it isn't Satou-dono!"

Galhar-shi firmly shakes my hand for the reunion.

Thinking it was strange that he came out of a hardware store instead of a magic shop, I asked him about it.

"The shopkeeper here has a hobby y'see. I came here to challenge him in an

『Arithmetic Game』. I couldn't do it at all when Driar-shi became a mayor, but he, Jojori and I learned『Advanced Arithmetic』under Driar-shi you see."

Galhar-shi had a faraway look toward the sky while saying, "It was fun."

I asked him about his plan after this, it seemed that he's going to take a carriage to Bolhart city by the request of a merchant friend.

"I plan to go to Bolhart city too, would you like to go together?"

"Is it alright? Then maybe I should take the ride."

Since he readily consented like that, it was decided that we were to go together but--.

"Eh? Airship? Personal airships, aren't those only the Boruenan Light Ships? Eh? Is it because of Misanalia-sama?"

--And so he was panicking for the first half of the trip.

I feel like I somehow did a bad thing.

"Are you alright?"

"Yeah sorry for troubling you...."

After drinking a jug of ale, he changed back to his dandy calm state.

"S-so, are you going to Teacher's forge in Bolhart city?"

"Yes, there's that too.... I've got my hands on some God Metal (Orichalcon), so I plan to present them to Dohar-shi."

"God Metal (Orichalcon)? The one manufactured by High Elves-sama?"

I wonder if it's known as something High Elves created?

Even without High Elves, you can manufacture them as long as you have some philosopher's stone and high level skills.

In fact, I can manufacture them just fine.

"No, I got it from a little connection of mine."

"Beautiful.... So this is God Metal (Orichalcon). The ultimate metal used to create sacred treasures."

I showed him an Orichalcon Ingot while saying so, and then Galhar-shi muttered alone like he was thinking hard.

"If we have this, then teacher will surely....Jojori...."

14-15. Bolhart (2)

Satou's here. There was a time when the word Missing Link was popular. At that time I mistook the 'link' part with 'ring', once I lost my face when I talked about it with a friend.

It seems to point out the lack of continuity with the phenomenon, but I don't think I'll ever come across it as long as I live normally.

◇

"To the right~, a little bit to the right~?"

Tama is giving an instruction to us using flags in the open space near the city hall.

She was just here a while ago, fast little thing.

Following her instructions, the brownie in flight uniform landed the airship in the open space.

Dwarves in work clothes are peeking through the windows curiously from the city hall.

Since there were a lot of plump ones, it made me remember a flock of sparrows standing in row on a pole cable.

"It's been awhile, Sir Pendragon."

"Please excuse me for my long silence."

I exchanged handshakes with Driar-shi the mayor who came to greet us.

Driar-shi's secretary and daughter, Jojori-san, is also with him.

"Oh? Isn't it Galhar! Why are you here?"

"Hey Jojori, your surprised face is wonderful too. I'd like to have a date in the sky together with you."

"Mou, oh Galhar."

Jojori-san reacted while not wholly blushing to Galhar-shi who naturally said some playboy's line.

When they met in the magic shop back then, Jojori-san acted like an older sister to Galhar-shi, but it seems there was some kind of change during these half year.

According to Arisa, Jojori-san seems to be the type of "A firm career woman who's drawn to no-good men."

"Master, where should we carry the souvenirs to?"

"Master, requesting instructions."

Liza and Nana came with the carts where I put the wine barrels, so I confirm Driar-shi for the place to put them.

I held back my laughter when Arisa said, "Bar~rel", with an unusually cute voice in front of the wine barrel, it was strange but since it was just Arisa being eccentric like usual, I ignored it.

<TLN: Atelier series reference.>

"Ah Pochi! That box is different."

"Different nodesu?"

I stopped Pochi who was going to carry a wooden box with a set of sake cups inside.

"Galhar-san, this wooden box is a souvenir for Galhar-san, could I bring it to your shop?"

"Much appreciated! Even though I still have the liquor you gave me, thanks for that."

"Mou Galhar! You haven't said your thank about the scroll workshop right?"

Huh, what is it about?

"Right! I wanted to write a letter but then a day had passed. You spoke about me to Viscount Shimen right? Thanks to that, I was able to regularly stock the popular『Firework』scrolls. The deserted Galhar shop has now become a business big enough that I could hire a clerk."

I don't remember ever especially talked about him, but I feel that I've spoken the topic about Galhar in the duchy capital's scroll workshop.

The workshop manager, Jung-shi probably worked about it.

"It's really thanks to Satou-san. Galhar's shop can now continue without worrying when it's going to bankrupt."

"That's awful Jojori. The goddess of fortune, that is you, is watching over my shop, so it won't go bankrupt you know."

When I was watching over the two's married couple-like conversation with warm eyes, Mayor Driar-shi came to call me.

Looks like my request to meet Elder Dohar has passed.

◇

"""God Metal (Orichalcon)!"""

The moment I took out the Orichalcon Ingot in Elder Dohar's room, the dwarven blacksmiths who were peeking on the entrance raised surprised voices at once.

"The heck you peeking at, you fools!"

"""We're sorry boss!"""

Elder Dohar drops his clenched fist to the dwarves who are doing seize in a line one by one.

"Sorry for the fuss."

"Please don't worry about it."

While the dwarves are still doing seiza, Elder Dohar went back to the table, and picked up the ingot.

"This is the God Metal (Orichalcon).... Furthermore, it's not a mere God Metal."

Elder Dohar looked at the ingot from various angles.

This is the first time I heard that, I wonder if it has some kind of classification?

"It must have been refined with the power of a quite high order Source. I can feel the blessing of the spirits just by touching it."

It's relatively easy to manufacture them as long as there are Crimson Treasures--Philosopher's Stone alchemy material, but there's no need to put a damper on Elder Dohar and the dwarves' passion, so I keep my silence.

"However, with this kind of God Metal, the usual facility used for mithril won't be enough."

Elder Dohar is looking at the ingot with a stern face.

Alright, this is the right [something like this might happen] timing to take out the Orichalcon hammer and anvil.

"Dohar-sama--"

"Alright Satou! Come with me!"

--Huh?

Elder Dohar stood up with whamp and then called to me.

Um, Orichalcon hammer and anvil....

"Jojori! Call Driar here! Tell him we're doing the Oblation Strike!"

"Yes!"

--Oblation Strike?

Some mysterious words appeared from Elder Dohar's mouth.

"Boss! O-Oblation Strike, that means--"

"That's right! I'm letting Driar to take over. We need to select Jojori's husband."

With Elder Dohar's words, the dwarven blacksmiths starting with Zajir begin to take strange poses to appeal with their muscles.

So Jojori-san really is popular among dwarven men.

"Satou, I said it before, don't you want to become Jojori's husband?"

"I am sorry, but our races are different."

I used the 'different races' excuse which was used by High Elf Aze-san to decline the marriage proposal.

It's a bit unfair, but there are times when it's necessary for an adult.

"--Oh right, yer' not a dwarf huh."

Elder Dohar murmured with a face like a dove that was shot by a peashooter.

Apparently, he completely forgot about my race.

"Can't be helped, I can't hand down my techniques if you can't deliver an heir."

Elder Dohar is thinking hard with his short arms folded

Then Driar-shi and Jojori-san rushed in.

"Driar! Who's going to be Jojori's husband? Decide it now!"

"H-husband is it, father?"

"G-grandfather!"

Driar-shi and Jojori-san were surprised to hear Elder Dohar.

Driar-shi who's composed himself from the shock first asks the perplexed Jojori-san with a soft voice.

"Jojori, whom do you want to be your husband."

"Ga--I..."

Jojori-san who was going to answer faltered.

I feel that she was going to utter Galhar-san's name.

Let's help her out a bit.

"Dohar-sama, do you want Jojori-san's husband for his blacksmithing talent? Or is it for his caliber as a mayor?"

"Neither. As long as he has the strength to take Jojori even after I knock him down, that's good enough."

Truly dwarf-like sense of value.

That kind of point does not suit the dandy Galhar-san.

If I had to say, the frank Zajir-shi suits that more.

For a while, silence rules this place.

"--I can't wait anymore. Let's get some suitable young lad to do a marriage interview for later."

Putting Jojori-san who couldn't answer onto the back burner, the impatient Elder Dohar continued the talk.

"The Oblation Strike is for me, Satou, Driar and Jojori to do--next we need a blacksmith and a magician. The blacksmith is, Zajir, you come."

"Yea! Boss!"

Zajir-shi whose name was called by Elder Dohar pushed his arm toward the sky and joyfully shouted.

The dwarves around him hit Zajir-shi with fists contained with blessings and envies.

Zajir-shi who smiles back to the strikes while covered in blood is scary. Dwarf's blessing is quite violence.

"Next, we need a magician.... It's either of Don or Hahn brothers."

"Father, those two will sulk if you choose either of them."

Driar-shi stopped Elder Dohar's decision.

"We should choose another magician. For the magician assigned to do the Oblation Strike, he not only needs magic, but also arithmetic skill."

"T-then, let's ask Galhar-san. He had just come to the city hall."

Jojori-san pushed with Driar-shi's assist.

"Right. We'll go with that."

I don't know whether Elder Dohar noticed the unnaturalness of the two or not, but he easily accepted.

Zajir-shi grimaced with the reappearance of his rival, but he didn't make an objection to Elder Dohar's decision.

◇

"Awesome, the heat is getting higher."

"I-is this the road to the deepest part?"

While overlooking the red hot magma below from a suspension bridge, Zajir-shi and Galhar-shi muttered.

This place is the deep underground of Bolhart City, a different map area where the City Core is located.

After taking the cold water purification ceremony, everyone changed to white blacksmith clothing.

After crossing the suspension bridge and a long stone stairway, we advanced through a sandbar in the middle of a magma river.

There's a Japanese-style shrine, a barrier is set around the precincts.

『Land Lord Dohar, please give the permission for people besides Driar to enter.』

"Ou! Give the permission to Satou, Jojori, Zajir, and Galhar."

『Acknowledged.』

Elder Dohar replied to the voice of the City Core.

The barrier protecting the shrine is removed, and then we enter the inside with Elder Dohar leading.

I'm already used to seeing City Core area, but it's a bit different here.

There's a big window in the slightly Japanese-styled shrine, and bubbling magma can be seen from it.

"We've come for the Oblation Strike. Prepare for it!"

『Acknowledged. Please appoint the next Land Lord.』

"Driar."

『Completed the registration, please appoint the next proxy.』

"Oy, driar, do it."

"Y-Yes. I appoint Jojori as the proxy."

『Completed the registration, manifesting the Oblation Strike tools.』

]

In front of the City Core, an anvil made from blue crystal and several blue hammers and tongs appeared.

Apparently, they're made of magic power.

Next time I'll do various experiments in the city that I rule in Holy State Parion.

"Listen! Driar and Galhar take care of the operating board there. That operating board is going to be the deciding factor of the processing of God Metal that's harder than mithril. Driar, teach Galhar."

"Yes! Our responsibility is grave, but you should be able to do it. Show father that arithmetic is not unneeded!"

"Yes, teacher!"

Looks like Driar-shi gets along well with Galhar-shi.

"Satou, have you made another sword after the Fairy Sword?"

"Yes I have."

"Show me."

I can't take out a holy sword or a magic sword, so I take out a katana made of Damascus steel from the Storage bag.

I didn't reach the deepest secret of katanasmith taught by Ban in the labyrinth's lower layer, but I feel that it's quite a splendid work of mine.

"You've become quite good--"

After looking at it from various angles, Elder Dohar contemplated for a bit.

"Zajir, you take care of the Phase Hammer."

"Ey! Boss!"

Zajir stroke his own chest while having a smile on his whole face.

"Satou, read the scroll here. Can you read dwarf language?"

Skimming it, the dwarf language doesn't seem to be that different from elf language.

After secretly using force magic's [Translate], I was able to correct the difference in nuance.

"I can."

"Then I'll leave it to you."

Reading it more, I was shocked.

--Isn't this the dwarf's secret!

What are you doing showing this to an outsider.

"Dohar-sama, isn't this document something that shouldn't be shown to me?"

"I don't mind. It has to be with the greatest blacksmith--no, a blacksmith that can imagine the strongest. I and Zajir cannot imagine a sword that surpasses holy swords. I can feel that from the sword you made earlier."

I see, then I'm certainly fit for it.

After all, I do know a sword that surpasses holy swords--.

"Are you ready!"

"""OU!"""

Everyone answered Elder Dohar.

"Melting operation starts."

"Confirming the semi-fluid state, commencing the countdown, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1."

Driar-shi and Galhar-shi control the operating board.

The ingot on the anvil became red-hot and began to become soft.

"Oblation Strike, begin!"

With Jojori-san's signal, Elder Dohar and Zajir began to strike the ingot.

I put on the circlet-shaped tool, and imagine the strongest arm from the Shinza.

However, unlike in games and anime, it seems I can't simply just imagine it.

A magic sword's circuit was written in the book I read earlier to help me imagine it.

Judging from that, my position is to design all the magic circuit that will be granted to the sword.

And it seems the magicians, Driar-shi and the others are supporting it.

Now then, imagine it--.

The Divine Sword that can slay gods appear in my mind.

The blade of darkness.

"Hai!"

"Hou!"

The passionate yells of Elder Dohar and Zajir-shi striking the Orichalcon echoed.

I imagine the materialization of the magic circuit.

But the ideal is too high, it seems that it'll need an absurd capacity that won't fit the sword.

A question appears at the same time.

Did the dwarves continue to do such an absurd work from generation to generation?

--What?

A magic circuit that I'm not familiar with appears in my mind.

I wonder if it's from the City Core or perhaps the Accumulated Knowledge (Library) in the Dragon's Vein?

From the Accumulated Knowledge, I elect the circuit that complies with the image I have.

A precise circuit that seems impossible for people to get.

There is not even 1 bit of waste, it bears a vivid resemblance to the artistic programs from Z80 era.

"Amazing, it's amazing, Jojori."

"Yes, what a beautiful numerical formula."

"You two, concentrate on your work! The sword won't be perfected if there's even a slightest error!"

""Yes!""

I faintly heard the voices of the three people assisting with the calculation.

It's probably possible to create a sword equaling the Divine Sword if this keeps up.

--Wrong.

Denial appeared in my mind.

I wonder what's not right.

--Wrong.

The sword that's going to be completed now is the strongest sword.

--Wrong wrong wrong.

Alert-like voice echoes in my head.

Blue light shines before my eyes, the golden Orichalcon that's shaping up into a sword in Elder Dohar's hand, the red hot magma that surrounds the room....

--I see.

I realize the one answer that can't be expressed in words from the depth of my heart.

◇

『Finished the sequence of Oblation Strike. Please give it a name.』

The City Core's voice cuts the serene atmosphere.

"T-this is--"
"How beautiful."
"A-awesome. I can feel more power than the hero's holy sword I saw in the past."

Zajir-shi, Jojori-san, Galhar-shi were impressed with the completed sword.

"Father, congratulations."
"Yeah, it's thanks to you guys and Satou."

Driar-shi supports Elder Dohar who has exhausted his power.

"Satou, try putting magic power into that sword."

"Yes."

I receive the delicate slender sword.

It's a golden sword that looks exactly like the Divine Sword.

I slowly put magic power into it.

Light burst out.

"Blue light? Is it a holy sword?"

"It's not! There's red light too."

"Is it a magic sword? Or maybe a holy sword?"

The shocked voices from the surrounding didn't reach my ears.

I increase the quantity of magic power I put into it.

I've put a lot, but neither Holy Edge nor Magic Edge occurs.

The red and blue light become intertwined, spinning into one color.

"Violet light?!"

<TLN: See *TLN at the end of the chapter.>

Driar-shi's shout echoes.

At that time, what appeared in my mind were the odd sense of [Burning-like enthusiasm of the dwarves] and the [The imagined Divine Sword that brings freezing-like ruin and extinction].

That's why, I wasn't imagining the [Divine Sword] but a [Sword that can destroy the Divine Sword].

And then, this mysterious sword that emits violet light is the finished product.

"I name it. Holy Magic Sword--"

<TLN: the 魔 (ma) in the 'magic' part can also be translated as demonic/cursed.>

Holy Magic Sword huh, it's quite a fitting name.

Properly speaking, it's probably going to be named with the city's name or Elder Dohar's name.

"--Pendragon."

WHY?

How did that happen?

Elder Dohar who took the sword from my hand thrusts it into the City Core.

To be exact, to the hole opened in the City Core.

『Holy Magic Sword Pendragon, oblation complete.』

The City Core's voice reverberates.

Come to think of it, it was an [Oblation] Strike huh.

If the sword is not going to be present, I guess there's no problem even if it's named whatever.

Now that the ceremony is complete, everyone besides me is going to take a rest until they can walk back to the ground.

During that rest, I asked Elder Dohar about the reason for the name.

"Your house name is from the name of a hero who crushed a dragon right? Don't you think it's appropriate for that strongest sword?"

I see, come to think of it, I think I remember telling that story during our drinking chat.

◇

Afterwards, Driar-shi inauguration of the office of the land lord, Elder Dohar retirement, and the announcement of Jojori-san's engagement happened at the same time, the whole Bolhart City was wrapped in festival.

The candidates for Jojori-san's fiance are the two who participated in the Oblation Strike, Galhar-shi and Zajir-shi.

The viewing flight that was very popular in the labyrinth city was also terrificly popular here, one part of the people who lined up for their turn made a big uproar that almost ended into a fist fight.

I've closed the Gate inside the small airship so there's no problem.

During the seven day drinking bout, I participated in drinking bouts with various brands of liquor that the people brought together with Elder Dohar and the others.

There were a lot of strong liquor enough to numb my tongue, but since I had a convenient body that could only get light drunkenness, I enjoyed the taste in full.

Among many of the smashed dwarves, the dwarves acknowledged my superiority in a strange meaning.

In addition, my companion were--.

The family-oriented members were taught blut and wurst-like sausages made from domestic animals that usually only appear during a festival and various sausage recipes from the female dwarves.

For some reason, the sausages that Arisa remodeled with magic were popular among the Bolhart's children.

The meat-eating members were vigorously hunting the monsters around Bolhart to supply the meat, they were revered like gods by the people who participated in the festival.

It seems the [Meat Song] which started with [Meat, meat, meat~] lyric composed by Pochi and Mia had become a boom by the time we were departing Bolhart.

In addition, the painting of [Hamburg Steak of Sunlight Filtering Through Trees] that master painter Tama made seems to be displayed in the Bolhart's art gallery.

◇

After the festival is over, the day when we were going to depart toward Muno Earldom, I asked a question to Elder Dohar after noticing a certain thing.

"Dohar-sama, where did the offered sword go to?"

"According to the legend, it's said that perhaps it's presented to heaven."

I see, looks like it's told that it's an offering to the god.

Judging from the way Elder Dohar spoke, it seems the City Core didn't have an answer to the question.

I look at the character string displayed on the Exchange Column's mailbox.

There--.

[Holy Magic Sword Pendragon] characters are displayed.

*TLN: Back then someone in the comment section suggested that I used violet as the word in Japanese could also mean that (EITHER CAN BE CORRECT depending on the context so please don't assume that this is an arbitrary decision from my side as a translator, it's still 100% true to the source). It had been established so much that I couldn't change it even after the raw of this chapter came out, but now that this chapter is translated, I think it's more appropriate to use 'purple' rather than 'violet' to refer to the color from now on. Readers, please take note.

Yes I know violet is a kind of purple.

14-16. Muno Earldom

Satou's here. There were times when work mails didn't reach me due to spam filter. For the mail to not be able to reach the mailbox unless it's been checked to be completely safe, if it's real, it's quite a dystopian world enough isn't it.

◇

When I select the mailbox in the Exchange Column on the menu, the sender's name is shown.

<TLN: Apparently the word ポスト (posuto) used in the raw means 'postbox' or 'mailbox' rather than just 'post' in this context. This applies to the previous chapter too.>

The sender's name is [UNKNOWN].

I don't think it refers to the mysterious little girl who appeared during my fight with the Dog-Head even though both their names are unknown.

In WW and FFW, you can't send and receive items from someone who isn't your friend, but even if that someone isn't in the name list, the sender will be shown as [UNKNOWN].

There's a [Reply] form in the mailbox, but it'd be problematic if I made the mysterious little girl an enemy had I carelessly sent it back.

--What should I do.

After hesitating for a bit, I choose to put a lid on this problem, postponing it.

Although I don't think it's one, it'll be scary if it's a trojan horse.

In addition, I couldn't send an item through the mailbox since I couldn't write an address.

Nevertheless, I didn't know that such a function exist.

◇

"Oblation Strike? Ah, it's about the dwarves in Bolhart huh?"

Hikaru answered so when I asked her.

"I'm not really well-versed in it, but it's when they make a sword to offer to the God when the next Land Lord takes over right?"

"Can it be done in other City Cores?"

"I wonder? Probably not maybe?"

According to Hikaru, it seems making an offering during the change of Land Lord is an old custom that only the fairykin perform.

When I went further to Aze-san to ask about it, it seems during the era of founding kings, they offered items to the God as thanks for the help in every territory.

The receiver of the offering seemed to be the God who brought the City Cores to the founding kings, but Aze-san and the elves didn't know which God it was either.

There were eyewitness accounts saying that the offered items seemed to have been equipped by the elites of Dragon Valley, so perhaps it was the Dragon God.

However, even though I've killed the Dragon God, it seems that the others Gods are capable of interfering the Dragon's Vein, and it's possible for them to steal the offered items.

....Today I heard a lot of new things.

◇

"Would you help me? I'd like to try something."

"Of course I would."

"OK."

I brought Hikaru and Arisa along to the territory that I rule in the Holy State Parion.

It seems the City Core's barrier hasn't been broken yet even now.

"Ooh! So this is a City Core! This is the first time I see one, it's really pretty."

Arisa was astonished when she saw the City Core.

"And, what are we going to do here?"

"I'd like to check whether it's possible to do the Oblation Strike and making an offering during the changing of Land Lord."

I answer Hikaru while putting up the City Core's terminal.

"City Core, I'm changing the Land Lord. Is it possible to do the Oblation Strike?"

『It is not possible. The optional feature has not been installed.』

I-it's optional huh.

Then--.

"What should I do to install the optional feature?"

『Unknown.』

I asked just to test it, looks like it's impossible.

"Then can I make an offering?"

『It is possible.』

Looks like this one is possible.

"Can I specify the receiver of the offering? If it's not possible, who's the default receiver of the offering."

『It is not possible to specify. It is Master.』

....Fumu.

"Who is this 'Master'?"

『The meaning of the question is unknown. Master is Master.』

I wonder if this Master is not the God?

For now let's continue the experiment.

"Then please prepare the ceremony."

『Acknowledged. Please appoint the next Land Lord.』

"The Land Lord is Mito."

『Registration Complete, please appoint the next proxy.』

I asked Hikaru with eyes, and then she pointed at Arisa.

"It's Arisa-chan."

『Registration complete, please make an offering.』

I insert a diamond holy sword to the opening that appeared in front of the City Core.

It's something I've especially made for this experiment.

I've put a marker on this.

『Oblation complete. The ceremony is complete.』

I open the marker list on the menu, and check its current position.

....None huh.

If things went well I thought I'd know the receiver of the offering, but it seems the item itself has disappeared.

"How about it?"

"Not good. Looks like it disappeared."

It seems it won't go that well.

The diamond sword didn't reach the Exchange Column's mailbox.

◇

The airship which industriously advanced through the course entered Muno Earldom during my experiment.

The airship is landing in the open space of Muno castle.

It seems the people of Muno castle are receiving us below.

The loli maids are waving their hands energetically, welcoming us.

"""Chevalier-sama!"""

"Wa, idiots! It's not Chevalier-sama anymore."

"Ah, that's right. Which title was it again?"

"Viscount-sama."

"The same as Consul Nina-sama?"

"That's right! Great isn't it!"

"Uwah, that's amazing."

"....Marrying into the wealth."

"If things go well, his mistress."

Attentive Ears skill picked up the loli maids gossiping.

Please be at least more than 20 year old if you aim to be my mistress.

Not like I'd take them even after they were.

"""Satou-sama, welcome back!"""

The airship landed on the wide open space of Muno castle, when I showed my face from the ramp, the employees of Muno castle unloaded their voices together in good coordination.

I thought I wouldn't hear it due to the driving sound of the airship, but they all waved their hands saying, "Welcome back" in loud voices.

"I'm back~?"

"Pochi has come back nodesu."

Tama and Pochi take the shutan poses before the maids.

"Tama-chan, cute."

"Pochi-chan too!"

"Oy, you guys! Tama-san and Pochi-san are mithril explorers y'know?"

"Right right! They're now honorary nobles after meeting His Majesty, if yer' adding chan on their names, ya'll be beheaded for lese majeste."

The ones who warned the maids are rabbitkin male soldiers who seem to be newcomers.

Their titles are [Former Explorers], they're probably people who came from the Labyrinth City Selbira.

"Really?"

"Even though they're this cute, amazing!"

"Soft and fluffy~"

The half doubting maids are hugging and touching Tama and Pochi even while being surprised.

Both Tama and Pochi are happily being affable.

"It's the Magic Spear Liza-sama!"

"Would she practice with us during her stay? Would she?"

"I want her to teach me the Magic Edge's knack."

"Liza-san is awesome. She's a noble even though she's a lizardfolk, even more it's baronet."

"Yeah, someday we too--"

The soldiers sent passionate eyes to Liza who appeared after Tama and Pochi.

It feels that there are more beastfolks and scalekin than humans among the new soldiers.

◇

"It appears the cityscape has become quite lively."

"Yeah, thanks to your efforts."

Led to the drawing room of Muno castle, we're having a talk with Nina-san while waiting for Earl Muno to come.

Apparently Earl Muno is doing something in the City Core area under the city with Orion-kun.

"By efforts, do you mean the thing about food and human resources collection in the Duchy Capital?"

"Yeah, of course that helped too, but it's not just that."

Nina-san shook her head while smiling wryly.

"Thanks to your activities in the Labyrinth City and the Royal Capital, Muno Earldom has become more recognized. We had a rapid increase in the number of government service applicants and merchants who came here."

Looking at the map, the population in the city has risen by 50%, and the total population in the territory by 20%.

The soldiers who were only 120 now have become around 2000 just in the standing army.

Looking at the population ratio, I think the increase is a bit too much, but Ms. Nina probably has some plan about it.

"By the way, Satou. Do you know how many towns and cities are there in Muno Earldom?"

I hesitate how to answer to Ms. Nina's question.

There are two cities under Muno Earldom, Muno city and another along the main road.

Some of the places that I thought to be villages seem to be towns.

These towns specialize in Gabo fruit productions, they only have a few inhabitants.

The surplus crops from the agricultural villages around the towns are bought by the purveyors and then transported to Muno city.

The towns have no governors, apparently they dispatch civil officials from commoners as the magistrates.

"There are four cities and seven towns in this earldom. Among them, one city and two towns are under Earl Muno's rule, three towns are under the local clans' rule, and the rest are occupied by monsters and savage tribes."

Ms. Nina who got tired waiting for my answer answered ahead, I checked the map.

There's a blank area near the territory located on a different map from Muno territory I visited before, three cities and two towns are located there.

These are not under control of the lord, so it's in another map.

Among these, two cities are under control of fiendish upper level 50s undead type monsters, two towns have become the nests of level 40 hydras and chimeras.

The savage tribe that Ms. Nina mentioned is probably about the kobolds who occupy the abandoned mine city in the mountain district.

Just like Goblins and Orcs, Kobolds are not monsters but a fairykin.

"And so. Now that we have the military power, soon, I'm thinking of taking back the control of the three towns who are occupied by those clans as they please--"

I see, so she wants us to lend our power to take those back.

So I thought, but Ms. Nina was thinking something a bit different.

"--Before that, we have a problem. The kobolds from the abandoned mine city have begun to meddle with the silver mine located in Kuhanou Earldom to the northeast you see."

That's troublesome.

If worst comes to worst, Earl Kuhanou might destroy the kobolds and snatch the territory.

"In other words, you want me to prevent the kobolds from attacking the mine?"

"Yeah, that's right. I'd like Satou and the others to drive away the kobolds that are heading toward the mine."

"Is it alright to just drive them away?"

I thought she would tell me to drive them out of the abandoned mine city.

"Hauto will take care of the abandoned mine city. With 500 territorial army and 1500 mercenaries, we should be able to subdue the kobolds. The mercenaries have been provided by Echigoya Firm."

I haven't heard that one--or so I wanted to say, but I feel that I saw a report about mercenaries deployment.

Looking up the reports I got from Tifaliza, there were documents about some hectic things in Yowok Kingdom and Holy State Parion.

It seems they've gathered refugees in Lesseu Earldom and brought them to Oyugock Dukedom through ships.

The population growth and the soldiers must be of those families.

It might be just right for Muno Earldom that's lacking manpower.

◇

"Heya, I've kept you waiting, Satou-kun."

Earl Muno appeared with his usual friendly manner.

"I'm back~?"

"Baron, I'm back nanodesu!"

"Oh! I'm happy that Tama-kun and Pochi-kun look healthy."

Without correcting Pochi's mistake, Earl Muno lifts both of them while smiling his whole face.

As usual he's an animal lover.

"Father, you're terrible desuwa."

Lady Karina whose reunion hug got put off puffed her cheeks a bit.

"Karina, welcome back. Did you get along well with Satou-sama?"

"Soruna-anesama!"

The eldest daughter of Earl Muno who appeared later, Lady Soruna hugs Lady Karina.

The objects that had lost their places to go between the two deformed with enough force to lift the continent.

"Satou-san, you're staring too much you know?"

Sera who circled around to block my lets out a sweet smile.

"Fast"

"Late start."

The impregnable guard pair whose appearance was stolen muttered, "Sera, what a frightening girl" vexingly.

"Sir Pendragon, looks like you're in good health."

Appearing behind Lady Soruna is the little brother of Lady Soruna and Lady Karina, the eldest son of Earl Muno and the next Earl, Orion-kun.

There's a subdued beautiful girl that I'm not familiar with next to him.

She's 15 year old just like him.

"Let me introduce her, she's my fiancee, Muse the daughter of Baron Ragock."

Orion-kun introduced the girl.

When I was in the Duchy Capital, there was a talk about his marriage with Sera's seven year old little sister of different mother, so she's probably a candidate for the second wife.

"Nice to meet you, Muse-sama. I am Viscount Satou Pendragon."

"N-nice to meet you Viscount-sama. I-I'm honored to be able to see you."

She seemed to be a reserved person, she greeted while looking very nervous.

"Muse-sama, you don't need to be that tense."

"Eh? Se-Sera-sama?! Why are you here?"

When miss Muse looked at Sera who talked to her to loosen her tension, she hardened more than when she greeted me.

"Sir Pendragon, why is the next saintess-sama here?"

Orion-kun whispered to me.

By next saintess-sama, he's probably referring to Sera.

"Did you not hear from Earl Muno? I've been appointed to be the vice minister of Shiga Kingdom's Tourism Ministry, so Sera accompanies me as an attendant."

"V-vice minister?"

Apparently, he only heard about me becoming a viscount.

Someone who coughs, seemingly purposely, behind me is the other attendant, Princess Shistina.

"Sir Pendragon, is the lady also your acquaintance?"

The fussy Orion-kun asked while looking annoyed.

He probably feels that I'm imprudent to take many women of blooming age along.

"This lady is another attendant of vice minister the same as Sera-sama--"

"Ara, it's not the same."

Princess Shistina gets up from the sofa and stands beside me.

"Nice to meet you Orion-dono. I'm the sixth princess of Shiga Kingdom, Shistina. I'm Satou's fiancee."

""P-princess""

Orion-kun and miss Muse were surprised at the same time.

Best of all, the princess's impact was too strong it seemed they ignored the fiancee part.

Before their shock settled down, I introduced the reserved Zena-san to Orion-kun and the others.

◇

"Now then, let's continue the talk from earlier."

Leaving the women in the drawing room, I, Arisa, Ms. Nina, and Orion-kun went together to Earl Muno's office. Of course with the Earl too.

"Please wait, Nina-dono."

"What is it? Next lord-dono."

"Please stop with the next lord-dono. More importantly! Why did you bring along a child to this political meeting, Sir Pendragon!"

Orion-kun pointed out Arisa of course.

Arisa herself watched the situation in delight.

"I called for Arisa-dono."

The one who answered him was not me, it was Ms. Nina.

"Many of the earldom's revival policies came from her suggestions. If you're deceived by her childish appearance, your caliber as a viceroy would be doubted you know?"

Orion-kun who was talked down by Ms. Nina kept silent while groaning, "Gununu".

I think it's impossible to see through Arisa's inner capability in your first meeting.

I protected Orion-kun in my mind.

The meeting advanced smoothly even though there was one such trouble.

Until halfway--.

"Then, Satou and the others would arrest or repulse the kobolds who went to the silver mine, is that okay with you?"

"Yes, understood."

I agree with Ms. Nina.

"Wait, why should it be arrest or repulse? Your retainers are strong enough to beat down those riff-raff right? Why wouldn't you just dispose the insurgents who damaged the territory right then and there?"

Orion-kun asked me in an angry tone.

Looks like he'll get angry If I honestly tell him that I don't want to kill them.

"In the short-term, what Orion-sama's said is the most efficient one."

Arisa looks at Orion-kun while smiling.

"That is right! Your retainer also said so--"
"However, if we so easily slaughter them, in the long term it'll leave a deep after-effect on the populace and become the seed that will obstruct the territory's development."

It's a case that happens often in the middle east in our former world.

"But, with weak attitude--"
"Quite so."

Arisa affirmed without listening to Orion-kun's rebuttal to the end.

"Therefore, I'd like to suggest another plan before doing the plan to repulse them."

After smiling at Orion-kun, Arisa tells her plan to Ms. Nina and Earl Muno.

"In order to keep the naughty kids from ever thinking of rebelling again, let's engrave the fear deep into their bones."
"Please don't be too hard (on them) okay."

While smiling wryly, Ms. Nina reminded Arisa who finished with a scary smile.

For some reason, Ms. Nina's line of sight was turned toward Orion-kun.

14-17. Muno Earldom (2)

Satou's here. I've heard that saving the heroine in a pinch is a requirement of being a hero. Recently, I feel that there are a lot of heroines who save the protagonists instead.

◇

The next day, we departed on the airship with Orion-kun and two of his attendants.

My companions are all the vanguard and Mia, five of them.

Lady Karina wanted to go, but I made her to stay in order to let her socialize with her sister-in-law, miss Muse.

I asked Sera to support the two.

I had asked Princess Shistina, Arisa and Zena-san to investigate the library in the former Muno castle so they also got left behind.

I'm told that most of the books have been scattered and lost, but the castle seems to be older than the kingdom itself, there might be some important documents remaining.

Lulu is teaching Gelt and other cooks the recipes she has learned in the Royal Castle and our journey.

I expect that the tourist attractions in Muno city will increase even a bit.

◇

Along the way, we stopped by a pioneer village called Pendragon village.

The former boy thief gang and the elderly who were abandoned near the river are living here.

I built the village provisionally, but it seems they've properly developed housings and fields during this one year.

"Uwah, it's a ship flying in the sky."

"Flyiing."

"Awesome."

Children began to gather when the airship lowered its altitude.

There's no place to land, so I descend to the ground using a rope ladder.

We're only going to see them for a bit, so only I, Pochi, and Tama get down.

"Viscount-sama!"

"Everyone! Chevalier-sama has come!"

"Waa, it's Tama-chan and Pochi-chan!"

Following after the nimble children, the elderly also totteringly gather around.

Both the children and the elderly look more healthy than when we met them before.

"Young organisms, conferring candy so I communicate."

"It's Nana~"

"I'm caught~"

"Candy tasty"

Nana who had come down before I realized it was already giving candy to the children.

The youngest child is being carried by Nana in high spirit while giggling happily.

After looking at them, I called the elderly.

"Excuse me for my long silence. This has become a splendid village isn't it."

"It's all thanks to chevalier-sama who had put up good words to viceroy-sama."

An old man who has assumed the position of the village chief talks politely.

It seems he was originally a civil official so he's fit for the job.

Liza brings down two barrels as the souvenirs.

"This one is a distilled liquor called『Giant's Tear』, while this barrel has smoked meat inside."

"Oh! We're having a feast today!"

"We're holding a feast for Satou-sama!"

"It is time to show off my edible plant dumpling."

"Hmph, my fried dumplings are better."

I feel sorry for the old men and women who are getting frolic, but since we only come here to see them for a bit, we can't participate in the feast.

"That's too bad. Please wait a minute, I'm gonna wrap them up quick."

An old woman who looked disappointed went back to her hut and began to do something.

She's making a lunch box made of the so-called edible plant dumplings.

And then some senior boys carrying crude bows ran out of the forest.

"Satou-sama! Are Totona and the others working hard in the castle? This is a pheasant I caught myself you see. Please take it."

"This ear rabbit too!"

"Hou, these are some excellent spoils."

I receive the pheasant and rabbit from the boys who look so proud about it, and then I present them with short bows and arrows I took out of the magic bag.

I made these bows and arrows myself, but they're just extremely common items.

"Waa, amazing."

"They're genuine bows and arrows!"

The hunter boys' eyes are sparkling before the bows and arrows.

"C-can we really take these?"

"Of course, please use these to hunt good game for everyone in the village."

"Leave it to me! Satou-sama!"

"Un, I'll do my best too!"

After encouraging the boys and getting an edible plant dumpling lunch box, we promptly left the pioneer village.

The edible plant dumplings which we enjoyed from the airship's viewing deck were simple but it tasted somewhat nostalgic.

◇

"Emer~gency~?"

"Master, this is bad nanodesu."

When I was giving a lecture to Orion-kun about the actual scenery of Muno Earldom in contrast with the map from the airship's deck, Tama and Pochi rushed from the bow.

"What's wrong?"

"Pinch."

"In the forest ahead, being chased nodesu!"

Checking the direction Tama and Pochi pointed at, I understand that a flock of small sized monsters called Snake Bats are chasing several people.

These Snake Bats are monsters with snake body and one-meter-long bat wings, when it's alone, even a normal soldier can defeat it safely.

However, they have paralyzing poison, so if they're in a group, even a knight will be in danger.

Of course, we're talking about a normal knight here.

"Pochi, Tama, I permit you two to sortie."

"Roger~"

"Yes nanodesu!"

Hearing my order, the two jumped off from the deck.

"Uwah! O-oy! Sir Pendragon, your retainers are!"

Seeing that, Orion-kun rushed to the handrail in shock.

Fwoosh, with a sound of cloth spreading, Tama shows herself on the port side.

Like a giant flying squirrel, she glided to the direction she reported earlier.

"A p-person, in the sky?!"

"Because she's a ninja."

I suitably answered Orion-kun's scream.

And then, boom, there was a big sound below.

Pochi probably landed on the ground.

Even though the airship's altitude was low, even Pochi would have gotten hurt at this height.

With Sky Step skill, a lower order skill of Sky Drive, she probably made footholds in the air and killed her falling speed.

It's plain compared to Tama's ninjutsu, but it looks like Pochi is steadily improving too.

Pochi runs while leaving cloud of dust behind.

She's about as quick as a car.

"Liza, to the port side."

"Understood."

I told Liza who was in charge of the steering wheel to turn the airship to where Tama had gone.

"Those children, just what are...."

"It seems they found some people being chased by monsters in that forest."

"--From this distance?"

I handed a telescope to Orion-kun who couldn't believe it.

◇

"Dog-head? Aren't they Kobolds?"

"Yes, that seems to be the case."

I affirmed the question of Orion-kun who was peeking from behind me.

Pochi and Tama have saved the daughter of Kobold clan's head and her two male and female attendants.

The rescue drama was already over when we arrived, so I don't know the detail.

Orion-kun expressed them as [Dog-heads], but they're more like people who put on a dog-head headdress on their head.

Asides from their slightly long canine teeth and slightly pointed ears, they don't look that different from humans.

Their skin are just a bit too white and bluish.

Since there were seven corpses of the Kobolds in the forest, I moved there in secret with Unit Arrangement and collected them.

"Awaken~?"

"Are you hurt anywhere nodesu?"

"....N? Is it Kyan?"

Tama and Pochi who sensed the Kobold girl waking up peeked at her face.

The girl uttered words in Shiga language.

I thought it was my chance to get Kobold language, how unfortunate.

"--You're not, who are you?"

"Awawa, nanodesu."

The girl jumped and pinned Pochi's arms behind, looking alert toward us.

Tama jumped back at once.

I think Pochi should be able to easily escape the grasp, but she's probably afraid to hurt the girl if she forcefully shakes her off.

Pochi's troubled face looks cute, but I can't leave this as is.

"Let go of her arms. These girls are your saviors."

"Ah--"

The girl lost her power with my words, so I quickly tear Pochi off her.

This is most likely an assistance from the [Abduction] skill.

"Kuh, where is my comrades--don't tell me."

Using 'Setsu' to refer herself, that's quite unusual.

If Arisa was here, she would have shouted "You think you're samurai!" no doubt.

No wait, that one is "Sessha" eh.

Now then, putting aside the girl's first person name-calling, it seems she's misunderstood that her friends are all killed, I'll clear that up first.

"Two of your bodyguards are fine. They were dying, but my magician friend has patched them up."

"I-is that so, you have my gratitude."

It'd be troubling if the adult Kobolds suddenly acted violently, so, after Mia had healed their serious wounds, I put them under [Anaesthesia] and [Force Sleep] magic and let them sleep on the napping room below.

Then Mia appeared from the lower floor.

"E-elf-sama?!"

When the girl found Mia, she went to Mia and fell down prostrating.

It's like she's doing a dogeza.

"I-I am an heiress of the late Bolflos, Piaz Bolflos"

『I'm the youngest elf of Boruenan Forest, the daughter of Lamisauya and Lilinatoa, Misanalia Boruenan.』

The girl introduced herself in fairy language and then Mia formally introduced herself too after nodding slightly.

"Misanalia-sama, I thank you for the mercy you have given to my comrades."

The girl continues to talk while her forehead is still on the floor.

Even though she's saying thanks, it feels like she's challenging someone to a serious match, or rather, she seems desperate.

"And, please forgive my impudence for wishing for another thing before I could return the favor--"

Summarizing the girl's story: the Kobold's mine had been exhausted, they ran out of gems called Blue Crystal needed for their breeding, so she'd like to have some of that Blue Crystal from Mia.

Mia tilted her face, looking confused.

She probably has no idea about that Blue Crystal.

Still, gems from an abandoned mine huh....

--Nn?

"Perhaps, the Kobolds attacked Kuhanou Earldom becaused they wanted that Blue Crystal?"

"That is so. We were told by a traveling magician about it."

While asking the girl, I search Kuhanou Earldom's silver mine.

I also tried searching for the unexplored mines, but I couldn't find the vein of this Blue Crystal.

"Are you really sure?"

"That I do not know. We cannot carelessly believe a weaselfolk magician, but upon completion, we promised to teach them the way to manufacture Blue Steel. Those greedy bunch should not miss that opportunity."

Geh, weasel again huh.

I'm slightly intrigued with that Blue Steel thing, I'll help them a bit.

I'll leave Mia to take care of the girl, and use [Telephone] magic to connect to Boruenan forest.

『Aze-san, could I have a bit of your time?』

『Satou! Of course you can.』

『Are you familiar with this gem called Blue Crystal?』

I asked about the Blue Crystal to Aze-san who sounded a bit lively.

Of course I'm talking in my mind, so the surrounding people can't hear it.

『Yes, I know about it. If I'm not mistaken, it's needed for Kobold's child raising isn't it?』

『The Kobold's mine has been exhausted, so they're in trouble. Do you know what kind of place this Blue Crystal occur at?』

『Umm, let me see--it should be deep in Mithril veins. I think you can get them along the deep part where the Dragon Vein is thick.』

I got to hear more detailed information than I thought, so I thanked Aze-san along with loving words and then I cut the call.

I don't know where this Dragon Vein is located, but since it should be connected to Sources, I'll check the core of towns and cities.

After checking Muno Earldom, I found out that there was an ore vein in the town where the monsters had build their nest.

There's a Mithril vein about 1KM deep under the city, and there are Blue Crystal along the crevices there.

That town is in a mountain district located between the hidden village of the giants and the Kobold town.

While I was at it, I tried searching the Mithril vein in the black dragon Heiron's mountain and the one in the dwarf's Bolhart dominion, I only found the Blue Crystals in the former.

The easiest way is to tell the Kobolds about the Blue Crystal in the Black Dragon Mountain which also means driving them away from the territory, but taking the profit for Muno Earldom into consideration, it'll be better if we gain allegiance of the Kobolds who hold the technique to mine and refine these special metal and also let them mine and refine the Mithril vein.

I call Arisa in Muno Castle with [Telephone] magic, and tell her to match the information about the ore vein.

"Satou."

Mia who looks like she's about to cry clings to me.

There's a desperate Kobold girl behind her.

That reminds me, I let Mia to handle her didn't I.

"Satou-dono, I beseech you! Send us to Boruenan forest with your airship. We will give you Kobold's treasured sword, 『Blue Fang』 as a reward for your assistance! If you so desire, I will make a promise to teach you the method to manufacture Blue Steel."

"That manufacturing method sounds attractive. However, we're currently in the middle of an official duty. We will help you obtain the Blue Crystal after we've accomplished our duty."

"Are you sure?!"

I assuredly nod back to the girl who's half in doubt.

14-18. Muno Earldom (3)

Satou's here. I dislike war. I don't mean that it will become peaceful if we just throw away weapons and decrease military might, but I think it's better if there are less casualties. It'll be nice if it's like in games where it can be settled in a war with no one dying.

◇

"Viceroy-sama! The third tower has been destroyed! Knight Gauen and Knight Juran have been made captives."

"If those two got done in, that means normal knights won't be a match for them..."

"You fools! This is not a knight match, it's a war! Push them with number! Distract their attentions with archers."

The domineering viceroy rebuked the timid staff officers.

He's the viceroy of the second city of Kuhanou Earldom, Sedam, that's near the silver mine the Kobolds are attacking.

I've come to ask him for the permission to intervene in the war against the Kobolds, but it's hard to call out to him.

Perhaps I should go out and come here again later.

I slipped out of the scouting ridge where the viceroy was, caught some suitable soldier and applied for a meeting with the viceroy.

Going out would be annoying, so I just skipped a few procedures.

"Visitation at a busy time like this?!"

The viceory's shout reached downstairs.

"What?! A retainer of Muno Earldom huh! If he's asking to be patronized at a time like this, I'll cut his neck."

Soldier A who's beside me averts his gaze awkwardly.

The viceroy probably purposely said it like that so I could hear it as a restraint.

After a bit, Soldier B came down and took me and Tama to the viceroy.

Of course we left the weapons we had on hands to the soldiers.

"Are you the retainer of Earl Muno? Having a catkin as your page, you've got some bad taste."

I was offended with a first discriminatory remark in a long while, but then I remembered that the discrimination of demi-humans was quite bad north of Muno territory.

"I'm honored to meet you, Viceroy-sama. In regard of the Kobolds that are troubling your excellency--"

"Hmph, are you saying that you're going to single handedly take care of them?"

"Immediately if you'd allow."

I turned a fearless smile to the viceroy who was going to say that it was impossible.

For some reason, Tama who was dressed as a page beside me also mimicked my expression.

"I'll give you half a koku time. If you show me that you can do something about it during that period, I'll give you my thanks."

"Thank you very much."

Normally speaking, even just gathering your force would need a few hours.

Even if I'm challenging them with a few elites, we can't probably gain complete control over the Kobolds who are currently in deadlock against Kuhanou force in half a koku--about one hour.

"Tama, I'm counting on you."

"Don't worry be happy~ nin nin~"

Tama entered ninja mode and then she disappeared.

I gave instructions to everyone using [Telephone] magic to begin to clean up the Kobolds.

"W-what is that!"

"Pe-people are, no, the dog-heads are fluttering in the air."

Two of the viceroy staff officers couldn't keep up with the absurd scene happening in the battlefield.

The beastkin girls on the frontline are catching and throwing the Kobolds to the air.

No matter how strong the girls are, their strength is not this absurd.

The thing that's helping them doing the act is a simple type of Acceleration Circle I've given them.

It was originally a technique I thought up when Pochi and Tama were having fun with the shooting experiment in the desert, but I'll keep that a secret in order to protect the Kobold warriors' dignity.

Mia's Artificial Spirits, Arachnes that are standing are spinning spiderwebs 100 meter back to absorb the impact of the thrown Kobolds and capture them.

Just to be safe, I let Nana to guard the airship and Mia.

Through the space magic [Tactic Talk] that's still connected to the girls, I can hear the screams filled with fear and angry roar from the Kobolds who are getting overran by the beastkin girls.

The job is complete while still leaving a lot of time in the half a koku time the viceroy put as a term.

『We've completed the suppression.』

『Good job, take the next action.』

『Understood! Pochi Tama let's go.』

『Hoi hoi~』

『Yes nanodesu!』

I ordered the beastkin girls with [Telephone] to collect the Kobolds who couldn't fight anymore before they went back.

It seems there are several captive Kobolds in the torture room of Kuhanou army.

I'll leave it to Tama to take care of that.

『Tama, sorry but I'm giving you an additional mission.』

『Don't worry be happy~』

I tell Ninja Tama the torture room's location, and then I begin the next action in order to assist her.

"Vi-viceroy-sama, a huge monster from the forest!"

"All members, evacuate! Just leave those Kobolds and evacuate!"

The viceroy and the staff officers were surprised when they saw the artificial spirit Behemoth appearing from behind the mountain in Muno territory.

I created that Behemoth, but for some reason it's bigger than the ones Mia and Aze-san summoned.

The attention in the fort are all gathered to the Behemoth.

"Viceory-sama, please don't worry. That's a spirit my companions have asked for help."

"Th-that's not a monster?!"

"Yes, it's going to exterminate the Kobolds that have escaped from the fort."

Although I said that it was going to eliminate, the Kobolds in the field had all been captured, the Arachnes had put them outside Kuhanou territory per Mia's instructions.

That Behemoth is an excuse so that they won't demand the Kobolds to be taken into their custody after the battle.

The Behemoth has finished moving, it's showing its side to us here.

We're about 300 meters apart.

"Viceroy-sama. It's going to be a bit dazzling and noisy, please take care."

After I've warned him, the Behemoth executes its race-specific ability, [Great Thunder].

Our purpose this time is for intimidation, I've lowered the power to lessen the environmental damage.

The thorns on Behemoth's body stretch and then lighting powerful enough to whiten the sky shoot out from them.

"""WOOO!"""

"""Eyes, my eyeeeeees"""

It looks like, besides the viceroy, there were only a few people who heeded my warning even though I had warned them beforehand.

The thunderous sound hit our ears and the smell of ozone swept on our hair and clothes.

The ionized air stimulates my skin.

"Wh-what is that."

"Such power from just one attack...."

The viceroy and staff officer gasped when they saw the scarred ground left by the Great Thunder.

About 1km of the mountain forest straight from the Behemoth are carbonized in 45 degree cone shape.

Behemoth calmly walks on that black road while clad in small electrical discharges.

The frontline of Kuhanou force fall in silent due to the excessive spectacle.

I faintly saw Tama taking the Kobolds away from the fort on the corner of my vision. They've disappeared into the trees, it should be alright now.

"It seems we overdid it. I wanted to capture several Kobolds to find out their strongholds...."

I tried talking to the Viceroy, but he looks like he'll drop his jaw, he just keeps staring at the battlefield with no response.

Looks like I really overdid it.

"--Viceroy-sama?"

"A-ah....Yo-you've done well...."

I offered a chair to the Viceroy who's still in shock, and then, thump, he dropped down to the chair like he had lost his power.

"--We should have several Kobold captives. I'll give them to you as a reward. Take them."

"Then, I'll gratefully accept them."

Looks like he heard me even though he looked stupefied.

Tama had infiltrated and save them already, but I feel less guilty now that I've gotten the permission.

I presented a weapon that was in the soldier's custody to the viceroy.

"Although this may not be enough as a thank, this is a present from my Viceroy."

"I-isn't' this the rumored magic spear of Echigoya Firm! Earl Kuhanou told me that he needs to wait for one year even after pulling his connections in the Royal Capital--are you sure?"

"Yes, of course."

It ended up like we took the viceroy's deeds so it was to make up for it, though it also served as a compensation for the trouble we caused them.

The soldiers will probably have busy days ahead of them with repairing the fort, but since no one loses their live, let's think of it to be a good outcome.

◇

"--Piaz, you traitor!"

"A-aniue, you misunderstand!"

<TLN: aniue= 'Esteemed older brother'.>

After the captured Kobolds were brought by Mia's spider-shaped artificial spirits, Arachnes, a siblings quarrel began when we went back to the airship.

"Master~"

"Misunderstanding is happening it's bad nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi are beside the quarreling siblings, they look flustered and confused as to what should they do.

I stop the Kobold older brother from talking with wind magic [Seal Talk].

It's originally a magic used for sealing magicians' chant.

It's often used in crimes, so it's not written in general magic books.

"Now then, Piaz's older brother. For the sake of you Kobolds' future, shall we go ask Earl Muno's permission."

I said so and then the airship levitated.

I put the Kobold soldiers and the Arachnes in a sub-space using [Another World] magic during the flight.

I'd feel sorry if they got eaten by monsters if I left them as is.

I thought of giving them to a fort between the two territories, but there were only 50 soldiers in the fort while there were 200 robust Kobold soldiers, managing them would be hard for them so I decided against it.

The Kobold soldiers are inside the Arachnes' cocoons, so they should not notice that they're inside the sub-space.

Orion-kun's attitude toward the beastkin girls has become strangely polite, I don't know whether it's because he was shocked by the Behemoth's lightning attack, or because he was surprised with the throwing of Kobolds.

◇

"You've gone and done quite the spectacle."

"Yes, after doing such a senseless thing, the people of Kuhanou Earldom won't imagine that the Kobolds who were attacking the mine are safe."

When we got back to Muno Castle, I was called by Earl Muno and Ms. Nina.

Tama took a letter to Ms. Nina to tell her about the situation ahead of time when the airship was doing the landing sequence.

"I'm told that the Kobolds were deceived by a weaselkin magician to attack Kuhanou Earldom in search of some Blue Crystal thing, is that right?"

"There is no mistake."

"If the Blue Crystal really does not exist in that silver mine, that is so."

The Kobold little sister and older brother who are tied affirm Ms. Nina's question.

I took only these siblings to Muno castle because they're the children of Bolflos clan's patriarch.

Judging from the things I've heard from the Kobold little sister during the flight, the older brother is the leader of the radical faction, while the little sister is the leader of the moderate faction, and the patriarch who should have unify the two is in sickbed.

"Master! We've made a huge discovery!"

Right then, Arisa together with the princess appeared.

The timing was perfect because I instructed Arisa through [Telephone].

"It's said that there's a Mithril vein under the town of Tagenkoumi! There's also a record about some unknown blue gem!"

The document Arisa is holding is something I've prepared and made to look worn out with [Weathering] magic.

"This is quite convenient isn't it, Viscount?"

"Right isn't it. It seems that fortune is on their side."

I elude Ms. Nina calling me [Viscount] full of doubt with [Poker Face] skill and receive the document from Arisa.

"This document seems to be something from the era of Marquis Muno. Apparently they secretly dug it at that time. Judging from the time, the killing of Marquis Muno by 『No Life King』 probably happened before they could do a full-scale mining operation and so it went to a standstill."

The [Deception] skill is exploding after a long time.

I think it's running wildly since I haven't used it for a long time.

"I see--You, what's your name?"

"Keiji. The next patriarch, Keiji Bolflos."

After pondering for a bit, Ms. Nina asks the Kobold older brother.

"I'll offer you two choices. One, for the crime of treason, your whole clan is to be executed or deported from Muno Earldom. The other one, the Kobolds are to retake the occupied town for Earl Muno, become the people of Tagenkoumi, and provide the work force to acquire the underground resource."

"Are you going to turn us all into slaves?"

After hearing Ms. Nina, the Kobold older brother shouted like he was barking while baring his fangs.

"If we did that, Satou would turn his back on us. This guy is softhearted you see. If we did such a thing to you guys, he'd take you all to a new land, I'd even bet on this."

Yup, I can't refute Ms. Nina on that.

If that really happened, I probably would take the Kobolds to the Mithril vein in the Black Dragon Mountain behind the scenes.

"That's why it's going to be『Inhabitants』. Normally, I'd like to entrust the patriarch to be the governor, but there was the thing with the『Kobolds attacking』Kuhanou Earldom's silver mine. We can't instate him immediately. Just like the dwarves, spend your time and gradually become a self-governing dominion."

After hearing Ms. Nina, the Kobold older brother contemplates.

"Thank you for your kindness. I will absolutely persuade the patriarch and the elders."

"I'll also help anija to unify the clan's will."

<TLN: Old expression to say "older brother".>

The Kobold siblings replied Ms. Nina passionately.

"Is that alright with you, Earl Leon?"

"Umu, I give you my consent."

Earl Muno generously nodded to Ms. Nina.

"Well then we should hasten exterminating the monsters from Tagenkoumi town."

"Then, let us Kobold soldiers lead the frontline!"

The Kobold older brother came forward while still being tied.

There's no mistake that freeing the town from the monsters should be done by the cooperation of the Kobolds and Muno Earldom's army.

However, that means they will have to plan the draft for the military march and the arrangement for the unification of two forces, huge tasks await them.

It'll need several months even at the fastest, or even half a year if it's done badly.

I think they can do it somehow even without us if we just curtail the boss class monsters that rule the town, but leaving them, saying "Pardon me for going ahead", right before a great task would be heartless of me.

"Earl Muno, we have our sightseeinig job, however--"

"Sir Pendragon!"

Orion-kun turned back toward me while looking like he couldn't believe it.

Yet, when our eyes met he lowered his eyes as if he was frightened. ...Incomprehensible.

"Orion, you must not be unreasonable okay."

"It's as Earl Muno said. In just a day, Viscount Pendragon settled the probable dispute with Kuhanou Earldom and found a definite solution today, afterward, we just need to make it happen. If we relied even more after so much, we'd better off yielding our position as statesmen to him too."

Orion-kun was remonstrated by Earl Muno and Ms. Nina added.

"You two, please wait. I cannot join the united front since I have a sightseeing job to do, but we will recapture Tagenkoumi town at least. How about performing the united front for when you need to recapture the other towns and cities?"

"You say it as if it's so easy."

"Is such a thing possible?"

Ms. Nina muttered in astonishment, Earl Muno asked like he couldn't believe it.

"I have some excellent companions. If we're with those girls, saving Tagenkoumi town and exterminating the monsters will be a walk in the park."

It's already afternoon though.

14-19. Muno Earldom (4)

Satou's here. A senpai told me that trust is like falling dominoes. Apparently how you endure the stress that pile up little by little and how easy it can be broken by a single misstep resemble them.

◇

"Airships really are fast aren't they."

"Father, for both the viceroy and his heir to go to the danger zone, isn't that too reckless!"

The people who are participating in the recapture plan of [Tagenkoumi Town] occupied by monsters are the members of team Pendragon, Earl Muno, Orion-kun, Sir Zotor who's made a comeback as a knight, and the Kobold siblings.

<TLN: It should be town instead of city, previous chapter has been corrected.>

That's good and all, but Orion-kun has been disputing seriously with Earl Muno since awhile ago.

"It's not recklessness. We're with Satou-kun and his companions, we'll be safe anywhere we go."

"Leave it to me~?"

"That's right nanodesu! Pochi will defeat things like dangers like 'zumbararin' nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi replied Earl Muno's fully trusting speech by taking shutan poses.

After looking at his father frustratingly, Orion-kun went to the deck with heavy steps.

From his point of view, if I were ambitious, I'd make it so that the two died by monsters' hands and took control of the territory, he was probably trying to warn his father about that.

It sounds rude, but being cautious like Orion-kun is normal.

I like people who are trusting, without being vigilant, like Earl Muno though.

"Master, flying-type monsters are approaching from the front."

"Master, permission to intercept!"

Liza reported, Nana bent herself forward and asked for my permission.

Looking at the map, I understand that there are countless monsters aiming for the airship from afar.

"Alright, permission granted. Arisa, please take the initiative with fire magic."

"Okkey."

"Master, I--"

"Lulu, please help sniping using the normal bullets."

"Yes!"

"Mia, please prepare the Garuda."

"Nn, leave it to me."

I stop the two Muno from following everyone to the viewing deck.

We have special seats for watching spectacles over the windshield in this cockpit.

Like a cloud, swarming monsters are dyeing the sky black.

It's merely a show since they're all small fries, but it's quite the visual effect. Like in a dream.

"S-so many of them...."

"A-aniue."

The kobold siblings are getting frightened by the approaching monster swarm.

It's understandable.

With so many of them, they look like a swarm of fly or locust, it looks gross.

"T-this is impossible. Sir Pendragon! What are you doing looking so flippant! Turn back the ship immediately! We can't possibly win against such a swarm!"

--'Flippant', how rude.

There was a time when Orion-kun seemed to be scared of me after the Behemoth matter, but it seemed the terror before his eyes had overwritten that, he snarled at me desperately.

"It's alright. We have Arisa here."

"What can a little girl who's only good with her mouth--"

Orion-kun stopped his words halfway through.

He's probably surprised with the hellfire like flash that can be seen through the window.

The wide-ranged advanced level fire magic that Arisa used incinerated the monster swarm.

It's exactly a real life act of "Sterilize the garbage!"

<TLN: Fist of North Star's reference.>

It's a bit showy, but since it's a magic that the Selbira's Guildmaster can also easily use, it should be fine.

As expected, she didn't use the forbidden spells of the space magic and fire magic that she recently learned.

『Master, did you see? Arisa-chan's coolness!』

"Yeah, of course I did. Don't monopolize them too much okay."

『Ho~i』

I replied Arisa's [Praise me] call from the speaking tube, and reminded her not to cut loose.

Orion-kun who saw it from the side has hardened with his mouth open, but Earl Muno simply praises, "Arisa-kun's magic is amazing", while looking like usual.

The vast majority of the small fries had been burned by Arisa's magic earlier, while most of the remaining ones had gone back to the town.

Some of the monsters that did try to approach us were all shot down by Lulu's sniping and the beastkin girls' Magic Edge Cannon.

The battle ended after a while and everyone got back here from the deck.

Only Mia who has just finished summoning the Garuda remains on the deck.

"Oops."

I received Arisa who was in good mood after playing an active part, jumping to me while shouting like Pochi.

"....W-with such talent for magic...w-why are you merely a Viscount's retainer...You should have aimed to become the head of Shiga 33 Wands carrying an army directly under His Majesty."

Orion-kun who stiffened with a dumbfounded face until a while ago asked Arisa with a trembling voice.

"How stupid, of course that's because I'm madly in love with Master."

After speaking her love in Showa's way of talking, she cutely kissed my cheek lightly.

Furthermore, with doya face, she poked her own cheek requesting a kiss for her too, so I lightly kiss her like in Western drama to show affection.

<TLN: Search "doya-gao" or ドヤ顔 .>

"A, awawawa"

Arisa who got her kiss reward looks flustered.

She's weak against surprise attacks as usual.

After kissing Tama and Pochi who looked envious in turns, Nana came before me with a serious expression.

Maybe Nana also wants a kiss? So I thought, but it seems to be a bit different.

"Master, wishing for the mean to do long-range attacks."

"Okay. I'll take proper measures."

It seems all of the monsters have been shot down before they entered Nana's [Javelin]'s range.

Nana seemed to be convinced with my sincere answer.

The revived Arisa retorted, "Are you a politician!", but since Nana didn't mind it, I ignored her.

The airship lowers its altitude as it approaches the town.

The monsters inside the town seem to be frightened with Arisa's magic earlier, they're hiding behind the building without a sound.

It seems the shrewd monsters have ran away from the town by scaling the wall and the exit.

When we have crossed the outer wall, there's a sudden movement from the castle ruin in the distant.

"Oh no~?"

"Master, look at that! Nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi who found the Hydra that showed its heads on the castle ruin made a racket.

"What is that big thing!"

"Looks like that's the boss here."

I told the surprised Orion-kun.

"I-if we just use the fire magic from earlier!"

"You can't."

I tell Orion-kun who's sending hopeful glances to Arisa that we can't accept that plan.

"Naturally~?"

"Magic is forbidden with hydra nanodesu."

"Master, please give us the permission to subjugate it in close combat."

"Master, permission to sortie!"

The vanguards agreed with my opinion and made a suggestion.

This is not because Hydra is resistant against fire magic.

"R-ridiculous. Why don't you fight by safely attacking it from a distance?"

The beastkin girls who are heading to the sortie catapult answer Orion-kun who's shaking his head finding it incomprehensible.

"Because, it's no good~?"

"That's right nanodesu. The meat will go bad nodesu."

"Hydra's meat is delicious. We cannot get the meat if we attack it carelessly."

"....What'd you say."

Looks like it's hard for Orion-kun to accept beastkin girls' explanations that are overflowing with appetite.

Nana has already sortied through acceleration magic circle from the catapult, she's not here now.

We have a lot of spectators today, so I let the ship to move close to the ground, making it going up and down.

Mia's Garuda that has gone ahead of everyone pins the Hydra to the ground.

And then the vanguards rush in one after another.

"It's a decisive battle of kaijuu."

"Pochi-chan and Tama-chan look like they're having fun."

Arisa and Lulu are in complete spectator mode.

"Umu, Pochi-kun and Tama-kun are strong on top of being cute aren't they."

Earl Muno also stands in a line with the two, enjoying the vanguards' actions.

For the fight this time, the one that has done the most is Pochi.

She cut down the Hydra's head one after another by using Magic Edge that she extended from her blade.

I'll give the right for the first fork stab of the Hydra's head grill to Pochi.

◇

Leaving the people who were watching the battle while holding their breath, I moved to the ground ahead with teleport magic.

"I guess it's around here?"

There are a lot of underground cavities from the treasure vaults and dungeons in the site of the castle ruin.

I pick a cavity that isn't close to the City Core and decide to make a tunnel hole with earth magic.

"I guess it'll look unnatural if there's a tunnel here suddenly."

While muttering to myself, I pick and use architecture magic from the Magic Column.

I installed a room and a bulk door with seal-like carving on the entrance of this underground tunnel.

In addition, I made them to look old using the [Weathering] magic I used on the document back then.

"Now then, I can finally start on the tunnel."

I've lost around five minute time, so let's do this quickly.

I dig a hole of around three meter big in diameter, and then I install a two meter spiral stair on the hole's side.

Of course I've included the hand rail to prevent falls.

I'm thinking of installing an elevator for transporting things on the center, so I've left it hollow.

As a precaution, I make an open space every 100 meters, moving pits out of the way.

I want to avoid lethal accidents from happening.

After continuing my work for about 10 minutes, I've finally penetrated to the silver vein and the pulsing Mithril ore area, and even connected to the place where there are Blue Crystal, our objective.

Just in case, I install a bulky door that leads to the Blue Crystal.

Just for appearance, let's put a powerful lock on the door.

Since I could set conditions with locking magic, I made a blue sapphire key for it, and put a condition where only the one that held it could go in. It should be fine as long as I have the duplicate.

I leave this key in the first room.

After finishing all the work in fifteen minute time after the start of the battle, I stealthily teleported back to the airship.

It was just right after the Hydra was defeated, so I directed the airship toward the castle ruin.

◇

"Master, completed the removal of debris in front of the barrier, so I report."

As a thanks for Nana who did the labor, I promise her to do the magic power supplement for her before we go to sleep later.

The beastkin girls and the Garuda are currently eliminating the monsters that are lurking in the castle ruin.

"The barrier is holding up huh."

"Nn, active."

The barrier that prevents intrusion to the City Core seems to be functioning.

I feel that the barrier will be broken if I touch it, so I make sure not to get close to it.

"What should we do? Should we go ahead to check if there's any danger?"

"You can't! Only the viceroy and the next viceroy can enter here."

When I asked Earl Muno, Orion-kun cut himself between us and replied.

"It's alright Satou-kun. There are many things protecting me with the viceroy's power. Orion, you wait here with Satou-kun."

"Fa-father."

"This is an order."

After saying so, Earl Muno walked to the other side of the barrier alone.

Orion-kun tried to follow after him, but it seemed he was stopped by the barrier, he couldn't go inside.

Earl Muno probably used the City Core's power dwelling in the terminal to enter the barrier.

After a while, the crest of Earl Muno flashed on the barrier's surface for an instant.

He's probably seized the City Core of this town.

We wait for the Earl Muno while calming down the Kobold siblings who are pestering about the location of the Mithril vein.

"Heya, thanks for waiting. I have to decide on the proxy--governor of this town."

Earl Muno who came back said so and looked around.

"Liza-kun, can I ask you?"

"Me, is it? Isn't it more suitable for Master?"

"I've discussed this with Nina, Satou-kun has to be the lord of the abandoned mine city. I want to appoint you to be the governor of this town."

"As I am Master's attendant, I can't do the duties--"

"The actual rule will be entrusted to a chief administrator, there's no problem."

Liza is looking at me with an anxious expression, so give her my consent.

"Understood. I accept the duty as a governor."

"Is that so! Good. Then let's start the ceremony right away."

It seems there's no need to be close to the City Core to appoint the proxy.

Liza's governor appointment ceremony was finished with a simple spell.

It was similar to the [Conferring Peerage] ceremony that I went through.

◇

"So this a place for ceremony, I wonder if there's something here?"

"Found, a key~?"

"Master! There's a stairway here nodesu!"

The beastkin girls found the room that went to the Mithril tunnel, Tama also quickly found the key to the Blue Crystal room.

"It's quite deep."

"You're right."

The people who are going to go down with me are the beastkin girls, the Kobold siblings and Orion-kun, seven of us.

Mia and Arisa were interested, but they gave up after hearing about the long stairs.

I'll show the video recording to the girls later.

"Silver? Isn't this a silver vein!"

The exposed silver vein was glittering halfway through the stairs, the tension of Orion-kun who looked tired went up.

"If there's a silver vein, that means--"

"Yes! There might really be a Mithril vein close by!"

The Kobold siblings look happy.

Apparently, the two didn't believe about the Blue Crystal matter.

Approximately 600 meter deep, the exposed vein slightly changes to green color from the silver.

"It's Mithril! If we dig here, the Blue Crystal might be here too!"

"There must be! I'll go back to the top immediately and bring a pickaxe."

I'm sorry for the two who are ecstatic, but they won't find the Blue Crystal no matter how long they dig here.

"Wait. According to the document, they found the Blue Crystal in the innermost bed. Bring the pickaxe after we've checked that."

With my persuasion, the two stepped ahead as if hurrying us.

There's still about 400 meter more, but I can't say that.

The Kobold siblings who have run to the lowest layer run back to us.

Tama and Pochi are together with them too.

"There was a door-like thing below. Hand ov--please lend me the key that was found earlier."

The older brother Kobold who was speaking in commandeering tone due to his excitement changed to polite speech with a glare from Liza.

"That key should be able to open it, desu."

<TLN: He added desu as a sort of polite tone.>

The older brother Kobold's deduction was right, but since I went out of my way to put a gimmick in order to see their delighted reactions, I made him to endure it, saying, "Let's go with everyone."

When we arrived before the door, Orion-kun who was staggering after walking too much sat down on the ground.

It looks like he's implying that he can't move anymore.

"--I'm opening it!"

The older brother Kobold who took the key look back at us, asking for confirmation.

Even though he was excited a while ago, it seems he's insecure now that he's actually here.

I gave him my consent, and then the door made an opening sound.

"Aniue!"
"Yeah, with this our Bolflos will live on."

While being illuminated by the glittering Blue Crystal that spread before their eyes, the Kobold siblings take each other hands, crying full of joy.

While still sitting down, Orion-kun's eyes gleam seeing those glittering.

"Pretty~?"
"It's blue like the color of holy swords nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi are looking at the scene with sparkling eyes that won't lose to the Blue Crystal.
That's while both of them are being carried under Liza's arms though.

The older brother gave a lump of Blue Crystal to the little sister and then he knelt down before me.

"Sir Pendragon, we siblings--no, Bolflos Clan pledge eternal allegiance to you."

No no, you should do that to Earl Muno.

If you said such a misfired thing, Orion-kun would glare at you, you know.

"If you want to pledge your loyalty, please do it to Earl Muno."

"But--"

"If he didn't give his permission, you guys wouldn't have been able to get the Blue Crystal."

"....Understood. We will follow Sir Pendragon's words."

He somehow looks like he doesn't understand it, but there's no problem as long as he pledges their allegiance to Earl Muno.

The Kobold siblings went back to the ground while bringing the needed amount of the Blue Crystal for now, and then the two pledged their allegiance to Earl Muno.

This time it's only with words, but it seems they'll officially be tied to Earl Muno with [Contract] later.

After taking the two Muno to Muno City, we brought the Kobold siblings to the abandoned mine city, and got the approval for their clan to migrate to Tagenkoumi town.

The aforementioned weaselkin magician didn't exist in the map, let alone the abandoned city, so I didn't get to meet him.

His name, [Black Mole] seems to be an alias that's often used, no one knows his real name.

In addition, since Echigoya Firm has received the project to redevelop [Tagenkoumi Town], the essential utilities, dwellings and administration facilities should be complete by the time the Kobolds arrive at Tagenkoumi town.

--Should be, or rather I think I'll just make them with magic secretly.

I tell Echigoya Firm's Manager to make a contract for getting stable supplies of Mithril ingots from Muno Earldom in exchange of the installation of Mithril refining equipment.

The Manager was awfully enthusiastic, perhaps I should have told her to take it easy.

◇

The Kobold siblings show up bringing tributes the day before we depart.

A Blue Steel pike and sword, silverworks, and sapphires, most are jewelries.

"Oh my! How wonderful!"

"It suits you well, Muse."

"Orion-sama."

Miss Muse who got an extra-large sapphire pendant from Orion-kun gleefully hugs him.

Orion-kun who didn't expect his fiancee's action is blushing.

"Viscount Pendragon, this is the promised『Blue Fang』treasured sword and the secret book that details the manufacturing process of Blue Steel."

"Got it."

I received the sword presented by the little sister Kobold and then gave it back to her.

"--Why?"

"The treasured sword should be carried by the one who should have it."

I answered her dissatisfaction while looking at the older brother Kobold.

She seemed to understand, she received the sword while saying, "We will follow our lord's decree."

Like I said, your master is Earl Muno.

The next morning, we departed while being sent off by the people of Muno Earldom.

I thought of stopping by to the Seryuu city, but since I don't want to deal with Earl Seryuu's unreasonable demands, we head toward the eastern group of countries as planned.

The first country is Kiwolk--the kingdom of snow and frost-covered trees.

Our first another world winter sports are waiting!

14-20. Snow Kingdom (1)

Satou's here. If we're talking about snow, I'd imagine about the time to be self-indulgent by amusing myself reading manga or playing games inside a Kotatsu. It's hard to leave out skis and snowboards, but being inside a warm room is better after all.

◇

"Snow!"

"Oh no nanodesu! Snow nanodesu!"

After crossing Muno Earldom and the monster dominion, we entered Kiwolk kingdom of the eastern countries beyond the mountain and witnessed a blizzard.

Since this was my first different world's snow, I temporarily canceled the [Canopy] in the airship's viewing deck and let the snow pile up to enjoy it with everyone.

Once there were enough snow to play around with, I called everyone but somehow, Tama and Pochi seem strange.

"Pochi!"

"Tama!"

After the two looked at each other, they ran up to me.

"Snow is bad!"

"Master, if we don't lump together quickly it'll be dangerous nodesu."

The two who tightly cling to my waist turn to everyone and desperately beckon them.

"Liza, quick~, Nana too~"

"Arisa, and Mia too, quickly stick close together nodesu! Lulu too, Karina too, quick! Nanodesu!"

I thought it was just a play, but Pochi is hiding her tail between her legs, and their voices sound too serious.

"Master, please excuse me."

Moreover, Liza who was called over hugged me from the front with a serious expression.

This is quite rare for Liza.

"Master, I was entrusted with an appeal for support. I'll protect the back."

My back found warm and happiness.

I'm intrigued with the beastkin girls' condition, but let's watch the situation for a little while. Since it's soft.

"Ehehe~ danger is bad isn't it~"

"Nn, prohibited."

Arisa and Mia happily cling to me tightly.

"Umm, excuse me Master."

Even while looking timid, Lulu put her arms around my neck from the side, embracing me.

Without knowing, she's the most glued one on me.

"I-I too, um...."

"I don't really understand, but me too."

"Satou-sama, please excuse me."

Leaving behind the hesitating Lady Karina, Sera and Princess Shistina embraced my left arm.

The two are wearing extra clothes for cold weather so there's not much happiness.

"Zena quick~?"

"Zena too, you'll die if you don't hurry nodesu."

"It's alright no one will die okay?"

Zena kneels down to match Pochi's and Tama's line of sight, and then she asks about the two's reasons.

"Snow is death god~?"

"Snow is pretty, but once you touch it, someone will fall if you don't stick together nodesu."

I don't understand, so I seek the explanation from Liza.

"There was a year where we had terrible blizzards when we were with the previous Master.... At that time there were several humans and snake-headkin who froze to death."

I see... It's a trauma from the previous master huh.

"Tama, Pochi, everyone here is alright okay."

To prove that I got rid of the snow on the viewing deck in an instant, and then filled the flight deck with warm spring atmosphere.

While I was at it, I stopped the blizzard and blew away the cloud outside the airship with the forbidden spell, [Weather Control], letting the sunlight in.

"Lukewarm warm~?"

"Master is really, really amazing nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi smile happily with their whole faces, losing their strength.

Among the girls who are dumbfounded, only Arisa who stares up at me while looking like she's given up.

I clap Arisa's shoulder to tell that's it's her turn.

"Tama! Pochi! After this Arisa-chan will teach you the true way to play with snow!"

"Nyu~?"

"Play with snow nodesu?"

"That's right! The default will be snowball fights and snowman making, but we'll also make a snow hut and eat some warm swe~et Zenzai and Oshiruko!"

"Shiruko~?"

"Are there meat in them nodesu?"

"Well, there's no meat in Oshiruko, maybe we should make Kenchinjiru too? Oden is also nice, but then I'd want sake and beers with it, so make that an exception."

The ways to enjoy a snow country that Arisa cited one after another won Tama and Pochi over.

After confirming that Pochi's tail has begun to swing energetically, Arisa starts to encourage them.

"Are you ready?"

"Aye aye sir~"

"Roger nanodesu!"

Arisa points at the snowfield with a whack.

"Then let's go!"

"Go~"

"Non-stop nanodesu!"

The youth troupe led by Arisa charge at the snowfield where the airship has landed. Together with Nana and Lady Karina.

It seems the snow is new, it's soft so they're buried into it.

Liza seemed to have noticed that, she made use of Magic Armor to create snow-shoes on the sole of her feet and ran with them.

"Let's play around here a bit."

I tell the senior group who are looking at the snowfield and then put down the ramp.

"So this is snow."

"It's cold, it's melting when it touches my finger."

It seems this is Sera's and Princess Shistina's first snow, they're enjoying the snow happily.

Lulu is making snow rabbits together with Zena-san.

I make a lodge that's often in ski resorts beside the airship using magic, and move many frost covered trees in the distant to near the building.

Next, I put a Kotatsu and a potbelly stove magic tools inside the lodge.

Taking the number of people into consideration, I've put a type of Kotatsu table that can accommodate a lot of people.

When I put my legs inside the Kotatsu, it feels like the good old Japanese culture.

◇

"Everyone, thanks for waiting."

"Sweet smell~?"

"Zenzai, nanodesu!"

"Nn, tasty."

"It smells nice isn't it."

Inside the snow hut, I distribute piping hot Zenzai from the heating earthen charcoal brazier to the youth troupe, including Lady Karina.

It's still to early for lunch, so these are just snacks.

"Let's play with the sled after we've eaten this."

"Then Pochi will pull the sled nodesu!"

"Tama too~?"

Arisa who saw the plaything I created earlier made a suggestion to everyone.

Arisa who took a glance at the skis and the snowboards muttered, "To have myself among riajuu even in another world....", please stop lumping enjoyable sports like that.

Looks like Nana is making a snow rabbit statue with mysterious pose together with Zena-san.

There are already snowmen for everyone now. Just how did they make a twintail snowman anyway.

It seems Sera and the princess are not good with cold, they're eating oranges on the Kotatsu inside the lodge.

Liza and Lulu are making Pork Miso Soup for the lunch in the lodge's kitchen.

"Satou-san, what are these boards used for?"

Zena-san who took a break from making the snow statue tilted her head in puzzlement seeing some skis leaned against the lodge.

Apparently there's no skis in Seryuu City.

It seems there's still some time before the youth troupe finish their Zenzai anyway, I'll teach Zena-san how to ski.

"They're tools called skis to practice marching on the snow. They make high-speed movement on the snow possible, so people practice using them since they're children in snow countries."

"U-Um! Can I use them too?"

"Of course you can."

Zena-san took it seriously, perhaps because I told her that it was military training.

After giving her a simple lecture, the two of us began to slide.

I have Zena-san to use flight magic along with it. This place isn't a maintained skiing area after all, so it's an insurance for if anything happens.

"Master, unfair!"

"Mwu"

When the Arisa and Mia saw us sliding on the slope, the two jumped out of the snow hut while carrying a Zenzai bowl on one hand.

"Pochi, Tama, Mia! Let's chase them!"

"Roger nanodesu."

"Aye aye~"

"Nn, pursuit."

They show up with Pochi pulling Arisa's sled and Tama pulling Mia's sled.

They somehow look like children playing train, but they're high-powered sleds equipped with Pochi Tama engine that won't lose to a snowmobile.

Two sleds are chasing us from behind while blowing up spray of snow.

The two's kicking power only blow the snow and there's not much driving force, they're slower than they look.

"Zena-san, the one who gets caught up first lose okay."

"Sa-Satou-san, wait for me."

To enjoy skiing that I haven't been for a long time, I'm not using use any skill or magic at all.

While enjoying the powder snow that won't lose to the one in Niseko, together with Zena-san, we carve skiing traces like dancing. <TLN: Niseko is a mountain range famous for its ski resorts in Hokkaido.> Since Zena-san is skiing while using flight magic, she looks skillful enough you won't guess that she's a beginner.

"Wait there! I won't permit love elopement!"

"Wait~?"

"Wait~, nanodesu!"

"Too fast."

Arisa whose Pochi-powered sled was becoming pure white from the piled up snow shouted out some incomprehensible thing.

Mia who's in the Tama-powered sled looks a bit pale.

Zena-san who's sliding beside me muttered "love elopement" while blushing.

You've been floating away from the snow surface since a while ago you know?

--Huh?

After an illusion where my legs felt like they were pulled below, my body was thrown out in the air.

Apparently, the snow below became a cliff.

"Satou-san!"

Zena-san earnestly stretches herself and catches my arm.

I can just use Sky Drive, but for this occasion, I'll see the results of Zena-san's flight magic practice.

"Uwaa, nanodesu."

"Uhhyaa"

Pochi and Arisa fell off the cliff.

Arisa [Return Teleport]-ed halfway through along with the sled, but Pochi kept falling.

She probably went out of the magic range.

"Air kick nanodesu."

I saw Pochi kicking the air to decelerate and regain her posture.

"Trifling nanodesu."

Although, right after she took a shupin pose on the ground, she got swallowed up by the snow from above and rolled down on the slope. It's really like Pochi.

I open the map to retrieve her back to where everyone is with Unit Arrangement.

--Oh?

It seems there's a local child on the direction Pochi is going.

『Private Pochi, you've got an urgent directive.』

I pass a directive to Pochi who's currently slipping down the slope magnificently through Telephone magic.

14-21. Snow Kingdom (2) SS

I'm Pipine of Nadare village in the northwest of Kiwolk Kingdom.

<TLN: Nadare means Avalanche.>

Pon-san, a merchant of Shiga Kingdom said that this kingdom is a country of snow and frost-covered trees, but it's just a cold poor little country.

We've been on bad terms with the neighboring Kogeoku Kingdom, repeatedly having wars with them for several years.

My grandfather, father and brother were taken away as soldiers and never came back.

"Onee-chan, you can't hunt."

"That's right, Pipine. If you go hunting by yourself, you'll get eaten by the Snow Leopard."

"I'm sorry, but I have to do it now that the snowstorm has stopped."

My little sister and grandmother tried to detain me, but I don't have any choice.

In this house with cold air entering through the drafts, there's no dried meat, dried fish or snow vegetable remaining, let alone wild plants and pickled vegetables we picked during the short spring.

We had milk from yaks when we still had them, but during the long two year of winter that still continues, we had disposed all of them.

In this three days, I feel my body has grown weaker from taking nothing but water.

If we don't get some food during this chance, we'll die of starvation sooner or later.

I won't ask for something as luxurious as snow rabbits.

I'm fine even if it's only fog insects, squirrels or weed under the snow, I have to get something anything.

I kicked the frozen front door and stepped forward to the snow.

--White, white, white.

In the usual scenery, I continue to walk toward the Kiwolk Mountain as the landmark that can be seen in the distance.

"It's the Frost Weed."

We can't eat this weed, but Pon-san the merchant will buy it at a high price for [Alkemy] or something.

If we're still alive until Pon-san comes, I'll exchange it for preserved foods.

I smile thinking that I'm lucky to have an unexpected harvest.

I'll have to make use of this luck to find something to eat.

--Snow, snow, snow.

Even though I'm wearing snowshoes, this new soft snow swallow my feet, stealing what little left of my strength.

I saw a small shadow moving beyond the snow.

Perhaps it's a snow rabbit?

It looks like I'm really lucky today.

I take the short bow on my back full of expectation.

Thud, with a sound, snow fell from a tree nearby.

--No! What am I going to do if the snow rabbit escapes!

I put an arrow on the short bow while cursing.

The snow jumps up on the place where I can see the shadow.

--I won't let you escape!

I reflexively ran and what came into my view was a pink-colored triangle inside the snow.

The dancing snow and the fog-like steam flicker around the pink thing.

--Oh no.

It was already too late when I noticed it.

The thing rising from the snow is a snow-colored beast.

A beast that even makes the Snow Leopard into its prey, the ruler of snow field--Rocket Wolf.

It blew the snow behind sounding like a snow slide and then it showed itself before me in the blink of an eye.

--PHYUSWYURUUUUUU.

The warm foul breath blew against my face.

Saliva dripping from its sharp fangs left a deep trace on the snow.

--Ah, I'm going to die here.

I'm worried about leaving my little sister and grandma behind, but if I can leave this suffering-only life, this isn't so bad.

While resigning myself, warm drools blew onto my face.

--I don't want to die, Idontwanttodie, I don't want to die!

"So-someone, save meeeeee!"

"Yes, nanodesu."

--Eh?

14-22. Snow Kingdom (3)

Satou's here. There are many cases where a deed that appears eccentric seen from outside has its reason when you go inside. Nevertheless, whether that is valid or not is another question.

◇

"....Is dis heavn'?"

The girl woke up in the bed and muttered.

>[Eastern Country Language] Skill Acquired.

I got a new skill, but since it sounded like a dialect of Shiga Kingdom, I could understand the meaning properly.

I don't intend to activate the skill but I'll use Translation magic to correct the nuance.

"...Um?"

The girl looks at me while looking puzzled.

This girl is the village girl who was saved by Pochi when she was attacked by a large monster in Kiwolk Mountain, Rocket Wolf.

Since her woolen clothes got dirtied by the Rocket Wolf's blood, she's wearing a cotton dress right now.

I wonder if she was stranded in the mountain, she was in Starvation on top of Weakening state, so I made her drink nourishment magic potion and let her sleep in the mountain lodge.

She was enjoying the bed with half-asleep eyes until awhile ago, but it seems she's finally woken up.

"You're mistaken. This is a lodge near your village."

"--Lodge?"

It seems she has realized her misunderstanding, the girl hurriedly gets up from the bed but then she gets an anemia.

I quickly support her and put some cushion behind the girl.

"For now drink this and calm down."

"Delicious... It's like the summer honey water."

The girl is slowly enjoying the citron tea I gave her.

This is a sweet tea made by boiling citron marmalade.

I picked this one since Zenzai would be a bit hard to swallow for her.

"We've brought the milk porridge that Lulu's especially made!"

"Ankake Hamburg Steak too~?"

"Meat is necessary after all nanodesu!"

"Nn, white bread."

The youth troupe brought the meal when the girl was drinking the citron tea.

Even though her stomach should be good now after drinking the nourishment medicine, meat is probably still hard for her.

That worry seemed to be unnecessary, the girl quickly ate up the milk porridge and put the small Ankake hamburg steak intriguingly into her mouth while looking surprised with the softness of the white bread.

The meat used for this hamburg steak comes from Rocket Wolf that tried to kill the girl.

It didn't have gamey smell even though it was carnivorous and tasted like beef, everyone starting from the beastkin girls highly praised it.

I'm thinking of hunting them later, just enough not to make them go extinct.

After filling her stomach, the girl seemed to recall something, said her thanks to me and Pochi, and then she apologized.

"U-um, I'm sorry for eating greedily without saying my thanks. My name is Pipine of Nadare village."

"I'm Satou of Shiga Kingdom."

I probably won't meet her again once we send her to her village, so I didn't tell her my house name and peerage.

"Eh~, you should have said that you're a retired crêpe merchant from Echigo there~"

"Dried sardines~?"

"Pochi likes people who appreciate dried meat more than fish nanodesu."

"Perilla sprinkled."

<TLN: crêpe=chirimen, dried sardines=chirimenjako. Mito Komon reference.>

The youth troupe mistook Arisa's words, derailing it to a strange direction.

"U-um. Is Onii-san a slave trader?"

"No, I'm not. I'm just a traveler."

After I denied it, Pipine looks dejected.

I don't think she's selling herself--feeling intrigued, I try searching her village.

--What is this, 90% of the village are in Starvation state.

Apparently, it'll be dangerous if she can't get food by selling herself.

Moreover, I wonder what this mean, many villages in this country are in similar states.

It makes me remember the old Muno territory.

"Why don't you tell us if you have something troubling you? I might be able to help you, you see?"

The girl hesitated for a bit, but it seemed she was at her wit's end, she talked about the village's distress and appealed for some food even for a little.

"Please! We don't have any money in our village, but there are nine unmarried girls including me. If you sell us as slaves in Shiga Kingdom, then the money for the food will--"

"Calm down. For now, let's go to your village as we have some extra supply of food."

I persuaded the girl and we decided to go to the village with the youth troupe.

We're using a snow boat I've made for the noon play. The main body looks like a canoe made of ice, the jib sail receives the wind to make it move.

"Fast~"

"Pochi has become one with the wind nodesu!"

"Uhhya~, scary."

"Nn, intense."

Our girls seem to like it very much, but the girl's having a face cramp and keeps silent due to the unexpected speed.

A Snow Leopard attacked us in the middle of the way, but it misread the snow boat's speed and landed behind.

It'd be troublesome if it chased us, so Tama brought the Snow Leopard down with an icicle shuriken.

Before long we saw houses between the snow.

Looking from the distant, Nadare village is a small village built on a mountain slope with only around 70 people.

There are big joint barns along the one-story houses buried in the snow, but not even one has any livestock inside.

Mysteriously, there are only a few men, the women consist of the 80% of the villagers.

Snow had begun to fall from the sky when we arrived at the elder's house.

◇

"Satou-sama, I give you my gratitude on behalf of the villagers."

The village elder and the villagers fall prostrate in front of me.

The villagers have escaped danger by taking nourishment magic potions and liquid food, people who can move have gathered in the elder's house.

I've given them enough food and salt so they should be fine until spring.

Mia has also cured the sick people with her magic.

"This may not be much, but they're items that the villagers have assembled. Please take it by all means."

The elder presented various woolen clothing and accessories, wood ornaments and combs, bronze swords, arrowheads *etc.*

There are some peculiar design carved on the swords and the arrowheads.

"They're peculiar aren't they. Does this have some kind of meaning?"

"This is a groove for varnishing paralyzing poison to hunt snow leopards and bears."

The swords have peculiar design with no guards, and the grips have carving that also act as anti-slip, it looks to me that they'll be popular as a handicraft.

"There are various pattern on these woolen stuff too."

"Ndaaaa. Do you know who made these woven and embroidery ndaaa."

An old woman with wrinkles talks while tracing the embroidery with her finger.

There are patterns handed down for generations in each house, and making a new pattern until you're married seems to be a proof of adulthood.

I'm glad that I've saved the village.

I'd like to preserve these art and culture.

While having sweet potatoes the villagers made, they begin to talk about this country.

"War?"

"Yes, the winter didn't always continue for two years like this, until then, every year, there were always some stirs with the neighboring Kogeoku Kingdom. "

The men of the village decreased every year since they got drafted every time there was a war.

According to the tourism book, wars do happen regularly with the neighboring country.

"It's nice if there's no war, but we can't grow weed to feed the yaks with all this winter."

"Yeah, we can't raise fish on the river and the pond too."

"I sure yearn for spring and summer although they're only two months."

They've done well to survive in such an absurd environment that continues for two years.

The winter most likely continues on because the City Core isn't controlled well.

The reason why the village barns are empty is because they turned the yaks that they could no longer raise into food.

"This village was famous for the yogurt dish even in the Royal Capital y'see."

"I'd like Satou-sama to eat it."

"The yak's milk sake too."

Looking at the map, it seems there are herds of wild yaks in a monster dominion outside of Kiwolk Kingdom.

There's no meaning in the present state, but once the winter somehow has passed on, the yogurt dish and the milk sake might be revived.

I want to assist them as a vice minister of Tourism Ministry.

First, I need to investigate the cause of the prolonged winter--.

◇

"--Snowmen are bringing food?"

"What the hell is that crazy rumor?"

Such rumors were exchanged whisperingly in a bar in the downtown of the sole city of Kiwolk Kingdom which is also its Royal Capital.

This Royal Capital has escaped starvation by eating food made of bodies of a monster called Murder Kelp that live in the lake nearby.

It seems the villages and towns near the Royal Capital and along the main road have received that benefit, but there's not enough to distribute them to every villages.

Moreover, since the Murder Kelp frankly tastes bad, it seems the few wealthy people in the Royal Capital are importing food from foreign countries using a large amount of money.

Murder Kelps seem to be a monster as weak as Demi-Goblins, but there is not insignificant number of people who died after getting dragged into cold water.

"Oy, young man."

When I was listening to rumors and drinking sweet potato liquor with the Murder Kelp jerky as the appetizer, the barkeeper jerked his chin, prompting me to look at the entrance.

A small man who showed up from the entrance sits down beside me.

"Sakura"

"Saku (bloom)"

Hearing the secret word, the small man sighs.

This man is a secret agent of Shiga Kingdom, he's been collecting intelligence in Kiwolk Kingdom.

With the information the prime minister taught me, I got in contact with the barkeeper to call this guy.

"It's not good here, come with me."

Guided by the man, we arrived at a storehouse after advancing through a narrow alley outside the bar's back entrance.

There were some hoodlum-looking men but after a glance from the small man, they returned to their foolish talk without paying any attention to me.

Once we've arrived at the man's hideout under the storehouse, I was finally able to gather information.

"What do you want to know?"

"Do you know the reason why the winter continues on in this country?"

"If we're to believe the talk of the downtown bunch, it's because the『Blizzard Spirit』and the『Grim Ice Ghost』are having a quarrel in the『Ghost Valley』."

I want to see that for a bit.

"Oy, don't take the joke seriously. In reality, it's because of the queen."

The king of this kingdom lost his life in the war two years ago, so the first queen has taken the throne.

The prince who should be the heir is still 9 year old.

Still, [Because of the queen], that means it's not that she can't do the job well, but she's lowered the atmospheric temperature using the City Core power on purpose?

"You know the reason right?"

"At first it looked like it was to prevent the invasion of Kogeoku Kingdom, but--"

I see, tremendous snowfall should have made the march impossible.

It's quite a fantasy-like battle.

"--But now it seems the purpose has changed to money-making."

The small man loathsomely drink the water with melted Murder Kelp.

"We haven't finished investigating the how, but it seems they're able to artificially create Ice Stones by making the winter continues on. They've made big profit by exporting those, that's the main rumor."

Apparently, it seems he can't contact the secret agent in charge of the infiltration.

Ice Stones are a material needed for refrigerator magic tools and Ice Wand for battles, Shiga Kingdom can only produce it from Selbira Labyrinth and a few mountains.

On top of having little yield, there is no stable source of supply that can satisfy the demand, so it's always priced high.

"And, the main export destinations of that are our Shiga Kingdom and the Weasel Empire at the eastern end."

I see, stopping the winter unilaterally would be bad huh... This is bothersome.

I'll ask merchants that deal with Ice Stones and the people in question in the royal palace.

"Thank you for the information."

As a replenishment for his fund, I put a small bag with small jewels in place of cash and also several sake bottles, smoked beef and cheese for the appetizers as a bonus.

"Ooh, unlike the contact so far, you know the stuff. I'm sick of Murder Kelp and sweet potato liquor you see."

The small man who's pleased gives an additional information.

"If yer' going to meddle with the royal palace, then you should be more careful with the Light Snow Princess and Winter General than the Ice Queen."

<TLN: Winter General aka Fuyu Shogun in Japan, https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/冬将軍 >

What? What are those chuunibyou-like names....

◇

"Master, we've finished delivering the food to the last village."

"Nn, complete."

"Thank you for your work."

The identity of the snowmen bringing food from the rumor in the bar are the snowmen golems I've made and Arisa and Mia carried by them.

With this there should be no one who dies of hunger for the time being.

"Prey~?"

"Lots nanodesu!"

"Master, hunted mainly Grey Wolves and Black Fang Bears, so I report."

"Master, we also have a treated fur of snow leopard."

Next, the vanguards who had come back to the lodge reported.

The snow leopard's fur feels very nice, I'll make one for everyone later.

Of course for Aze-san and the others too.

"Master, I've finished the prototype for『Ration』, would you be willing to sample it?"

"Yeah, I'm going now."

We might meet starved people like this next time, so I asked Lulu to develop preserved food with good nutrition.

Strangely, the main ingredient is Chlorella, the same as Murder Kelp that appear in the Royal Capital.

We made the Giant Kelps that multiplied in the trench near the Underwater City into fine powder and put various dried things and crushed meat of Sea Serpents, making it into a cereal that could be carried.

"Un, it's nice. I won't get tired even if I eat this for a long time."

The degree of completion is such that you wouldn't have thought it only took a few days.

It just needs more flavor variations next.

We might also need to develop a version for allergic people.

After praising Lulu, I go to meet Zena-san, Sera, Lady Karin, and the princess who are leveling up in Selbira Labyrinth.

I've got them to collect ingredients in the Flying Eater (Fish) and Hopping Octopus area while also raising their levels.

I enter the Teleport Gate that goes to the hunting ground in the labyrinth.

"Impertinent, desuwa."

"Ka-Karina-sama! Please don't go too forward."

Lady Karina drops her Pole Mace clad in purple lightning on a giant fish that looks like it could swallow a man whole.

Even though Zena-san warned her, Lady Karina thrust herself into the center of a monster herd.

She's too reckless even though she has Raka's defense and Sera's protective magic.

"Shield Golem, go three steps ahead. Great Sword Golem, stop the monsters attacking Karina-dono!"

The princess covers Lady Karina using 12 golems like they're her limbs.

These golems move by magic supply from a specially made Command Rod.

The efficiency is a bit bad, but experience points collected by the golems will be shared to the Princess, so she can level up from a safe place.

"Bow Golems, time the attack when Lady Karina retreats--shoot!"

The four rear guard golems shot spear-sized stone arrows, skewering the Hopping Octopus into a triple dango.

"Zena!"

".... ■■■■ Multiple Air Cutter"

At the same time as Lady Karina pointed at the ceiling, Zena-san's intermediate wind magic thoroughly uprooted the Crawler Shells that were approaching on the ceiling.

"Gathering group!"

"Yes. Living Doll-san, go."

Answering the princess, the Brownies who are in charge of the dismantling use the Living Doll to gather the monster bodies from the battlefield.

"Satou-san!"

"Good work."

Sera who found me came to me the foremost.

Besides Lady Karina, they were rarely ever wounded, so it seems her turns as a healer rarely appeared.

Normally, she acted as a support using a hand-me-down magic gun from Lulu and light magic she learned from the [Blessing Orb].

Leaving the dismantling group and the golems behind, I take the entourage of Tourism Ministry back to the airship.

Lady Karina is not a member of the Tourism Ministry, but I'll have her act as a guard together with Zena, disguised as [Lady K]. Formally, she's diving into Selbira Labyrinth together with Pendragon Team after all.

Now then, shall we go visit our first foreign country as the vice minister of the Tourism Ministry.

14-23. Snow Kingdom (4)

Satou's here. Since using poison in suspense drama had gone out of fashion, a friend told me that they could identify the writing era of the original work by looking at the type of the poison used. In the first place, it's rare for a suspense drama to use poison nowadays.

◇

"Then, we'll be going."

"Houi, we're going to the labyrinth, contact us if anything happen okay."

I exchanged words with Arisa in the bridge of the airship that's circling in the sky above the royal castle of Kiwolk Kingdom.

A lot of nobles and merchants have gathered in the makeshift airfield below.

There are a lot of people welcoming us.

Probably because Princess Shistina is with us.

After seeing off Arisa and the others, the Team Pendragon, I meet up with Team Sightseeing who came from the solitary island palace.

The princess is wearing a golden dress, while Sera is wearing a silver dress.

Zena-san and Lady Karina are wearing sunglasses and SP-style clothing with their hair in bun style.

Both of them are equipped with a thin sword as a decoration, they look quite cool.

It's the result of Arisa's and my bad taste.

"Thank you for waiting, your excellency vice minister."

I smiled back at Sera who teased me a bit and lowered the airship.

"A lot of people are there desuwane."

"They must be welcoming us!"

Lady Karina who sounds intrigued, and Zena-san who has an innocent impression.

"Since an airship is quite unusual, maybe we should put some strict guards inside."

"Ara? If there's anything happen with the airship, they'll be picking a fight with Shiga Kingdom right?"

"You shouldn't let your guard down, Tina-sama. Every country has fools who don't understand the self-evident truth after all."

To respond Sera's and the princess's conversation, I summon guard golems from the solitary island palace here.

Three winged gargoyles type on the viewing deck, one exclusive guardian that can use every type of barrier, and eight knight type living dolls to guard the ramp.

Every golem is only around level 30, but these should be enough to prevent simple thievery and smuggling.

◇

I see that the queen is in the center of the people welcoming us when I look around.

Kiwolk queen is a beauty that doesn't look like she's at her forties, her breasts area is particularly intense and she's wearing a black dress.

The right etiquette here is for me to immediately meet her, but since it seems like I'd be looked down if I were to much in a hurry, I should do it after several beats.

This is troublesome--.

"So that's Viscount Pendragon, he's quite young huh...."

"Your excellency, your voice is a bit too loud."

I could hear such whispers from among the kneeling people.

The only one that could hear it was probably me with my [Attentive Ears] skill.

"Good grief, why should I, the eldest son of a duke, kneel before a mere viscount even if he's a noble of a foreign kingdom."

"Viscount Pendragon is a retainer of the viceroy of the large Muno territory, moreover he's been recognized to receive such a precious item as an airship, once he's married to the princess of Shiga Kingdom, there's no doubt that he'll become an influential man in the capital. That influence equals Her Majesty the Queen, or perhaps more."

Hee, so vice ministers and viceroys have that much power huh....

"That youngster is?"

"Indeed. If by any chance, we incurred his wrath and got armies sent to us, our kingdom would eventually perish and our heads would probably be displayed before the castle gate."

Oy oy, what kind of warring state of period talk is that.

"However, our kingdom has the 『Forest of Snow』. No matter how many army attacking--"

"Please do not underestimate a major power. They have the 『Crimson Ogre』-dono protecting the kingdom's west, and a group of abnormal people called Shiga Eight Swords."

"However, our kingdom also has the generals and Light Snow Princess."

"Unfortunately, they are no match against them. They are mighty warriors who can fight demons on equal ground."

"Against de-demons...."

I don't know who's this Crimson Ogre, but it seems the 'equaling demons' part is a highly-valued point.

I think even Zena-san and Lady Karina, not just our girls, can easily fight against a lesser demon now.

--Now then, it should be alright now.

Even though the content of the chat was interesting, I took more time than planned. I feel that the queen's smile has begun to cramp.

As I stepped forward while minding to keep refined conduct, I saw the queen slowly took a breath.

Apparently, I had accidentally given some unnecessary pressure to them.

Once I've stepped forward enough, I greet the queen.

"I am the vice minister of Shiga Kingdom's Tourism Ministry, Satou Pendragon."

"I'm Kiwolk Queen, Heitana. I will allow Viscount Pendragon to call me Heitana."

"It is my honor, Your Majesty Heitana."

I lightly kiss the hand of the queen that's wrapped in a white glove.

It feels like the surrounding people who took a glance at that looked relieved and eased their tension.

According to the Tourism Book, it seems to be an etiquette shown to a noble who's above you in the eastern countries, so they're probably relieved to see me deeming the queen to be positioned above.

This seem to be an obsolete custom in Shiga Kingdom.

I introduced my entourages, the princess and Sera to the queen and we changed the location to inside the castle.

◇

"--Amazing."

One of the queen's maids who saw the tribute had her breath taken away.

This place is not the audience hall but the queen's private room.

Two officials, one noble, and one girl with flowing hair near the queen have gathered here.

Glassworks, jade silk and Shiga pongee fabric, work of art and paintings I got a lot in the Royal Capital, I also brought some unusual ingredients for a mountainous country like dried saltwater fish and abalones. There is no arms.

Among the glassworks I've also put engraved seals on them to make them into pseudo magic tools.

They're just items that can prevent slight injuries, and protect against microorganisms and weak germs.

They look like toys compared to the goods my companions have that can even protect against Hydra's deadly poison, but this should be no problem since they're just something to add values to the accessories.

In addition, I asked Sera and Princess Shistina to pick these selection of gifts.

"To bring such gifts for a courtesy call.... as expected of a retainer of the lord of the large Muno territory. Does Viscount Pendragon have a duty as a governor besides being a vice minister?"

The queen who was in good mood due to the tribute asked so.

Even though I'm a governor in name only, she sure knows her information fast.

--I forgot the name of the abandoned mine city, so I checked the name on the map.

"Yes, just the other day, I was appointed to be the governor of Blaiton City by Earl Muno."

The people beside the queen were surprised when they heard the [Governor] part.

"To be a vice minister of the capital, governor, moreover, a warrior who defeated a mighty monster of Selbira Labyrinth, the『Floormaster』at such young age, perchance, Viscount Pendragon is related to Shiga Royalty?"

"No, I am a commoner-born upstart."

A middle-aged noble with handlebar mustache beside the queen--he seems to be the prime minister of this country--asked me, but I promptly denied it.

Even though I said the truth, he said, "you jest", while smiling wryly. What a mystery.

And then, maids came into the room pushing wagons with tea utensils.

"My, what a wonderful fragrance."

"It's the blue tea from Rumooku. It's a first class good that can even compare to product of Zetsu Earldom of Shiga Kingdom."

The one who reacted to Princess Shistina was the girl with wavy hair.

She's the second princess of Kiwolk, her name is Cruu. She's unmarried despite being a 21 year old royalty, a child-faced beauty with huge breasts. The breasts in her white dress are probably about the same size as Nana's.

And also, in contrast to her calm demeanor, she's a level 37 magic warrior who possesses Two-handed Hammer, Ice Magic, and Horseback-riding skills.

If you're deceived by her appearance, she might use that chance to beat you.

"Her Highness Light Snow favors Rumooku. Shouldn't you welcome the guest from other country with our own country's tea?"

"General Ganun--"

The prime minister rebuked the muscular read-haired general.

Apparently, Princess Cruu is the Light Snow Princess.

She's the person whom the Shiga Kingdom's secret agent warned me to be careful with.

The other military personnel keeps observing us without saying a word.

He's probably the so-called [Winter General].

He's a black haired man who looks like an unmotivated soldier, a 29 year old man, having a beret looks like it'll suit him.

He's observing the surrounding while sipping the tea.

The tea was good, but the tea-cake was too sweet with gritty sugar.

It seems there are a lot of sweet-tooth in this country, the prime minister and the red-haired general are eating them with relish.

"Do sweet things not to Viscount Pendragon liking?"

"No, it's really delicious."

"However, you look like you don't have an appetite."

"I was admiring the beautiful cake that looks like the new snow of this kingdom."

"Hohoho, Viscount has a way with words."

I made some suitable excuses for the queen.

Using Poker Face skill's help, I put up a business smile and put the too-sweet cake into my mouth.

Ah, it's gritty. I don't dislike sweet things, but this is hard.

"Although the snow is beautiful for us travelers, isn't it hard for the people living here?"

"The continuing snow should make it hard for the people living in the mountain to look after cattle, let alone going on a hunt."

Sera-san got on my the topic I brought up.

"O-our country's people have gotten used to snow, please don't worry."

"I have heard rumor that the winter is unusually long--"

Sera jumped on the prime minister's excuse.

"Fufufu, Sera-dono is kind. I am aware of the continuing winter, thus I have ordered the prime minister to exempt all taxes and forced labors."

"Y-yes, Your Majesty. We will provide food supply if there really are such villages."

The prime minister let out a sigh of relief for the queen's backing.

Fumu, I didn't ask about taxes and forced labors, but I didn't see any food aid at least.

"Your Majesty and prime minister-dono are too soft! There is not enough self-support effort! No matter how long you exempt tax and labor, the war won't ever finish. Once we've assembled our force, even without relying on the winter, we will drive away those annoying Kogeoku Kingdom's savages!"

"--General Ganunu!"

The prime minister chided the red-haired general's verbal slip.

Looks like I can really consider the [Winter] of this country to be man-made.

Black haired Winter General-shi looked bitter, but he turned away when he noticed my line of sight.

Looks like the red-haired general does not like using the [Winter] to prevent the invasion even though his reason seems to be different.

◇

"Satou-sama, please tell me about Shiga Kingdom."

"What kind of dresses are in fashion in the Royal Capital?"

"I was given the chance to see the Jade Silk presented to Her Majesty, it was really wonderful."

"Has Satou-sama seen the thing called sea?"

"I saw in the book that there are seas of sand called deserts, is that true?"

In the dance party we were invited to after the talk with the queen, I was surrounded by the noble daughters.

Every girl is wearing an expensive dress and fine ornaments.

Compared to the suffering populace, the nobles seem to be prosperous.

Sera and the princess volunteered to take care of the girls, so I was finally able to enjoy the party.

Still, it's a gaudy party that's unbelievable for a rural kingdom.

Delicacies that I've never seen in downtowns are lined up on the buffet table.

I tried eating several, the galette with yogurt that seemed to be made of local ingredients, and the greater burdock and carrot wrapped in bird meat with the sweet sauce were tasty.

The others were like inferior version of Shiga Kingdom's dishes, they were not quite there.

It's not a problem with the freshness of the ingredients, it feels like the chefs are just not accustomed to the ingredients.

"What do you think, Viscount-dono. About our country's cuisines."

The eldest son of a duke who was gossiping about me earlier came to talk to me while holding a wine cup in one hand.

"They're very luxurious. The cuisine over here is especially splendid."

"Kiwolk bird wrapped greater burdock is it, you seem to prefer quite a rustic dish."

I praised this kingdom's cuisine since I had a favorable impression, but he treated it as [Rustic dish] instead.

Looks like he dislikes his own country's cuisine.

"Yes, it's simple but truly delicious. Enough to make me wanting to thank the chef later."

"I-is that so...."

If possible I'd like to get the chef to teach me the recipe and the secret to it, that'd be swell.

The young nobleman was taken aback with my reply.

Perhaps he was trying to provoke me?

"Here you are, Viscount-dono!"

The one who called me with a bold voice was the red-haired general, holding a curved sword in one hand.

His face looks a bit red, he reeks of liquor. Looks like he's drunk.

"I heard that Viscount-dono has many valorous acts to be proud of! Please show us your valor by doing a sword dance with me."

The red-haired general throws a sheathed curved sword to me.

As if matching the timing, the people who were dancing around moved aside to clear the stage for the sword dance.

Courteously, the red-haired's and my sword dance is officially announced to the surrounding people.

Looks like it's impossible to decline the sword dance invitation.

I look around the venue to collect information.

The queen is expressionless like a noh mask so I can't read her emotion, the prime minister, the Winter General and some capable looking nobles are looking like it's unpleasant, Light Snow Princess and most of the nobles look like they're looking forward to it.

Judging from the cheering, it seems the red haired general is popular among the military and the wealthy nobles.

Zena-san and Lady Karina who are peeking from behind the venue's pillars are looking here with excited faces.

Sera and the princess's faces look like they're saying, "Get him!"

--This is not a duel but a sword dance you know?

Starting with a strumming sound, heroic tune from the orchestra begins.

I somehow feels that it sounds crude, perhaps because I've gotten used to Mia's music.

"Here I go, Viscount."

"Please go easy on me."

He pulls the curved sword and holds the sheath in the other hand.

The red-haired general seems to be a dual-wielder, so he's using the sheath for the other one instead.

--Zazan.

I block the two swords swinging down on me with the curved sword while matching the tune.

Due to the thin curved blade, it made a peculiar sound when I blocked.

I glide my feet on the carpet, revolving once while still blocking the two swords to the red-haired general's side, and then I strongly fling away both of his swords.

Matching the time when he fixes his posture, I hit my sword against his to make za, zan sounds rhythmically.

"Y-you little!"

Since this was a sword dance, I got out of the swordsmanship's standard and attempted to do some exaggerated movements, but it seems the red-haired general doesn't like it.

I'm imagining the battle dance from the [Returning King] anime, I'll ask Arisa to score it once we get back.

It was popular with the girls and the maids in the venue at least.

In the middle of the sword dance, since I saw the queen getting excited, not only the princess, it was worth the effort.

When the music is over, the red-haired general is gasping for breath.

Looks like the stress is a bit too much for him since it was at the level of simulative blows with the beastkin girls.

Please stop looking at me with those eyes, this was a sword dance you proposed yourself.

"It was quite a wonderful entertainment. Both General Ganunu and Viscount Pendragon are representatives of brave warriors from each country. I shall give you these presents."

The queen praised us both and gave us bracelets with ice stones on it.

They're not magic tools but they look quite expensive.

It seems General Ganunu is a queen devotee, his face looks like he's forgotten about me and is greatly moved with the bracelet he got.

Without a sound, a maid came to me and presented a wine goblet on a tray.

I drank the honey wine and returned the empty goblet to her.

Since it seems there was a paralyzing poison with delayed effect inside the honey wine, I put a mark on the maid.

In addition, although I can cure myself from paralyze state using magic from

Magic Column, this kind of abnormal status drug won't work due to my Resistance, so it's not a threat.

"Viscount-sama, could I have a bit of your time?"

"But of course."

I replied to the hooded weaselkin merchant who called out to me with a smile.

14-24. Snow Kingdom (5)

Satou's here. In the past, during the time when the anime about galaxy war was popular, there was a time when drinking black tea mixed with brandy among friends was popular. It quickly ended up with people drinking only the brandy though.

◇

"Are you always wearing that boorish hood?"

"Please pardon me. This is because there are a lot of nobles who find our beast faces unpleasant."

When I was halfway walking outside of the party venue with the weaselkin merchant, I asked about his hood and got that answer.

He was speaking strangely eloquently so I was getting cautious, but looking closer the reason seems to be because of the translation ring he's wearing.

It's probably the same item they gave to the summoned Japanese people in Rumooku Kingdom.

Unlike the warm party venue, this stone corridor with its penetrating cold likely would even make a healthy person catch a cold in half an hour.

There are some movements of suspicious shadow beyond the corridor.

Waiting in a place like this huh, assassins have it hard too.

"Please look at that."

The weaselkin merchant stopped in the middle of the corridor and pointed outside a small glass window.

I see snowy landscapes outside the window.

The Kiwolk Kingdom buried under the snow and a lake covered in ice.

On the middle of the lake an amethyst-like rock--no, tower-like thing has sprouted, emitting faint light.

I can see them thanks to [Distant View] skill but normal people probably can only see a very faint purple light.

I heard a faint sound behind the corridor pillars.

The obvious assailant is probably going to attack soon.

"That purple light is the thing you wanted to show me?"

"Yes, the tower emitting that light is--"

I thrust the merchant away when he was still talking, and swat the poisonous daggers that were thrown at us using a muffler circulated with magic power.

"Impossible."

"He repelled all seven of them!"

The assailants show themselves up from behind the pillars.

Lisp speech were revised in my brain like usual.

The five assailants are holding poisonous daggers.

Under the hood, their figures look like weaselkin, but according to the AR reading, they're ratkin men.

Their affiliation is--.

"Sir Pendragon, are you alright! Soldiers! Do not let even one of the thieves escape!"

"""OU"""

From the opposite side of the corridor, the red-haired general and soldiers showed up with an oddly good timing.

The assailants who are in disadvantage seemingly intend to escape through the hole behind the pillar that they used to invade here.

I've put markers on them so there's no point of them escaping, but catching them would be troublesome, so I neutralize one of the assailants by throwing a pebble on him.

"Send this guy to the dungeon and question him."

The soldiers brought by the red-haired general tie the assailant and are going to take him away.

Oops, it'll be bad as is.

"Sir Pendragon, are you injured anywhere?"

"No, I'm alright."

I gave the red-haired general, who was trying to hide the assailant from my line of sight with a barefaced smile, a positive answer.

"Wait, I have some business with that man."

"Sir Pendragon, please don't get close to the thief."

I stepped forward to stop the soldiers who were going to take the assailant away, but the red-haired general obstructed me.

"This kind of assassins has many unknown ways to attack. As you are our country's guest of honor, we cannot let you get injured."

"I see, that's true isn't it--"

I flick half a copper coin I took from my hand away, uncovering the assailant's hood.

"--I thought he was a weaselkin, but it appears he's a ratkin isn't he."

When I told the red-haired general that while putting a refreshing smile, he muttered, "gununu", and said, "that seems to be the case", with a cramped face while squeezing the words, and then he withdrew.

Now then, about this chain of baffling surprise attacks--.

The ratkin people who attacked us belong the demi-human unit of Kiwolk Kingdom who's specialized in dirty works. Common appraisal technique would show their affiliation to be of a crime guild though.

They're disguising their affiliation like the way the people of the [Wings of

Liberty] did.

Next when I tried searching on the map, I found several weaselkin people in critical condition in the dungeon.

This is my conjecture, the red-haired general probably was going to execute the weaselkin people in the dungeon after capturing the assailants and push the crime of my assassination to the weaselkin.

The red-haired general would then drive out the weaselkin away from the kingdom, and either sell all the Ice Stones or perhaps end the [Winter] to restart the war.

He also might have tried to help me who should have been weakened from the paralyze poison and then demand something for the favor.

In addition, the maid who gave me the poisoned liquor is being confined in one part of the noble district in fainted state.

Before meddling with things like a softhearted person would, I'll finish the things I should do now.

I turn toward the merchant who still can't get up.

"Now then, let me hear it. What does that tower--"

◇

"You were the one who incited Ganunu to step on the dragon's tail right?"

"I did not give him any order. Besides, I don't think that Viscount would fall for such a child's play."

"Ara, you sure have a high opinion of him don't you?"

"A commoner who has just come of age, getting peerage of a large kingdom, and even becoming the vice minister of its capital. Only fools would underestimate such a person."

When I sneaked into Winter General's room, I could hear a conversation between the person himself and Light Snow Princess.

"I thought you wanted to end the『Winter』, was I mistaken?"

"It was I who suggested the『Winter』to the queen you know? Even though I knew that it would cut off remote villages, I couldn't come up with other plans."

Winter General told Light Snow Princess like he was sneering at himself.

"Our army is weak huh."

Light Snow Princess muttered so and stood up.

"If the『Winter』won't stop then I can't fight in this country anymore. Rather than rotting inside this ice cage, maybe I should entice Viscount-sama and get him to take me to countries with battlefields?"

"Are the Snow Leopards and the Rocket Wolf not to your liking?"

"I've grown tired of them. I want to fight demons for the sake of world peace. Even though it's impossible for me to stand beside the hero, I want to be a warrior that can rival the Shiga Eight Swords."

I thought Light Snow Princess was someone who seeks enjoyment more, but she unexpectedly has a clear target.

After the silent Winter General sent a restraining glance, Light Snow Princess shrugged and left the room.

Winter General gulps down the kelp tea mixed with sweet potato liquor with a gloomy face.

"....The『Winter』will defend us from the enemies only for several years more. Knowing the Kogeoku King, he will absolutely find a way to make it possible for his army to move on the snow. Gathering Ice Stones and preparing weapons until that happens is...."

"Is it impossible?"

"....Your Majesty."

The queen in black dress came in from a different door than the one Light Snow Princess used to go out.

I expected her to wear some sexy see-through clothes, but she's wearing a business-like dress with subdued chest.

"We can prepare a fixed number of them in five years if we put the portion wasted to the nobles to use, but as it stands now--"

"That's impossible. There are a lot of nobles who reject the『Winter』even now. If we stop coaxing them with money and goods, there will be intense dispute to select the next king, there won't even be any development."

The queen pours some sweet potato liquor to the tea cup and sips it elegantly.

"It'd have been simple if the king of Kogeoku would stop the invasion--."

"That's impossible isn't it. The cold wind flowing from this country is killing the meadows of that country. With how the『Winter』is accelerating now, Kogeoku King won't yield."

--Hm?

Even if this country keeps temperature above spring all year, the dispute with the neighboring country won't stop?

"Is there really no way?"

Winter General remains silent to the queen's question.

Is his pride preventing him from saying no, or perhaps--.

"There is. However, Sir Pendragon's help is indispensable in this plan."

"Say it. If it's anything that I can do, I will even offer my body."

"We ask him and his retainers to kill the demon sealed in the lake."

--The demon sealed in the lake.

In fact, the merchant told me about that earlier.

In order to keep the seal of this demon, the winter of this country has been prolonged.

The miasma leaking from the demon is changing the lake kelps into monsters, the ice essences gathered on the tower where it's sealed produce Ice Stones.

It seems the reason why the merchant told me that was for the sake of [securing profit].

He has collected enough supply of Ice Stones, so he wants a third party to end it out of fear of a price collapse if the production continues.

It's selfish, but it's really like a weaselkin merchant.

"If the lake demon is killed, then it will not be impossible for this country to keep an everlasting spring."

"Fumu, it's a bit difficult, but simply keeping a warmth temperature enough to prevent cold air blowing to the neighboring country should be possible. There is no guarantee that it will stop Kogeoku Kingdom's attack, but there is a merit in trying."

Looks like the story is advancing while I was deep in thought.

"Very well, I will seduce the viscount with my charm. Wait for the good news!"

The queen went out of the room after leaving a statement that sounded like a preview for the next episode.

I think she'll come across Light Snow Princess who's waiting in the bed of my room, but leaving them be should be fine.

I knock on the door and enter the room without waiting for the general's response.

"Good evening Your Excellency General."

"Welcome, Viscount-dono. Would you be willing to defeat it, the lake demon?"

I thought there would be some long explanation, but it seems Winter General noticed me eavesdropping.

"If you can promise me a promptly end of the『Winter』and half of the Ice Stones the country has in stock that is."

"Understood. I promise to get the queen's approval with my life on the line."

He quickly accepted it even though my condition was quite unreasonable.

The demon sealed in the lake is high leveled for a mid demon at level 50. Its skill are [Ashification], [Summon Servants] and more. This [Ashification] seems to be the advanced version of [Petrification].

When I was going to toast the liquor cup offered by Winter General with him, the door opened violently.

"General! We got a report of Kogeoku army breaking through the fort!"

"W-what! I'm going! Viscount-dono, please excuse me."

Winter General left the room in a hurry after hearing the official.

This country sure is full of drama isn't it.

--Do your best, Winter General.

14-25. Snow Kingdom (6)

Satou's here. There was a time when I kept a pet cat in my lodging house during my college days. Many times, I woke up with corpses of G lined up before my eyes like they were offering and my cat looking triumphant, perhaps it was because the dwelling was run-down. That was troublesome.

<TLN: G=gokiburi=cockroachs>

◇

As the Winter General and the official went to the general staff room together, I opened the map and checked the situation while sipping the sweet potato liquor.

It seems the Kogeoku Kingdom army has invaded the mountain region to the south-east.

It's quite to the south of the regular highway.

--Centaurs kin?

Looks like Kogeoku Kingdom is not a human kingdom.

Real life centaurs huh... Maybe we should go sightsee them?

While thinking that and looking at the map's information, the movement of a small unit that's seemingly attacking a nearby village looks strange.

It's as if they're running away from something, heading toward the main troop.

Wonder if they encountered Rock Wolves?

Yet, there's no dead person in Kogeoku Kingdom army.

Only people in fainted and frostbite states.

I invoke [Clairvoyance] and [Clairhearing] magic to confirm the actual site.

『I-it's a demon! A snow demon is attacking.』

『Run away! You'll get stepped on!』

I saw centaurs wearing warm-looking fur armor desperately scampering in the snow.

Their language seems to be of the East Nation language.

『Uwaaaaaaa』

『Tommy!』

『That guy's finished. Quick run!』

--Oh?

The white object walking with thud thud sounds looks familiar.

It's the snowman golem we used to transport food.

They were a disposable type that didn't use Magic Core so I had set them to protect the village after they had finished transporting to the last village.

They should be only in three places, those centaurs sure are unlucky to draw the loser ticket by chance.

『I am the third prince of Kogeoku Kingdom, Retaromi! Demon! Become the rust of my treasured lance!』

--Oh, amazing.

He performed an accelerated Lance Charge as if he was flying in the sky, though it was probably due to the power of the wind stone on the tip of the lance.

With a dull sound, the snow golem's stomach was pierced through.

"Did you see that! The strongest of Kogeoku--"

During the middle of the prince's victory shout, the snow golem dropped its fist from above, burying Prince Retaromi deep into the snow.

The hole in the golem's stomach was restored to the original state like reversing a film, and it restarted to attack the other centaurs energetically.

It looks comical looking at them from the image in my mind, but the escaping centaurs are serious.

I've set it to be non-lethal for everything but monsters, so there's no one dying for now.

『Save the prince! Bring the flame beasts!』

A slightly arrogant-looking commander swung a short whip with tuft attached, and then eight monsters that looked like anteaters that spew fire from their mouth came from the troop's vanguard position.

Apparently they're tamed monsters.
They're probably using those monsters to move the army in the snow.

『BURN IT DOOOOWN!』

The snow is lit red, and the snow golem is covered in flame, melting.

However, the snow golem can't be melted that easily.

--MVA.

From the snow golem's charcoal briquette mouth that opened, it emits blizzard breath mixed with icicles after roaring once.

--KUGYWEEEEEE.
--KYSHUUUUUUW.
--MVA.

The flame and the blizzard jumbled together, the image is covered in white mist.

"Hoooooot"
"Co-cold. I'm numbiiiiing."

Apparently, the hot steam and the cold blizzard did a number to the surrounding centaurs.

It'll be nice if they come to dislike war a bit after this.

Some unknown top people of Kiwolk Kingdom will probably goes through a sleepless night without knowing that the military forces of Kogeoku Kingdom were chased away by a golem.

Before going to sleep, I stealthily saved the weaselkin people in the dungeon and the paralyzing poison maid who was on the verge of being frozen to death and left them in some appropriate stable.

They won't die from cold there, and they'll probably run away themselves.

In addition, I confirmed that the weaselkin people in the dungeon were falsely accused from the conversation of the guard and the torture officer.

After coming back to my room, I slept while feeling slightly troubled with the perfume fragrance and the warm temperature of human body in the bed.

◇

"Looks like you can walk on top of the frozen lake surface."

"Yes, but since the snow flake bears can't walk on it, everyone has to get down."

The next morning after the army of Kogeoku Kingdom scurried back to their home land.

Together with Light Snow Princess, I rode polar bear-like passenger animals to the Amethyst Tower on the middle of the lake.

There are several house-sized domes made of ice near the tower, they're probably the magic facilities the weaselkin engineers are using to produce Ice Stones.

This place looks like a good tourist attraction if only the demon weren't sealed in the Amethyst Tower.

Direct subordinates of Light Snow Princess, the White Lily Squad that's encompassed of 15 female knights have followed us here.

Their average level is 8, so they're probably just a decoration squad.

"I heard that a neighboring country has attacked, is it alright for you to guide me?"

"Yes, I don't mind. Kogeoku army seemed to have been defeated by an unknown demon and retreated back. Right now general Ganunu should be going to investigate the demon."

Light Snow Princess answered me with a light tone.

The snow golem should have crumbled after losing all its magic power yesterday, the red-haired general's search will go in vain.

Apparently, the information about the the withdrawal of Kogeoku army arrived this morning through the messenger tower whom Winter General had built.

There's only one facility on the direction of Kogeuku Kingdom that exists, but the high-speed information is quite a thing.

--MUWOOOOWN.

The yell of the monsters below the ice was transmitted here.

The squirming Murder Kelps under the ice look gross.

Even though I know they can't get through the thick ice, it's still physiologically revolting.

"That's, right."

Light Snow Princess points at a suspicious altar where a seal-type magic circle is engraved.

There are six of this altar placed around the Amethyst Tower.

Today is just a preliminary inspection. The sealed demon's extermination will be in two weeks.

We're going to bring the mithril explorers team [Pendragon] from the Labyrinth City with the airship.

"By the way, Your Highness."

"What is it?"

"I wonder what are the imposing Ice Wands that the guards are carrying and the cannon on the sled behind us for?"

"Ufufu--"

Light Snow Princess dodged my question by laughing.

"--What do you think they're for? If you guessed right, I'll give you the right to do anything you want with me."

Light Snow Princess who walked up to the altar looked at me with a feminine smile.

The huge War Hammer she's shouldering looks extremely ill-matched with her.

Don't tell me, she won't destroy the seal right here and now will she?

"<<BREAK>> Castle Destroyer War Hammer!"

After the princess recited the scripture while smiling, the war hammer--Castle Destroyer War Hammer glowed red.

Boom, tearing the cold air, the princess's hammer smashes the sealing magic circle.

I could have stopped the princess's rampage if I had used Ground Shrink and chantless [Magic Hand], but as expected, using those would have exposed me.

If I could use those, it'd show that I'd have no problem fighting against a mid demon in a close combat.

Using [Telephone] magic, I ordered my companions in the airship to do an emergency takeoff and to deploy the gargoyle unit here.

They should arrive in several minutes at this distance.

--Crackle.

"Now then, Satou-sama. Let us fight together."

Light Snow Princess stretches one hand toward me with a nice smile.

How do I say this, she's a battle junkie at the same level of the black dragon.

--Crackle crackle crackle.

The Amethyst Tower is cracking.

The weaselkin engineers who were working in the ice dome nearby ran away while fumbling on the ice lake surface.

The young ladies of White Lily Squad seem to have taken some distance away and finished preparing the Ice Wands.

It seems setting the cannon on the sled is met with some difficulty, the female engineers are operating in panic. Do your best, I cheered for them in my mind.

The Amethyst Tower breaks while leaking white mist.

The thing that appears is a mid demon with the lower half of an octopus and upper half of a rotted tree. There's a bird nest-like structure on the part that should be its head.

It seems the tentacle lower half is under the ice until the middle part.

--TWAKWUUUUUUUOW.

<TLN: Written in romaji on the raw. FYI, 'tako' means octopus.>

The mid demon roared, the ice below cracked and then tentacles appeared from the cracked ice.

Somehow, it feels like when your feet get tangled on roots of sweet potatoes.

I thought it was freed at a glance, but only the outer tentacles had appeared from the ice.

I said that the tentacles looks like an octopus's, but there are branches grown on the middle of the tentacles, the way they're wriggling look gross.

Before the demon could got its freedom, Light Snow Princess who was the closest jumped forward.

"Dwoseeeeeeeeeeeeeeeei!"

With an unladylike yell, she struck the mid-demon's body with the Castle Destroyer War Hammer.

Due to the Body Reinforcement and Strength Increase skills, Light Snow Princess's swinging speed was quite a thing.

--DWAGWWWUUUUOWN.

The demon's roar seemed to be a spell, an ashen barrier appeared to block the Light Snow Princess's hammer.

The scattered ashen powder seem to bring bad status, the princess's armor that's bathed in the powder begins to deteriorate.

Taking the Fairy Sword from behind the mantle, I cut the tentacle that tried to sweep down the princess.

The tentacle tried to attack me by scattering ashen blood by wriggling about, but it stopped moving when I trampled it with my foot.

"Satou-sama, my thanks desuwa."

The demon's bird nest-like head has begun to produce ashen mist.

"Ice Wand unit! Fire at the head!"

""""YES!""""

By the vice-captain's order, the young ladies of the White Lily Squad use the Ice Wands.

The shower of white hail freezes the ashen mist above the demon, blowing it away.

It seemed the demon didn't like it, it took out the tentacles below the ice without caring the tentacles that got torn-off.

--DWAGWWWUUUUOWN.

The demon seemed like it was going to invoke a ranged magic, so I kicked the tentacle that was going to attack the princess toward the main body, stopping its chant.

Meanwhile, the demon's thin tentacles stretched toward the White Lily Squad, binding them.

Screams, stretched limbs, broken chest armor, they were like in eroge, but unlike a game, the girls were not being disgraced, but slaughtered here.

The demon tries to attack with its tentacles, aiming at the hearts under their bare skin.

"I won't let you!"

To save her subordinates, Light Snow Princess aims her war hammer at the root of the demon's tentacles, she has too many gaps since she's wielding a heavy weapon.

The tentacle coming from behind her caught her leg, raising her body up in the air.

While screaming, the princess is raised upside down.

I don't like splatters, so I stop the sharp demon's tentacle with [Magic Arm].

The young ladies of White Lily Squad who saw the sharp tentacles before their eyes had cold sweat while looking pale.

I'm sorry for the young ladies, but help is coming soon, so please bear with it.

"....■■■ Air Slasher!"

Clear voice echoed in the sky, and then invisible blades cut the tentacles.

The aftermath of the blades that cut the tentacles also tore the ice field, covering the surrounding area in white ice and snow mist.

Being invisible is a good thing, I take out some pebbles from Storage and throws them at the root of the demon's tentacles.

The wind magic earlier only cut the surface of the tentacles, it didn't sever them.

Flying in the sky with a shining emerald staff on her hand is Zena-san.

"I-I can't stoooooooop"

I catch Zena-san who was going to crash to the ice with [Magic Arm].

I thought she was strangely fast, turned out she used the catapult in the airship to gain the velocity.

Imitating Pochi and Tama is dangerous, please be more discreet okay.

"T-thank you Satou-san."

"Are you hurt anywhere?"

"No, I'm alright."

Behind the heartwarming exchange, the tumbling demon struggled to get up and slid along the ice.

The gargoyles that came flying seemed to have rescued the young ladies of the White Lily Squad.

Light Snow Princess is squirming to get out of the tentacle that's coiling the lower part of her body.

The tentacle is strangely active even though it's been separated from the main body.

"Ah, Her Highness Princess is!"

"Can I ask you to help her?"

"Yes! I'm going."

Zena-san who saw Light Snow Princess pulled her stiletto and went to rescue her.

I'll support Zena-san with [Magic Arm].

"FIREEEEE!"

While sinking into the breaking ice field, the cannon on top of the sled fired off blizzard mixed with white icicles.

However, due to the unstable ground, the attack vainly disappeared beyond the horizon without hitting the target.

Looks like the shooter young ladies have managed to escape the sinking sled.

When I look closer, the magic facilities where the weaselkin were using to produce Ice Stones are sinking into the lake together with the broken domes.

I stealthily extend [Magic Hand] to one of them and collect it.

I'll put it back into the lake once I've finished making the copy.

"Satou-san I've successfully rescued the princess."

"T-thank you for your cooperation desuwa."

Light Snow Princess who's borrowing Zena-san's shoulder has wounds all over her body.

Her white steel armor is crumbling, but compared to her subordinates whose skins even got exposed, she's still better.

I looked up when I heard an engine sound and saw the airship approaching the lake.

I could see the princess, Sera and Hikaru on the bow canopy.

Looks like Hikaru has come to help since I talked to her about the demon when I went to the solitary island palace.

The catapult gate on the approaching airship is opening.

--It can't be.

"Karina kiiiiiiiiick!"

Lady Karina who mimicked Zena-san flew from the airship's catapult.

Doing that despite not having any way to fly, she's too reckless.

Lady Karina who's wrapped in Raka's white light protection runs into the demon body like a bullet.

The demon's ashen barrier and Raka's protection is clashing, scattering sparks around.

Kaboom, with heavy sounds, the ashen barrier got broken through.

--DWAGWWWUUUUOWN.

The demon's roar that's both a chant and a scream echoes.

I saw the ashen blood splash eroding Lady Karina's trousers' cuff.

"Raka! Expand the protection!"

『Umu, this is bad.』

With my call, Lady Karina's [Intelligent Item], Raka, expands the light protection.

Unlike the young ladies of White Lily Squad, it ended with just Lady Karina's ankle getting exposed.

Thanks to Lady Karina's reckless courage, the demon's health is on the verge of exhaustion.

I kept the fact that the demon's HP had been cut down by 90% from the pebble attack before her assault a secret.

The demon screamed like it was its death agony, the tentacles that remained on the ice field writhed about.

It seemed Lady Karina's feet were damaged badly and she couldn't move, so I made her move using [Magic Hand], evacuating her here.

『Shistina-sama, the bombardment.』

『Yes! Understood.』

The two magic cannons of the airship burns down the demon with red heat rays.

These magic cannons are the same model used in Seryuu city to fight wyverns and installed in large airships.

It's not usable with a normal airship since the ship's magic power won't be not enough, but it's a different story with my airship since mine has a magic furnace that makes use of a Philosopher's Stone.

The fact that the small fire bullet from my Magic Column has higher attack power than the cannon is a secret.

Thus, the mid demon that was sealed in Kiwolk Kingdom was destroyed and became black dust.

14-26. Snow Kingdom (7)

Satou's here. Cleaning up afterwards is unexpectedly hard isn't it. When I think back upon it, the reason why I stopped cooking my own food when I was living alone was because cleaning up afterward was troublesome.

◇

"Sir Satou Pendragon, extolling your achievement, we reward you with the Medal of Kiwolk Blue Ice Lake."

"I respectfully accept."

I was also offered the peerage of Kiwolk Kingdom's marquis as a reward.

According to Princess Shistina, there are many cases of Shiga Kingdom nobles receiving peerage of other countries, but since there's no merit in getting the peerage, I declined the offer.

As an extra prize, I was also offered Light Snow Princess and her sisters' hand in marriage, but I also politely declined that.

Light Snow Princess kept elegantly complaining how she wanted to go together with us as a guest, but I persuaded her to stay here since this country would need her power now that the winter is over.

In addition she was reproached by the queen and Princess Shistina for forcibly attacking the demon arbitrary. I didn't back her up since it was her own fault.

For this incident, Sera and Princess Shistina got the permission to read the royal castle's library, so I'm thinking of reading many things there.

I legitimately got the Ice Stones promised by Winter General.

There were a lot more than I thought, but I brought it to the solitary island palace through the airship's passage so there's no problem.

It was a bit inconsistent with the airship's hangar capacity, but I explained that I had a high-performing [Magic Bag] to people who were doubtful.

"Sir Pendragon, thank you very much for your assistance."

"I practically did nothing, it was all thanks to my companions."

"My fiancee who was in Light Snow Princess's White Lily Squad wouldn't have gone unscathed if it wasn't for you."

After I was done talking with Winter General, an intellectual beauty with short blond hair who was standing beside him bowed once and said her thanks with a dignified voice.

If I'm not mistaken she was one of the girls who were operating the cannon on the back.

A few days later, I left the party in the royal castle to Sera and Satou doll to take care of, while I, the princess and Hikaru who acted as the guard replacing Lady K went to the royal castle's library to hunt information.

Further, I let Lady K aka Lady Karina to watch footages of traffic accident-like videos to make her realize the rashness of the catapult takeoff she did.

She was trembling together with Pochi and Tama beside her, so she's probably going to take care of herself better from now on.

Right now, she's currently together with Pochi and Tama, experimenting with practical uses of catapult takeoff equipment.

Now then, back to the topic about the library.

There weren't many books, but the documents about the abandoned festivals and local cultures were quite interesting.

"There's a lot of unusual method of ice and fire magic, but most of them aren't that different from the ones in Shiga Kingdom's documents."

"Satou-sama, Ancestor King-sama, please look at these documents relating about magic tools."

"Is this weaselkin language?"

"There is a dictionary for eastern nation language here."

The things the princess found were documents about the general concept of the magic equipment I got during the battle with the demon recently and its operation manual. I'll be copying the content.

Other than that, there wasn't any big discovery and we finished the investigation.

There wasn't any suspicious ancient document or something that I expected.

Further, Light Snow Princess tried to stow away before we departed, but the guard golems caught her, rolled her up in bamboo mat and delivered her to the royal castle's soldiers.

Winter General implied that she was going to forcefully do it before we went, so it was easy to uncover her plan to stow away among the Ice Stone containers.

With a bit of such problems, we, who had settled all the cases, departed for the journey while being sent off by the people of the Royal Capital.

"Satou-sama! I won't give uuuuuuuup!"

Since the stubborn princess shout out loud from the royal castle's spire, I waved back to her with a smile.

What an interesting person. I have no intention of going on the journey with her, but I'll keep her company if we come here again.

◇

Thus, we officially left but--.

We disguised ourselves and then went back to the Royal Capital to treat ourselves with some sightseeing.

"It sure is lively isn't it~"

"That's because Queen-sama announced that the『Winter』is ending. Here, take these young ladies."

"Thank you~?"

"Wa~i, nanodesu."

"Nn, thanks."

A stall shopkeeper who's in high tension gave green manjuu wrapped in kelp to the girls.

"I like something a bit harder, but this reminds of the weed dango in Seryuu city."

"Suited for vegetarians, so I evaluate."

"It tastes unusual isn't it."

Liza ate the manjuu and squinted, Nana and Lady Karina carried the manjuu into their mouth with complicated expressions.

Sera and the princess knew that the cuisine in this country tasted bad so they declined the manjuu with a smile and laugh.

"Ugee, yuck. ...Satou."

"Okay okay, I'll eat the leftover, so don't make that face."

"Wa~i, thank you~"

I got the manjuu from Hikaru who had given up from just one bite.

"Mwu."

"I-I want to make the guilty verdict."

For some reason, Mia and Arisa are looking at me like they want to say something.

I lightly pat their heads and advance the street.

While chewing the peculiar tasting manjuu in my hand that by no means were tasty, and watching the people who were excited with the [Arrival of Spring], I fully enjoyed the famous places and specialty products of Kiwolk Kingdom.

As I thought, sightseeing is better when the place is merry isn't it.

◆Extra◆

"Kuro-dono, are you telling that you will build a bulwark on the national border to Kogeoku?"

"That's right."

As Kuro of Echigoya Firm, I visited Kiwolk Kingdom and suggested such a plan to the queen.

As the compensation, I demand the permission to build a branch office in the Royal Capital and amnesty for the people of Kiwolk's remote villages who had left the country and became nomadic tribes.

"People leaving the country is an undesirable state brought about by my lack of virtue. I do not mind giving them amnesty, but what does Kuro-dono seek for desiring such a thing?"

"It is the will of my master, Hero Nanashi-sama."

The queen's question is reasonable, but the goal of this interference is to secure a gain.

As for the gain, since I noticed some people from Kiwolk Kingdom's remote villages had left the country and become wandering people, I'm going to send ones among those people who wish to emigrate to Muno Earldom to the city that will be governed by Satou and the surrounding villages with Unit Arrangement stealthily.

It'd be an international problem if I did it while they were still nomadic tribes, so I've come to ask the amnesty ahead of time.

With this, the wool product and yogurt dish should spread in Muno Earldom.

I've brought enough wild yaks already to produce the materials. Taming them seems like it'll require a considerable effort, but I'll let the emigrated people to work hard on it.

For the meddling, I'm going to make a workshop that produces rations made from Murder Kelp in order to give works to the widows and the orphans.

It's in conflict with their occupation so far, but they should be stopping being reliant with the kelp once the spring comes so it should be good to kill the time until that happens.

The taste is lacking after all, but a portion of the production will be bought by the Kingdom as emergency food reserves. I'll be expecting the new branch manager to expand the market.

I hope that warm spring will come to Kiwolk Kingdom--.

◆Pipine's Point of View: Survivors of Nadare Village◆

"Uwaa! The snow stopped!"

"Look, look onee-chan! Water drop is dripping from the icicle!"

"It's spring! Spring is coming!"

"Yay!"

At the scene that conveyed the arrival of spring after 2 years, my little sister and I rally together loudly.

My little sister took the snow shovel and jumped into the house.

I am Pipine of Nadare village to the northwest of Kiwolk Kingdom.

The village that was on the verge of destruction 10 days has become lively beyond recognition.

This and that are all thanks to Satou-san for sharing us food and salt.

"Onee-chan, the person who collapsed on the road woke up!"

My little sister called, I rushed into the house.

The beauty-san who got up from the fur bed looks at us with sleepy eyes.

She was going to say something, but I stop her with my hand.

Her throat would get hurt if she tried to talk since she was sleeping for a long time.

"I'll boil hot water quickly, please wait okay."

The beauty-san with light blue hair that looks like the sky across the icicles lightly nods.

"So you have saved me.... My gratitude."

After drinking the hot water, she took a light breath and said her thanks.

While feeling embarrassed, I warm up the yesterday evening soup and grill some saltwater fish and dried fish I got from Satou-san.

"This is good. I heard that the people of this country suffered from famine...."

Beauty-san tilted her head, shaking her light blue hair.

What an unusual color. The peddler Pon-san told me that there's a king with pink hair in the kingdom to the south.

Maybe this person is a royalty.

"Un, that's right. There might have been no one who survived in this village if Satou-san didn't give us food."

"Is that so.... So it was the truth."

Beauty-san's complexion clouded over with a complicated expression.

The tasty soup will be spoiled if you make that face.

"--Wait, 『Sato』 you said?"

"No that's wrong. It's Satou-san you see?"

"I-I see, it appears I misheard."

It seems she mistook Satou-san's name with her acquaintance.

I received the emptied soup bowl and gave Beauty-san well grilled dried fish.

"Then, to return the favor, I will bring the divine punishment as the proxy to the people who have made this terrible 『Winter』 continue, even to the statesmen."

Beauty-san said some difficult things while biting the dried fish in relish.

I don't really understand, but she misunderstood one thing.

"The winter is over you know?"

"--What?"

I open the window and show here the dripping icicles.

Slightly warm wind flows from the window.

"Spring is coming soon!"

When I told her that with a smile, Beauty-san stood up while muttering, "I see, there was no need for the divine punishment."

It seems she can already move well even though she collapsed on the road and slept for days.

"Girl. Bring one firewood and an empty pot."

I gave her the things she asked, then she said, "This is my thanks", and changed the firewood into salt.

"Wooooow."

"Onee-chan, it's amazing. She turned a firewood to salt!"

It seems this person is a magician.

My little sister and I joined our hands seeing the miracle before our eyes and screamed in surprise.

We still have salt from Satou-san, but we can never have enough salt, so I received it obediently.

Salt is more useful than money in this Nadare village.

"Then, I'll be going, girl."

"You're going already?"

"Umu, I cannot be in tranquil in order to increase believers of God Zaikuon."

I gave spare snow-shoes and a basket filled with food for several days to the beauty-san who wore a white robe and a white mantle.

"Are you sure?"

"Un, we got a lot salt from you."

"Then I will gratefully accept them. May your life be blessed with fortune--"

Beauty-san who happily took them left after saying some priest-sama like words.

◆

"Oy, Pipine! Is the collapsed person still sleeping."

"Elder-san! Un, she left energetically after drinking the soup."

--Rather than that!

"Elder-san, what are those yaks?"

"Ou, these are borrowed things from Echigoya Firm of Shiga Kingdom. They lend the village around 100 yaks. I'm distributing these two to your place. Raise them carefully since they're borrowed okay."

"Un! Leave it to me!"

I take the yaks' leash from elder-san and lightly scratch the chin of the yak that's leaking white breaths.

My smile naturally leaks when I see the yak snorting happily.

My father and brother who went to the war didn't come back, but the yaks did.

From now on I will raise the yaks, squeeze the milk, shear the wool and live.

And then I will teach my children the way to weave the wool--.

Before that I have to find a husband.

Satou-san's kind smile flashes in my mind.

"Onee-chan, your face is red you know? Did you get a cold?"

"It's nothing! Nothing I said!"

I shake off my little sister's pressing and roll my sleeves to take down the snow piled on the roof.

Now, today is going to be a busy day too!

14-27. Journey Across the Eastern Countries

Satou's here. I feel that time passes faster when you're immersing yourself in your hobby. Even in my work, I can quickly come up and create difficult routines, while squashing bugs and working out the changes in specification are long and hard.

◇

It has already been one and a half month since we departed the snow country--Kiwolk Kingdom.

We visited various countries and small tribe villages in relaxed pace while working hard in leveling up and practices during the airship cruise.

Of course there were recreations led by Arisa inserted appropriately between them.

Today I've come to Boruenan Forest alone to play and show my new work to Aze-san.

"Amazing, Satou! You've finally succeeded!"

"Yes, the magic power consumption is still too large though, so there's still some time until it's completed."

I look up at the airship that appeared in the sky above the tree house in Boruenan Forest.

Even though it's inferior compared to the elf's Light Ships and Hero Hayato's Jules Verne, I'm finally able to make my own airship fitted with the dimensional-cruise function to fly.

It's thanks to the technology provided by the elf's Beriunan Clan and Burainan Clan.

"It's really amazing. Light Ships are produced and maintained by the world trees, so there are only a few who understand the dimensional-cruise function, in fact, only high elves-sama of Beriunan Clan and Burainan Clan can make them."

Lua-san who's looking at me with respectful eyes from the side praised.

Right after I made a good atmosphere with Aze-san, the craftsman elves came one after another after seeing the new type of airship.

"Yo, Satou. Did you finally make a Light Ship too?"

"I can't believe we are overtaken by a human who had just learned the basic of airships."

"Right, I made an automatic ice maker from the Elemental Stones I got from you last time, take it."

"With that many Elemental Stones, we can make everything."

The Elemental Stones mentioned in the latter half are not about the Ice Stones I got from Kiwolk Kingdom.

After leaving that country, we saved the army of the third prince of Kogeoku Kingdom who were dying from cold in a monster domain, and we got a lot of Wind Stones as thanks.

Just like the the neighboring Kiwolk Kingdom that produced Ice Stones, the country of meadows, Kogeoku is also producing Wind Stones artificially.

Of course, the ones providing the technology are the weaselkins just like in Kiwolk Kingdom.

I'm intrigued as to why they're gathering Elemental Stones, but I have a feeling that it's all about profit.

Due to some twists and turns and Pochi's efforts, I was able to get the wreckage of Kogeku Kingdom's Wind Stone magic facility, and got to comprehend the general method to create Elemental Stones by comparing it to the Ice Stone magic facility I got in Kiwolk Kingdom.

Put simply, by turning spirits into a simple element and giving them a lot of Magic Essence, the Magic Essence will crystalize into Elemental Stones.

This [Turning spirits into a simple element] should be the role of the environmental and magic devices that produce Elemental Stones, but since I can arbitrary change spirits into the element I want using Spirit Magic, I can produce Elemental Stones as long as I can provide a lot of Magic Essence.

Since I know a place with a lot of Magic Essence, right now I'm mass producing Elemental Stones of various elements.

I've also gotten my hands on the high purity Crystal type Elemental Stones too, although in small quantity, I'm planning to use them for my companions.

--The dream is expanding.

In addition, regarding the matter about the apostle--.

During our visits to Kogeoku Kingdom and three other kingdoms, we found two places with traces of a white-robed apostle.

A manager of a mine who employed children slaves and members of crime guild who were making Fiend Drug-kind of drug were turned into salt pillars.

In both cases, only the perpetrators were punished, the mastermind behind the cases were left alone, so the same things occured again.

For the former, I exchanged the children slaves for small-sized doll products of Echigoya Firm, while for the later, I exposed the mastermind, handed him over to the king and completely erased the manufacturing formula of the drug.

I employed the doctors and the alchemists who were forced to create the drug to work in the workshop of Echigoya Firm in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital.

Further, I was worried whether the people of Kiwolk Kingdom were turned into salt, so I visited there as Kuro but I couldn't find anyone who seemed to be the apostle.

◇

Today, the late-starter group has gone to the inner part of Selbira's labyrinth upper layer to check their new equipment and level up, and Hikaru has gone to the former depressed demon lord's place to play with the Siberian Husky-like dog.

And, the members of Team Pendragon are--.

"Tama and Pochi who went ahead to be the Seko will return soon. Are you ready?"

"Completed setting the『Net』so I report."

"Nn, perfect."

"The preparation for the Spread Cannon Type Three is complete too."

"I've put the space magic's『Labyrinth』here too. We can thoroughly beat the ones that escape the shooting."

It seems they're just about to get rid of the small fries when I come to see them.

I can see Pochi and Tama taking along herds of monsters from beyond the ruined city.

I thought being Seko meant you should drive them from behind though.... well I guess it's fine.

This is one of the city in the [Blue Territory] to the southwest of the kingdom.

The hunting ground has been changed here since the monsters in middle layer of Selbira's labyrinth seemed like they'd go extinct when we were leveling up during our journey.

It looked like I'd disturb everyone's concentration if I just showed up, so I'll be watching them from the back for now.

"First~"

"Pochi was one step faster nodesu."

Behind the two who finished together, a light net lifted up.

This is Nana's [Fortress] added with paralyzing adhesive feature to capture targets.

"Shooting start!"

With Liza's signal, Lulu fired her accelerated cannon.

Innumerable rain of shells infringed the small-sized monsters, decreasing the number greatly.

"The big ones are coming. One on the left, two on the right. All of them are of level 50 class."

"Acknowledged. Mia, the Sand Hell."

"Nn, execute."

Receiving Arisa's report, Liza gave the next instruction.

Mia nodded and then sand in the open space forward began to move like a creature.

Right at then, a large Dragon Snake (Huge Naga) that looks like a snake with wings appeared.

Behind it, I could saw a herd of Venom Naga that are at level mid-40s behind it, they seemed to be its followers.

Even though the Naga has 'Snake' on its name, it's a monster that has limbs and ant-like wings, it looks like a skink lizard with elongated body.

I want to press a question to the one who named it.

"A mere snake pretending to be a dragon, how ridiculous so I announce!"

The mid and large sized ones are roused by Nana's provocation.

"Arisa, the wings."

"Okey, here comes the dimensional cut."

Arisa invoked space magic chantlessly, cutting the Huge Naga's wings and minced the Venom Naga that followed behind it.

"Arisa no good no good~"

"That's right nanodesu! If you cut the yummy Naga like that, you can't eat their guts nodesuyo!"

Since the meat of Naga are delicious eaten in kabayaki-style, Tama and Pochi faulted Arisa's barbaric act.

"You two, save the complaint. Take care of the ones on the left side."

"Aye aye~"

"Yes nanodesu."

With Liza's instruction, Tama and Pochi dashed while leaving golden trails behind.

"Eri eri buun, nanodesu!"

Pochi who misspelled the new Aerial Boost feature of the Golden Armor flew toward the Naga literally as quick as the wind.

This Aerial Boost feature uses Wind Stone as its core since I got a lot of them, and since it seems more useful than I thought, I'm planning to add them to the other girls' armors.

Liza used Flickering Movement to assault the Naga to the right.

"Apprehend."

Mia muttered a word, and then the sand on the ground apprehended the Naga's legs and bodies.

It seems she used the Sand Giant that fought the Floor Master in Selbira's upper layer as a trap this time.

"Shadow clone cut~?"

Tama who's in golden armor with a pink mantle divided into 12 bodies and toyed with the Naga.

I've also mastered ninjutsu taught by Tama-sensei, but since I can't use it as good in practice, I can't put it into practical uses as good as Tama.

And, on Tama's side, Pochi cuts the Huge Naga's snake using Magic Edge three times her height.

"Pochi, switch~?"

"Roger nanodesu."

Looks like Pochi who has a powerful offensive ability in a single strike is in charge of the Huge Naga while Tama who can eliminate great number of enemies while toying around is in charge of the Naga's herds.

Tama decapitated the Naga's head one by one while saying, "Nin nin."

Looks like she's being careful not to damage the poison gland properly. She's fully eager to eat them.

"Liza-san, the boss is going to make its move soon."

"Understood."

Arisa who was in charge of enemy search warned Liza who was peerlessly trampling down the enemies with two spears.

The Dragon Spear Heiron that Liza holds is the same as before, but the Magic Spear Douma has been improved to become the Magic Spear Douma Kai.

I plated the tip of the Magic Spear Douma with Adamantite using alchemy.

It's not of even plating, I've made it so that it'll generate drill-shaped blast when she shoots Magic Edge Cannon with it.

Thanks to that, the Magic Edge Cannon's penetration power has been increased by around 20%,

"Golem-san, please take the monsters' bodies while being careful not to damage the meat, two at a time."

--MVA.

Lulu ordered the golem unit to collect the monsters' bodies.

The golems have human-shaped upper bodies and spider-shaped lower bodies as I assumed that they were going to work in a ruined city.

"Meatt"

"Nanodesu!"

Tama whose ears straightened up and Pochi whose tails was swinging around came back bringing the Naga's heads.

According to the two, the meat here are the most delicious.

In such peaceful atmosphere, the boss that Arisa warned earlier showed up, turning the situation around.

A snake monster as huge as the heavenly dragon showed itself while scattering the wreckage of the castle in the center of the ruined city.

It doesn't have wings like the Naga, but it's floating above the ground, gliding toward us.

"Uwaaah, level 90 you serious. I think we really have to call Master here."

We haven't meet a powerful enemy for a long time.

"Level 90 is it.... It is a fitting opponent."

"Don't worry be happy~?"

"I-it's alright nanodesu. Pochi is fine against that much nanodesu."

Liza puts the Magic Spear Douma Kai into the magic bag and grasps the Dragon Spear Heiron while looking grim.

Tama seems carefree, but Pochi looks to be anxious enough to hide her tail between her legs.

Certainly, it's an opponent that these girls likely won't be able to beat with their current levels.

By the way, everyone here besides Mia is level 60.

Only Mia is level 58 since she needs a lot of exp.

『Master, it's an emergency. Some level 90 snake came out.』

『Roger, I'm going now.』

Arisa asked for reinforcement through [Telephone].

I pretend to have just teleported in, appearing behind Arisa and the others.

"I'm here."

"Fast"

Well that's because I've been watching from behind since awhile ago.

The meat and the material will be injured if I fight it normally, so I paralyze the snake with an advanced water magic spell.

While everyone is attacking the snake once, I call Hikaru who's visiting the former depressed demon lord Shizuka with [Telephone] to come here.

"Kept you waiting, what's with that snake."

"That seems to be the boss here. The level is just right for you I called you to strike it with a Force Spear once."

"Ehehe, thank you, Satouuu."

It seems Hikaru has gotten used to calling me Satou.

Hikaru's level has increased to 91 since I usually call her when we fight a powerful enemy like this.

She chantlessly produces a Force Spear and hits the snake.

Next, I just need to lift the snake's head with [Magic Arm] and cut it with the advanced light magic spell [Photon Laser], finished.

"Your strength is absurd like always...."

"As expected of my Satou."

Astonished Arisa and delighted Hikaru said.

However, the "my" part was unnecessary.

The other girls seem to be full of appetite, they rush to gather the meat.

I pat the two's heads and go to where everyone is to collect the snake's body into my Storage.

◇

"Are you going to attract emigrants once you've ruled the City Core?"

"No, I don't have such plan. I'll cover the city with space magic and forest magic barrier to prevent monster coming in though."

"Then you're not going to use it for anything?"

"Since the climate is of southern countries and all, I'm thinking of preparing the soil and let the golems to make an orchard or rice field inside the rampart."

If I link the golems with the City Core, even golems without magic cores will have no need of magic power from the user.

It's the same structure as the golems inside labyrinths.

"And so, Mito. How's Shizuka's condition?"

"Nn~, how do I say it, she's enjoying her lonely life to the full you see."

--What the heck's that?

"It's like an embodiment of a life of a single woman of around thirty. She's growing vegetables and herbs on the field, she makes teas and pot-pourri from the herbs, she makes jam and sweets from the fruits and honey gathered by the Living Dolls in the forest. She also said that she went for a stroll with her Siberian Husky, Wanfu, in the morning until the river, fishing and collecting pretty stones there."

It's like a normal rural life, but as long a she's happy then all is good.

She's self-sufficient with the Living Dolls working for the necessities, I also deliver flavoring and books through the brownies or Hikaru who also look her condition once in a while.

According to Hikaru, it seems Shizuka loves literary, she's drawn various things in small books.

She didn't want to show it to me for some reason, but forcing her would not be good so I didn't press it further.

I collect the meat while only leaving the share for today's lunch.

Since Arisa and the others are going to explore the city to search for any remnant of monsters, I've decided to join the exploration once I go to the Selbira Labyrinth.

Looks like Hikaru is not going back to Shizuka's place as she's accompanying Arisa.

Further, as there are archives and treasures hidden by magic in this city, I'm looking forward to it already.

◇

It seems the late-starter group is fighting Blast Corns and a Marionette Rafflesia that's manipulating demi goblins and demi ogres in the plant area.

Their pace is slower than the forerunner group, but all members of the late-starter group have broken through level 40, Zena-san is level 41, Sera is level 42.

Further, as the members of Echigoya Firm are busy with their main occupation, their levels are still at the first-half of 30 with no change.

I've power-leveled Aoi boy and the new manager candidates to level 15.

"....■■■■■ Laser"

Wielding a light wand, Sera who is now able to use mid level light magic sliced the gigantic demi ogres all at once.

Since humanoid monsters can only be used to become fodders for monsters raised for power-leveling usage, there's no problem in handling them carelessly.

The current Sera is able to use most holy magic including prayer magic, I don't know whether it's because she healed a lot of people who suffered from epidemic disease in a country we visited or because she simply leveled up.

Since she can easily heal lost limbs, ruptured internal organs or other fatal wounds, my magic potion hasn't got its turn lately.

Sera safely flings away a Demi Goblin Assassin that jumped out of a nearby thicket.

It's the result of learning the art of self-defense under Lulu.

Not only Sera, the princess and Zena-san also learned the self-defense art.

It seems they're also interested in staff-fighting art recently.

"Imperial Golem Guard third!"

The princess ordered the golem to receive the flung demi goblin to kill it.

The princess turns her line of sight to Zena-san who's flying in the sky.

"Zena! You must not go forward alone!"

"I'm sorry Tina-sama."

The princess warned Zena-san who was flying with flight magic to look for the Marionette Rafflesia that was manipulating the demi ogres.

I saw a Blast Corn beyond the thicket shooting at Zena-san with exploding bullets.

"--Kya"

Zena-san screamed shortly, but Sera's defensive magic protected her from the bullet exploding near her.

"Let me go and defeat that corn."

『Karina-dono, there's a monster to the left!』

Lady Karina who's dual wielding heavy maces on both hands swings the one on her left hand to strike a slime-shaped Metal Eater that Raka warned.

"Raka-san!"

『Understood.』

Lady Karina who's bad at Magic Operation relies on Raka to activate the electric discharge circuit in the Heavy Mace to thoroughly burn the Metal Eater, and then she jumps into the thicket.

The sound of Lady Karina's heavy mace hitting the Blast Corn beyond the thicket reverberates.

Since the clumsy Lady Karina wasn't able to use her old hammer main weapon, she's shifted to using the heavy mace simplistically like batting.

Since Raka's grapple and equipment boost's reach is short, she only uses that one reservedly.

"....■■■■ Divine Sonic"

Wielding a wind wand, Zena-san supported Lady Karina who was seemingly about to be surrounded by a herd of Blast Corns with magic.

The power of the advanced spell of wind magic is magnificent, every one of the monsters besides the one in front of Lady Karina has been neutralized.

The monsters that had resistance against wind were eliminated by Zena-san's newly learned magic and rifle-type magic gun.

In addition to the advanced spells of wind magic, Zena-san is also now able to use lightning magic and ice magic until elementary level.

It seems she's unable to decide which one she's going to use as her sub.

"Everyone! 『Droon』 golem has found the main body of Marionette Rafflesia. Heavyweight golem one to six, charges toward 3 o'clock direction!"

Sera, Zena-san and Lady Karina gather with the princess's report.

The automatic flight [Drone] golem is something that she made herself with her own alchemy and magic.

Due to the influence of having in charge of operating the golems and her interest in magic tools creation with her alchemy skill she had from the beginning, now her position is like my pupil in the creation of magic tools and golems.

Since she's not suited to direct battles despite learning the self-defense art, she doesn't have any special weapon, instead small animal-shaped golems with stun functions are always by her side as her guards.

"Zena!"

"Yes, Karina-sama!"

Zena-san carrying Lady Karina dances in the air, they head toward the Marionette Rafflesia while almost touching the ceiling, and then they do a nose dive.

"Here I go!"

Zena-san and Lady Karina put their sole of feet to each other and then kick reciprocally to accelerate even more.

"Rapid start Karina Ki--"

Before Lady Karina could speak until the end, her kick pierced through the Marionette Rafflesia's petal.

--FUWANNNNNNNNA.

While scattering some suspicious pollens, the Marionette Rafflesia stops moving.

Lady Karina crawled out of the body while coughing violently.

Sera rushed to her in a hurry and used detoxification magic on Lady Karina.

.....Do assaults in moderation okay.

◇

After retrieving the late-starter group from the labyrinth, we met up with Arisa, Hikaru and the others to enjoy the exploration.

"I never thought that I would safely set my foot in the Blue Territory."

"Th-this is the Haunt of Blue is it...."

Sera and the princess look around the ruin while stuttering their words.

It seems Lady Karina and Zena-san have never heard of the Blue Territory.

I'll guide them to the treasury for the occasion.

"Here is strange~?"

"There's no smell of meat nodesuyo?"

Tama tilted her head in confusion before the hidden magic circle.

Pochi sniffed with her nose but it seems there was no smell that was of interest for her.

"There are traces of someone doing a consecration ceremony. I can't feel any miasma."

Sera commented while touching the magic circle.

When the magic power was put into the magic circle, some words appeared.

"It seems there are Command Words written in ancient language. Umm, 『Even if the city is destroyed by the tsunami, people will not perish. We will give rewards to those who liberate the city.』 is written, the Command Word is-- Baalus?"

"It's safe since there's one character difference huh."

<TLN: reference to Castle in the Sky, should be 'Balus'.>

Arisa was shocked when she heard the word of destruction from a famous anime coming out of Hikaru's mouth, but she muttered in relief when she noticed her mistake.

Everyone besides me doesn't understand the meaning, they look wondering.

『Regenerate (Baalus)』

>[Ancient Language] Skill Acquired.

The magic circle lits up when Hikaru recited the Command Word in Ancient Language, then a door appeared out of nowhere.

Golden brightness jumped into our eyes when the door was opened.

The inside is wide, the inner wall seems like something made from the space magic's [Garage].

Everyone rushes happily into the golden brightness.

Lady Karina and Zena-san seem to be nervous with the large amount of treasures.

"Gold silver~"

"There is a bar too nodesu."

The bar-like thing that Pochi picked up appears to be a magic tool called [Illusion Smash (Dispel Bar)]

It appears to be an artifact.

"These are the lost handicrafts from the era of Furu Empire."

"How nostalgic, I hated the nobles of that country, but their buildings like the royal castle one were very excellent."

It seems Sera is interested with the picture and works of art on the wall.

For Hikaru, it seems they're things she knew before going into the sleep.

From the opposite side of the beastkin girls who are examining the weapons, and Nana and Lulu who are looking for cute things, someone calls me.

"Satou! It seems there's a library inside."

"Yay, I wonder if there's any magic book?"

"Expectation."

Arisa and Mia gleefully run toward the library that the princess found.

After picking the loot, we went to the solitary island palace and enjoyed the Naga kabayaki and pop-corns made of the Blast Corns.

"Yummaye~"

"Lulu's boxes really are delicious nodesu."

We're eating the Naga kabayaki while listening to the sound of wind bells.

The thick meat with fat is truly delicious.

Thus, in contrary to our peaceful days, the hero is currently struggling in the underground labyrinth located in a remote region of the Weaselkin Empire.

I'm worried to hear that they get serious injuries sometimes, but according to the communication, it seems they're closing in the demon lord's main body while defeating the split bodies.

Apparently the magic tool provided by the weaselkin empire is doing its job.

I thought they're taking a bit too long in defeating the demon lord, but according to Hikaru it's normal to take several months to subjugate a demon lord.

She said that it even took several years in her case.

--Do your best, Hero.

While I was cheering for Hero Hayato in my mind, the airship entered the territory of the pink haired princess Menea's kingdom, Rumooku Kingdom for the tour.

It'll be nice if I can read the documents regarding people of another world in Rumooku Kigndom--.

14-28. Water Peach Kingdom (1)

Satou's here. It's a common story in earth for a king to be bestowed his throne by the god. I'm intrigued to see how it is in a world with gods in reality.

◇

"Potato~?"

"It's another potato-san nanodesu."

The ears of Pochi and Tama who peeked at the stall dropped down in dejection.

We're in one of the food areas in the Royal Capital of Rumooku Kingdom.

The touring airship is scheduled to arrive tomorrow, but since I found out that there was a festival here, we went ahead to treat ourselves with some sightseeing.

We're going incognito this time so so we've separated into three teams consisting of three to five people each. It'd be too conspicuous if we were all together.

I'll be going with a different team every two hours.

The members of the first team are the beastkin girls, Lady Karin and Zena-san.

"You guys from another country? Rumooku has a lot of dishes made with Diet Potato you see."

An apekin stall shopkeeper showed us some white-colored potatoes.

He presented some sliced unpeeled potatoes to us.

"If you think I'm lying, try eating these sliced Diet Potatoes."

"Lie~?"

"Lying is bad nodesuyo?"

Pochi and Tama who were lured by the sliced potatoes sniffed the smell.

Being hesitant in biting a raw vegetable whole is something that happens a lot in TV programs about diet.

"Sliced and diced~?"

"Pochi thinks potatoes are tastier boiled or baked than raw nodesu."

Tama and Pochi who took the sliced potatoes nibbled them.

"It's a potato."

"It's unexpectedly tasty desuwa."

"--It is, isn't it."

After the two, Liza and Lady Karina tried them, and Zena-san who lost to the peer pressure also took it.

"What about you young master?"

"I might as well, please."

Losing to the apekin old man's glance, I also tried it after everyone.

The texture feels like a carrot, the taste is mild, like a warmed potato.

It's hard to say it's bad, but it's not bad enough to make you grimace.

"Is Diet Potato a specialty around here?"

"Yeah, seems that it's only grown in this country--"

I asked the shopkeeper about it since I never saw the potato in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital that had plenty of foodstuff in circulation, turned out it's a prohibited commodity to export.

"--Prohibited?"

"Yeah, in the past the Hero King Yamato-sama told the king that 'it's [Calirozeo] so don't', you see."

--I guess he means calorie zero? I'll ask Hikaru herself later.

"If you only ever eat Diet Potatoe you'll lose weight and die, something like that?"

"Oh what, you already knew huh. That's right, it's fine if you eat it with other food, but mysteriously it seems you'll die if you only eat Diet Potato. I don't feel sick even though I've eaten it for 40 years, some strange story that one's."

As expected, looks like it's a low calorie foodstuff like konjac.

I'd like to sell these in powdered form for the nobles as way to do diet.

I'd feel bad if we only sampled his food, so I bought the Diet Potatoes and Wrapped Berries for several people.

I put the portions for other teams into my storage while pretending I was putting them into my bag.

"Master~?"

Tama's ears are twitching.

"There's smell of grilled meat from over there nodesu!　It must be wolf or bear meat nodesu!"

Pochi who's swinging her tail so hard like it'd get torn off catches my sleeve and jumps around.

"Master, I will be going to check them."

"Tama too~?"

"Pochi also wants to check nodesu!"

Apparently, Tama, Pochi and even Liza are tired with the potatoes already.

After declaring so with sharp faces, they took the initiative to move ahead and scout where the meat were.

"Pochi, Tama, wait!"

Lady Karina pursued the beastkin girls impatiently.

"Then let's go too."

"Yes, Satou-san."

Zena-san smiled when I exchanged look with her, we walked toward the crowd where the four disappeared into.

It'd be bad if I lost sight of Zena-san in this congested crowd so I joined hands with her.

◇

"--The second prince didn't agree with it right?"

"Yeah, he curtly refused saying that the weasels can't be trusted."

Attentive Ears skill caught that conversation from beyond the crowd.

I might have become a bit more sensitive to the word 'weasel'.

"Even without you guys there's no way the royalty of this country would agree to allow anyone search for treasures in the Fallen Castle."

"Why is that? It'll possible to better the finance of this poor country you know. The prince himself could use it to raise his succession precedence right?"

Looking at the map, it seems the ones talking are a weaselkin merchant and a high level adventurer from Saga Empire.

The female adventurer is level 39, quite something.

"Only you guys who calculate things like that. There's a legend that said the ancestors of this kingdom's royalty were living in the Fallen Castle--the Floating Castle of Shadow Princess. The few who survived when it crashed in this country built this kingdom.... Putting your hands on that castle is not that different from raiding their ancestor grave site."

"Fumu, it appears I've forgotten that humans are creatures who put their priority in irrational things."

According to the Tour Book, the Fallen Castle the adventurer mentioned is an ancient ruin located in the forest to the northeast of this kingdom.

Judging from the map, the center of the northeastern forest is a different map, that's probably it.

"We could build a sky mother ship that could surpass the Great Monstrous Fish if only we got our hands on the core part of the Fallen Castle...."

"That is if you can get it right? That place is a maze where even Shiga Kingdom's Hero King Yamato who challenged the place 600 years ago ran away from. It'll be a different story if you're only ravaging the entrance vicinity, but challenging the inner part is pretty much a suicide. I know since I've seen the absurdity of heroes by Hayato."

I'm intrigued with the core part of the Fallen Castle.... but I don't want to raid a tomb.

Looks like Hikaru had entered the place once, I'll ask her about it later.

"--Then, how about the job of carrying this magic tool into the Fallen Castle?"

"Huh? What's this egg?"

"A magic creature for investigation will appear if you recite the Command Word. I'll pay you 100 gold coins if you can carry this inside."

"It's hard to use your country's money. I'll do it for 150 gold coins of Shiga Kingdom or 75 gold coins of Saga Empire."

"Very well, I'll pay with Shiga Kingdom gold coins. 30 gold coins in advance, 120 after."

"Got it, so--"

A reserved voice broke my concentration in the middle of the sinister talk.

"Satou-san, is there anything wrong?"

"No, there was just someone who looked like an acquaintance of mine, but it seems I was mistaken."

I made some fuzzy excuse since Zena-san looked worried.

Looks like the two from earlier have gone into the inn to talk in private.

It smells of trouble so I'll put markers on them for now.

As I walked on the street while exchanging some harmless conversation with Zena-san, we saw the head of a giant monster beyond the crowd.

"That seems to be the source of the smell."

"I-is that a monster?"

"Yes, apparently it's a monster called Fortress Tiger."

I saw its stuffed animal in the Duchy Capital museum back then.

It appears a Fortress Tiger that has been defeated by the soldiers is displayed as one of the main attractions of the festival.

A temporary stove has been put right beside the hind leg of the Fortress Tiger, and it seems people can eat it for free.

Maybe due to the beastly smell, the nearby people aren't approaching it, only people with poor clothes and men who seemed to be manual laborers are getting the meat skewers and stew dish.

When I was watching it, the beastkin girls came back with skewers in their hands.

"Toughie"

"It's like wyvern meat nanodesu."

"It does have toughness and chewiness doesn't it."

The beastkin girls are chewing the meat.

"Master, we have secured everyone's share."

"Yeah, thanks."

"Bon appétit."

"I'm, um, full so--"

"Understood, I will take full responsibility of Zena-sama's meat skewer."

I take the meat skewer Liza hands out.

....How do I say this, on top of the shoe sole-like texture, beast smell oozes out with every bite.

Frankly, it's bad.

Pochi ate the leftover, but I don't think I'll ever eat another of the meat.

Of course I thought of that in my mind, I didn't say it loud.

That's because there are people who are frantically eating that hard and unpleasant meat around.

Lady Karina gave up and Tama disposed her leftover.

"Soft! Even I can eat this."

"You're amazing young lady. Even grandma who doesn't have any tooth remaining can eat it!"

When I looked at the direction people were smiling happily at, I saw Lulu cooking beside the Fortress Tiger with a kitchen knife in one hand.

Looks like she was unable to only watch the troubled people and went to help.

Arisa, Mia, and the Princess are behind Lulu.

Arisa who noticed me made a 'look at the watch' gesture.

Looks like it's about time.

◇

"Hee, a scheme between adventurers and weaselkins huh."

I stealthily told the thing about the two earlier to Arisa.

I can't exactly say that it's a scheme, but I'm slightly bothered by it.

Mia, Lulu and the princess are enjoying malt starch syrup together.

The princess who saw her first starch syrup is full of curiosity.

"You knead two sticks like this round and round and it'll be tasty."

"L-like this?"

Lulu is teaching the princess the way to eat starch syrup, perhaps because the princess who's acting like a child looks cute.

Mia chants water magic [Slap Knead] to knead the starch syrup instantly while nodding.

This magic is an original spell I made by Mia's request when we were staying in the labyrinth city.

I'm wasting the skill I have if I do say so myself.

"Nn, mild."

While walking around the stalls and eating the starch syrup, we heard cheers and xylophone-like sound from the main street forward.

"I wonder what is it? Let's go and see it!"

"Nn, let's."

Arisa and Mia pull my hands and begin to run.

"Tina-sama, let us go too."

"Y-yes."

Lulu who's pulling the princess's hand also follow behind us in quick steps.

We're separated a bit far, but Lulu should be fine.

I heard some screams from hoodlums behind but it must have been my imagination.

With the strength of Arisa and Mia who are level 60 even though they're small, we push ourselves into a place where we can see the main street.

The role of apologizing to people who are glaring at us in annoyance inevitably falls to me.

"It looks somewhat like a float."

"Float?"

"Yes, the thing that looks like a portable shrine with wheels like that, I guess?"

<TLN: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Float_(parade)>

I didn't remember the accurate classification, so I explained to Mia hazily.

Arisa makes a visor with her hands on her head and gazes at the float coming here.

It looks hard to see for them so I lift both of them to make it easier.

"Uoooou.... Thank you."

"Thanks."

I smile back at Arisa who was surprised for suddenly being lifted and Mia, and watch the float together with Lulu and the princess who've met up with us.

The floats are, from the the first one; [The Pitch Silhouette of the Castle], [A Pink-haired Princess and a Black-haired Prince who are Sitting on Balcony-like Place in a Castle], and [The Noble Daughters wearing Attendant Clothes] floats.

The soldiers walking beside the floats are wearing pitch black cloth on their whole body, they look like dolls made of shadow.

There's no doubt that they're festival floats to worship the ancestors of Rumooku Kingdom and the Fallen Castle that came out in the talk between the female adventurer and the weaselkin earlier.

According to AR reading, the pink-haired princess seems to be the sixth princess of Rumooku Kingdom.

Looking like Princess Menea, she's a seven-year-old pretty little girl who looks calm and quiet.

"Today Rumia-sama looks graceful doesn't she."

"That's cause she's acting as the Shadow Princess in this festival."

"She usually rode a horse with her brother princes, so it's hard to imagine her like this."

Judging from the surrounding people's talk, the sixth princess is originally a lively girl--no.

According to the AR reading, the sixth princess's name is Rimia. According to their talk, that's the the twin sister of the fifth princess Rumia.

Princess Rimia probably has little exposures to the citizens.

The black-haired boy who's sitting beside her seems to be the real twelve-year-old fourth prince.

Since the royalty seems to be all pink-haired, he's probably wearing a black wig.

◇

After watching the floats,

"Kyaa, I'm sorry."

"Please excuse me too. Are you alright?"

"Un, I'm okay."

I saw pink hair under the apologizing girl's hood.

She's probably the rumored fifth princess, Rumia whom the citizens talked about during the parade earlier.

Looks like the lively princess is enjoying the festival in secret.

Some soldiers and maids who seem to be her escorts are coming from the other side of the crowd.

Princess Rumia glanced back and then she ran to a narrow alley in a hurry.

--That place is bad.

My Attentive Ears skill heard a small scream and the sound of something being put into a sack.

Guess it's unavoidable.

I put off joining with Hikaru and the others and went to the narrow alley.

"The hell you want"

"Oy oy stop with your sudden threatening attitude. Look at that, the rich kid is trembling."

Two hoodlums are glaring at me while tying a sack.

The empty-headed senior-looking guy took out a hatchet and licked it to show me.

It's a situation that appears often in a story, but I wonder if his tongue is cut?

"What're ya smiling about! Are you mocking us!"

Maybe because I was thinking whatever like that the hoodlum swung down his hatchet to my shoulder.

I lightly evaded, circled behind him, and kicked his big butt, sending him flying to some rubble on the ground.

"How dare you--"

When the other hoodlum released his hand from the sack and drew a dagger, I sent him flying with my hand.

With a whomp, the senior hoodlum's scream resounded in the back alley.

I didn't particularly aim for it, but it seems I hit the ball squarely.

As the two who were entangled tried to get up, I reaped their consciousness with a stunner made with Lightning Stone.

Before I release the princess from the sack I use light magic to hide my countenance.

There's no need to raise a flag with a little girl.

"Are you injured anywhere?"

"U-un. I'm fine--Farsa!"

"Princess-sama!"

The dumbfounded princess called her acquaintance on the street with a loud voice.

The escort knights who followed from behind and noticed the disturbance in the back alley drew their swords and stood to protect the princess.

"Are you Your Highness's escorts?"

"That's right, who are you."

"I'm not worthy enough to give my name. I only saved the princess since I saw the two people over there trying to kidnap her, I'll leave the rest to you."

"Oy, wait--"

I ignored the knight calling me and kicked the alley's roof to move to the roof, then I canceled the light magic and warped to the place near Hikaru and the others.

◇

"Floating Castle made by God, the beautiful maiden with pink hair will be the bride of God--"

After meeting with Hikaru and the others, coaxed by Sera, we went to watch a show that was performing in an open space nearby.

The program seems to be about this country's founding.

The actors aren't that good, but the scenario is quite something.

Furthermore, the woman who's playing as the beautiful maiden is quite attractive and glamorous.

"Has Mito ever gone inside the Fallen Castle?"

"Un, I entered by the request of the king at that time, but the sentry shadows that were protecting the innermost room were too strong so I escaped."

"Yama--Mito-sama did?"

"Un, each one of them wasn't as strong as a greater demon, but they kept reappearing every time I defeated one--"

Nana turns her face to us who are chatting.

"You should be quiet when you're watching the play so I warn."

"""We're sorry."""

It's the proper thing to do, so I watch the play in silent afterward.

During the climax of the play, a group of people riding horses ran past the main street and then the kingdom knights went noisily with the sound of their metal armor clashing, clank clank.

"Bad manners so I criticize."

Nana is in bad mood since the tactless sound disturbed the climax of the play.

On the stage, the scene of the dog-headed evil god fighting against the white main god continues on.

The god splendidly slew the evil god but the evil god used a magic before it died and the floating castle crashed.

Pink-haired prince and princess appeared from the fallen castle, and were told that their mother who was the wife of the god had died.

"It appears that gods and humans are not meant to be together.... My beloved children, I bestow tis' blood and blessing unto you. Build a good country."

"At your will, father--no, Great God-sama."

The last scene seems to be a divine blessing that are common among royalty.

◇

Before joining with others I opened the map since I was bothered a bit, but it seems the horse-riding earlier isn't related to the female adventurer and the weaselkin who were talking about something shady earlier. The latter seems to be in the Royal Capital right now.

And then, after we met up, we were able to secure a private room in the best restaurant in the city according to the prime minister's Tour Book.

Normally there should not be any free room during a festival, but since someone who made a reservation canceled the room due to an urgent business, we slipped in during that chance.

The menu is a mountain of small pies made from the Diet Potatoe we ate in the noon.

Diet Potato and mushroom pies, Diet Potato and blueberry pies, Diet Potatoe and deer kidney pies, boiled unfamiliar plants for the salad, and peeled sliced Diet Potato and mashed potato are piled up.

As usual the menu mainly consisted of Diet Potato, but the main dish, the whole roast of a giant Blue Horn Deer that the contracted hunters of the restaurant got appeared.

The meal began with Arisa's lead "Itadakimasu" like usual.

"Meat delish~?"

"There's meat in this pie nodesu."

"Master, please enjoy this deer tendon meat stew. The cartilage that's been cooked together with it is crispy and tasty."

I put the dishes recommended by the beastkin girls into my mouth in turns.

The grilled venison that Tama recommended was fatty with light flavor, quite delicious.

The kidney pie I tried to eat in a British restaurant in the past was quite smelly I couldn't eat it, but the kidney pie here was quite delicious, I didn't know whether it was because the chef was good or the kidney was fresh. There was a little of unique smell but it was hidden well by the herb, it was quite satisfactory enough.

The thick stew Liza recommended was warm and felt good in the stomach.

I can't get tired of green-peas-like beans mixed inside. It makes me wanting for some wine.

"Mwuu, mushroom pie."

"Wait a minute, don't put that many to the plate."

I stopped Mia who pushed her recommendation and dealt with it after cleaning up the plate first.

As we eat the tasty dishes in relish, I'm hearing some disturbing conversation from outside the private room.

The wall here seems to be thin.

"--looks like the Shadow Princess festival site was assaulted."

"The site did?"

"Who the accursed did."

"Are the prince and the princess in the site alright?"

It's probably about the young prince and princess that were in the noon parade.

"That's.... It seems Rumia-sama was kidnapped."

"How about the prince and the soldiers guarding them?"

"The prince is safe. The soldiers were, with paralyzing poisoned liquor--."

Looks like some trouble has sprung forth.

14-29. Water Peach Kingdom (2)

※It's not in Satou's point of view.

◆Royal Villa of Rumooku Kingdom◆

"--Your Highness, what did the weasel ask?"

"To let them enter the Shadow Castle, saying they would make it float again."

The second prince leisurely replied the cabinet minister from his faction who came to his room. <TLN: I wrote third instead of second on the previous chapter. Amended.> The minister ordered an official behind him to vacate the soldiers outside the door and close it.

"The Shadow Castle? Is that possible?"

"Of course not."

The second prince raised the reasons why it's impossible one after another.

"The gate won't open unless you take a little girl wearing the『Necklace of Treasure Key』that can't be taken out except during the grand festival, on top of that the castle is protected by sentries that even made that Hero King Yamato ran away y'know?"

The legend passed through the second prince's mind.

The hero king Yamato who defeated the great demon lord, that ruined the ancient Furu Empire which reigned supreme in this continent, the symbol of the [Strongest].

An existence that can't even be defeated by the [Strongest], he can't imagine it.

"Still, it's too bad isn't it. If the god sentry weren't there, Your Highness could have gotten his hands on the treasures sleeping in the Shadow Castle...."

"Are you implying me to raid the tomb?"

"Not at all, Your Highness will only take a little bit of inheritance from your ancestor."

The second prince's wavers with the minister's words.

As if taking advantage of that, the official behind the minister murmurs.

"Perhaps the weaselkin's underling that contacted the crime guild the other day was related to this?"

"--You mean they instigated the crime guild people to kidnap Rumia who'll be acting as the Shadow Princess?"

"With all dues respect...."

The minister assented to the second prince's worry.

"Don't tell me--the B-class adventurers who had an audience with His Majesty were also summoned by them?"

"It is possible. There's also the report of a scout-looking adventurer going astray in the prohibited place in the royal castle."

It's probably hard to infiltrate the Shadow Castle no matter how many riff-raff you send there, but if you are together with adventurers most active on the frontier, the success rate should be different.

"Let the knights to stand by near the ceremony site."

The second prince stood up while giving an order to the minister.

"I'll go out too. It's the older brother's job to save his little sister."

The thought of saving his little sister from the crime guild and the adventurers, getting the treasures they have and then confiscating the disrespectful weaselkin's firm floats in his mind.

There is no one here who pointed out about him counting the chickens before they're hatched.

◆Rimia the Sixth Princess of Rumooku◆

"Rumia is calm today."

My heart aches hearing Nii-sama who spoke and smiled lightly.

Even though I've switched with Rumia ane-sama to do the role of the Shadow Princess in the festival, Nii-sama doesn't notice it at all.

Perhaps brother doesn't recognize me, who doesn't have pink hair, as his little sister.

"If you're tired, let me be the one to greet the citizens. Rumia can just smile suitably while drinking the fruit water."

"Thank you very much. Nii-sama."

I replied my brother kindness by smiling my best.

--The day darkens before long and a bonfire is lighted in the center of the ceremony site.

"Hou, this is some tasty wine...."

"It was brought in a barrel by the representative earlier."

"Must be a wealthy merchant to bring a barrel of an expensive wine like this."

Nii-sama sips the wine in good mood.

I've never drunk wine before but people said that the wine in this kingdom is astringent and bad so this must've been imported from some foreign country.

"Here's some grape water for Rumia-sama."

"Thank you."

I drink transparent red drink offered by an unfamiliar maid.

--Sweet.

It's as classy as the sugar water that I got during Nii-sama's coming of age ceremony back then.

I forget my depressed mood just now and drink the sweet grape water.

My view shakes.

I staggered, fell to the ground and looked at the surrounding with disorderly mind.

--Everyone is sleeping?

"Hey, isn't the all-important princess awake there."

"Keh, that damn weasel gave us a defective product."

"Oy! Save your complaint. Let's get out quickly."

I could only shiver with pale face hearing the violent words.

Just when I thought my hand was caught, I was tossed inside a sack with strange smell and carried like a baggage.

"N-o, get--"

My frail protest reached no one, and I fainted as I was carried roughly.

◆Crime Guild◆

"Boss! The cavalry are chasing us from behind."

"What?!"

When the crime guild boss looked at the back, he saw cavalry wearing scale mails.

Despite their heavy armor, their horses speed is faster.

"10 horses all huh.... There's only a few of them, but they appeared too fast."

They must've been on stand by even before the princess was kidnapped.

It's an impossible tact for the incompetent knights of this country.

"Tsk, did we get set up by the weasel bastard?"

"Boss, those are the second prince's troops."

"That schemer daredevil second prince sure is fast. Oy, use the smoke ball we took from Shiga Kingdom explorers. Throw it after we pass that watchtower!"

"Yea"

When the boss passed through a watchtower for festival use, he cut the tower's ropes.

Slightly afterward, his subordinate threw a white bundle, and then smoke covered the surrounding explosively.

Without caring the cries in the back, the men ran pass the Royal Capital through the opened gate.

They smashed several festival decorations as they passed the gate and let a subordinate set them to fire.

"Boss, is this alright? Doing this much."

"Don't worry. We just have escape the country once we got the treasures in the Fallen Castle."

The boss laughed off the vice's worry.

There were many cases where pursuers couldn't catch up to them considering the fact that there's a little traffic between the cities and the borders of the eastern countries.

Although, cases of kidnapping a royalty and pillaging the national treasure like these are probably going to be an exception.

Only several people including the boss and the vice notice it.

"What if we don't get the treasures?"

The timid vice asked the boss while whipping his horse.

"No worries. The things we stole from the prince and the princess earlier are already valuable enough. We could even get peerage rank if we sold this 『Necklace of Treasure Key』 this princess had to some king of the neighboring countries."

"As expected of boss, you're well thought!"

Unlike the gloomy vice, the subordinates applauded the boss.

The men who escaped the cavalry leisurely ran through the forest toward the Shadow Castle on their horses.

◆Rumia the Fifth Princess of Rumooku◆

"Rimiaaaaa!"

Farsa, my wet mother held me back as I was going to dash out.

My little sister Rimia was kidnapped by bad masked men before my eyes.

"Let me go."

"Princess-sama, you must not."

Farsa checked with the escort soldiers about the safety on the surrounding, and let the escort soldiers to go to the guard station after confirming it's safe.

And then a horse riding group appeared.

They're probably the knights of this country.

"You guys, chase the thieves! They must have gone toward the Shadow Castle."

"""OU!"""

While leaving several people riding horses here, they chase after the thieves who kidnapped Rimia.

"Ah, that's the crest of the second prince?"

Hearing Farsa, I look up, certainly, the dignified older Nii-sama is there.

"Nii-sama!"

"--Rumia? Why are you here?"

"It's terrible! Rimia was kidnapped by bad people."

"So it's like that...."

Nii-sama's face is scary.

He must be angry at the bad people who kidnapped Rimia.

"You should go back to the castle--oy, you guys, call the soldiers in the castle. I'll take my little brother to the court physician."

Older Nii-sama took younger Nii-sama and rode the horse toward the court physician in the castle.

The other cavalry also run off to call other people.

"Oh?　What happened here?"

As I was looking at that, my body shivered when I heard the voice that suddenly appeared behind me.

There, a woman with red blazing hair, a thin scout-like man, and a giant warrior twice as big as a normal adult--the Saga Empire adventurers who visited the castle back then are standing.

"--Nn? Aren't you princess-chan? What's wrong, you look like you'd cry you know?"

I told the peering female adventurer-san about the situation, bursting like a broken dam, and asked for help.

"Alright, I've lost to princess-chan's spirit who wants to help her little sister. This B-class adventurer Kaizemain-sama will pitch in and help!"

Even though it should have been reassuring, I departed the Royal Capital while feeling like a rat who's being toyed with by a cat somehow.

"Princess-sama, let's leave it to His Highness second prince to save Rimia-sama."
"What're you going to do princess-chan."
"I'm going. Please take me."
"Alright!　You'll be safe and sound with us!"

My wet nurse objected even now, but I want to save Rimia who changed place with me due to my selfishness.

I thought we were going to chase them with horses, but we went to a farm village near the Royal Capital instead.

Three golems came out of one of the sheds.

"These are our『Sea Fire War Ogres』you see."

Female adventurer-san showed the golems while smiling like Nii-sama when he was showing off his toys.

"....The golems used by the weaselkin."
"That's right, wet nurse-dono is knowledgeable huh."

Farsa who's shaking with pale face fainted when she saw female adventurer-san grinning.

"Oh oh?　We can't take along someone who's fainted. Let the people in the village take care of her."

"You say that after putting up that coercion."

"You said something?"

"N-no, nothing at all Nee-san."

"Then stop talking and do it quick."

"Yes, Nee-san."

The thin adventurer ran to the village ordered by female adventurer-san.

Still.... What is this coercion they talked about?

"Ize Neesan. The startup is complete."

"Alright, I'll go ahead with princess-chan. Go with that guy once he comes back."

I'm carried under female adventurer-san's arm, and taken onto the golem that's taller than the surrounding houses.

It's shorter than the balcony in the castle, but the shaking shaking cockpit is cold it's scary.

"We're going to run okay? Hold tight so you won't fall."

Without being able to reply to the cheerful female adventurer-san, I desperately clings to her waist.

Wait for me, Rimia.

I'll absolutely save you!

◆Weaselkin◆

"Then, take care of the firm."

"Yes, president."

After telling that to the ashratkin clerk, I get into the carriage.

I've only taken the female slave that has the [Item Box] skill along.

There will be little damage even if the firm is confiscated by the kingdom since I've taken the funds and the expensive items.

"Looks like Kaizemain-dono is heading toward the Shadow Castle successfully. It'll be the best if I can bring an Artifact from the era of god in the Shadow Castle, but bringing information from even one of the explorer probes should be enough to make His Majesty the emperor delighted. Nothing of value will be lost even if I lose one or two branch offices in a poor country."

I murmured alone and looked up, and then black shadows got reflected in my eyes.

The wind pressure shakes the carriage, the slave girl screams.

Four monsters met up with the merchant who got off the carriage.

Lizardkin and beastkin wearing slave collars are riding on the monsters' back.

The things the slaves riding are tamed wyverns that only wealthy merchants have even in our Weasel Empire.

"President, we've come to pick you."

"Good work. Let these go to the Shadow Forest besides the one we're riding."

The Wyvern Riders flew off after receiving the magic tool to retrieve the Explorer Probe.

"President, Rumooku soldiers are heading here."

"Then let's go too."

"Is our destination the empire?"

The rabbitkin rider asked me who had ridden on the wyvern.

"No, go to Silga Kingdom before we return to the empire."

"Certainly."

The wyvern takes off while sliding and chipping the highway.

"I will not ask for something as extravagance as fang, I'd like to get claws, or thorns--or at least the scales."

I muttered while leaving my body to the body temperature of the slave clinging to me.

◆In the Forest of the Shadow Castle◆

"Damn it, why isn't the gate opening."

The necessary condition should have been fulfilled, the boss catches and pulls the little girl's hair.

The pink wig comes off of the princess who screams shortly, golden hair appears in the light from the torches.

"--A fake?"

The dark brown boss glared at the little princess.

"I'm not a fake."

"There's no point if a royalty doesn't have colored hair!　You damn fake."

The boss is still flinging violent words to the princess who's fighting back with a shaking voice.

"Can't be helped, the key is profitable enough. Let's scram."

Torches shines over the boss's curved sword which glitters suspiciously.

The curved sword casually swings down toward the princess who's edging back without even being able to scream.

Everyone expected blood to spill but in the next moment, they only heard the sound of the blade sinking into a wood.

In the place where the princess should have been, there's a log wrapped in dress--

"Utsusemi no jutsu~?"

"--Who the!"

Toward the voice that could be heard somewhere, the boss asked for its identity.

A masked boy appears with a gust of wind.

Beside him, there's a little golden armor wearing a pink mantle standing.

"Hello, nice to meet you. Tough I think our acquaintance will be short, best regards okay."

Hearing the boy who doesn't have a speck of tension, every member of the crime guild is trembling as if their spine has been thrust with an icicle.

14-30. Water Peach Kingdom (3)

Satou's here. I wonder who first popularized the death flag. Though, I feel the thing that made a friend who said, "I'll go on a ski trip with my girlfriend once I finished my course credit" to end up taking the supplementary lesson was the grudge of the unpopular colleagues. You shouldn't talk about your love affair out loud you know.

◇

"What's wrong Master?"

"--The princess of this country has been kidnapped, or so I heard."

I briefly answered Arisa who asked.

"Oh no! Then I'll go rescue her. Where's she now?"

"Oh no oh no~?"

"Pochi will also go rescuing nodesu."

"Protecting young organisms is indispensable and a must so I tell."

Hikaru stood up as if it was natural to go help.

As if pulled by her, Tama, Pochi and Nana also stood up.

Pochi and Tama are still holding their forks stuck with meat dish.

It's not like the princess is particularly our acquaintance and I think she should be saved by this country, but it appears such a thing is irrelevant for Hikaru and the others.

"I'll check it for a bit, wait--"

I told so to everyone and opened the map.

We don't know if she's really kidnapped just from a rumor.

The rumor said that Princess Rumia was kidnapped, but the one who rode the float was her little sister Princess Rimia.

I'll search for [Princess] instead of a specific person.

I ignore the luminous points of the princesses in the Royal Capital--there are two outside the city.

Looks like Princess Rimia is near the border of a different map where the Shadow Castle is.

There were several crime guild people close to her, but I don't know the exact number since they immediately went to a different map with Princess Rimia.

The other luminous point is in the middle of the mountain path between the Royal Capital and the Shadow Castle, moving at a speed faster than a horse.

This one seems to be Princess Rumia.

There's a luminous point with a marker near Princess Rumia.

Apparently, she's together with the female adventurer who contacted the weaselkin.

Her marker was in the Royal Capital when I checked it earlier, so she must have taken Princess Rumia from the Royal Capital after that.

I check the present situation of the princess by invoking the space magic [Clairvoyance].

The female explorer is moving in a golem together with princess Rumia in the cockpit.

The princess is desperately clinging to the female explorer while shutting her eyes, there's no trace of her being violently restrained.

She probably sought the female explorer's help in order to save Princess Rimia.

"--How is it?"

"Princess Rimia has been kidnapped by the crime guild people, they're in the Shadow Forest. Princess Rumia seems to be chasing them."

Even if I said the princesses' names, it didn't really mean anything to everyone besides Hikaru and Arisa who had the personal appraisal skills, since the names weren't that important, I summarized the explanation.

"I'll help them out a bit."

It's not really our problem, but in order to enjoy the festival cuisine, I declared to save the princesses quickly.

"Wait."

"Please wait, Master."

Arisa and Liza controlled me who stood up.

"Although Master can probably do it alone, isn't it easier if we divide the work?"

"That's right. At lease please take Tama along."

I agreed to Arisa and Liza and it's decided that Hikaru and Arisa will go help Princess Rumia's side while I will go to Princess Rimia's side along with Tama.

The reason why Arisa is working with Hikaru is in order to secure the way to do teleportation for them.

--Putting that aside, Liza.

Please don't lift up Tama who's holding a venison in her mouth, presenting her to me like she's a stuffed toy.

"Don't worry be happy~"

◇

"Then, I'll leave this side to you."

"OK."

"Un, don't let your guard down okay."

I brought Hikaru and Arisa ahead of the place Princess Rumia is heading with space magic [Teleport Gate].

Hikaru is in Nanashi's disguise and Arisa is wearing the golden armor.

Afterward I opened a [Teleport Gate] in front of the Shadow Forest and moved with Tama there.

The Shadow Forest map is a teleportation-prohibited area just like the castle of Ban the True Ancestor in the labyrinth's lower layer so I couldn't directly teleport inside.

"The castle pitch black~?"

Tama pointed at a spire of a jet black castle that looks like a silhouette on top of the forest.

As one might expect of something called Shadow Castle, it's swaying like I'm looking at a mirage.

I hid a carved seal board to be the landmark for Arisa's teleportation.

"Now then, let's go Tama."

"Aye aye~"

'Pyon', Tama jumped and landed on my shoulder, she then took the pose to ride on it.

Since Tama is wearing the golden armor, it feels slightly painful.

It became a different map once we walked a bit in the forest, so I used [All Map Exploration] magic to get the details of the blank area.

Hikaru said that the shadow sentries were protecting it, but there's no one inside the castle that occupies half of the forest.

Princess Rimia and the crime guild people are stranded in front of the barrier protecting the castle.

According to Hikaru, the barrier should be dissolved if there's a royalty carrying an item called [Necklace of the Treasured Key], it seems there's some kind of problem there.

"--A fake?"

"I'm not a fake."

I could hear such conversations when we I landed on a pitch black tree branch surrounding them.

The crime guild boss is holding a pink-colored wig, Princess Rimia's hair color has changed to golden.

Looks like she doesn't have the pink hair peculiar to Rumooku royalty.

"There's no point if a royalty doesn't have colored hair! You damn fake."

The enraged crime guild boss complained unreasonably and swung his curved sword.

--Oops, that's bad.

"Utsusemi no jutsu~?"

Ninja Tama replaced the princess with a log while camouflaging it with a white smoke.

Retorting, "Isn't that [Switching] jutsu", here would be boorish of me, so I used this chance to wear Nanashi mask.

"--Who the!"

"Hello, nice to meet you. Although I think our acquaintance will be short, best regards okay."

While feeling nostalgic with Nanashi's way of talking that I haven't used for a while, I knocked down the crime guild people with the anti-personal [Remote Stun] magic.

Some screamed, some tried to ran away, and some used their friends or trees as a shield, but I gained total control in about 10 seconds.

Ninja Tama skilfully collected the torches they had before they fell.

"Are you injured anywhere?"

Even though I asked her that, the princess only keeps shivering with a pale face without answering.

"Is it painful somewhere~?"

The princess shook her head to Tama's question and asked back with a trembling voice.

"Are you shadow sentry-sama who's going to punish Rimia for entering the forest?"

"We're not."

Once she understood that she was mistaken, she looked relieved and fainted.

Well, I can't blame her.

This sheltered princess was kidnapped by these evil looking people after all.

I let the little girl to sleep nearby, asked Tama to capture the kidnappers, and then I went around to collect the horses that have dispersed in the forest.

I met Arisa and the others who are together with Princess Rumia's party when I had collected the last horse.

I've made a bonfire reclyed from the thieves' torches as a mark.

Moving differently from Arisa and the others, it seem this country's second prince and his troops are coming toward here.

Let's push the duty to take the princesses back to them.

"Rimiaaaaaa"

"Princess-chan, running is dangerous."

Princess Rumia who found Princess Rimia ran toward her while screaming loudly.

The female adventurer supported her when it looked like she was going to fall.

Behind the female adventurer, two of her friends in manned golems are following.

Judging from Hikaru's and Arisa's expressions who are accompanying them, it seems the adventurers didn't kidnap Princess Rimia.

It wouldn't be an emotional reunion if she were still unconscious, so I woke Princess Rimia with wakening magic.

"--Ane-sama?"

"Rimiaaaaaa"

Little girls who don't look different besides their hair color are crying in relief.

"Quick as always~"

"The opponents were just some common criminals after all."

Arisa talked to me while looking at the little girls.

"Isn't fine, peace is the best."

Hikaru finished with a smile while putting her hand on Arisa's head.

Right right, no incident is the best.

I looked up at the sky while confirming a luminous point moving at high speed reflected on the radar.

14-31. Water Peach Kingdom (4)

Satou's here. Once you're familiar with a habit, it comes out of you unconsciously. You can say that it's been optimized, but there was a time when it backfired on me when I changed my job and environment.

◇

Although I think Hikaru's flag-like line isn't the culprit, several Wyvern Riders from Rumooku Kingdom's area are coming here flying.

"Pihyororo~?"

"That sounds like a flute we've heard somewhere isn't it?"

The source of the sound seem to be the Wyvern Riders although we can't see them here because of the trees obstructing the view.

"Guaaaaa"

"Uuruururururu"

"Faoooooooo"

I shift my glance toward the queer sounds, the tied kidnappers on the ground are writhing in agony while anguishing.

Parts of their bodies and faces are moving like different creatures, it's quite a horror.

"Uge, that seems dangerous!"

"Princess-chan, come here with your little sister! Keep a distant from these guys."

Arisa screamed, the female adventurer urged the two princesses to escape with the adventurers.

"Hikaru! Take care of the wyverns."

"Leave it to me!"

Hikaru kicks the tree and disappears into the sky.

She should be fine with that side.

"What about Tama~?"

"I'm counting on Tama to protect Arisa and the others."

"Nin nin~"

Tama joins her hands in Ninja-style and runs to Arisa.

The kidnappers cut their binding while I was feeling grossed with the spectacle and stood up after becoming grotesque-looking.

I remember these figures.

They look like someone who has excessively taken Fiend Drugs.

The difference is the existence of the wriggling red rope-like light magic circles on their bodies--They're likely the human version of the [Red Rope

Monsters] that attacked Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital.

--What a bad taste.

I'm sorry for the adventurers who are holding their sword and wands in alert, but I'll deal with this quick.

I hate splatter after all.

I invoke the advanced force magic [Magic Arm] to immobilize the kidnappers, and drain their magic power all at once with [Mana Drain Thorn].

This magic is a version of [Mana Drain] that works against many people at once, furnished with thorn-like light that grow in all directions as a visual.

The quantity of the MP drain is less than the original but it's more than enough for these guys.

The kidnappers whose magic power have been drained become mummy-like.

It's still better than being grotesque-looking but it seems they won't go back to their original figures like the people who were addicted with Fiend Drug.

--Nn?

The luminous points of the adventurers reflected on the radar are moving toward the Shadow Castle.

Come to think of it, that female adventurer undertook the job of carrying the [Magic Creature for Intelligence Gathering] into the Shadow Castle from the weaselkin huh.

She probably took Princess Rumia to open the barrier.

"--Master!"

When I turned around to Arisa's voice, I saw Arisa and the others being pulled by countless black hands toward barrier's beyond.

I immediately used space magic [Article Pull (Abort)] to pull them back, but it was canceled in vain.

--I forgot that this was a teleportation-prohibited area.

While regretting my foolish mismanagement, I moved to the foremost black hand with Ground Shrink and helped Tama escape from it.

It seems Holy swords can easily cut the black hands but they grow back every time they're cut so Tama couldn't escape from them.

I stretched my hand toward Arisa but tsunami-like shadow hands pushed me away, she got kidnapped together with the princesses and the others to beyond the barrier.

"Barrier~?"

Tama repeatedly hits the surface of the barrier that was closed before her.

Then, Hikaru came back while dragging beastkin people who seemed to be the Wyvern Riders.

"Satou, I've defeated them--wait, what about Arisa and the others?"

"They were taken by the shadow."

Looking at the map, Arisa and the others seem to have been taken to the innermost room in the maze-like castle.

"Wait a minute, I'll use the barrier puncture magic--"

"There's no need."

I stopped Hikaru's talk midway.

--Things like barrier, I'll just tear them off.

I'm being dominated with a slightly violent thought from the impatience of losing Arisa.

While doing self-analysis like such, I throw away my restrain and extend my hand at the barrier.

--Huh?

For some reason, the barrier doesn't reject me, my hand is slipping right through it.

Tama who's still hitting the barrier is still denied of entry.

I tried to pull Tama's hand and we could enter together.

"Hikaru, let's go together. Tama, wait at the rock with the carved seal board after you've delivered these guys to the knight."

"Un, I got it."

"Tama will wait."

Hikaru agreed with my instruction, Tama nodded and talked with a stiff not-slow voice.

After patting Tama's head once to relieve her, I took Hikaru along beyond the barrier.

--Now, let's go help Arisa.

◇

"<<DANCE>> Claiomh Solais"

Hikaru uses Claiomh Solais to turn the Shadow Sentries blocking our way into dust.

I wonder if it's just my imagination, I feel that the Shadow Sentries are only attacking Hikaru since awhile ago.

Perhaps they remember about their fight with Hikaru a long time ago?

While getting distracted by that, we passed through the forest and arrived before the castle.

There's a cliff before our eyes and a pitch black castle towering over us on top of the cliff.

"They're coming again!"

Shadow Sentries are appearing one after another from the shadow of the trees and rocks.

It's like a spawn point with unlimited spawn, and even if a hundred of them appear, they're nothing but a hindrance since they're only level 30.

Furthermore, they don't exist on the map until after they've appeared which is annoying.

--<<Remote Shining Javelin>>.

Just like the name suggest, homing spears that emit intense light defeat the Shadow Sentries.

Once I, who was ignored by the sentries, defeated one of the them, they seemed to deem me as an enemy and started to attack me.

"They don't give you experience, so we'd better use『Light Net』to catch them and leave them alone!"

"Got it."

Following Hikaru's advice, I use several Light Nets to catch the pursuing sentries, stopping them.

Thanks to that, we successfully invaded the castle.

It seems Arisa and the others are in the innermost room of the castle, [Master Room], in fainted states.

I can't use teleport and Clairvoyance magic so I can only see them from the map's information.

The situation uncontrollably worries me.

"Ichirou-nii, Arisa would be fine, you shouldn't get impatient."

"Yeah, I'm just worried if Arisa would go too far."

I replied Hikaru with a light tone somehow.

Still, my mind was able to calm down somewhat from the conversation.

We quickly advance the path after thanking Hikaru.

With Arisa's current ability, she should be fine even against a demon lord, but I can't say that out loud.

Some god or great demon lord feel like they'd appear if I do that.

◇

"--Hikaru, let's stop a bit here."

I let Hikaru who's breathing roughly to rest, take out an accelerated magic gun and annihilate [Shadow Sentries] and some mixed level 50 [Shadow Knights] with [Holy Bullets].

The bullets hit the wall and got repelled while leaving sound like when you drop waterdrops at hot oil.

....Stopping holy bullets huh, that's quite a sturdy wall.

Still, on top of the increasing enemy level, their spawn rhythm has increased too.

We're just wasting time if this keeps on.

Arisa and the others are not injured for the time being, but on top of not knowing the other party's objective, there's no guarantee that they will keep being safe.

Wonder if I can make a short cut somehow?

I took out a small white knife from Storage and cut the wall with it.

--Yup, looks like it'll go well.

"■■■■■■■■ ■■ ■ ■■■....."

Next, I point a wand made of [True Silver] that has good magic accuracy diagonally toward the wall and begin to chant the forbidden spell of destruction magic [Banishing Perforation].

"Ichirou-nii, the wall here can't be broken you know. The child who came with me in the past said that it had 『Non-Destructive Element』."

I lift the corner of my mouth to reply Hikaru.

We'll see the result soon.

The forbidden spell consumes magic power that equals the Meteor Shower's.

I can't afford the chance of Arisa and the others getting injured so the target's direction is the opposite of them.

"....■■■■■■■■■■ Banishing Perforation."

A collapsing phenomenon from the concept of [Destruction] that can't be comprehended by the science I know is slowly destroying the wall.

Judging from the preface of the spell code, it seems to be a spell that recreates the power of dragon fang that [Penetrates all].

--Still, the control of the magic is difficult.

If I lose focus, the power of [Destruction] might even erase me as the user.

I maintain the wand that feels like it'll fly off with my physical strength, enduring until the spell ends.

The wall in front of me has been erased, and many walls beyond it are also bored through.

In the end, it seem to even reach the sky.

"Uwah, you really destroyed the wall."

Hikaru muttered in astonishment.

I drink a magic potion and calm my rough breath.

This was a test to see whether the wall could be broken with magic, but I used a white knife made from the remain of the black dragon's fang to test whether it could be broken itself.

"Now then, time for the real thing."

I use [Banishing Perforation] once again in order to create a shortcut in the maze-like corridors.

Unfortunately I couldn't pierce through the target location.

Judging from the sensation, it seems the area surrounding the [Master Room] is protected by an Anti Magic type of barrier.

"Let's go."

"Un, let's!"

Together with Hikaru, I jumped into the hole created by the [Banishing Perforation].

◇

"Tubes? Hikaru, do you know what is the facility here?"

"U~n, I didn't reach here when I came before so I don't know."

After entering the door at the end of the hole, we came into a room full of glass tubes that looked like the ones used to create homonculus that I saw in the Royal Capital.

Among many of them, one has some kind of liquid with something floating inside.

"--But there's no mistake that this is an important facility isn't it."

"That seems to be the case."

Shadow Knights appear in every direction of the room--and they're strong at level 99 to boot.

Hikaru might get hurt if I don't fight them seriously.

--Eat this.

I cut down the Shadow Knights with the advanced light magic [Photon Laser].

I understand from the fights so far, these shadows are weak against light magic indeed.

--This is bad.

The Photon Laser that hit the wall was reflected and cut down the unexpected facilities.

Glass pieces are scattered, black sparks paint the space.

"Ichirou-nii, behind you!"

A Shadow Knight is closing in even while breaking down into dust.

I fill the holy sword Durandal I have in hand with magic power and imitate the light magic finisher that hero Hayato showed once before.

--<<Shining Blade>>.

The shock wave produced by Durandal annihilated the Shadow Knight like an ink dropped into water.

"Ichirou-nii, you overdid it!"

Glass pipes and equipment as tall as a person are breaking one after another behind Hikaru who's running toward the exit at full force.

Looks like they're broken by the after-waves of the light magic and the finisher.

The one with something floating inside is protected by Flexible Shield so it's safe. I collect the pipe into the Storage as is.

I'll check the inside after we've saved Aria and the others.

While deploying wind magic protection to evade the dust, I follow after Hikaru.

◇

"Arisa!"

After kicking a monochrome door that's as tall as a person, we came into a place that looked like a throne room.

It appears the level 75 [Great Shadow Knight] that were endlessly spawning just before aren't appearing in this throne room.

This place is filled with serene atmosphere.

And, Arisa and the princesses are sleeping on the gigantic 10-meter tall thrones on the back.

I reach it in one leap with Flash Drive and wake Arisa up with wakening magic.

"Ehehe, Satou"

The half-sleeping Arisa hugs my neck, I stop her from stealing my lips by pining her forehead.

"I'll do as many kisses as you like later, just wake up quick."

"Fue? --Eh, Master?"

Arisa who was laughing nihe nihe with half-asleep eyes woke up and got back to her sober face.

Apparently she didn't hear my statement earlier.

"I'm sorry, I've become a drag."

"It's fine as long as you're safe."

I can manage somehow as long as she didn't die.

On the other hand, I noticed that Hikaru who's under the throne seemed strange.

"Ichirou-nii, look at that!"

Hikaru points at--.

14-32. Water Peach Kingdom (5)

Satou's here. I think there's only a few people who can immediately draw their face without seeing a mirror or a picture. Unexpectedly enough, people tend to forget their face don't they.

◇

"Ichirou-nii, look at that!"

It seems Hikaru is pointing at the wall near the throne.

'I wanna see', so Arisa who jumped from my arm said, and then she looked at the thing Hikaru was pointing at.

--Painting?

A black-haired young man carrying a pink-haired little girl are drawn there.

He looks like a Japanese man and somehow feels familiar. He has athlete-style mustache, but it's hard to say it suits him.

"His face somehow looks familiar even though I never meet him~"

"You're right--"

Arisa tilted her head in puzzlement as she saw the picture.

I jump to Hikaru's side and ask the reason why she's surprised.

"What about that painting?"

"Eh? You really don't realize it? Look at it better!"

Hikaru pulls my arm and points at the painting like she can't believe it.

--I don't understand.

"It's how Ichirou-nii looked before!"

"I never grown that kind of mustache y'know."

"He looks exactly like you besides that part."

So Hikaru said, but does it look really like me?

My face doesn't look that strange y'know?

"His face looks somewhat lolicon-like isn't."

"Isn't that the face of a father who's adoring his children?"

Arisa's evaluation is harsh.

I said something to protect the man in the painting, perhaps it's because they're saying that it looks like me.

--Crisis perception.

A shadow overflowed from the gap of the painting.

Looks like the guardian of this room finally showed itself.

"Ichirou-nii, that shadow is dangerous. I've a really bad feeling about it."

"Agreed."

I hug Arisa and Hikaru, move onto the throne, collect the two princesses with [Magic Hand] and evacuate from between the thrones.

Nevermind Arisa, the two princesses would get hurt if I used Flash Drive normally, so I invoked two magic [Shock Absorption] and [Inertia Neutralizer] to protect them.

I dive into the hole created from the magic test-firing and jump out of the castle.

"Huu, I thought I'd die...."

Arisa who was dead tired in my arm said some dangerous remark.

"Ichirou-nii, it's coming."

"Looks like it."

I leave the two princesses to Arisa and Hikaru and look back at the castle.

Its information according to AR reading is--UNKNOWN.

It's the same reading as the [Demon God's Casted Offshots] that attacked Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital and the little girl who appeared during my fight with the Dog-Head demon lord.

--Then that is a god.

Or perhaps a god's familiar, no doubt about it.

"Hikaru, take the three along and escape to beyond the barrier wall."

"Un, got it!"

"Master, please don't overexert yourself okay."

Hikaru flies away with Arisa who said it like a worried mother.

Seeing that, the shadow lets out a suspicious roar from its crescent moon-like mouth.

It's a suspicious sound that makes your mind destabilize just from hearing it.

--LOWRWYEEEE.

>[Age of Gods Language] Skill Acquired.

The mysterious roar just now was a word huh.

I was preparing to use Break Magic since I thought it was a spell chant, it was a waste.

I quickly activate the skill since I might be able to avoid a needless battle with it.

『O scoundrel who snatched away God's brides.』

『You've mistaken them for another people. They are the princesses of Rumooku Kingdom.』

『O small one, your nonsense is useless. You are stealing girls who posses the mark that is their pink hair.』

Fumu, apparently, Rumooku myth has some truth in it.

However, I would not let some innocent little girls be sacrificed.

『Are you a God? If so, declare your name.』
『A god I am not. For I am the apostle guarding in absence of God.』
『Do pray tell of Apostle-dono's master.』

Oops, I caught on the apostle's strange way of talking.

At any rate, the [Dragon Talisman] that I've prepared as an anti-apostle countermeasure doesn't seem to be working at all.

『For it is insolent to ask the emperor name of God. For the name of the emperor who rules everything in this world is widely known in the whole world. You'd do well to worship the ally of the supreme--』

Our words can't connect, or rather I somehow feel like talking with a bad AI.

『--If that is be so, depart this world painlessly, and return anew.』

The shadow's extended arms are attacking from both side with speed so fast it looks like a frame skip.

--Fast.

Arms which leaped with speed so fast it's creating whirlwind cut rally before my eyes.

While evading them within a hair's breadth, I tried cutting them with the holy sword Durandal I had in my hand, but as expected it went through them.

So these Unknown Series really can only be wounded with the Divine Sword.

I have a hunch that the Holy Magic Sword from back then most likely can't cut them either.

Just in case, it might be better to prepare a replacement for the Divine Sword.

The shadow is still repeating its crude baby-like attacks, but each of them is too fast, it's creating sonic boom-like shockwaves.

It's not that I can't evade them, but it's quite hard.

The shockwaves turned the trees inside the barrier into a disastrous scene. Fortunately the area outside the barrier is unaffected.

Looking at the map, Hikaru and the others have safely evacuated outside the barrier.

Now I can fight without worry.

With a speed that makes it looks like it has clone bodies, the baby's repeated blows come flying at me.

I use Flash Drive to evade those, and then jump toward the shadow's chest when I find a chance.

"Uoo"

Sharp shadow spears attacked me from the shadow's chest.

I put the Divine Sword in front of my body like a shield to block them.

I cut the shadow in front of me while scattering purple sparks.

I had let my guard down since the opponent was human-shaped.
However, I changed this predicament into a chance.

I arrive at its chest and stab the Divine Sword into it.

『Impossibleeeeee』

I ignore the shadow's scream and cut it until its head.

『You small one shouldn't have been able to cut a familiar of God.』

I evade the giant arms that are trying to stop me within a hair's breadth, and then cut the shadow's face which has a shocked mouth that only serves as an appearance.

『You....Who are you....』

It seems the Divine Sword is giving more damage than it looks like, the places that have been cut are disappearing into purple dust.

『Hero Nanashi』
『....Damn you....Parion's pawn....』

The castle is gradually disappearing into dust together with the shadow.

>[God's Soldier Silhouette] is defeated.

It's quite different than the Parion Holy State's pseudeo-god's soldier.

The reason why the Auto Loot isn't working is probably because the adventurers and the explorer probes they bring into the area.

I collect the probes I found in the area, and throw the adventurers who had wounds all over their body to outside where Hikaru and others are.

It wasn't a fatal injury, so I'll let them feel the pain to reflect on their own recklessness.

It looked like I spent too much time, most of the loot inside the castle had turned into dust along with the castle, I was only able to get the power reactor part.

It seems I'll have to wait for another chance to get the precious so-called age of gods documents.

"Wlcome~?"

"I'm back Tama."

Tama jumped to my head when I teleported outside the barrier.

I settle things while apologizing for making her worry.

I pushed the princesses to the knights, collected everyone and teleported back to the solitary island's palace.

Today is tiring.

Investigating the new mystery can be done later.

I lay my body in the bed together with the others like usual.

Is it just my imagination, I feel that there are more people than usual, but I'll check if after I wake up.

Losing to the drowsiness, I slept like a log.

◇

"Your Highness, is that it?"

The next day after we saved the princesses from the Shadow Castle, we formally visited Rumooku Kingdom with the tour ministry's airship.

After doing some greetings in the Royal Castle, I requested to take a look at the Japanese-summoning site, and since they pleasantly agreed, I immediately went to see it.

"That's right, we can't go from here due to the fissure. It's a bit troublesome but we need to go around the spire over there."

The crown prince of this country is graciously guiding us.

At first, the half sister of Princess Menea, the fourth princess was the one going to do it, but he volunteered to be the guide almost forcefully.

"Viscount Pendragon, this is the place where the Japanese were summoned. As you can see, the building has collapsed from the greater demon's attack, the magic equipment for the summoning have been broken, and more than half of the summoning magic circle is damaged."

The crown prince led us to a partially destroyed palace.

The scenery that can be seen from there is completely different than the town where we enjoyed the festival at yesterday.

The town on the opposite side of the Royal Castle is in shambles.

Burnt carbonized pillars and wreckages are piled up, crows seeking the dead flesh are eerily crawling.

Nevertheless, it seems they've started rebuilding, slaves are engaged in labor supervised by the soldiers.

"Was that done by the greater demon?"

"--That's right. If they felt like it, this country might have already been erased from the map."

The crown prince answered me while looking grim.

It's understandable seeing that there's hardly anyone strong enough to fight a demon-class enemy in this country.

"Viscount-sama, let us confirm the magic circle."

Hikaru who's acting as Lady K the guard reminded me about our original purpose.

"Ah, that's right--Your Highness, may I?"
"Of course."

We already got the permission from the king, but I checked with the crown prince who's accompanying us to show deference.

"Hm~m, so this is the magic circle used to summon people from another world..."

Hikaru muttered in a low voice.

--What is this? I can read it normally y'know?

『Hikaru, can you read this magic circle?』

I silently asked through『Telephone』, Hikaru lightly waved her head.
Apparently, only I can read it.

"The weaselkin magician was boasting how they had remodeled the transcribed summoning magic circle of the Saga Empire. Apparently, it was written in an ancient language."

Crown prince, thank you for the information.

Apparently, I'm able to read it thanks to the [Age of Gods Language] skill I got from the fight with the Silhouette of the God's Soldier.

Easy mode is nice indeed.

I can understand the content to some extent even if it's broken as long as I can read the writing.

There's probably no point to this in simple form, but I might be able to learn the way to go back home if I compare it with the hero summoning magic circle in Saga Empire.

I'm already fully planning to stay here, but I don't want to sever my connections with the people in my former world dryly, and I might use it to send Aoi and Shin back to their worlds if they wished for it.

After getting the necessary information, I saw some kind of purple thing in the gap of the wreckage.

According to the AR reading, it's a [Yuriko's Hair].

It's probably the reincarnated person, the king's little sister and the pivot of the summoning, Yuriko's hair strand.

"Viscount Pendragon, that hair is of my aunt."

"By aunt you mean--"

The crown prince holds out his hand while looking stiff toward me who's holding a purple hair strand.

After I gave him the hair, he wrapped it in a handkerchief and preciously put it in his chest.

"Due to the greater demon's magic attack, there was not even a body remaining of my aunt to mourn for. Even though she might be a great criminal to your kingdom and Saga Empire, she was our important family.... I'd like to put at least a hair into her royal family grave."

--No body was remaining huh.

It's not unusual with ranged advanced level magic or forbidden spell, but if this were a shounen manga, she might reappear while saying, "I'm actually alive all along" or something....

Apart from that, I wonder what he meant by [great criminal]?

From the Japanese's point of view, it's inevitable for her to be called a [great criminal], but I wonder if there's a law saying [Summoning Japanese people is forbidden] in Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire?

We left Rumooku Kingdom without any particular impression perhaps due to that incoherent things distracting me.

It must be because the event in the day before left too deep of an impression.

◇

Now then, I'll confirm various things before leaving the country.

The criminals who kidnapped the sixth princess Rimia are naturally executed.

As a punishment for the fifth princess Rumia who left the Royal Capital without permission, she's prohibited from eating after-meal snacks for 10 days.

Capital punishment was also considered for the officials and soldiers who drank liquor and let the royalty to be kidnapped, but they only ended up getting whipped due to both the princesses' appeal and the lack of personnel.

I feel that it's quite a generous punishment, but it's another country's problem so I decide not to care.

The country confiscated the firm of the suspected weaselkin, but the weaselkin who was the owner of the firm had escaped, the confiscated property of the firm was too little compared to its scale, so they concluded that it was a planned offense and the king dispatched an official protest and a messenger to the Weasel Empire.

The three adventurers seem to have fled the country along with the artifacts they safely got from the Shadow Castle.

It seems they pushed half of the artifacts to Hikaru who they mistook as their life savior.

And, the blond sixth princess Rimia is--.

"Thank you very much, Viscount-sama."

"It's nothing much. I'm only doing as His Majesty asked; to send Your Highness to the Duchy Capital."

I'm only going to help the princess who's smart beyond her age to enter the childhood school of Shiga Kingdom Royal Academy.

She should stop being conscious with her non-pink hair complex if she lives in a different place, and her big sister Princess Menea should be able to help her when she's troubled if it's in the Royal Capital.

While being careful as to not raise some little girl flag carelessly, I directed the ship to toward the Duchy Capital and solemnly drove the taxi.

We reunited with the one-armed magic hunter Kon boy when we stopped by the [Puta Town] to stock up tomato seedlings.

On top of being trained the basic by a Shiga Eight Swords, he also got a magic sword from a mysterious black-clothed person.

....Even good luck should have a limit.

As he wanted to go to the Labyrinth City, I sent him to the Duchy Capital together with Princess Rimia.

He got along with Princess Rimia in the journey, so he was probably going to be her guard until the Royal Capital.

I pushed the things after that to Toruma, so it should go well no doubt.

After that, as Nanashi, I told the King of Rumooku Kingdom that the Shadow Castle in the barrier had disappeared, and I had set it so the fixed barrier would be opened if the [Rumooku King] recite the command word.

Further, in consideration for sightseeing, I've also made it so that the stereoscopy image of the Shadow Castle can be seen outside the barrier.

Many magic tools suited for the power reactor part are too dangerous, and it seems like it'll bring unnecessary misfortunes if a small country were to posses it, so I told the king about undiscovered gold and coal pit sites instead.

People would probably stop calling it a poor country in 10 years.

14-33. Research and an Act in Daily Life

Satou's here. Although daily life isn't restricted to peace, I think it's important to immerse yourself in your hobby while forgetting your work once in a while. Although you have no choice but to accept if you were to fall into a carnage due to that....

◇

"Fumu, reproducing it was harder than I thought...."

I stare at the prototype [Float Core] floating in the air.

"As expected of my Satou."

"No, Tina-sama. He's our Satou."

The Princess and Sera who came to watch said some strange things behind me.

I feel like I'm seeing illusions of a tiger and a dragon on them even while they're smiling.

I'd be glad if someone said I belong to Aze-san instead.

"--By the way, Satou. Is this magic device different from aerodynamic engine?"

"Yes, it has a completely different theory--"

Since the princess asked, I taught her about the result of my research.

Aerodynamic engine's approach is by changing magic power into wind element to create buoyancy.

This Float Core is made from a high purity Darkness Stone, making use of its [Absorption] effect to suck the gravity at the place where the Float Core is situated at, showing a fantasy power.

If a physic teacher were to hear this, they would narrate a long lecture about how unscientific it is for gravity.

Further, it doesn't seem to be an anti-gravity where the directional is reversed.

The Darkness Stone which had no use besides for making a darkroom or for counterbalancing magic is in the limelight of this.

"Kyaaaa"

"Tina-sama!"

The Princess who lost to her curiosity and approached the [Float Core] seemed to have gotten too close and entered the effective range.

Sera jumped out to save the Princess who was floating in the zero gravity but she bumped against her and began to rotate wildly.

I think they'll go out of the range before long, but letting the skirts of these girls of marriageable age out in the open like this is probably bad.

I tell them, "I'm coming to help you", and then I gently catch them with [Magic Hand] and put them on the safe ground.

"--Did you see?"

The Princess asked with upturned eyes while blushing red.

"The rotation was too fast, I wasn't able to."

Of course it's a lie.

The Princess was wearing a white pant with snow crystal-like embroidery on the side, Sera's was a close-cut G-string you wouldn't have thought she was a former priestess. Truly ni--I mean. Truly, outrageous.

The former was made from common silk, the later was made from the jade silk from the Duchy Capital.

Previously the Princess and Sera wore the standard Shiga Kingdom's drawers and breast sash, but then they got influenced by Arisa and the others once they started living in the solitary island's palace and now they're wearing modern underwear.

I think they're Echigoya Firm's items, I'll tell the firm to add garter belt in the lineup.

"Please take--the responsibility."

"Please don't worry, I didn't see it you know."

Sera who's bright red despite her light tone is saying something that's hard to judge whether it's serious or a joke.

I varnished over that lightly and took the two's hands to go the other area.

"Master~?"

"Master, nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi found and jumped to me.

Since the two are wearing the golden armor, they're probably going to play in the blue territory or the labyrinth.

"Are you going out?"

"The usual, picnic~?"

"Lulu made us bento nodesu."

When I asked, the two took out their bento from their magic bags and showed them to me.

"Meatt meat meat~ meat burger~?"

"Today it's a wonderful meat burger with hamburg steak put in between nanodesu!"

I stopped the two from opening the bundles, and then I sent them off at the blue territory gate after reminding them to wear the Scout Monocles to judge the enemy's strength.

The [Scout Monocle] is my magic tool creation that can roughly tell the enemy's strength, showing [Weak], [A bit Weak], [About Equal], [Strong], [Absolutely can't Win] in accordance to the enemy's level.

The reason why there's only a few information is because they're tuned for

Pochi and Tama.

Arisa insisted it to show numerical value, but I think something easy to understand is better.

We went to the living room, Arisa and Mia had opened a thick book there.

Arisa who noticed us turned around.

"Master, Aze-tan contacted us just now. She said something about the high elves of Beriunan Clan protesting."

"Ah, that huh--"

They probably heard about how I requested only Burainan Clan, who likes researching, to analyze the building material I got from the Shadow Castle.

Since Beriunan Clan and Burainan Clan are rivals, they must have complained it to Aze-san whom they could contact directly.

Both the clans' abilities aren't different, but since I only had a few of the material on hand, I had to choose only one.

Thus, I prioritized Burainan Clan that was closer and didn't have the tendency to be impatient with result.

"I know what they want, so I'll personally go to Beriunan Forest after contacting Aze-san."

"Must be difficult to even have to go to the other continent.... Can't you just contact them?"

I probably have to personally go for this business.

◇

"Is this the specimen?"

After apologizing to Aze-san with Telephone, I came to Beriunan Clan alone.

I'm currently talking with a high elf of Beriunan Clan, Salisaize-san.

She's an intellectual girl wearing a white robe, but since her face looks exactly the same as Aze-san's, it feels very odd.

Since the high elves were created by the Creator God from nine archetypes, a lot of them have the same appearance.

There are five high elves in this Beriunan Clan, I'm amazed that they don't mistake them since two of them have the same faces.

Leaving that aside--.

"Yes, according to my analysis magic, it's a type of artificial substance composed of the force magic 『Shield』 and 『Cube』--"

"Whoops there, please don't say some unnecessary information before I begin the inspection."

I made my analysis magic from Hikaru's hint and [All Map Exploration], it can draw up information from the Dragon Vein to see the original material and the structure of a specific item.

I don't want to use it that much since it needs a throughput so large I can't open the Menu during the magic, on top of that, the gotten information is so minute.

Simply put, it's painful for my brain and it makes me tired.

Salisaize-san who got the material starts up the analysis device while humming.

When I was staring at the hip line of a gleeful intellectual beauty, two high elves came in from outside.

"Satou! So you were here!"

"Geez, you didn't come no matter how many times we called you, I got tired of waiting!"

I was taken by high elves who had the same faces like a twin toward the observatory deck in the top of Beriunan's World Tree.

Further, Salisaize-san who was absorbed in her experiment didn't pay any attention to me at all.

"Now, look at the artificial spirit exclusively for the void sky from your idea, the『Nautilus Three Full Burnern』!"

"Unlike the『Nautilus Two』that disappeared in the distant void sky, this time its mobility is extraordinary."

I watch the artificial spirit at the observatory deck the two guided me to.

Unlike the unbranded [Nautilus] before, the [Nautilus Three] that appeared in front of my eyes looks far apart from a real Nautilus.

If I have to say, it looks more like an Auger Shell.

"That's some great mobility."

It certainly lives up to their bragging as it has splendid acceleration and orbit adjustment capabilities.

"Isn't it, isn't it."

"Now we can win against Burainan Clan's 『Vulgtmm Ai』!"

The two who are in good mood throw up their chests like children.

Burainan Clan's [Vulgtmm Ai] is an artificial spirit shaped like an eyeball, it puts more importance to long ranged attack through laser than mobility.

They said that they made it after being influenced by the laser I used to exterminate the jellyfish back then.

Since I copied the artificial spirit summoning spell of the [Nautilus Three] earlier, perhaps I should try making an artificial spirit summoning spell that has high offensive power and high mobility by combining it with the [Vulgtmm Ai] spell I heard back then.

"--Alright, we're having a match!"

Using World Phone magic, the high elves who were happy with my praise immediately challenged Burainan Clan's high elves to a match.

I guess it's inevitable for me to be the referee for the new artificial spirits match?

Well, I'm borrowing both clans' power to analyze the material after all, I'll do this much as many time as they want.

◇

"--And then, who was the winner?"

"It was a draw."

After finishing my work as the referee, I went back to the tree house in Boruenan Forest and had a talk with Aze-san and the others about the situation while having some tea.

The highly mobile Nautilus Three evaded all of the lasers, but it couldn't break through the barrage of the pulse lasers, so the match ended in a draw with both running out of gas.

It seems their next target is exploring the way to improve the fuel consumption without cutting down the spirit's ability.

I feel that the High Elves from those two clans are living a frantic life considering elves have a long life.

When I was thinking that, I felt a warm softness on my right arm.

When I look there, Aze-san is leaning on my shoulder.

"Ehehe~"

I put my head on Aze-san's head who looks overjoyed.

Lua-san who's sitting in front of us is glaring at us while looking like she'll vomit sugar, but I'm ignoring her since it's just the usual.

I move to the main issue as to why I've come here after I've replenished my Azenium supply.

"Aze-san, are you familiar with floating castle?"

"The place where Satou fought an apostle that looked like shadow recently?"

"Yes, I'm wondering if there's more of that--"

Aze-san puts her index finger on her chin, and then she probes her memory while looking up.

"U~n, I don't know."

'Tehehe' while laughing awkwardly, she muttered 'you should ask my memory in the world tree'.

Asking about legend really should be with demi-god mode Aze-san after all.

I went to the world tree with Aze-san.

"--Floating castle? Around 30.000 years ago, they started being distributed to religious countries in order to collect believers for the gods."

Aze-san who's connected to her memory in the world tree answers my question.

"The gods caused many disasters such as floods and eruptions on the ground, and the people of the floating castles were able to gain followers from the countries on the ground which were on the verge of destruction."

That's too harsh for something they orchestrated themselves.

"The few people who survived on the ground were treated like slaves by the people of floating castles, they were exploited and exhausted to the limit."

The high elves who investigated the world at that time couldn't stand the painting of hell, thus they decided to sleep in the world trees.

"I heard the first demon lord『Dog-Head Ancient King』that appeared at that time knocked down many floating castles to the ground and sea."

Ah, so this is the reason why Dog-head was extremely contempt with priests.

"There were many that escaped from the demonic hand of the『Dog-Head Ancient King』, but they were persistently knocked down every time the『Dog Head Ancient King』was revived, the one that fell near Saga Empire capital city 2000 years ago was the last in the record."

"Is there any information about the floating castle that fell in Rumooku Kingdom?"

When I asked her, Aze-san closes her eyes to search for info.

Revolving lantern-like images of Aze-san memories are floating around.

"I referred the memories of the other high elves, but there is no record about it."

--No record.

"Most likely, it didn't crash but descended on the land by itself."

"Jet black floating castle is a characteristic of something created by the Demon God, but since it's said that 90% in the golden age were created by the Demon God, it might be hard to identify it."

"There was that much?"

"Yes, I do not know about it directly, but it is said that the Demon God agreed to make the floating castles in exchange for divinity and authority from the gods."

Fumu, so the Demon God was like a craftsman or an expert huh.

Its position is probably like the weaselkin right now.

As the result, humanity decreased sharply, and according to its subordinate, the Dog-Head, humans were even about to go extinct.

"Could I ask one last thing?"

I asked Aze-san whether the Demon God had ever lived in the floating castle.

The answer is--no.

At least, as far as the high elves know, "Gods never lived in the floating castles."

◇

"Have your lolicon awakened?!"

Arisa joyfully shouted when she saw the photograph floating in the air.

That's quite a terrible rumor.

"No. It's the photograph of a body I found on the way to help Arisa."

It's the body of a pink-haired little girl that was in a mysterious floating matter we found in the room with glass pipes before we saved Arisa.

It should be a body from more than 2000 years ago according to the story I heard from Aze-san, yet there's no degradation or damage at all.

I'm thinking of researching the preservation liquid used on the body to see if I can reproduce it.

"It might be surprisingly in a state of apparent death."
"That can't be--"

I can't exactly deny it seeing the fresh-looking dead body in the photograph.

I'll go to Head Miko-san in the Duchy Capital and see if she can be revived.

Putting her in the royal grave of Rumooku can be done after trying that.

"By the way, Master has--"

Arisa hesitated and bit her lips.

"--never time traveled before right? Like maybe you traveled to the present after mass producing pink-haired little girls in Rumooku Kingdom in the past?"

"Nope, never."

I negated Arisa's nonsense with a light tone.

What she really wanted to ask was probably about the [Painting that looked like me in the Shadow Castle].

Arisa must have wanted to ask whether my real identity is the Demon God or not.

"--You're mistaken. We simply look alike."

"Y-yes, that's it isn't it."

I pat Arisa's head who clings to me, and then I hug her to relieve her.

Arisa's worry is understandable, but based on the things I heard from Aze-san's memory, it's possible that a king who summoned me from a parallel world or perhaps his relative let him manipulate the royalty's gene to produce pink-haired children.

If you think about it normally, Demon God has no reason to do such a thing after all.

◇

--nyanyan nyanyanyan.

When Arisa who was being hugged loosened her shoulders, the alarm of the emergency terminal on the wall rang.

--nyanyan nyannyanyan.

That's--.

"--Did something happen to Tama?"

I separated from Arisa who looked up, and invoked [Telephone].
The two are in a mountain slightly away from the blue territory's city.

"Tama! What's wrong."
『In a desperate pinch~?』

With that words I moved to the blue territory with Unit Arrangement and then I opened a gate on their location.

I didn't directly pull them with Unit Arrangement since their health shown on the map is in safety zone.

"Master~?"

"I-I'm sorry nanodesu. Po-Pochi killed it nodesu."

Pochi looks up at me with her tail between her legs and flopped ears.

There's a white lesser dragon about 30 meter big that's in tatters, playing dead near Pochi.

A lot of lesser dragons have brown or ultramarine color, so this dragon is probably an albino.

"It's Pochi's fault for not checking even though it was written don't hunt it nanodesu."

"It's awright~, Stopped it at the last moment~"

Tama pats the dejected Pochi's head.

The [Scout Monocles] I gave to the two will show [Hunting Prohibited (Don't hunt it)] when they look at dragons.

Pochi probably rushed into battle without checking it.

"Pochi used high and elixir from Master, but it won't get up nodesu."

The medicines for Pochi are probably not enough to heal the big body of a lesser dragon.

"I'll heal it real fast."

From the magic column, I pick and use the advanced water magic [<<Heal All Wounds>>].

There should be no need to use the forbidden spell [<<Heal All Dragon Well>>].

For some reason, there's a lot of spells that use dragon name among the highest water magic spells. It's strange considering I've never even seen a water dragon.

Healing water heals the dirtied scales and wounds on the lesser dragon's body.

Its torn arms and wings return to normal, but its broken horns, fangs and cut tail aren't growing back.

I regenerate these loss with magic power overcharged elixir.

"It woke up nodesu!"

The dragon looked at Pochi who raised her voice, and then it takes a surrender pose by putting its stomach upward.

It's probably really scared from the match with Pochi.

"Pochi won't attack you, so please get up nodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU?

"Pochi is satisfied since she was able to fight with all her might nanodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU.

Looks like they've mysteriously established a conversation.

Lesser dragons don't have language, so it must just be the feel.

--LYURYU.

The lesser dragon submits its neck before Pochi, and points at its head.

"You'd let Pochi rides nodesu?"

"Tama wants to ride too~?"

--LYULYU.

Pochi and Tama rides on the dragon who showed affirmation and then they fly in the sky.

The lesser dragon's title becomes [Pochi's Dragon Ride].

I thought perhaps Pochi also got [Dragon Knight] title so I checked hers, but it was something I never expected instead.

--The title of hero is at the point between life and death.

The [No-Life King] Zen said that.

Pochi defeated a lesser dragon alone and obtained the title Hero.

I should talk to Liza, it's probably better to keep the title a secret from Pochi until she grows up a bit more.

Let's decide about that in the family meeting with Liza and Arisa.

For now, I'll make a lesser dragon's nest in the mountains of the solitary island.

I have to make sure that the infant dragon in Echigoya Firm's garden doesn't notice it.

14-34. Wyvern Kingdom (1) Road to the Dragon Shrine

Satou's here. Inrou was the key item in a famous historical drama, but when I was a child, I thought that the item was only something that appeared in that historical drama. I was surprised when I saw it was used to put Inkan in my grandfather's house.

◇

"--Hero is it?"

"Hee, Pochi is a hero huh."

Evening of the day Pochi defeated a lesser dragon and got the Hero title, I called Liza and Arisa to have a parent meeting.

I was thinking of calling Hikaru too, but since she said she was going to attend a banquet in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital, I decided to tell her about it later.

"Master, does Pochi know of that fact?"

"No, I haven't talked to her yet."

I shook my head to reply Liza who asked seriously.

"Ah~, then isn't it better if we keep it a secret from her for now? Pochi is careless y'see."

"I also agree with Arisa. I'm worried if Pochi would feel conceited with the 『Hero』 title."

Looks like the two have the same opinion as me, thinking that there are many demerits in telling Pochi about the title [Hero].

In the end, we decided to keep it a secret until Pochi grew up a bit and became a bit more composed.

"Come to think of it Master, what's the advantage of the『Hero』title?"

"Well, I don't really know."

I shook my head to answer Arisa's question.

"W-why?"

"I only felt『My body feels a bit lighter I think?』somehow even if I changed my title."

I answered Arisa who seemed surprised.

In truth, with my maxed parameters I wouldn't have no way of knowing even if the title changed them.

We can probably understand such a change by observing Pochi's battles.

"Hm~m, then what do you think is the condition to get the title? There are three cases, Master, Shin-kun and this time it's Pochi, so you should know it somehow right?"

--I wonder about that?

I fought a greater demon, Shin boy fought a red rope monster, and Pochi defeated a lesser dragon to get the title [Hero].

The enemies' strength are lower, higher and about the same, there's no common ground.

Shin boy and Pochi fought one-on-one battles, but in my case, I was fighting together with soldiers and magicians of the territorial army.

At the very least, my case didn't meet the condition of [Hero title is located between the point of life and death] that Zen said.

"I can't think of a common denominator...."

"I see."

Arisa sighed disappointingly when she heard that.

I'll ask about Hero title to Hikaru and Earl Muno later.

◇

"Here come meat~?"

"Cast a net and they come biting nanodesu."

The two who're not allowed to eat meat for two days are looking at the four incoming wyverns with glints on their eyes full of appetites.

This country has early summer climate, so Tama and Pochi are wearing short-sleeved sailor uniforms.

Since Pochi fought an enemy of equal strength in the Blue territory, breaking the prohibition, she was punished by having meals with no meat.

Tama didn't particular do anything bad to get a punishment, but for the reason, "Tama didn't stop Pochi even though she's the onee-chan", she undertook the punishment together with Pochi.

Or rather, this is the first time I hear that Tama's position is as Pochi's big sister.

Further, I don't tell the two that there won't be a punishment as long as the creatures prohibited from being hunted, a lesser dragon in this case, don't die.

"You shouldn't hunt those wyverns."

"Pochi can't nanodesu?"

"Look, see them closer."

The ones coming toward our airship which has entered Silga Kingdom, also called the Wyvern Kingdom in the eastern countries, are the force of this countries, Wyvern Riders.

I lead the line of sight of Pochi who inclined her head, pointing at the knights riding on the wyverns' back.

"It's like Pochi and Lyuryu nanodesu."

She probably likened them with the lesser dragon Lyuryu who's become her dragon ride and herself.

Pochi's line of sight that are looking at the Wyvern Riders suddenly changed to feeling of camaraderie.

The riders seem to be called Red Scalekin who have red scales on the base of their necks and arms, they also have lizard-like tail. Scalekin such as Red Scalekin and Lizardfolk are the majority of people in this country.

Zena-san and Liza appeared from the lower floor, and then Liza took Tama and Pochi back inside.

It can't be helped since the beastfolk girls aren't supposed to be with us.

"Shiga Kingdom's airship! What is your purpose for coming to our country!"

The rider on a wyvern's back shouted loudly.

I replied after Zena-san who's beside me invoked [Wind Whisper].

"This is the airship of the vice minister of Shiga Kingdom's Tourism Ministry, Satou Pendragon. Our purpose is touring, we wish to have a courtesy visit at Silga royal castle."

"--Touring?"

The expressions of the knights wearing flying helmets look perplexed, it seems they don't know the word touring.

"We accepted the matter of courtesy visit to His Majesty. We will send a herald ahead."

With a sign from a knight, one of the Wyvern Riders fluttered its wings to the direction of the royal castle.

--Hm, that's?

I saw a small shadow between the clouds in the distant.

"For your own safety, we will guide you on a safe route and also advise you to lower your altitude. At this height--"

When the knight was talking, the black shadow I found earlier broke through the clouds and gradually became bigger, it got close to the airship in a blink of an eye.

The other three Wyvern Riders besides the captain ran away since their wyverns were panicking.

"--Damn!"

It seems the captain couldn't control his wyvern too as they also escaped.

"Dragon...."
"It's a lesser dragon."

The lesser dragon spread its wings in front of the airship, making a sudden brake.

"Satou-san, it's dangerous."

Zena-san spreads her arms and stands in front of me.

She moved like an escort would, but Zena-san's legs are trembling before the lesser dragon.

I thought she had gotten used to it since she rode Lyuryu with Pochi, but it seems the circumstance is different compared to a tamed lesser dragon (Lyuryu).

The air turbulence from the dragon's sudden braking reaches the airship.

The airship's stabilizer is doing its best to stabilize the frame, but the turbulence seems to be too much.

I invoke [Magic Arm] magic and seize the hull to stabilize the airship.

I tried to use the remaining [Magic Arm] to prevent Zena-san's skirt from getting disheveled, but since the magic's finesse is low in exchange for more power than the usual [Magic Hand], I couldn't do it well.

Zena-san was focused on the lesser dragon, and since her underwear wasn't showing, I deemed it good enough.

Just having her beautiful thighs seen is alright isn't it.

"--It's alright."

After stabilizing the airship, I clap Zena-san's shoulders to loosen her.

I've remodeled this airship with magic after we went out of Shiga Kingdom, so it won't fall behind a lesser dragon, though it will be a different story against a real dragon. Putting aside offensive power, its defensive power equals to Lulu's.

--GURWRURRRUUUU.

While groaning, the lesser dragon glares at us with a face that looks like a junior high schooler who's looking for a fight.

Unfortunately these dragons don't have language so we can't have a conversation.

"Satou, what happened--wait, isn't that a lesser dragon."

Then, Hikaru appeared.

Hikaru instantly grasped the situation and then she points her forefinger at the lesser dragon.

"You there! You shouldn't pick a fight without reason!"

Her tone is like a teacher who's scolding a kid.

--GU, GURWRUUUUU.

The lesser dragon is slightly daunted.

--Right, I wonder if the talisman made from heavenly dragon's scale would work?

I made it for the mysterious apostle's prevention, but since it didn't work at all, I tried taking it out.

--KYURWORUUUUUN.

The lesser dragon looked at me wonderingly, but then it ran away while making a voice that sounded like a scream.

My image of the heavenly dragon is that she's quite lacking, but it seems she's quite high in the dragon's hierarchy.

She'll get scared if I go there myself, so I'll make a full course from the tasty naga and ask Hikaru to deliver it to her.

After a bit, the Wyvern Riders came back and then they escorted us to Silga Kingdom's Royal Capital.

The airship is cruising with speed for use in foreign territories, so it's probably going to be nightfall when we arrive.

I'm sorry for the high-speed wyverns, but they'll have to keep us company at this slow pace.

◇

Silga Kingdom is a largish country that's twice as vast compared to all other eastern countries we've passed through so far.

Compared to Shiga Kingdom, I guess it's around 50% of Seryuu Earldom or about 10% of Muno Earldom?

According to the Tourism Ministry document, most of the territory is composed of wetlands, fishing industry such ash fish, kelp, frogs and water plants raising in the wetlands are mode predominant than agriculture.

Compared to other countries, it seems there are a lot of people who are born gifted with water magic and earth magic hereditary.

People with the former helps in the fishing industry, while people with the latter can gain a high social position compared to other element users since they can compensate the lack of material needed to build buildings in the country.

It sounds like the country would also have fuel problem, but it seems they're raising water plants that produce great amount of oil content.

Lots of frog and snake monsters are living in the wetlands, these monsters become the fodder for the strongest force of Silga Kingdom, the Wyvern Rider's wyverns.

The capital of Silga Kingdom we're heading at is located on the foot of a rigorous mountain towering over those wetlands.

Around 10 lesser dragons have settled down on the top of that mountain and they've become the objects of Silga Kingdom people's faith.

It appears there's a Dragon Shrine halfway up on the mountain which doesn't exist in other countries.

Compared to large countries, there are a lot of knights at upper level 30s in this Silga Kingdom.

Most of them are Wyvern Riders, the princes and the king seem to be parts of the knights as they dabble in military affairs.

There are four people who are past level 40 including the king and the princes.

The king isn't decided from lineage or heritage, it's said that the hero chosen by the dragon becomes the king.

Although, in actuality, the king usually comes from from five houses called the Five Scale House who have anti-dragon weapons, there's never been a case where someone from the masses becomes a king.

◇

"This place is warmer than the solitary island's palace isn't it."

"You're right, it feels more like a summer than early summer even though it's quite high in elevation."

I replied so to Liza who's partly closing her eyes toward the warm sunlight.

Since Silga Kingdom's Royal Capital is right beside the lesser dragon's mountaintop, I've come with Liza ahead of time before the airship arrives.

Tama and Pochi also wanted to go, but since I saw a lot of meat skewers and grilled fish stalls when I checked with [Clairvoyance] beforehand, they opted to stay behind.

It must be hard to be among the meat--.

"This place is lively isn't it."

On the road that looks like the road to the shrine often seen in Kyoto, a lot of stalls are lined up on the twisting hill road that's around two meter wide, selling various handicrafts and light meals.

This road is connected to the Dragon Shrine on the side of the mountain, so it's not [Looks like] but it's actually one.

A lot of the pedestrians are of Scalekin. A lot of them are of Lizardfolk kin, Snakehead kin, Red Scale kin, Orange Scale in, Blue Scale kin.

Humans and Beastfolk are also present, but they're relatively few compared to the Scalekin.

The Red Scale kin, Orange Scale kin and Blue Scale kin don't look different compared to humans other than the colorful scales on their nape of their necks and their arms, and having a tail on their lower back though, so at a glance it almost like there are a lot of humans here.

A lot of local people are wearing bold clothing with exposed stomachs and upper arms, their skirts are short and they're wearing sandals under their feet.

"Master, I feel line of sights clad with bad presences. Please don't be too far apart from me."

"You don't have to be that worried, it's alright okay."

I denied Liza's worry with a smile.

The presences she's sensing is glances clad with passion from the Lizardfolk kin men.

Apparently, Liza is an owner of considerable attractiveness according to Lizardfolk's sense of beauty.

Lots of them are glancing, but there's none who calls out to Liza.

They're probably overawed by the intimidating air from the cautious Liza.

Among the pedestrians, a Snakehead woman wearing troubadour-like clothing is reciting something with a mysterious reverberating voice in an open space to the side of the road.

"--Shariui who escapes from the suppression of the mad king Galtafut. Led to the wetlands by the『Original Witch』whose fate is linked to men--"

I've seen the name mad king Galtafut in Shiga Kingdom's history book, although I don't remember the detail.

A young king from about 400 years ago who was famous for oppressing demi-humans.

If I'm not mistaken, it's related to Hero Daisaku's retirement to Boruenan Forest.

"--ancient dragon, the master of the wetlands, asks Riui.『Dost thou be my sacrifice, or perhaps dost thou be a warrior who challenges me.』. Riui replies saying『We are wanderers. We seek for a place we can live in peace』--"

Ancient dragon should be a grade of dragon the likes of the black dragon Heiron and the heavenly dragon.

There's none of such in these outskirts at least, so either the dragon has left or the story has been dramatized.

The story advanced while I was thinking such a thing, the scene where Riui the wanderer fighting the ancient dragon was next.

The fight continued for three days and nights, in the end the morning light reflected from Riui's sword at the ancient dragon created an opening, and the fight ended when the dragon's eye was gouged and he was bathed in the dragon's blood.

I probably shouldn't retort that size-wise that's impossible.

It's hard to throw away my habit to verify things scientifically.

Liza who likes tales is staring at the poet seriously like when she's listening to a picture book's recitation.

"--The ancient dragon speaks heroically while shedding blood. 『O small one who hath wounded me. I bestow thou the king's throne and this land. My followers will watch over thine descendants. However, do not ever forget. The moment a king loses his power befitting of a king and his nobility, my followers will deprive thou of thine kingship and territory』--so the ancient dragon announced, and bestowed fangs, claws and thorns to the wanderer king Riui. King Riui created arms from each of those and gave them to his close friends. This is the beginning of Silga Kingdom's Five Scale Houses as it was handed down."

The poet concludes the story, the last reverberation trails.

The audiences give down generous applauses and incessantly pour down modest money offering on the poet.

I also throw her a silver coin.

It's a money I got from the country we visited before, the timing is just right.

I waved my hand to the poet who bowed when she saw the silver coin, and then we advanced toward the Dragon Shrine.

14-35. Wyvern Kingdom (2) Meeting at the Dragon Shrine

Satou's here. In manga and dramas in the past, There were scenes of aunties who liked to be the matchmaker setting up marriage meetings. Companies who plan for marriage hunting parties appeared in place of such a person lately.

◇

I head toward the Dragon Shrine at the end of the road while looking at the stalls along the road to the shrine with Liza.

"Look at that Liza."

"Is this a wood carving modeled after a dragon?"

『You have some good eyes customer, nyamo.』

--nyamo? What kind of ending word is that?

I checked the lizardfolk shopkeeper since I had a bad feeling about it, but it seems the shopkeeper is just a normal person.

According to the log it's the [Red Scale Kin Language], so I probably heard it in a strange dialect because of the effect of the [Green Scale Kin Language] skill I already had.

There's no need to put points into the skill, I invoke [Translate] magic and correct the strange dialect.

"This is an ornament for the hair and scale, you put it like this, see."

"Ornaments and I don't...."

The shopkeeper showed how it was done, so I tried putting one on Liza.

Oh, it unexpectedly suits her.

"Yup, it looks good on you."

"I-if Master said so."

Liza's swinging tail reveled the delight in her mind.

I gave a copper coin to the shopkeeper as the payment.

"Oh, it's quite rare to see Shiga Kingdom's copper coin."

"Can't I use it?"

"Nope, you're very welcome since that kingdom isn't stingy with the copper. The reputation is good among the merchants outside too."

While saying so, the shopkeeper showed a rusted copper coin.

Looks like copper coins of this country have a lot of impurities.

As such, Liza and I toured the road to the shrine.

There were some stalls selling whole roasted capybara-like creatures in the rest area open space halfway through the road.

They're not sold whole roasted, but the meat is chipped and then put into wrapped black crepe.

"Liza, want to try one?"

"I'm sorry Master. I'd like to refrain from eating meat today."

Oh? It's rare for Liza to not eat meat.

"If you're not feeling well, should we go back?"

"No, it is not about that..."

Liza who looks evasive seems like she's enduring a pain.

Is she troubled with something?

"When Pochi and Tama can't eat meat during their punishment, for me to eat it in secret is...."

I see, she's being reserved for the two huh.

But when I asked her about how she ate meat normally in the dining table, she said that it was to make the two realize that it was a punishment, if Liza were to not eat meat then, the other girls would follow too and it would just look like a compulsion.

It's really like Liza, but I don't think she needs to over think that far.

"Then, let's eat something besides meat."

I said that and bought a sukombu-like things sold on a stall nearby, then I shared half to Liza.

It's quite chewy so it should suits Liza's taste.

◇

"So this is the Dragon Shrine."

"It's smaller than I thought."

In the open space before the Dragon Shrine, I look up at the shrine that looks like it's made from white concrete.

The plaster is probably made with earth magic so it looks like concrete. It's a method of construction I saw some in the royal and duchy capitals.

The roof of the rectangular building is shaped like a dome, so it somehow looks like an astronomical observatory.

『--Dragon! M-my name is Bar-Baut of beastkin! I challenge you to a fair fight!』

The introduction carried by the wind sounded intermittent.

Seen from behind, the owner of the voice is standing in a round-shaped arena as large as a track field.

It's surrounded by three cliffs, it seem the top of the cliffs are the napping spots of the lesser dragons.

I can't see due to the crowds, but according to the map, it seems there's a deep valley between the back of the Dragon Shrine and the round arena connected by a suspension bridge.

It seems the place beyond the valley is a prohibited ground, there's no one there besides the aforementioned beastkin man.

"That beast lad is already at his third day huh?"

"He couldn't do anything against dragon-sama, poor him."

"He's powerless and only looking for death."

The gossips around us conveyed the situation.

There were some dangerous words, but there's no need to mind it.

The jeers from the spectators flung to the man were grating, so I urged Liza to enter the Dragon Shrine.

When we entered the shrine, we came to a place directly under the dome, the ceiling was high.

A slanted ceiling on the deep is opened, we can see a part of the napping lesser dragons on the cliffs from here.

Some of the worshipers are praying while looking up at that lesser dragons.

--Rather than that.

The mural inside the dome is wonderful.

Religious painting are depicted there, similar to the one in Seryuu City's Parion Temple.

"Nobleman of foreign country, would you like to make an almsgiving."

An Orange Scalekin girl who was wearing high-exposure miko clothing called out.

Almsgiving--even though she's asking for donation for the shrine, she's bearing herself coldly without trying to flatter me.

Her atmosphere is somehow similar to Liza.

While I was thinking so, the girl kept staring calmly like a doll.

Liza called me in a quiet voice, "Master", I feel ashamed of my ill manner.

"I'm sorry. I was lost in thought."

I apologize to the miko girl and take out a small bag with 10 Saga Empire gold coins from my pocket, then I put it on the tray for almsgiving the girl is carrying.

I might come here as Satou later, so I used Saga Empire gold coins to reduce the chance of getting exposed.

"....So much."

The miko girl showed her first surprised reaction when she peeked at the glittering gold coins in the small bag.

A miko with low exposure clothing who noticed that quickly approached us.

"Oh my, what a devout you are! As a senior miko, I'll guide you from now on."

A Red Scalekin senior miko smiled with her whole face.

She has light makeup but her sweet perfume tickles my nose.

"--The one who's showing his face right now is『Shippu』-sama. He's still young so he likes to play games of tag with the kingdom's Wyvern Riders."

The senior miko who's pulling my arm explains about the lesser dragon that can be seen from the skylight.

It seems this Dragon Shrine isn't a shrine that worships the Dragon God.

The object of faith seems to be the whole dragon kin itself.

"Ah! Did you see the black tail who peeked just now? That's the oldest『Bouryu』-sama! He rarely ever nap on the ground!"

It's good that she's excited and all but her ample breasts are deforming on my arm.

It feels nice so I don't mind, but the junior miko is touching her own breasts sorrowfully, so please leave it at that.

Contrary to the carefree senior miko, I could hear rustles and armor's sounds from the direction of the Dragon Shrine's entrance.

"Oy, that--isn't that someone from the Five Scale Houses?"

"Yeah, he's probably going to do the『Dragon Challenging Ceremony』."

Intrigued by the worshipers' words the Attentive Ears skill picked up, I turn around.

There's a macho.

A big lizardkin warrior wearing luxurious armor.

He looks like a handsome man even though he has lizard face.

In fact, the lizardkin girls in the Dragon Shrine are passionately looking at the maccho warrior.

"He seems to be quite able. He's no match against Pochi and Tama, but he might be stronger than Karina-sama."

Liza muttered so when she saw the macho warrior.

There's no particular comment about his figure.

The spear in his hand is made from the horn of a lesser dragon, its superb performance is equal to Liza's magic spear Douma Mk2.

He's level 45, among the five best in the country.

"--Ho?"

The maccho warrior notices us and looks at Liza with sharp eyes.

Blazing line of sights that feel like it'll scattering sparks are exchanged.

Guess a warrior understands other warrior--.

"Girl, become my wife."

--or not.

With the macho warrior's words, shock ran through the people who are in the Dragon Shrine.

"I refuse."

Liza declined immediately, rustles and screams with different meaning than the earlier fill the Dragon Shrine.

The backbiting from the female lizardkin were particularly bad.

The macho warrior who was taken aback smiles broadly.

"--Fuhahahahaha. Interesting, I never thought there was a woman who would dump me."

"I do not intend to form a pair with someone weaker than me. Come back after you're at least able to defeat a greater demon."

Liza coldly dealt the macho warrior who was laughing happily.

Liza.... I don't think there's a man who can satisfy such an unreasonable requirement you know?

"Defeating a greater demon huh--you're really an interesting girl."

The macho warrior grins composedly.

Apparently he ignored Liza's "weaker than herself" line.

"I won't fight greater demon whose location I don't know, but I'll show you my fight with a dragon later. Watch that fight and fall for me! I'll make you ask me to be my wife yourself."

The macho warrior who boasted full of confidence went into the Dragon Shrine's depth together with a dragonewt head-miko who came for him from the deep of the shrine.

◇

"--This mural depicts the exploits of the founder king Riui-sama."

Since the other senior miko went with the macho warrior, we listened the explanation of the murals by the Orange Scalekin junior miko.

"Those six people are King Riui and the founders of the Five Scale Houses."

According to the junior miko's explanation, the weapons the founders had were Dragon Fang Spear, Dragon Horn Spear, Dragon Thorn Halberd, Twin Dragon Claw Sword, and Dragon Claw Great Sword.

The thing the macho warrior held earlier is the Dragon Horn Spear, and the current king has the Dragon Fang Spear.

"This depicts the battle against the military forces of the mad king Galtafut. The one drawn back to back with King Riui is the Saga Empire hero. This little thing drawn here is the light ship of Boruenan elf, so it's handed down."

There's a hero wearing the same blue armor Hero Hayato wore.

The holy sword shining blue light looks like something that appears in a Japanese myth.

As we were looking up at the wall and listening, we came to a mysterious drawing.

"What's this drawing?"

"That's King Riui turning into a dragon using the secret art of the『Wich of Origin』."

--A person turning into a dragon?

"A person cannot become a dragon."

Liza resolutely dismissed the junior miko.

"It's the truth. It's not only clearly written in the scriptures of the shrine, but also in the official documents of the kingdom."

The junior miko bit back even though she was daunted by Liza's words.

Certainly, races that can change their body like vampires that can create followers by shifting one part of their body into a bat or a wolf, or lycanthropes and werewolves that can turn from a human into a wolf exist in this world.

Moreover, there are also magic that can create giant creatures like the spirit magic's artificial spirit or earth magic's golem.

Human turning into dragon is something overflowing with fantasy, it's really wonderful so I'd like for it to exist.

However--unfortunately, that's impossible.

Because, even the heavenly dragon who excels in magic power and is second only to the Dragon God among the dragons uses a homonculus controlled remotely instead of [Turning into Human].

If there were a magic that can [turn a person into a dragon], the heavenly dragon who's lived for a long time would have developed a magic to [turn a dragon into a human].

The [Dragon Change] magic is probably one of the fairy-tales that the first generation king and the Dragon Shrine created with their authorities.

Even though I concluded so, no one would be happy if their belief was struck by someone's opinion, so I don't intend to say it out loud.

"I'll excuse myself."

First I should apologize to the angry junior miko whose belief was dismissed.

"Liza you shouldn't dismiss the myth of this country."

"Yes, master...."

Liza who noticed her verbal slip regained her composure.

"Miko-dono, I retract my careless remark previously."

"A-as long as you understand."

Liza apologized, the junior miko replied stoutly while trembling and looking like she'd cry.

Faith seems to be quite difficult.

◇

The one who saved us from the awkward atmosphere is the macho warrior who came out from the depth of the shrine.

His scales somehow look moist and glittering.

Even more intense screams came from the female lizardkin toward the macho warrior whose handsomeness had increased.

I wonder if there's a hot spring inside the shrine?

So I thought, but I saw that the glitters were the effect of reinforcement and defensive spells of water magic from looking at the AR reading.

It seems the miko here use water magic instead of holy magic.

"Hmph, you waited for me huh."

The macho warrior saw Liza and said satisfyingly.

Just where does that confidence come from.

"Come with me, I'll let you fall for me from a special seat--"

After telling that, the macho warrior triumphantly went out of the shrine without waiting for Liza's reply.

Due to that, he didn't see Liza shaking her head.

It seems to be an important match, it's nice that we don't need to look for seats.

"Liza, since we've been invited and all, why don't we watch?"

"Yes, leaving aside the nonsense earlier, I'm interested with the fight between a man and a dragon."

Liza assented with eyes of a warrior.

Apparently, it's still too early for Liza to dabble in love.

14-36. Wyvern Kingdom (3) Shippu the Lesser Dragon

Satou's here. Even though I was very much troubled with the language when I went abroad, mysteriously enough, slanders and jeers got transmitted along just fine. The hardships of a local fellow traveler who tried hard to arbitrate things feels nostalgic now.

◇

"--Dragons living on the sacred peak! Appear before me if you do not fear the Dragon Holy Spear!"

The lizardkin macho soldier shouted in the middle of the round arena.

We're watching him from the side of the valley.

Lots of people around us are cheering, the head miko and senior miko are watching attentively in front of the suspension bridge.

"Look! 『Shippu』-sama showed up!"

"『Gunjou』-sama and 『Unryu』-sama too!"

"As expected of the young master from the Five Scale house!"

The spectators are delighted to look up at the lesser dragons that peeked from their napping spot.

Unlike with the warrior we saw when we went to the Dragon Shrine earlier, it seems this time they're not ignoring his call.

"--I do not like it."

Liza muttered while looking up at the lesser dragons.

She's probably talking about the eyes of the lesser dragons that look like they're looking down.

"If you're strong, no, exactly because you're strong, your heart should also be pure."

Liza's serious words carried away by the valley wind.

Apparently Liza didn't notice that she said her thought out loud.

"I wonder if they can be fixed if they take a lesson from master...."

It seems Liza has also been influenced by Arisa's showa-ism inside.

"Oh! Here it comes!"

"It's『Shippu』-sama!"

"Young master break a leggggg!"

With the peanut gallery's shout, I shift my glance from Liza to the arena.

Big body of a lesser dragon called Shippu who's the youngest among the lesser dragons landed in the arena, shaking the ground.

--KWYSHHYEEEEERRRR.

Shippu spread its wings and let out an intimidating roar.

Responding to that, the macho warrior fills the Dragon Horn Spear with magic power.

Just like the dragon spear Heiron, strangely, weapons that use the (dragon) part won't emit blue light even if you fill them with magic power.

It's strange how magic spear that shines red looks stronger than them.

"Here I--"

The macho warrior accelerates while leaving small cloud of dust.

He plunges to near the dragon's knee using Flickering Movement, and thrusts the Dragon Horn Spear at the dragon's knee.

"--He was lured."

Liza muttered.

Right before the Dragon Horn Spear reached the dragon, it's like there's a 3D motion blur effect on the body of the dragon.

Moving like doing a roundhouse kick in ultra high speed, Shippu's tail mows down the macho warrior.

--He's going forward there huh.

Even though the macho warrior evaded the counter, he used Flickering Movement to move forward instead of back or up.

Sparks from the friction scattered on the ground where the tail passed.

On the opposite side of the cloud dust from the after waves, the macho warrior fixes his spear.

His eyes have no anxiety nor fear.

Shippu whose attack has been avoided looks vexed.

It takes a threatening posture once again and inhales greatly.

--Dragon Breath huh!

Seeing Shippu's body sign, the macho warrior stakes it all in a do-or-die.

He uses Flickering Movement once again and approaches the dragon's leg.

However, it seems Shippu doesn't intend to overlook that easily.

Stone buckshots shot by Shippu's tail assaults the planned course of the macho warrior.

The power is not much compared to an attack from the dragon itself, but he couldn't evade the mass and got flung away.

From overhead, Shippu let out its Dragon Breath toward the mortified macho warrior whose Flickering Movement was canceled.

"--Tch"

As if speaking in behalf of the macho warrior, a beastkin warrior in the spectators clicked his tongue.

Looks like he saw the tide turning in this fight too.

The macho warrior evacuates to the sky to avoid Shippu's breath.

Many spectators praised the macho warrior who successfully evaded the fiery breath touching the ground, but people who are proficient in battles understood that it was a bad move.

Of course, the one who's fighting also realizes that.

Shippu stopped its breath and attacks the macho in the air with its left claw.

The macho warrior was knocked down like a feather, but it seems he hasn't given up yet.

Purple lightning flutters from the tip of his Dragon Horn Spear.

"Eat this"

The electric shock releasing from the macho warrior's Dragon Horn Spear burns Shippu's tip of nose.

--GYWUUUN.

Shippu closes its eyes and screams.

The lesser dragons on the cliff top are sneering at Shippu who got wounded by a frail creature.

Apparently, these lesser dragons don't have manners as spectators.

Sparks gather again on the macho warrior's Dragon Horn Spear--.

However, his fight is over there.

Shippu swung its hand to the ground in desperation and hit the ground, when the macho warrior jumped he was hit by Shippu's tail as it rotated and he was flung to the cliff's wall.

The macho warrior hit the cliff's wall, creating spiderweb-shaped cracks, his body was sunk into the the cliff and stopped moving.

Without minding the macho warrior who's bleeding powerlessly, Shippu flies away from the round arena.

The macho warrior didn't let go of the Dragon Horn Spear even while lying on a puddle of blood, but he had ran out of magic power and couldn't release a lightning attack.

◇

While glancing at the lesser dragons who have begun quarreling playfully in their napping spot, the people are frantically settling the aftermath.

"Young master!"

"Run medics! Don't let young master die!"

The miko of the Dragon Shrine crosses the suspension bridge with desperate looks after they have confirmed that the fight is over.

It looked like it wouldn't have been strange for the macho warrior to have instantly died, but according to the information on the Menu's Map, he's only heavily injured, his life is not in danger.

It's probably thanks to the defensive magic of the senior miko and his tempered body.

His machoness doesn't seem to be only for show.

"As expected of young master from the Dragon Horn Spear house."

"Yea, that was splendid."

"Where? Didn't he lose."

Unlike the miko who went to the rescue, the spectators are carefree.

"You, you're an outsider right? As long as you don't die in『Dragon Challenging Ceremony』, you pass."

"Dragons-sama won't descend when it's someone who'd die easily, yet two out of three challengers usually die. Participating in the ceremony means risking your life."

"Furthermore!　Further! Young master landed a single blow on Shippu-sama."

"Yeah, it's a feat that hasn't happened for 80 years."

"He'll probably become the next king."

I see, it's probably better to keep the fact that Pochi defeated the lesser dragon Lyuryu and made it into her dragon ride a secret.

While I was thinking so, Liza who saw the match sighed deeply.

"I cannot approve of this...."

Liza shakes her head quietly.

"Master, please allow me to fight the dragons."

"Are you avenging him?"

"--avenging?"

Liza showed a rare blank expression hearing my unexpected question.

"No, master. I'd like to make the dragons who are fighting self-conceitedly because they're strong to know their places a bit...."

I see, it seems the sigh wasn't directed toward the macho warrior but the lesser dragon.

"Okay, but it'll be bad with that casual clothes."

Today Liza is wearing a blouse and short pants, on top of the light fabric with deep slit.

Of course these Liza's clothes are my handiworks, created from Orichalcum fiber and the whale's silver leather, they're stab-proof magic-made items, yet, it's a bit worrying to be used for a fight against dragons, even if they're the lesser ones.

"No, master. In the first place, the golden armor cannot block a dragon fang, and my offensive-oriented armor is only able to block a single 『Dragon Breath』. There is no problem with light clothing."

It's full of problems for me as her guardian, but I'll put several defensive magic enchants on her.

And also, it's a bit late but I have her equip the [Thief God Harness] that can even deceive my AR reading.

Liza's identity should not be exposed with this. Just in case, I'll also equip one of the three set of [Thief God Harness] so I can change places with Liza if it looks like she'll be fatally wounded.

◇

"--Who's that?"

"Scalekin? A woman?"

"She looks like a lizardkin though..."

As expected of the highest class of artifact.

After the macho warrior has been carried away, Liza stands in the round arena, no one seems to be able to accurately recognize her figure.

Without minding the noisy audiences, Liza rotates her magic spear and then strikes the brunt end to the ground.

The people who have sensed that something was happening stop rustling, but the lesser dragons seem to be busy playing among themselves, they don't appear to be interested.

Liza lightly swings her magic spear.

Red glitter flowed on the magic spear for an instant, she shot a Magic Edge Cannon with a speed that normal people couldn't see--exploding near the lesser dragons.

Thunderous sound reverberates, the after waves of the magic power blow clouds of dust toward the gamboling lesser dragons.

The lesser dragon squabbling on the cliff top stopped moving, they moved their head to look down at the round arena.

"You, ones looking down at warriors from the cliff top. Fight me if you do not fear defeat. I will etch fear and remorse into you guys."

Liza's firm voice echoes in the arena.

The effect of [Provocation] skill probably rode on that voice.

The lesser dragons on top of the cliff are roaring in anger.

It seemed to be something feared by normal people, the great majority of the spectators got under [Panic] and [Frightened] states, the people who were the former scrambled to run away first thing.

If this keeps up, the after-effect of Liza and lesser dragons' match will cause the people here to evacuate and become an obstacle, so I invoke mind magic [Calm Field] to cancel the [Panic] state from the spectators.

Rustle and bustle came back to the spectators as if to shake off their trembling bodies.

"O, ooh! It's Shippu-sama."
"No, they're still coming!"

--Zudan, zudadadan.

One after another, lesser dragons are descending to the arena.

"Even Unyu-sama and Katame-sama too...."

Attentive Ears skill picked up words mixed with fear and awe.
There are now eight lesser dragons who have climbed down the cliff.

The lesser dragons lined up in the arena are coercing Liza by growling.
Although, Liza herself stands still while holding her spear without letting her guard down.

And then--.

"Bouryu-sama is spreading his wings."
"Don't tell me, Bouryu-sama who hasn't fought for 100 years will also fight!"

With explanatory-like comments from the spectators, the biggest and highest leveled lesser dragon landed in the arena with a roaring sound.

This Bouryu is level 65, it's a cut above the lesser dragons living here.

Needless to say, it's stronger than Liza who's level 62.

--GURURUWW.

--GUROROWN.

--GERURURU.

Starting from Bouryu, the lesser dragons struck Liza with coercive sounds.

"I will acknowledge your mettle to appear in the battlefield fearlessly. Who will be the first to be etched with defeat? If you're afraid to fight one-on-one, I don't mind if you all go together at once."

Liza's provocative words make the lesser dragons' anger to reach the climax.

They shouldn't be able to converse, but it seems insult is a universal thing.

Shippu who was going to charge forward got mowed down by Bouryu's tail.

--GURUWZ.

Bouryu howled once and spread its wings, and then the other lesser dragons reluctantly went back to the cliff top.

Shippu who was looking reluctant also withdrew when an ultramarine-colored lesser dragon urged it.

"You're worthy to be my opponent. Lizardkin Liza, come."

I captured Liza's sharp profile with [Recording] magic.

While adjusting two and three takes, I check the [Recording]'s sensitivity.

While somehow feeling like a father who's enthusiastic about his daughter's athletic festival, I concentrate to shoot Liza's gallant figure in order to show it to everyone later.

Oops, I must make a contact to settle the things later.

This is likely going to make an uproar, so overdoing the preparation probably won't go to waste.

In order to ask help from a friend, I invoke the [Telephone] magic.

14-37. Wyvern Kingdom (4) Lesser Dragon Bouryu VS Liza

Satou's here. During school commuting, there was a friend of mine who said, "nyaon", when we met a wild cat. Even though she was usually composed, I thought she was cute when she acted defenselessly when she's against a small animal. I was shy at that time.

◇

"She moved!"

"Red light--"

"It's a magic spear!"

Without caring the shouts from spectators, Liza approaches Bouryu while drawing a red light line from the magic edge.

--Hm? She's not using Flickering Movement?

She's as fast as the macho warrior earlier so the spectators don't seem to be able to distinguish it, but Liza is only doing a normal dash.

The contour of Bouryu's body is blurring.

After confirming that Bouryu has started to attack with its tail in high speed, Liza suddenly accelerates with Flickering Movement.

Bouryu opened its eyes wide in surprise but it's already too late.

Riding on the speed accelerated from the Flickering Movement, Liza kicks Bouryu's hind leg from its defenseless side.

Looking at their masses, normally Liza should've been the one knocked away, but due to the inflation from her STR and VIT that have risen with her level, a violence scene that would make you question the law of physics happens.

With her pivoting leg depressed into the arena, Liza's kick sends Bouryu into the air.

--GYUWON.

Faster than the screaming Bouryu got blown off, it attacked with its tail following the inertia, and Liza blocked it by deploying Magic Armor on her palm.

"Ooh! Just who the..."
"Don't tell me, she's an elite from the『Dragon Valley』?"
"Apostle-sama of Dragon God huh!"

The spectators are getting excited with the unreal scene happening before their eyes.

However, Liza is having a complicated expression.

She was able to block the tail earlier not because of her Magic Armor, she noticed that it was due to my magic enchant, several mixed emotions showed up on her face.

--KWYSHHYEEEEERRRR.

Bouryu who was blown off to the cliff brushed off the rock on its body and stood up.

The distance to Liza is about 100 meters.

Bouryu takes a threatening posture and inhales greatly.

Seeing that, Liza closes the distance between them using Flickering Movement.

As if imitating the fight between Shippu and the macho warrior earlier, Bouryu used its tail to send stone buckshots toward Liza.

Shippu most likely learned its battle pattern from Bouryu.

--Liza's tail glitters red.

Magic Edge Cannon shot from Liza's tail shoot down the buckshots.

The Magic Edge Cannon whose convergence was made weak on purpose didn't thoroughly destroy the buckshots, but it accomplished its purpose of securing Liza's path.

However, yet the distance between them is unreasonable for Liza to cross before Bouryu let out the Dragon Breath.

"Arisa said this--"

Liza's tail glitters red once again.

Liza who warped to Bouryu's bosom at a speed rivaling my Ground Shrink rotates her spear and then strikes Bouryu's mouth that's leaking fire on the chin from below.

'Gouu', the Dragon Breath wasn't blown at Liza, but vainly at the empty sky, heating the air.

"--Experienced warriors in another world attack not by using Magic Edge Cannon, but by moving at ultra high speed."

....Liza, that's a story from manga (fiction).

Moreover, I don't think the fainted Bouryu can hear you y'know?

◇

It seems Bouryu was stupefied only for an instant, it turned it head and then prowled its line of sight on the surrounding looking for Liza.

However, those eyes never catch Liza.

That is because.

"Where are you looking at."

Liza's question came from above Bouryu.

--KWYSHHYEEEEERRRR.

Bouryu let out an angry roar and then it charged at Liza who was shaking her head in the air.

Bouryu opened its big mouth, the white fangs glittered.

--Dragon's fang penetrates all.

Bouryu's eyes are brimming with joy, sure of its victory.

There is no material that can resist the fang of dragons.

Thus, dragons are unrivaled.

"I'll straighten up that misconception."

Liza made a double jump in the air, escaping the dragon's jaws, jumping to an even higher place.

Bouryu's jaws that had closed once, opened again.

The thing that's reflected on the eyes of Bouryu who's still sure of its victory is--a red flower.

Nay--they're seven light spheres of Magic Edge Cannon floating around Liza's magic spear.

Their sizes are far more superior than all the magic bullets that have been shot so far.

"Funeral Flower Meteor Bullets"

Liza shouted the technique's name, and then small red bullets rain down from the seven light spheres.

The red light rain tore the firm membranes of the dragon's wings, smashed the sturdy scales, and created countless small craters on the ground.

Receiving the incessant thrashing, Bouryu could only crouch down on the ground without even being able to scream.

This is the new technique that Liza came up with after seeing Lulu's accelerated cannon.

It may look like a cruel merciless attack, but Liza is properly holding back.

If she had intended to kill the dragon, it'd have been faster to hit it with a magic edge cannon with penetration rate raised to the max when it opened its mouth.

While the dragon's fang is a dragon's greatest attack, it's also the time when they're at the most defenseless.

"O-oy, did Bouryu-sama, die?"

"Apostle-sama, so merciless...."

"That's cause she's that Dragon God's apostle-sama...."

The spectators are exchanging words mixed with fear.

It's been on my mind since earlier, they don't add [sama] to call Dragon God?

"Oh, is she going to finish him off?"

"I hope she could overlook Bouryu-sama."

As I thought, the people do love the lesser dragons here.

Liza descends to the ground and walks toward Bouryu who's playing dead.

Yes, it's [playing dead].

The instant Liza showed an opening, Bouryu's tail attacked from her blind spot.

However, Liza who was wary didn't let her guard down.

Liza's magic spear, Douma stitches Bouryu's thorned tail to the ground.

"Do something about that bloodthirst of yours if you want to make a surprise attack."

As a thanks for Liza's advice, Bouryu's fangs charge toward her.

It seems the tail earlier was a feint, this one is the real thing.

Liza separates her hand from magic spear Douma that's been pierced deeply to the ground, and strikes Bouryu's nosetip with a red lit fist of magic edge.

--GYWRUPEE.

Magic edged Liza's tail hit the side of the screaming Bouryu's face.

Crack, with that sound, Bouryu's fang breaks and wounds its mouth.

Like the boxing's dempsey roll, Liza does severe blows on both sides of Bouryu's head using Flickering Movement.

It continues on until bloodthirst and desire disappear from Bouryu.

"Close your eyes if you surrender. Or I'll play with you until you're satisfied if you wish to continue."

Liza takes out a dagger made from a heavenly dragon's scale and thrusts it in front of the Bouryu's eyes.

Bouryu heeds Liza's words, closes its eyes and plops down on the ground.

Looks like the battle has ended.

Liza kept her alert for a while and only put the dagger back into its sheath after confirming Bouryu's total surrender.

◇

"She defeated Bouryu-sama!"

"--She's a dragon beater."

"No! She's a Dragon Slayer!"

Oy oy, Bouryu is still alive y'know.

While retorting them in my mind, I talk to my friend with [Telephone].

『Hey, could you cross the mountain right about now?』

『Umu, I'm going now.』

Now then, I'll clean up several things before we leave.

I move to beside Liza using short-range teleport and heal Bouryu's wounds with magic.

--KURURUWW.

Bouryu let out happy voice, perhaps its pain receded with the healing magic.

"Congratulations, Liza."

"Thank you very much."

I praised Liza after I had treated Bouryu's wounds.

Unfortunately, unlike with Pochi, Liza didn't get [Hero] title.

Instead Liza got [Shura], [Enlightened], and [Dragon King] titles.

Since Liza's current title is [Dragon King], it'd likely create a big uproar if she were to go in public without equipping some high level recognition inhibition item.

"Master, it's the battle's spoil."

Liza submitted the Bouryu's fang she had picked up.

A lesser dragon's fang huh.... I don't really need it but leaving it here seems like it'll create problems so I guess it's better to take it with me?

I'll make something out of it as a commemoration for Liza's victory.

"Oy, that!"

"N-no way--"

"It's a true dragon-sama!"

"The master of the Black Dragon Mountain has descended!"

The people who sharply saw the black dragon Heiron made a fuss.

Black dragon Heiron who came flying decelerated, typhoon-like wind raged, and people got blown off from the wind.

Bouryu who was downed on the ground scurried away, stuck its body on the back of the cliff, and made a face that looked like it was repeatedly chanting, "I'm a tree".

I don't know where its sweat glands are, but it's sweating all over it won't lose to a frog being glared by a snake.

The lesser dragons on the cliff top are also pretending to be rocks while holding their breath, waiting while trembling in fear until the black dragon Heiron flies away.

『Kuro! I've come to pick you up!』

『Hey, sorry for the trouble Heiron.』

『I don't mind. We're having a festival of goats and whale meat after a long while!』

I wave my hand at the black dragon Heiron who's laughing, "Kaka."

I'm thinking of leaving with the black dragon Heiron like this to befuddle the spectators with the impact.

"Guruu, gururira?"

I heard a feeble voice and turned my head toward the suspension bridge, there I saw the dragonewt head-miko trying to mimic the black dragon's sound for some reason.

"Gororoun?"

The black dragon is puzzled to see her.

『Kuro, what is this person saying?』

『Well now? Maybe she's greeting you.』

『I see--Good work on you greeting.』

Black Dragon Heiron put his face before the head miko and appreciated her.

However, the language of the dragon sounds like roars. And, it seems those roars are so frightening it can't be compared to a lesser dragon's growls.

Excluding Liza and I, everyone besides the head miko and the macho warrior has already fainted with bubbles on their mouths since awhile ago, and even the head miko who was conducting herself stoutly up until now has fainted with the dreadful roars that happened in front of her.

I hold the fainting head miko and lay her down on the ground.

The macho warrior should be able to do something about it afterward.

"Let's go Liza."

"Is it alright for me to ride on Black Dragon-sama?"

"Of course, 『right, Heiron』."

『Umu, even if it was a lesser one, you did defeat a dragon, so I'll let you ride on my back as a reward.』

I take Liza's hand and ride on black dragon Heiron's head.

We don't need to worry about being exposed since we're equipped with [Thief God Harness], so there's no problem no matter how much we stand out.

Black dragon Heiron folded his wings, kicked the ground and soared to the sky, once he reached the top, he spread his wings open.

Black dragon Heiron circled the quiet Dragon Shrine once and then he went toward the Black Dragon Mountains.

Now then, we're having a feast in the Black Dragon Mountains tonight.

It should be about time for the airship to arrive in Silga Kingdom, but they probably don't have enough margin to care about us due to the matter with Liza, so I'll let Satou doll, the princess and the others to take care of that side.

14-38. Wyvern Kingdom (5) At the Black Dragon Mountains

Satou's here. When you're playing computer RPGs, there are many cases where NPCs' lines change following the story progress. There were times when I wanted to retort, "Tell me that from the start!"

◇

『U-umu, as I thought, fighting Kuro is fun.』

『Yeah, it's a good way to sweat out for me too.』

When we arrived at the Black Dragon Mountains, Black Dragon Heiron said that he wanted to fight me so I made a copy of the mountains in the sub-space and performed a mock battle there.

Since Black Dragon had his breath and fangs, I'm not sure if we could call it a mock battle, but I'm unhurt and the Black Dragon himself only has some parts of his body popped out, so there's no problem.

Black Dragon's fang broke again, but I swear to the gods of heaven and earth that it wasn't on purpose.

It was because Black Dragon jumped in front of me when I shot a Magic Edge Cannon as a feint.

I'm really glad that it wasn't the guillotine type Magic Edge Cannon I usually use to secure materials.

『I've stopped your bleeding, but your fang is not growing back.』

『I don't mind, once I eat a lot of goats and whale, and sleep a lot, it'll grow back in no time.』

'Kaka', Black Dragon laughs, in fact, his fang which was broken in our last battle has grown back.

It's mysterious since he said that it'd take several years.

We went back to the safe location at end of the area where Liza was watching while we were talking like so.

"We're back Liza."

"Master--"

Huh? I had let Liza watch my fight with Black Dragon since I thought she'd be happy, but her face is stiff for some reason.

Perhaps, she didn't like the playful battle with Black Dragon?

"--Thank you very much for your teaching!"

Swoosh, Liza knelt down on the ground and began to speak earnestly.

"This Liza has burned in her mind, Master's teaching who warned me to not feel self-conceited just by defeating a lesser dragon. A fight between true strong warriors are truly terrific like that."

Liza looks at me with dreamy eyes.

Certainly, even though the lesser dragon Bouryu's and Black Dragon's levels are close, their battle prowesses are utterly far apart.

Take the breath as an example, there's a huge difference between a slow fire breath that you can evade by sight and a high-powered laser breath that can only be evaded by moving at warp-speed the moment you felt the omen.

Moreover, physical attacks unleashed by the large body of Black Dragon can change the shape of mountain terrains, and he can also shoot composite magic freely with short chants.

I even had a hard time against the new barrage-like magic shot from Black Dragon's mouth.

"I'm sure soon Liza will become strong enough to fight Black Dragon."

"Can I really do it."

『Impossible--』

Black Dragon interrupted me before I could say "Of course" to Liza.

I had used Translation magic in order for us to converse during the journey to the Black Dragon Mountains, but as an unfortunate result, Black Dragon's words were also conveyed to Liza.

"That's not true."

『Kuro. It's impossible.』

Black Dragon denied my follow up.

『That girl's weapon cannot injure me.』

Saying so, Black Dragon picks up the magic spear in Liza's hand.

Since Black Dragon's sharp claws would have damaged the magic spear, he used light web-like magic to wrap and lift it up.

『Fumwu, it appears to be mainly made from [Origin Monster]'s materials, but this won't be able to damage my scales. It's likely going to have a hard time even damaging the surface.』

As the current Magic Spear Douma has been coated with Adamantite, I think it could somehow damage the raw scales, but since Black Dragon's scales are guarded by multiple powerful magic during a battle as expected, Liza probably won't be able to break through them even with magic edge.

--For now that is.

『The only thing that can hurt a dragon is a dragon's weapon--of course, my friend Kuro is an exception.』

I wonder about that, can't Pochi equipped with Excalibur do it?

I feel that she could if she used the scripture.

"However, I am...."

Liza who received the magic spear back muttered with downcast eyes.

『If you like that spear, you can just fuse it with my fang that has been broken today. It'll be much more stronger than being covered in some boorish magic metal. The skillful Kuro should be able to do it no?』

Black Dragon said it as if it was extremely natural.

Unfortunately, even my magic isn't such a fantastical line up.

The secret art of alchemy is capable of doing something similar to that, but it's only applicable with materials that are slightly lower ranked.

『I don't have such a handy technique really.』

『Fumu, then do it not with the present magic, you should just ask someone skillful with ancient magic. The ancient dragon granny-sama at the south continent and the Elder Trent at the east continent can do it.』

Fumu.... Someone good with magic huh.

If Aze-san is the default, then who will be the runner-up?

I could ask high elves of Biroanan and Beriunan clans but I think I'll ask the ancient dragon at the south continent who surely knows about the spell.

Even though I've looked at the south continent from the orbital satellite I've yet to come there myself.

When I was thinking about it, a thunderous sound echoed.

『--Kuro, I'm hungry.』

So it really was Black Dragon's stomach sound.

I consented to Black Dragon who gave a nice information to strengthen Liza's spear, and then opened a gate to outside the sub-space where Lulu and the others were preparing the party.

◇

"Mayouma~?" <TLN: Uma=tasty>

『Umu, this spicy mayo is truly splendid. It's not a good match with the goats, but the whale meat is many time tastier with it!』

Tama who's sitting on Black Dragon's nose tip is biting whale meat skewers smeared with mayonnaise.

Without minding Tama, Black Dragon gulps down a ton-sized giant whale meat skewer smeared with mustard mayonnaise.

Liza who usually would have scolded Tama seemed to be tired with her fight against the lesser dragon, she had gone to sleep exhaustedly after she ate her meal vigorously as if she was replenishing her fuel.

"Deriglu sauce won't lose either nodesu!"

『Umu umu, demi-glace sauce is also sweet and tasty. This one matches goats well. Humans' flavoring really are good. Although Kuro's are certain, the dishes of the girl over there are also truly delicious.』

Pochi who was giving the whale meat to the lesser dragon Lyuryu asserted to Black Dragon, and then Black Dragon nodded his big head.

Black Dragon puts a goat warmed with his breath and covered with thick demi-glace into his mouth, chewing it satisfyingly.

--Pipiru!

--KYEWWROUUUN.

A green Infant Dragon jumped out of the gate connected to the solitary island palace.

Hikaru is riding on its back, looks like she's taking advantage of the ride.

I wave back to Hikaru who's waving at me looking carefree.

--Pipiru! Piru! Piru!

There's a jade green bird chirping proudly on top of Infant Dragon's head.

Unlike the bold Hisui, Infant Dragon is getting scared of Black Dragon, it's hiding behind my back.

Due to our size difference, it's not being hidden at all.

『Aren't you an Infant Dragon?』

--KYEWWROW?

Infant Dragon tilted its head in puzzlement to Black Dragon's question.

I thought something was strange, turned out Infant Dragon couldn't speak dragon language.

『Fumu, what are the parent dragons doing leaving a child who cannot speak words.』

It's a remark with good sense I would never have thought coming out of the battle junkie Black Dragon.

『Alright, I'll teach you dragon magic and language. I'll temper strength befitting of a dragon and indomitable fighting spirit into you.』

Black Dragon spoke while smiling nicely to Infant Dragon.

--KYEROWN?
--Pipirururururu.

Since Infant Dragon couldn't understand the words, Hisui answered in place of it.

Even though Hisui can't speak, I feel that it can understand human and dragon language from its gestures.
Perhaps the God Bird race is an intellectual species.

◇

After we're done with the party, I take Hisui along to the Royal Capital.

Infant Dragon can probably fly back to the Royal Capital from the Black Dragon Mountains by itself, but since it's quiet impossible for Hisui who's a small bird, I bring it with me.

Hisui's owner, Princess Doris would be sad if Hisui were to be gone for several days.

--Piruru.

After releasing Hisui who looked reluctant to part way on top of Echigoya Firm's rooftop, I moved to the office room with Unit Arrangement.

"Thanks for your hard work. Eat this with everyone."

"Thank you very much."

I gave the party food in boxes to Tifaliza.

It seems she likes Lulu's cooking too, her icy beautiful face loosened for a little.

"Oh my, Kuro-sama! Welcome back!"

"I'm back Manager. I'm hearing if you have important matters to report."

I listen about the situation in the Royal Capital and the recruitment progress for immigrants in the city where I serve as the governor in Muno territory from the always high-tension Manager.

The Royal Capital is generally peaceful, but the disturbances at the western part of the continent still haven't been quelled.

Among them, it seems the Holy State Parion has been re-invaded by the neighboring countries, and lost several cities.

As for the domestic strife, it seems they've successfully captured Bishtal's Duchy Capital, and the eldest son of the capital who crowned himself as the king has ran away to the fortress city at the northern end of the territory.

Apparently, the reason why it didn't completely settled was because Duke Bistahl who had returned from the Royal Capital did many unnecessary things which held back the royal army.

It seems a not-insignificant number of refugees were fleeing to the territory under direct control of the royalty and Marquis Eluett's territory, although it wasn't as bad as Earl Lesseu's territory.

"Due to these circumstances, there were around 10 times the applicants of the targeted 200 immigrants."

Perhaps because Manager knows that Kuro's identity was Satou, it looks like she's put some extra effort to the immigrant recruitment which should have been only an additional job.

"Still, 10 times huh, that's a lot."

"There's a rumor spreading among the commoners that Sir Pendragon is someone who's merciful and very wealthy, which might have an effect."

I see.... It can't be that the ones who spread that rumor are people of Echigoya Firm right?

"In addition, due to the increasing populace, there's a surge of jobless people in the downtown that resorted to crimes, thus the kingdom's government has asked for us to provide the downtown's people with jobs."

"I allow it."

Since Manager is capable, she's probably going to find the good balance if I just allow her to.

Echigoya Firm is currently extremely in black, so there's no problem even if some red appear.

"It appears the kingdom's government are racking their brains regarding the immigration problem too. A letter regarding that has arrived from the prime minister to Kuro-sama."

I receive a letter from Tifaliza's delicate fingers.

I open the envelope which has neat pattern and give the inside to the manager after scanning it.

"To allow the fourth and fifth large warships soon to be completed to be used in the emigration plan..."

After reading it, Manager muttered in shock.

I understand her feeling.

Normally they will never deploy newly-made warships to move commoners.

Since the king and the prime minister don't know that Nanashi and Satou are the same person, it's probably correct to assume that what they want is the accommodation of Echigoya Firm which had helped restoring the Royal Capital.

Now that I'm able to freely use magic, I could make 100 big airships easily during the journey, but it wouldn't be funny if the gods set their eyes on me if I did so, so I restrained myself.

"We will gratefully make use of them. Each one can hold around 100 people, but if we disregard the livability, it can hold three times the number."

"Th-three times?!"

"Yes, it's possible."

Contrary to Manager who stiffened hearing my suggestion, Tifaliza flatly spoke while maintaining her icy beauty.

Since Manager's worry is reasonable, I'll tell her more.

"There is no need to worry. Normally the journey will take five days but I'll shorten it to an overnight trip. There should be no problem with livability if it's just for a night."

Manager finally convinced after I explained.

I've reformed ghost towns and fields in Muno Territory, and thinned out monsters around them, so the territory can accept immigrants anytime.

Formally, Satou paid an enormous sum to Echigoya Firm to make Kuro perform the deeds.

Although it's troublesome, some duties are unavoidable in order to smoothen these multiple life.

With engineers as the top priority, we have put several requirements for the immigrants.

Since there are foreign immigrants from the snow kingdom--Kiwolk Kingdom and such, I tell them to prioritize people who don't have prejudice against foreigners and people of different races, and also people who are engaged in primal industry like agriculture and stock-farming.

The less seeds of trouble there are, the better.

◇

I returned to the party place and then took my companions back to the solitary island palace.

I thought Infant Dragon would follow along, but since it had become quite attached to Black Dragon, I left it in the Black Dragon Mountains.

I expect it to become an excellent true dragon.

"Then I'll synchronize myself with the doll for a bit."

"Hoi! I'll guard Master's body to prevent it from being played with."

Arisa cheerfully replied me.

--No no, I completely can't trust her.

"Lulu, Mia, I'm sorry but please watch over Arisa so she won't mess with my body."

"Yes, leave it to me."

"Nn, acknowledged."

I leave it to the two and then I use a magic to synchronize myself with Satou doll in Silga Kingdom.

The magic was originally for synchronizing with a familiar, but I arranged it a little so that it can be used with the living doll, Satou doll.

『....Satou-san?』

『Yes, that's right.』

Sera sensed that it was me when I had just blinked once.

I feel that Sera's face was close when I opened my eyes, but it must have been my imagination.

『--Then, the audience with Silga King hasn't started yet?』

『Yes, it seems they're currently in a big meeting regarding the wild uproar about the [female warrior overwhelming a lesser dragon], so the audience with us, who visited in short notice, is scheduled for tomorrow.』

Even though we couldn't meet the king and the nobles, it seems there was a lavish dinner since it was a visit from a large country's high officials.

I can't use radar and map as Satou doll, so I have no way of knowing how big the meeting is.

--No wait, I've used All Map Exploration here, so I can see the information from solitary island palace.

It seems important nobles and leaders of the Five Scale Houses have gathered in the castle.

The macho warrior from before is attending too.

Fumu, it looks like they'll probe about Liza in tomorrow audience, I'll just play dumb.

She's formally in Selbira Labyrinth anyway, if I make her come out of the labyrinth tomorrow morning it'll be a good alibi, and they'll probably regard it as a case of mistaken identity.

Furthermore, there's no problem even if the truth is exposed somehow.

『Princess, even though it's a proxy, you shouldn't wear s-such clothes in front of Satou-san.』

『Ufufu, it's a practice show for my future husband. Right, Karina-sama.』

『I-I wasn't intending to...』

From the adjourning room, Princess Shistina wearing see-through thin silk negligee on her body, Lady Karina wearing nightgown with sexier-looking breast area than usual, and Zena-san wearing simple neat pajama appeared.

--Ooh.

With my sheer willpower, I forcibly twist my line of sight from jumping into Lady Karina's breast.

Exerting my fighting spirit, I control the fight between angel and devil in my mind that's even more intense than a fight with demon lords.

『Sa-Satou-san! You've come here?』

『Yes, just now.』

I replied to Zena-san who saw through it at first sight like Sera.

Of course, that's while I'm averting my face from the beauties.

The princess and Lady Karina blushed and then they ran to the adjoining room while screaming cutely.

--Dear me, t'was a sight for sore eyes.

If silk negligee that show body lines were more popular, I feel that there won't be anymore royalty troubled with getting successors.

『Mou, oh Satou-san! Size isn't everything you know.』

Sera held my arm and whispered.

It's extremely unfortunate that Satou doll cannot transmit touch sensation.

I ended up listening to Sera's and Zena-san's impressions about this country and the situation in the castle until the two came back from the adjoining room.

As a postscript, I had to scold Arisa halfway through.

Good grief--be more moderate with your pranks okay.

14-39. Wyvern Kingdom (6) Silga Castle

Satou's here. There are people who slander others only from rumors without ever meeting them face-to-face. There were also times I believed in rumors, but I think most of them ended up in my impression changing "They were a surprisingly good person" when I actually met the other party directly.

◇

"Viscount Pendragon-sama, I've come to guide you."

"Thank you."

We're led by a maid to the audience chamber.

Today Lady K is not Lady Karina but Hikaru.

It's because Lady Karina would show it on her face the moment they inquired about Liza.

Zena-san and Hikaru are also easy to read but Pochi and Lady Karina are special cases...

--Oh?

There's a marker with color that's neither foe or friend on the radar.

It's the weaselkin merchant who sent the adventurers to the Shadow Castle in Rumooku Kingdom.

I open the map and check, it seems he's only nearby at level plane, he's actually far below underground--imprisoned in a prison.

It seems he's with his slaves in the prison, a rabbitkin wyvern rider and a human woman who has Item Box skill.

I don't know what they did in this country, but I'm not interested enough to see them in the prison, so I'll just ignore them.

He tried to sneak into the Shadow Castle to steal the [Float Core] and artifacts after all.

"--I'm going to the Black Dragon Mountains to look for the goddess!"

The macho warrior from yesterday jumped out of the audience chamber while shouting like that.

As he was going to collide with me, I lightly fling him away.

I'm sorry, but he'd knock down the princess and Sera behind me if I evaded him normally so there was no helping it.

Since I only threw him lightly, the macho warrior rotated in the air and landed on his feet.

That's some great athletic ability despite him wearing full body armor.

"Excuse me, are you hurt anywhere?"

"That's some skill--you, have we met somewhere?"

Looks like he doesn't remember me since I wore recognition inhibition equipment when we met yesterday.

I was wearing the normal one when we were trying various foods on the road to the shrine so I was worried, but it appears to be unfounded.

"Isn't it just your imagination?"

I won't clearly deny it.

This guy doesn't have Fathom skill, but there's a high possibility of lineage nobles having that kind of item here, the place with royal family.

"Wait! Don't you think the next king is allowed to run away!"

A good-looking red scale prince rushed out of the audience chamber, caught the macho warrior's shoulders and forcefully turned him around.

He puts his face close to the macho warrior their foreheads look like they'll touch, it seems he wants to talk in secret.

"My"

"Ooh"

I heard sounds waxed with rotten smell coming from the princess and Hikaru. <TLN: wiki "Fujoshi"> I ignore the two like a gentleman would.

Since outsiders will only be a hindrance in this passionate talk between young men, I merely nod to the two and continue into the audience chamber.

I felt slightly reproachful glances from the princess and Hikaru, but our work comes first.

◇

"Shiga Kingdom's Viscount, Sir Satou Pendragon--"

A red scale knight standing beside the entrance shouts out loud.

Apparently, he's introducing people who are coming inside.

We don't have to introduce ourselves, nice.

After exchanging greetings which differ by country, we get into the main issue of the audience.

"--I see, sightseeing is a way to learn cultures and livelihood of people in foreign countries huh."

For some reason, I had to explain the meaning of sightseeing to Silga King who seemed to be interested in it.

"Then, I will also go tour Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire after I abdicate my throne later."

"That's a wonderful thought."

It might sound like a flattery, but it's my true feeling.

The main cause of disputes are un-mutual understanding between people and countries.

I think it's a really good thing if the knowledge is spread by the top person of the country.

"By the way viscount, it seems that there's a retainer of yours, a master of spears, who have defeated the『Unfalling』-dono."

"Yes, Dame Kishresgalza is the best spear-user among my retainers."

While thinking "Here it comes" in my mind and being cautious, I boasted about Liza to the king who said it as if he was admiring her.

Since Shiga Eight Swords is a symbol of military force from a foreign country's perspective, it's kinda hard to boast Liza's victory.

"I-I thought it was just a rumor, so it was true that she defeated that incarnation of valor, Sir Julberg!"

The king stood up from the throne and shouted.

Is it really something that surprising?

If we're talking about fighting strength, I think Lady Ringrande, and hero's attendants, the warriors Rususu and Fuifi can win against Sir Julberg....

"I got the chance to have a bout with him before I assumed the throne, that person was extraordinary.... I respect Shiga Kingdom which has such a warrior serving under it, but to think a retainer, and a viscount's retainer at that, was such a warrior...."

Silga King dropped down to his throne exhaustedly.

Is he praising Liza or speaking ill of me, it's hard to tell which.

"Your Majesty, people shouldn't be measured solely by their strength. Sir Pendragon is a great person."

"Excuse my rudeness, but Viscount-sama is idolized by that exceptional virtuous Kishresgalza-dono."

Princess Shistina and Sera talked to the king while looking very proud.

This country seems to be dominated by males, there are unpleasant reactions when the two talked to the king.

I don't like the bad-mouthing rustles I can hear from here.

However, we didn't come to pick a fight, so I'll act like an adult here.

"Your Majesty, please excuse my entourages."

"I do not mind. It appears Viscount is well liked by women."

I held back the princess and Sera and apologized to the king, he let it pass with a laugh.

When the mood of the place has become relaxed, the king suddenly throws a straight ball.

"The spearswoman who defeated Bouryu-sama was Dame Kishresgalza right?"

"--What is it about?"

I was able to put an exquisite interval since I had anticipated it.

It'd be suspicious if I said it too promptly, so I had practiced with Arisa beforehand.

It somehow reminded me of the stress interviews during job hunting.

"Who is this Bouryu-sama?"

"I see, Sir Pendragon doesn't know huh. Bouryu-sama is the chief of the lesser dragons sitting on the sacred mountain, he's sort of a guardian of our country."

--Hohou?

Bouryu-kun wasn't just a wild kid huh?

"When he found a herd of Naga to the west, he brought his followers along to exterminate them, and when he heard that a Hydra appeared to the east, he merrily challenged it to a fight--our country's peace is all thanks to dragons-sama's doing."

So he's really just a wild kid....

All's good since he seems to be helpful though.

"I may look like this but I'm also a spearsman. I'd like to receive coaching from Dame Kishresgalza, would you mediate for us today?"

"I'd like to comply Silga King's wish, however--unfortunately, she is currently exploring the labyrinth in the labyrinth city Selbira."

"What, are you saying that you didn't bring a retainer excelling at fighting in a dangerous journey?"

The calm and composed Silga King is plainly surprised to hear my reply.

--Is it really that strange?

When I think about it, it is indeed strange.

I completely forgot that traveling in this world means risking your life.

Moreover, this is a trip with a relatively high risk.

When I was thinking how to explain it, sounds of bells rang in the audience chamber.

"Alarm bell--this sound, the border eh."

Attentive Ears skill picked up Silga King's muttering.

Looks like something happened in the border.

Checking the map, luminous points signifying people have gathered in the east border.

800 soldiers of this country and 1000 mix of soldiers and commoners of the neighboring country.

There are a lot of injured people among the commoners, most are about to run out of stamina.

I heard that there was a tension between the neigboring Makiwa Kingdom and Weasel Empire, but it seems the war has already started.

Then, a messenger rushed in.

"Your Majesty! Reporting in--"

I thought I should leave here, but for some reason Silga King said, "Let Sir Pendragon hear it too", detaining me.

"--1000 commoners of Makiwa Kingdom have surged in the eastern national border."

Hearing the soldier's report, the high officials and military officers in the audience chamber make a commotion.

"So the war between Makiwa Kingdom and Weasel Empire has begun at last...."

"If there are 1000 refugees, does that mean they've lost to the weaselkin?"

"How will His Majesty react."

"Even His Majesty won't be whimsical enough to take care of Makiwa Kingdom's people infamous for hating demi-humans."

"There is no reason to lend a hand to people who despise anyone besides humans."

On the other hand, Silga King's expression doesn't change.

It seems he had expected this situation. "Quiet!", with a thundering voice, he urges the messenger to continue.

"So, what do they want?"

"Someone claiming to be the representative of the commoners said that they wanted to emigrate to Shiga Kingdom, thus they wished to pass through our country."

That's quite rash.

Going to Shiga Kingdom by walking on foot is already hard enough, I think it's impossible for them to go through the monster dominions located between Silga Kingdom and Shiga Kingdom.

I peek at the Tourism Ministry book in the storage, it seems it's possible for a vice minister to accept immigration.

However, the one who accepted them has to act as their guardian, securing their livelihood and employment.

"Sir Pendragon, you are famous for your profound mercifulness. If you wish to save your kind, I will not hesitate to allow them pass through our country."

Fumu, I don't mind saving people in trouble, but the words [hating demi-humans] I heard from one of the officials bother me.

I don't want to bring seeds of trouble to Muno Territory.

On the other hand, I'm also reluctant to leave them all to another territory.

Perhaps I can exchange them with demi-humans in Seryuu territory as a solution?

"Satou, I'm against it."

"Satou-san, please give mercy to people with no place to go."

Princess Shistina is against it, Sera is in favor.

I look at the two people who are acting as the guards.

Hikaru's eyes are fully expecting to help them, Zena-san too, is having a complicated expression that looks like it's saying, "I'd like to help them if possible."

"--Humans sure are troublesome. Just save them if they're your kind no?"

The macho warrior advised me who was hesitating.

Being simple is nice.

"I cannot answer immediately. I'd like to talk to them once if possible, would you allow?"

"Very well, I give you the permission."

"Then I'll escort him to the border."

The macho warrior suggested so to me who got the permission from the king.

For some reason the prince is also going to tag along too.

Rather than securing my safety, it's probably to prevent the macho warrior from running away.

"A wyvern can only take two people. Choose one of viscount's entourages."

I've ridden on a lesser dragon and Black Dragon, but this is my first time with a wyvern.

Now then, whom should I choose.

As Hikaru is to guard Princess Shistina who's against this, between Sera and Zena-san--I'll go with Sera.

She should be able to openly heal the troubled refugees with her holy magic.

◇

"I can see 'em!"

I can't see due to the macho warrior's body obstructing, so I lean my body slightly and look below.

There's a [Great Wall of China]-like wall constructed in the national border, refugees have gathered on the road in front of the checking station.

I should be able to hear them through the wind.

"Could you circle once above them?"

"--Hahn? Sure, but it won't be funny if we're sniped. Are you fine at an altitude outside arrow reach?"

"Yes, please."

The moment the macho warrior took the wyvern out of the border, I executed All Map Exploration.

Now I don't have to worry about surprise attacks from the other side of the border.

--This is bad.

I've expected that there would be people with [Inciting] and [Brainwashing] skills among the refugees, but I didn't expect that there would be one with [Unknown Skill].

Since the person is in the back of the refugees, I'll put a marker now and get in touch later.

I think the person is a reincarnated person judging from the name, Kei, but the hidden titles, [Believer of Zaikuon] and [Fake Apostle] are intriguing.

This person must be the [Apostle] from the [Salt Pillar] incidents right?

14-40. Wyvern Kingdom (7) Turmoil at the Checking Station

Satou's here. Fortunately, I've never had to ask myself whether I should desert my country or not. If it were just school or workplace though, I think you should leave before you even had to ask if it was worth your life.

◇

"We, demand, pass through, checking station."

"Demi-humans, tyranny, unforgivable."

"Checking station, barrier, immediately, open."

We heard such angry voices as we arrived at the landing spot for wyverns on the multistoried building of the checking station.

It sounds like the choral chanting in the movie about student movements I saw in the past.

My motivation drops somehow or other.

I feel like leaving them and going back, but I can't do that since Sera is with me.

We saw mothers holding their babies and children when when were looking from the sky after all.

"--How cruel."

I turn my line of sight hearing Sera's criticism.

I saw Lizardkin and Orange Scalekin soldiers shooting arrows at the people who are trying to cross the border wall and putting their feet on the wetlands.

I could understand her reaction if they were laughing at the fleeing people, but the truth is a bit different.

According to Attentive Ears skill--.

"You didn't hit them right?"

"Of course. What's the point of threatening them away from the bottomless swamp of the wetlands if I hit them."

"Hahn, you trying to speak some intelligent words. Oy, there too."

"Again huh.... Won't they become obedient if we let one get swallowed by the bottomless swamp?"

"Don't even joke 'bout it. That's going to haunt our dream."

"Right."

--Such conversations happened.

When I told that to Sera, she felt ashamed with her remark earlier, but I supported her saying that it was only natural she misunderstood since she couldn't hear them.

◇

"Y-your Highness! And even young master of Dragon Horn House!"

An official in charge of the checking station rushed in from the station building and greeted the prince and Macho Warrior.

He looks like a petty official who's flattering nobles, but judging from his glittering eyes, it seems he's genuinely a fan of the two.

This is a country who respects strong men isn't it.

"Captain! This is bad! Those guys!"

A soldier who was keeping watch on top of the wall shouted.

He has stopped looking idle.

Macho Warrior and the prince dashed and the official followed after, so I and Sera also go with them.

The spiral case that connects to the wall smells of mold, it's stickied with moss and mud.

"--Hear us, frog eaters!"

Human men are on the bridge connecting the border to the checking station with drawn swords.

In addition to former soldiers of Makiwa Kingdom and members of crime guild, there's even a high level warrior with unknown affiliation. The men are all in [Incited] state.

There's none of the agent provocateurs among them.

They're still dispersed in the refugees.

These agent provocateurs belong to a mysterious group called [Cannibal Snake].

I've never heard of them during my journey, and this group doesn't exist in the countries I know.

Despite being a crime guild, skill compositions of the members don't lose to professional spies. They're probably special agents specialized in illegal activities of some country somewhere.

If the men speaking in unison earlier were like the demonstrators influenced by student movement, then these guys are probably the professional terrorist ones.

Every member has Murder offense, the high leveled warrior even has [Homicidal Maniac] title.

They've pointed their swords to three lizardkin people who are tied with ropes.

According to AR reading, the three of them are commoners of Silga Kingdom. It seems they're fishermen of a small village to the south.

"Open the station if you value these guys' life. Their limbs will be cut off every time the sand falls down in this hourglass."

The lizardkin hostages screamed hearing the cruel words of the men's leader.

"--Shut up."

With the leader's sign, the high level warrior cuts off a lizardkin's tail with his sword.

The bridge is turning red every time the tail squirms.

"Unforgivable--"

Macho Warrior who saw that brutality jumped down the multistoried building.

With his level, he's probably fine at only this height.

"That idiotic fool, he done and got himself worked up from such an obvious provocation."

The prince who disparaged the macho warrior with downtown language unfitting of a royalty jumped down while looking like it couldn't be helped.

They're quite a good pair.

"Satou-san, let us go too."

Sera said with shaking voices.

She's been quiet since awhile ago, apparently she's shaken with anger.

Her dignified face with raised eyebrows looks quite cool.

I'm bothered with the movement of the markers on the map, but she's probably safer beside me than me leaving her.

I know the agents' positions, but there's a possibility that there might be brainwashed people in the checking station.

I carry Sera in my arms and then follow after the two.

◇

"I-If you come any closer--"

Macho Warrior got close to the men before they could threaten him.

The spear thrust by Macho Warrior was somehow blocked by the high level warrior's shield.

"--Tsk, you're good."

"You won't pass through."

"Oh I will--"

Macho warrior's spear was a decoy, he pulled the warrior's pivot leg with his tail.

"Y-you coward."

"Coming from someone taking hostages."

The prince who caught up with Macho Warrior thrust his spear while saying so.

The warrior's shield seems to be a magic item, but it's out of its league this time.

"I-Impossible...."

"Repent in human hell. Your friends will follow soon."

The prince's Dragon Fang Spear which pierced through the shield stabbed the warrior's heart.

As I thought, the prince's Dragon Fang Spear has higher piercing power than Macho Warrior's Dragon Horn Spear.

The refugees who are surrounding us from a distance scream.

Looks like Macho Warrior has begun stabbing the other terrorists.

The people here really are merciless against their enemy.

I'm not good with violent scenes, so I'd like to refrain from seeing such things.

"Don't kill them all! Leave some for interrogation later."

"Tsk, can't be helped."

Receiving the prince's order, Macho Warrior knocked down two of the men.

They're not dead indeed, but their limbs are turned to odd directions. Their ribs seem to be broken too.

As we caught up, we didn't join the battle and went to the lizardkin hostages instead.

Besides the cut tail, they also have some injuries from beating, so I'll let Sera take care of that, while I pick the squirming tail on the ground.

The lizard's tail was cut, but once I sticked it to the wound and let the man drink mid magic potion, it got attached back.

He can probably move it again after getting some rehabilitation.

"--You murderer!"

One of the agents mixed among the refugees threw a stone while shouting.

He probably used [Inciting] skill at the same time.

I remember the odd sense of having my mind getting hazy.

I check the bracelet magic tool I've made myself.

This is a magic tool intended to be a simple version of Raka, it has automatic self-defense against mental interference, and automatically recovers when you're attacked with paralyze, stun or any kind of debuff.

It cannot speak, but it has preset to distinguish them and automatically deal with them even without the user's input.

In addition, it can also defend against physical and magic attacks, but unfortunately it can be broken by a single mid level magic from me.

It's still possible to improve on that section.

"Revenge for our countrymen!"

"Make the frog eaters bathe in blood!"

"Blood for blood!"

It seems there are refugees who are cooperating with the agents, unreasonable abuses and stone-throwing come from the location where the agents can't be found.

Even though they were the one who did the harm first, they act like the victims now.

"Hmph, what can such pebbles do."

Macho Warrior smiles ferociously, then he swings his spear like a fan to fling back the stones, slightly later, the prince invokes [Air Shield] magic to repel the stones back to the crowd.

Some stones also come flying toward us, so I use mid level force magic [Defense Wall II] to create a transparent dome shaped barrier.

Unlike the lower force magic [Defense Wall], you can go in and out of this freely.

With a bwoosh sound, the prince's [Air Shield] had been broken.

"Tsk, a magician huh--"

The prince's loathing was interrupted by a stone that hit his forehead.

It seems he has taken his helmet off after meeting the checking station's official.

"I'll crush you damn small frieeeeeeeeeees!"

The prince who's bleeding on his forehead shouted in rage.

With that wrath, the crowd's state changed from [Enraged] to [Panic].

Apparently, his shout earlier was added with [Coercion] skill.

The crowd begin to run away from the prince one after another.

"Uwaaaaaah, we'll be killeeeeeed."

"Run! We'll get eaten from the head!"

"My child isn't here, where is my childdddd."

The panicked male refugees run while kicking down the frail old people and women.

I make an effort to save the weak as much as possible using [Magic Hand].

Unlike the criminals earlier, I can't let ordinary women and children get hurt even though they have the same ideology.

As expected I couldn't save all 1000 people, people who got their bone fractured and injured appeared one after another.

"--Don't think I'll let you run!"

It seems the prince intends to pursue them.

"I'll crush the left side. You do the right side."

"O-ou."

Macho Warrior seemed to be taken aback by the prince's angry look.

I don't intend to watch a mass slaughter, so I need to act now.

"Please calm down."

I come out of the checking station and whack the prince's head with a long wand I've taken from my bag.

"What are you doing!"

"I canceled your abnormal status with magic. It seems there's someone who can use incitement magic over there."

I told the turning prince while checking that his [Enraged] state had returned to blank.

I used mind magic [Cool Down] since his magic armor would have been broken if I used the usual Break Magic.

Macho Warrior's state had already restored when he was taken aback by the prince's action.

It's probably because simple mind is easy to get abnormal status, but in turn it's also easy to be restored from one.

"--■ Erase Evil Effect"

Glittering light emitted from Sera rain down upon the refugees.

Sera's advanced level holy magic removed abnormal status of the refugees.

This magic doesn't last long even though its effect is immediate, so I use mind magic's [Calm Field] to prevent them from getting incited again.

Since the refugees are spread far and wide, I expand the effective range by stretching it thin.

The effectiveness slightly decreases, but it should be enough to lower the success rate of the incitement.

Advanced magic could probably protect them easily, but since there were many frail people among the refugees, I didn't use high powered magic which would have big burden on their bodies.

With this, I've stopped the refugees from rioting and prevented the agents' secret maneuver.

Arresting the agents and their cooperators will be for later.

That is because--.

I see a priest in white clothing walking toward here from the wasteland that has quieted down from Sera's magic.

--It seems the next one is the fake apostle.

14-41. Wyvern Kingdom (8) The Fake Apostle

Satou's here. I feel that I become unusually temperamental when I'm tired. Even though I know that it'll get better if I take a warm bath and enough sleep, it's hard to attain such luxurious chances.

◇

A priest with white robe walks toward us in the open space which has been quieted down by Sera's magic. It's the fake apostle.

I cannot see the fake apostle's visage since their hood covers until the nose. The long hair spilling from the hood is blue colored.

--Is the fake apostle not a reincarnated person?

The fake apostle doesn't use healing magic at the injured people even while looking at them sorrowfully.

The fake apostle stops about 10 meter before us.

I think they want to be outside the range, but it's already within the range of Macho Warrior and the prince who have Flickering Movement.

<TLN: 'They' as in gender neutral they as it is on the raw.>

"--You're hurting soldiers and commoners."

The fake apostle said in shaking anger with a slightly husky voice.

Still angry even after getting the [Erase Evil Effect] and [Calm Field] huh, it seems the fake apostle needs more calcium.

"Huuh? Who the hell are you?"

"Be careful, he might have some plans."

Macho Warrior who heard the fake apostle's muttering scowled, the prince warned him while holding the Dragon Fang Spear.

Looks like the prince has regained his composure with Sera's magic earlier.

I'm glad that he's returned to his intellectual staff officer-type character.

"Military that doesn't perform civilian control is merely a violent organization."

The fake apostle arrogantly said words that sounded like some superficial knowledge.

I think civilian control is no different from violence.

Moreover, does this world even have the concept of civilian control?

Somehow, I have a bad feeling that we can't have a talk, let alone persuading the fake apostle.

"A mere violent organization is the same as Yakuza--"

The pair of eyes inside the hood are shining purple.

"Oy, I've a bad hunch."

"Are you telling the truth? Your hunch is something that can't be disregarded."

Macho Warrior muttered, the prince looked sour.

"Become salt with my『Infinite Salt Maker』!"

--Oy oy.

I reacted late since I was distracted with the skill's name which sounded familiar.

White fog sprout out from below the fake apostle's feet that are shining purple painting the surrounding white.

The white Tsunami swallows weeds, bushes, and rocks while leaving white objects behind it--they're probably things that have turned into salt.

Apparently it's a skill that turn anything, regardless if it's organic or inorganic, into salt.

According to AR reading, the fake apostle's MP has decreased, so it's probably a type of skill that consumes MP.

"This is baad."

"We're withdrawing--Sir Pendragon too, quick!"

Macho Warrior and the prince quickly made the strategic decision of retreating.

The speed of salt-turning wave is accelerating, but they should be able to evade it with their physical ability.

"--Tei."

I took out a small palm wood chip and threw it at the fake apostle's face. Of course I perfectly held back.

With a thud, the fake apostle's face was hit and they fainted.

The salt wave isn't stopping even after I've defeated the fake apostle.

".... ■■■ Divine Light Wall"

Sera invoked an advanced level magic, a glittering light wall appeared.

The salt wave that touches the wall scatter into light purple and blue sparks.

It seems she has [Chant Shortening] like her older sister, Lady Ringrande, her magic invocation is faster than I thought.

Even Arisa was surprised to see her learning advanced level magic of both [Holy Magic: Tenion Belief] and [Light Magic] despite being level 43.

The experiment to see whether skill given through [Gift Orb] could level up appears to be a success.

◇

I thoroughly drain the fake apostle's MP with [Mana Drain].

In addition, I tied the fake apostle with [Thorn Foot] rope to prevent MP recovery.

"Viscount-sama, are you alright?"

"Yes, I'm okay."

Soldiers came running out of the checking station.

It seems Macho Warrior and the prince are staying in the station.

"Satou-san, I'd like to treat the injured people, may I?"

I check the positions of the agents on the map.

Other than the wounded one who got left behind, the agents have split into three groups in different locations with a pair in each group.

"Yes, no problem."

I consented Sera's request and asked the captain to guard her.

I also asked the soldiers to watch over the fake apostle.

Using nature's call as an excuse, I walk to a bush alone.

There's something that needs to be taken care of before interrogating the fake apostle.

"--Tama."

"You called~?"

Bounce, ninja Tama in pink hood appeared from my shadow below.

I was just muttering alone, 'I'll call Tama with Unit Arrangement', but she appeared by herself instead....

Apparently Tama's Ninjutsu can do the same thing as shadow magic's [Shadow Portal].

I squat down in the bush and display a map with [Illusion] magic in front of Tama.

"This is our location, these ones over there with the red points are the suspects."

"Aye aye sir~"

I was still in the middle of my explanation, but Tama dived into the shadow and then screams occurred from among the refugees.

"Viscount-sama! Something seems to be happening over there."

"It's fine, it's just one of my subordinates."

I replied 'it's okay' to the soldier who call out from the opposite side of the bush.

It seems ninja Tama's acts ended before long, she jumped out of the shadow with five agents wrapped in bamboo mat.

Everyone is unconscious, maybe because they were being carried inside the shadow space.

"Secured bad people~?"

"Thank you Tama. Do you have any request for the dinner?"

"Yess, hambuurg~?"

"Alright. We're having a hamburg steak full course today."

After I said that, Tama disappeared into the shadow after happily dancing the [Rejoicing Dance] secret version.

"Th-these guys are?"

"The ringleaders of this case."

I drag one of the agents back, while leaving the rest for the soldiers to carry.

The captain asked how I caught them, but I answered, "It's a secret."

They must have interpreted that there were Shiga Kingdom's secret agents lurking.

◇

"--Did I lose?"

The fake apostle seems to have woken up.

"This is a rope that absorbs magic power right?"

I affirm the fake apostle's question.

Since the soldiers are currently busy dealing with the agents and the male refugees, it's only Sera and me who are in front of the fake apostle.

The refugees who had been treated went back to their location.

"Why were you trying to kill the prince and me?"

"P-prince?"

I crouched down in front of the fake apostle and inquired about the reason.

The fake apostle who realized that they were trying to harm a royalty is panicking noticeably.

Looks like they're unexpectedly someone of lower middle class.

"In-injuring the populace, they can die out for all I care."

Apparently, they decided not to hear it and continue the talk.

"Those people were the ones who kidnapped Silga Kingdom's people and injured the hostages. The prince and his friend only helped their citizens and punished the criminals."

"H-however--th-there shouldn't be any need to kill them."

The fake apostle made a forced excuse to Sera's sound argument.

It seems the fake apostle is poor at debating.

Apparently, they didn't have any ulterior motive, they just jumped out without thinking when they saw militant men killing commoners.

Even if they have Unique Skills, I can't believe they survive this long with such a simplistic thinking.

"Those lizards were clearly stronger than humans."

"Therefore, they should catch the criminals who harmed their citizens without killing them?"

"Th-that's right!"

--Un? The fake apostle said some subtle racial discrimination just now.

The fake apostle agreed to Sera without noticing her cold tone, maybe because Sera looked like she was listening to them.

Sera is kind to the weak, but as a descendant of a Duke house, she's strict to people who disturb order.

"What's the point in that?"

"P-point?"

Sera continued talking to the confused fake apostle.

"Do you know what would happen if they were arrested alive?"

Sera pauses, the fake apostle doesn't speak back.

"Bandits who surrender will end up becoming crime slaves and be forced to work in manual labors, they rarely get executed."

"Th-that's right!"

Sera shuts up the fake apostle who reflexively spoke during her speech with a cold glance.

Sera has completely taken the pace.

"That is only the case if the bandits injured a commoner."

"Just what are? ....Ah."

Apparently, the fake apostle realized what Sera wanted to say.

"People who meant harm toward royalty won't end up just by getting executed. Their whole families will be executed for the crime of treason. In this case, it probably would have applied to the refugees."

Sera might have slightly exaggerated it, but getting all the members executed is a possible discretion of the king.

If I had to say, the stone-throwing at that time would have likely be viewed as a problem, but we can just throw the whole responsibility to the mysterious group [Cannibal Snake] that was the heart of the problem.

"P-people--"

Purple ripples develop on the fake apostle's body.

Oops, please don't rampage in this place.

I could do something about it even if it was a demon lordfication, but I'd like to refrain doing that in a place with this many witnesses.

"--People aren't segmented by class!"

The fake apostle who turned the Thorn Foot rope into salt stood up while saying so.

Objects that have been turned into salt drop down below the fake apostle.

The whirling salt crystals are reflecting the sunlight, glittering.

The too slender upper half of the body is hidden by the flowing purple hair, the lower half of the body is covered by the whirling salt smoke.

I took out a sample of mass-produced mantle from my bag and threw it to the fake apostle.

"--Wear your clothes, you exhibitionist."

It's a naked body of a beautiful girl who will likely drive a certain group of enthusiasts wild, but since it's out of my preferred range, I don't feel happy seeing that.

I'll gladly appreciate it if it's in five years time.

『Wha, who's an exhibitionist--ueee』

The fake apostle who finally noticed her situation holds her body and crouches down.

She hides herself in the mantle I gave while turnig bright red.

It looks like she was really flustered, she said the last line in Japanese.

Apparently she failed to control her skill well when she was cutting the rope, her wig and clothes turned into salt too.

I look at the fake apostle who's a reincarnated person, agents of a mysterious group, and the refugees who have humans supremacy doctrine, in turns.

Let me see, what will be a good middle ground.

I'd like to settle this and quickly get back to the pleasure trip.

14-42. Wyvern Kingdom (9) Cleaning-up

Satou's here. Terrorism is woeful and violent. Terrorism that aims at people behind the military instead the military itself is a big problem in the modern society. And even in another world--.

◇

"I forbid you from using skills, including Unique Skills."

I used [Geass] skill at the fake apostle who was glaring at me spitefully to nip the trouble in the bud.

The ornamental mantle of noble clothes is too small to hide her body so she's been fidgeting restlessly since awhile ago.

Looks like she even didn't pay attention to the fact that she got [Geass]ed.

『....Lewd』

I take a big shirt from my bag and drop it on the complaining fake apostle's head.

"Behave yourself for a bit."

『Don't look at me you pervert.』

She somehow feels like my little sister when she was in her rebellious phase.

I avert my gaze from the fake apostle who's having a hard time wearing the shirt to hide her body, and entrust the rest to Sera whose smile looks scary.

Her Japanese wording seems childish somewhat.

Did she have any reason to use masculine language?

The prince and Macho Warrior came here when I was thinking such.

Looks like they had sensed that the situation was under control.

"Sir Pendragon, I know that humans are in heat all year round, but understand the time and place."

"Really. If you want to strip and assault your captive, at least do it in that bush over there."

Apparently, the people of the checking station think that I stripped the fake apostle's clothes.

The soldiers look awkward, the women and children among the refugees are looking frightened.

Only the prostitute-like women among the refugees emphasize their breasts, trying to appeal to me. Very shrewd.

"It's a misunderstanding. The tool she had got out of control and turned her own clothes to salt. There's no danger anymore since the tool has been destroyed."

I took out a broken tool from my breast pocket.

Of course it's just a [looks legit] item that has nothing to do with the fake apostle.

If I'm not mistaken it's the failed creation of Echigoya Firm's Prof. Jahad who tried to make [A magic tool to mutually create magic power and electric power] is it?

Since he was obsessed with subjects that involved rotation, he had been immersing himself in that theme after completing the new aerodynamic engine model.

When I visited Echigoya Firm not too long ago, the Japanese Aoi boy who was working as the Prof's assistant grumbled that he didn't have time to do his own research.

Leaving that aside--.

The prince glanced at the item and lost interest, then he turned his sight to the agents.

"Even though I know that the captives in battlefield are prioritized to the captor, would you be willing to hand over those men to our country."

"I don't mind if you let me take custody of the girl over there."

Dealing with the agents afterward sounds troublesome, it's easier to let the people in charge to handle them.

The prince readily consented, so the fake apostle has been placed under my custody.

Now that I've sealed her dangerous Unique Skill, I'll leave her at some Zaikuon temple or monastery in some safe easy-to-live city.

An Urion priest soldier who has personal appraisal skill, [Judgment Eye] runs up to the prince and whispers something to his hear.

He reported that the agents were not ordinary mob.

"Incitement and Brainwashing?"

"That's some heretic skills.... Maybe there's some of their friends who can use mind magic?"

"Don't be stupid. If there's someone who can use such heretic magic, I'll feed them to the wyvern."

Looks like mind magic is more hated than I thought.

I'll keep the fact that there's someone who can use mind magic here a secret.

"Are you going to execute the ones who have Incitement and Brainwashing skills?"

"It should be fine as long as both of their eyes and mouths are blocked. Although this is the first time I meet people who have these skills, I've learned about it during my training when I was entrusted to be the person in charge of the checking station."

--Hohou?

I'd like to receive that training.

I'll ask Silga King if I could get one once we get back to the royal castle.

"Needless to say, block their mouth and suicide attempt."

"Yes, the one with Brainwashing skill might have influenced the soldiers in the station. I'll let soldiers who have just been assigned to be the guards."

The officers in this country seem to be quite excellent.

After getting all their equipment besides their underwear stripped, the agents who are tied with [Magic Sealing Chain] are carried by the soldiers to the station.

There were some men who shouted, [Save sensei!] among the refugees, but the soldiers quickly arrest and took them to the station together with the agents.

Next, we need to deal with the refugees.

As I switched my thought to that, roaring sounds and vibrations detained it.

"What happened!"

"The checking station's gate is collapsing!"

A soldier answered the prince.

"We're asking the reason! I'm going for a bit. You wait here with Sir Pendragon."

Macho Warrior ran to the station after saying so.

I wouldn't go with him even if he asked me to.

Because--.

"Suicide bombing?"

"Yeah, the station's gate has collapsed, pieces of meats are sticking to the surrounding wall and tower."

It'll appear in my dream if you explain it in detail so please stop that.

Without even listening to the prince and Macho Warrior's conversation, I know that all of the agents have died looking at the disappeared points on the map.

Looks like the sympathizer men and the soldiers who were with the agents instantly died too.

After that thorough physical check, just where did they hid the bombs.....

Good grief, please stop with suicide bombing terror in another world.

I searched [Bomb] on the map just in case and found a hit on a pregnant woman.

Looking with 3D display, I found that it was inside the pregnant woman's stomach.

I enter a bush once again and pull the [Bomb] from the pregnant woman with advanced space magic [Aport Object].

It seems the bomb is triggered when it's taken outside, it's swelling in my hand.

--I won't let it.

I put the bomb that was going to explode in my hand into my storage.

I deem [Cannibal Snake] which the agents belong to as the same dangerous organizations as the [Wings of Liberty] and the [Light of Liberty].

There's no need to be considerate with a group who made use of a pregnant woman to do bomb terrorism.

◇

"....■■■■■■■■■■ Mass Heal All"

Once Sera completed her long long chant, more than 1000 refugees are wrapped in a giant light pillar that extends to the sky.

The glittering blue firefly light heals the refugees and washes away their fatigue.

"--Ooh, god."

"Onii-chan! Mother has woken up!"

"Something feels warm."

"My legs, I can move my legs."

"Feels nice.... I feel happy somehow. Wonder if the heaven is calling me."

Bright smiles return to the refugees who have been healed with Sera's holy magic.

There was a slightly dangerous remark mixed in, but it must just have been my mind tricking me so I ignore it.

I signal to the soldiers to carry barrels put with food and water to the refugees.

I've negotiated with the prince to share the food and water reserve of the checking station.

Of course it was not free and I paid the price.

"That was Tenion-sama's holy mark--That person must be a saintess with the name."

"Let's pray to saintess-sama and Tenion-sama."

The religious officials who noticed the holy mark inside the light pillar astutely advertised and propagated it to the surrounding people.

Some people whose wounds are cured and stomachs are satisfied offer thankful prayers while looking content.

That circle spread like a chain reaction and reached the whole refugees.

Perhaps due to the effect of the people who are praying earnestly, Sera has gotten a new [Saintess] title.

『Saintess? No one praised me even though I worked that hard....』

The fake apostle who was kneeling behind me muttered her complaint with a gloomy face.

The soldiers who don't understand Japanese are looking at her weirdly.

Did the fake apostle haphazardly punish people without getting thanked by anyone?

I wanted to ask her circumstances, but since an old man with relatively good attires was coming here, I turned my attention to him.

"--How should we thank you."

The old man who introduced himself as a former representative of Makiwa

Kingdom's Keldan town's governor prostrated himself before Sera and me.

It seems he was leading the refugees before the agents and their sympathizers took over.

He thanked us for giving food and water to the refugees who had been weakened.

"Give your thanks not to me but His Highness who gave his permission to share the station's water and food."

Maybe because their countries were at odd, the old man was hesitating for a bit but then he finally fell prostrate and thanked the prince and Macho Warrior.

『There were people who were happy with my salt but there were lots who accused me "A smuggler!", tried to put me into jail and profited by reselling it.』

The fake apostle muttered grudge like she had fallen ill.

In a lot of cases, salt sale's right is held by countries or land lords, so you'll get caught if you carelessly sell them.

"So, has Makiwa Kingdom lost to Weasel Empire?"

"We don't know. Two days after the news that Marquis Dasles territory at the eastern end got attacked, our town at the northwest also got attacked by the empire's monster tamer army."

I check the map while listening to the old man.

Besides Makiwa Kingdom's Royal Capital and two towns, only the territory capital of the southern Muzaris Earldom is left in Makiwa Kingdom.

The town near Silga Kingdom has also been occupied by Weasel Empire's army, around 3000 refugees are currently moving toward Silga Kingdom.

It seems they're doing slave hunting, mercenary units under Weasel Empire are moving vigorously.

....I don't intend to participate in a war.

I don't want to see places where people die and I still don't like to see corpses even now.

I'm not good against violent scenes, and I don't take pleasures in overwhelmingly infringing other people with force.

However, I don't like this even more.

After considering a bit, I've decided.

『Tifaliza, when is the fitting-out of the airships from before completed?』

『The second airships in three days, the third airships in ten days.』

I talk to Tifaliza in Shiga Kingdom's Echigoya Firm through [Telephone].

She answered without getting surprised nor paused even though I called her suddenly.

『Kuro-sama should entrust it to General Manager Elterina if you want to hasten it. She should be able to make the second to depart the Royal Capital tomorrow and the third in two days.』

She gave that suggestion taking my intention into consideration.

『Okay, tell that to Manager.』

『--Please excuse me, but I think it'll be better if Kuro-sama directly instructs her. If you whisper close to her ears "I can only count on you", the wanted delivery date will certainly be fulfilled.』

It's rare for Tifaliza to make a joke.

I change the call and ask Manager to accelerate the departure.

『Please Elterina. I'm counting on you--』

And lastly, when I tried to joke as Tifaliza said, Manager who sounded excited interrupted.

『Leave it to me! Forget tomorrow, I'll make the warships depart by today's end. The rest of the fitting-out can just be done in the middle of the flight.』

--Ooh, the effectiveness is outstanding.

Alright, now the alibi for transporting the refugees is perfect.

◇

『The village I lived in was really really poor--』

After returning to Silga royal castle, I tried talking to the fake apostle, Kei, while waiting for the audience with the king.

I was hesitating for a bit, but I didn't call Arisa and Hikaru.

There was no danger physically speaking, but since I was slightly bothered with Kei's gloomy laugh, I decided to hear her out before the two.

『--I lived in terrible poverty, my past life looked like heaven in comparison. To be honest, it was enough to make me resent the god who reincarnated me.』

Kei talked about her birthplace while staring at the ground.

Sounds like it'll be a darker story than I thought.

『Even so you know, my parents this time were good people. They didn't hit me without reason or left me outside like my previous parents did, they didn't cull me like other families did, and they raised me who was useless.』

Looks like she loves her parents in this world.

Kei's face smiled a little only when she talked about them.

『I, who was an urban junior high student, couldn't do anything. Even if I knew useful tools, I couldn't make them, and I didn't have money to ask someone to make them. And yet, I did as best as I could with my parents--』

--Her village was attacked by thieves.

『Everyone was dead when I came back from gathering nuts. I couldn't remember well after that. I didn't know whether the salt pillars that remained in the whited village were the thieves or villagers.』

Her Unique Skill probably went out-of-control.

I'm surprised she didn't turn into demon lord.

『At that time, I might have died if I didn't meet gramp who was on pilgrimage.... I guess that's good too? Then I'd be able to go to heaven with my parents.』

It's probably something that happens often in remote regions, but you just don't know how to console the one concerned.

I merely listened to her story quietly.

『Gramp was a priest-sama of Zaikuon Temple.』

--It's connected.

『He couldn't use holy magic since the god was weakened, but gramp said that he learned medicines to compensate for magic.』

I see since god Zaikuon died and holy magic became unusable, he learned the alternative.

『He said if Zaikuon temple's priests go around while doing good deeds, people who feel gratitude will give their prayers and the weakened god will become healthy, so we worked hard.』

Kei was visiting various countries with the old priest to impart their idea and techniques to the people of Zaikuon Temples.

『But it was a fruitless effort.... I forgot which city, but some priests who didn't like gramp giving medicines hired bad people to kill gramp.』

And then, after turning those evil priests and bad people into salt, she began to do the sham pilgrimage in place of the old priest alone.

Her skills are of the usual reincarnated person sets, and then [Hunger Resistance], [Rot Resistance], [Poison Resistance], [Disease Resistance], [Paralyze Resistance], [Good Walker], [Compounding] and lastly [Holy Magic: Zaikuon Belief].

She couldn't heal the refugees after all, she probably can't invoke the magic even if she has the skill.

『This world is a shitty game. That's why, I'll revive the god and make this world right.... A world where good people won't have unpleasant things happening to them, a world where bad people will surely be punished.... That's why, I--』

--Calling herself Zaikuon apostle, and punishing the evil are probably her way to do her justice.

I let Kei who began to laugh as if cramping to sleep with mind magic, and then I called Sera in the next room to use her holy magic on Kei who was having a nightmare so she can sleep peacefully.

Holy magic is good for this kind of thing.

Her last line is a dangerous way of thinking, but she lacks knowledge and experience to realize the thing she wants.

I don't care whether god Zaikuon is revived or not, but I'll let Kei to study with a teacher to correct her way.

Moreover, there should be other people who weren't bad yet got turned into salt by her [Infinite Salt Maker], so I have to make her make up for it and visit their graves once her study is done to some extent.

While we're at it, I'll let her mingle with various countries and people's hierarchy to broaden her view.

◇

"--Have you decided to accept the refugees?"

"Regarding that matter.... Since the scale was bigger than I expected, I cannot decide it on my own."

I met the king and talked about the way to cope with the refugees.

After that time, I talked to the old man representative from before, it seemed Makiwa Kingdom's racial discrimination stemmed from the assassinations of Marquis Dasles's family and Makiwa King by white tigerkin.

After those incidents, rejection campaign toward the white tigerkin unnaturally exploded and developed toward the whole demi-humans.

There's a high chance that people who were like those agents were behind the rejection campaign.

If that's the whole story, then the root of the racial discrimination seems shallow.

"So, until the decision from my country comes, I'm thinking of putting a monster barrier in the valley near the border to Makiwa Kingdom to be a temporary foreign settlement."

Eventually, I want to send them home together with the ones taken by the slave hunters.

Moreover, Silga Kingdom's nobles would probably complain if there were a large mass near the national border after all.

"Did my son not tell you? That's the hunting ground of Fort Phanters y'know? Monster barrier has no meaning before a Fort Phanter."

"Please don't worry, my subordinates will take care of that."

I've already dispatched the beastkin girls, currently they must be hunting the Fort Phanters around the area.

I've also asked Mia to make a spring with her advanced level water magic.

"Sir Pendragon, are you aware of an organization called 『Cannibal Snake』?"

"If I'm not mistaken, it's the organization the spies who destroyed the checking station belong to. I'm sorry but I don't know any further."

Silga King shakes his head.

"Then, how about 『Glutton Racoon』 and 『Filth Eater Fox』?"

"No, unfortunately I don't know them. Is there any relation with the aforementioned『Cannibal Snake』?"

"That I don't know. The two I mentioned earlier were organizations whose members had Incitement and Brainwashing skills used by Furu Empire a long time ago. I remember a story about people who inherited those organizations' names laying waste to Shiga Kingdom during the era of the mad king Galtafut. I thought a noble of Shiga Kingdom like Viscount-sama would know about them."

Fumu, organizations of an ancient empire huh....

At the very least, organizations called [Glutton Racoon] and [Filth Eater Fox] don't seem to exist within my range.

I can't use extensive search since there are many people who have Incitement skill.

There's only several people with Brainwashing skill in a country it seems.

It's more numerous than I thought.

I tried to examine the map closer but there was no one who belonged to organizations with similar name.

Silga King put several terms for the matter of the foreign settlement, but I agreed to them since they were something that could be solved with money.

Time is precious right now.

◇

Our airship departed to Shiga Kingdom.

I don't have time to keep the fake apostle Kei company so I let her sleep with continuous-type mind magic and left her in the airship. She's going to wake up in three days, but my business should be over by that time.

"Are you ready everyone?"

"But of course! We checked our equipment for 10 times already."

With Arisa in the lead, everyone nodded.

Matching that movement, the rabbit ears and the colorful feathers swayed.

"Alright, let's go!"

We, Team Pendragon, depart to Makiwa Kingdom that's in war.

Now, let's protect the refugees from the slave hunting groups.

14-43. War Kingdom (1) Scientific Weapons

※ It's not from Satou's point of view this time

"Wheel Chief! We can see Makiwa Kingdom's capital in the front!"

"Stop. Operator, stop the followers too."

Steel box-like weapons of the weaselkin stopped on top of the cliff.

Although it looks like a golem carriage, it has a peculiar shape where there's a box on top of a flat box and a long and narrow cylinder attached to the top box.

The tiger and lionkin slaves on the vehicles are watching the surrounding.

After the slaves confirmed that there were no danger in the surrounding, the top of the top box opened, and a weaselkin man called Wheel Chief showed his face.

Wheel Chief sprawled on the clifftop and checked the capital using a magic tool that looked like two attached tubes to see from a distance.

He's not wearing armor despite being a soldier, only sturdy looking clothes.

From here to the capital, it's about half a ri in weaselkin's unit, and around 3KM in earth unit.

"The Rocket Raccoon unit and Iron Hopper Cavalry have spread out in front of the capital huh.... As expected of the mobile corps."

100 Rocket Raccoons as big as three adult men and 3000 Iron Hoppers as big as a horse are lined up in front of the capital.

Screw-like suspicious magic tools are attached on top of the monsters' heads.

The riders in the box on the back of the monsters are probably using those magic tools to control them.

"Captain, will Makiwa knights come out?"

"Oh they will."

The one next to a Wheel Chief called Captain was a young Wheel Chief of a trailing vehicle.

"--Rather, if they don't, the Rocket Raccoons and Iron Hoppers can just jump over the wall and devastate the capital."

"They're in the palm of Tacticican-sama aren't they."

Captain looks sullen, it seems he doesn't like the Tactician.

"We're a bit too far from here. We'll move to the ruins of hunting mansion over there."

"Understood."

By Captain's order, the vehicles move again.

Buzz, buzz, clang, clang, while spreading strange noise that won't lose to their appearances, they move while leaving strange wheel tracks.

If there were a modern Japanese man here, he surely would call the vehicles.

--Tanks.

◇

"Wheel Chief, we got a new message from headquarter. The scouts who had infiltrated the capital could only identify 『Water』 and 『Earth』, the 『Wind』 and 『Fire』 weren't there."

"Alright!"

Wheel Chief grinned and struck his fist at his palm.

"This war--we've won."

"Is Fire--the Crimson Wand that Marquis Dasles had really that dreadful?"

With his military shoes, Wheel Chief trampled the bored loading officer's head who interrupted.

Marquis Dasles territory in Makiwa Kingdom is the closest to the weaselkin territory, but the weaselkin never tried to invade it even after utterly destroying Lionkin and Tigerkin Kingdoms.

And, it's widely known how the mentioned Lionkin Kingdom tried to invade Makiwa Kingdom many times only to be repulsed by Marquis Dasles for generations.

The story about how they killed enemy troops who invaded the territory but never once pursued the troops who got out of the territory out of mercy is also famous.

"Even General ordered us to retreat without attacking if Marquis Dasles appeared."

"What did Tactician-sama said?"

Wheel Chief once again trampled the loading officer's head who implied that the tactician was greater than the general.

"Listen okay? Dasles isn't someone to be afraid of. The Crimson Wand he has is."

The Crimson Wand handed down in Marquis Dasles house is famous as a treasured wand which contains flame spirit, but at the same time it's also said that it's a cursed item that makes fire monsters gather.

Including Marquis Dasles's Crimson Wand, this Makiwa Kingdom has four lords with elemental wands.

Holding the Roaring Vibration Wand that rules over earth, Earl Jizaros of the north.

Holding the Surging Wave Wand that rules over water, Earl Mizaras of the west.

Holding the Typhoon Wand that rules over the wind, Earl Muzaris of the south.

According to the contact earlier, it appears Earl Jizaros of the Roaring Vibration Wand and Earl Mizaras of the Surging Wave Wand are in the royal castle.

Their easy-to-be-confused names seem to be infamous among diplomats and young people who aspire to enter into military service.

"This tank and cannonball are weak against fire. It can't defend against Crimson Wand with just fireproof magic enchant."

The operator thought that it was just another of the mighty elemental wands of the four house with a different element, but he wisely judged that it would only bring the Wheel Chief's shoes onto his head if he said it out loud.

"A report from the ratkin keeping watch! A super huge golem three time as big as the outer wall has appeared."

"So it appeared at last. There's no water dragon huh?"

"Yes, it's just the golem."

"Good, activate the engine! Order the soldiers outside to hide in the bush! Operator, tell the other vehicles to get ready."

"Understood."

The soldiers get ready as the war begins.

"Is there still no signal?"

"--There it is! Two black balls, permission to engage."

Wheel Chief gave his order as a report from the observer came.

"Good! Take the aim. Gunman, you don't need to aim at the legs, just shoot at the golem's huge chest!"

"Wheel Chief, what to do with Captain's wait and see--"

The loading officer stuffs a huge long and thin cannonball into the barrel, the gunman turns the handle and adjusts the cannon's angle.

"The era of huge golems in battlefields has ended. Exposing such a stupidly huge target--"

He checks the slide rule result in the scope.

"I'm aiming, I'll aim at ya, alright, here! Aim and shoot!"

With the gunner's shout, the steel cannonball flies over one kilometer away.

The super huge golem that was peerless against the Rocket Raccoons and Iron Hoppers stopped moving with a roaring sound.

It tried to balance itself after a bit, but it couldn't stand the countless cannonballs shot at its chest as its ankle broke, and fell behind while breaking the capital's wall.

Earth, sand and dust overrun the capital with terrific force.

"Alright, you did well! The knights are coming out next! Prepare the buckshots."

"Captain, a new report from Tank #2. They want to start the『Magic Eater』 experiment, so they ask for an escort."

"Hoo, so it's finally time for the『Magic Eater』experiment huh--The top might be thinking to meddle with Shiga Kingdom too eh."

Wheel Chief licked his lips when he heard the operator's report.

"Captain, how should we reply?"

"Tell them understood. Inside the『Magic Eater』, only we, Scientific Tank Unit can fight properly--"

"Knights without physical reinforcements are just tasty meatballs. We'll run and kill them over the caterpillars."

Hearing Wheel Chief, the silent pilot laughs dryly 'kehi kehi'.

The tank corps started their attack on the capital while being wrapped in complicated mood.

◇

"From the north gate, there's 10 knights, 500 light knights--this is bad! The water dragon appeared from the west gate!"

"We're leaving it alone, first we need to pluck the feathers of Magic Beast Units to prevent them from flying."

"You sure are some careful guy."

It seems destroying units with the ability to fly is a normal practice in this world.

"Captain, don't you think it's strange?"

"What is?"

He ignored the loading officer and asked back the operator.

"Earl Jizaros of Roaring Vibration Wand isn't summoning the next golem. It should have been about time for his magic power to recover enough with magic potion...."

"Come to think of it, that is strange--tell the HQ. They probably have realized it already, but just in case."

"Understood."

Wheel Chief ordered after pondering the operator's words.

It's the HQ's job to think about the whole picture--looks like that's what he's concluded.

"Water dragon's breath is coming."

The after-wave of the water dragon's breath graze the tanks.

"--Damage minimum. Several desant soldiers are deserting."

"We can collect them later. Right now charge!"

It seems the life of Tank Desant's soldiers are light in this world.

"Signal balls--three red balls. They're invoking『Magic Eater』."

"The vibration suppression machine will stop. Careful not to bite your tongue."

A vehicle with round ring attached on it got close to the capital and shot out black ripples.

The vibration on the tanks became intense the moment those ripples touched them.

"To the front, knights are coming."

"Gunman! Rout them!"

"Ou! No need to aim! Eat this!"

The tank's barrel spouts out black smoke, a different cannonball from earlier approaches the knights.

"Advance while ignoring the missed shots!"

"""OU!"""

The knights are pressing on while ignoring the cannonball which is coming toward no one, but then the shell disperses in the air, scattering innumerable buckshot.

"Such feeble pebbles are nothing against magic armors, my『Vajra』and tempered muscles--"

The knight in the lead died without being able to finish his words.

They died without noticing that their enchanted armors became mere metal armor and their proud skills had been neutralized until the very end.

Even the lucky knights who survived were either ran over by the caterpillars or got their hearts stabbed by the tankmen's spears.

The magic beast corps whose movements become dull cross over the main gate to attack the capital.

"Don't fall behind them! Shoot fire bombs at the royal castle from the cliff before the west gate!"

Wheel Chief is burning with ambition to leave a military record of damaging the capital, which is usually protected by defensive wall from the City Core, from outside.

However, the world is not that easy.

◇

"Ca-Captain! It's badbadbadbad"

"Calm down!"

The head of the gunner who shouted like he was broken was kicked.

--GWLOROOOOOUNN!

The soldiers who heard the roar stiffened from fear.

The hardened Wheel Chief forcefully moves and opens the hatch, turning his head toward the blue sky.

A flock of dragons are flying in the sky.

There's even a more than 80 meter long lesser dragon leading the four.

The white dragon in the back is only 30 meter long, but that's not a consolation.

"Why are the Silga Kingdom's dragons here...."

If the people of the country muttered by Wheel Captain heard that, they would shake their heads.

'Our country's dragons-sama are not that big', or so they'd say.

"--Captain."

The white dragon is swooping towards the tanks.

"Rotate at once. We're escaping once we surprise it!"

"Captain, it's no good."

"Loading fool shut up. Right now our top priority is to bring the tank back to the home town."

"--Not that."

"What is not that!"

"That's not just a dragon, it's a Dragon Knight."

"Impossible...."

That's an unrealistic existence that only appears in fairy tales about heroes.

During the last 1000 years, there were only two existences that were called Dragon Knights, Shiga Kingdom's Ancestor King Yamato and Silga Kingdom's Wandering King Riui.

"All four of them are Dragon Knights?!"

There's no more reliable existence if they are allies, but they're nothing but nightmare if they are enemies.

Their only chance to win is--.

"Captain, let's do it! We have『Magic Eater』right now."

"That's right! If we use all the experimental anti-aircraft high explosive projectiles, even if we're up against the invincible dragons!"

"Alright, let's wait and bombard them! Gain the time for the consort plane to escape!"

It seems they're betting on the slight possibility even though there are people who are in despair.

"I'll be watching their faces the moment they're wounded now that there's no magic wall defending their proud scales."

The white dragon is assaulting while a lizardkin child on its back swinging its tail buzzingly.

"That's an awfully small lizardkin isn't it?"

"Shoot!"

"--Eat this!"

The cannonball shot at 50 meter short distance blasted in the air, scattering piece of metals.

It's a certain kill distance even if the opponent is a dragon.

"--That was surprising, nanodesu."

The lizardkin child jumped down in front of the dragon and repelled all the metal pieces.

The sword would have been broken if it was a normal sword.

"It's nothing compared to Tama's shuriken nanodesu."

Swing, the lizardkin child who landed in one revolution, shutan, takes a strange pose.

"Pochi will forgive you if you surrender nodesuyo?"

The caterpillar blows backward, and then accelerates with that recoils, rushing toward the lizardkin child.

"Pochi punch, nanodesu!"

"Not noticing the『Magic Eater』is your lost! Regret after getting ran over!"

In a situation without magic power, a small fist is crashing into tons of iron lump.

There is no need to narrate the result.

--Or should have been.

◇

The next time Wheel Chief who was sure of his victory came to himself, he was on top of a mat along with the other tankmen with a burning tank nearby.

Even though the front of the tank was squashed flat, the pilot was uninjured lying nearby. For some reason he's not wearing trousers, but it doesn't seem like it's hollowed out.

"Have you come to desuka? Pochi recommends surrendering nodesu."

"Okay, we surrender. My uncle is in the senate. Please ask the ransom money to the senate."

He agreed to the advice of the lizardkin child, whose tail swings like a dogkin, to surrender.

It seems he's judged that people of a country with no science won't be able to understand the principle behind the tank with how bad it's burning.

"....Tell me one thing."

"The war is over already nodesu. Pochi doesn't mind one question nodesuyo?"

"How did you wreck the vehicle we were riding on?"

"Of course it's because of this thoroughly tempered steel body nodesu!"

It's a squishy hand that doesn't look like a steel at all--beastkin's hand?

When the Wheel Chief looked at it again, it had come back to lizardkin's hand.

"Pochi forgot that the glove was off nodesu. Pochi's identity was almost exposed nodesu. Allies of justice are better unidentified nodesu. Miserable hell where even tears of blood freeze over waits for people who know the secret nodesuyo?"

Wheel Chief shakes his head vigorously toward the glittering eyes.

"--It's fine if you didn't see it nodesu."

In order to varnish over it, Wheel Chief forcefully turned back the topic.

"Magic power?"

"That's right, how did you do it in a place where magic power is sealed."

"That's easy nanodesu! Fighting in a space where magic is nu is the basic of the basic nanodesu. If you can't do that much, you'll be toyed with by the Ropper Rokkun in the labyrinth's lower layer nodesuyo."

Wheel Chief dryly laughed at the dogkin child wearing lizard costume who was nodding.

Apparently, there are existences outside of his common sense in this world.

Thus, the battle between the first deployment of Weaselkin scientific weapons VS Makiwa Kingdom, the unreasonable fantasy victory ended.

The identity of the mysterious Dragon Knights who saved Makiwa Kingdom this day is wrapped in mystery with no one knowing.

Further, the Wheel Chief who saw the only glimpse of their identity takes the secret to his grave.

14-44. War Kingdom (2) Dragon Riders

Satou's here. I think a country can feel proud just by being safe and secure. While that may be true, parading in clothes that are as good as being half-naked in a business district at night is truly sexy but cute--I mean no, for adults with good sense, I think it's necessary to be careful.

Even if I'm thinking "Nice, do it more" in my head.

◇

『Enemies found~?』

『Master! There are bad people nodesu!』

Tama and Pochi talk through the [Tactic Talk] which is superior in counterintelligence.

As we entered Makiwa Kingdom, we caught a sight of the refugees escaping to the west and slave-hunting mercenaries chasing them.

Both the escapees and the pursuers are humans.

『I'll save that group. Everyone please stop the battle in front of the royal capital if it looks like it'll be decisive.』

『Okay, this will be a cinch with the Evil Dragons.』

As Arisa's said, I've summoned the Evil Dragon family from the labyrinth's lower layer for their coercive effect.

The father Evil Dragon was hesitating to let anyone besides me riding on them, but they were unexpectedly cooperative to act as the dragon rides after sensing Black Dragon's presence who played with everyone yesterday.

Further, since Black Dragon is too enthusiastic and prone to run amok, I'm not bringing him here.

『Lyuryu is also with us nanodesu!』

--LYURYURYUUU.

The white lesser dragon that Pochi rides on cried peculiarly.

We're equipped with the golden armor disguise version since today is an operation of absolute secrecy.

The defensive power are the same as the original golden armor, but our appearances become to look like various beastkins like lizardkin. This is not magic but special make-up technique which is also used on Satou doll.

Liza and Mia are disguising as rabbitkin, Pochi and Tama as lizardkin, Nana and Lulu as birdkin, and Arisa as catkin.

Unfortunately, Hikaru is supervising the foreign settlement, while Zena-san and the others are to stay in the airship and the solitary island palace.

We're using these kind of disguises in order to hide our identities as well as to sweep away demi-humans' discriminations in Makiwa Kingdom.

Leaving that aside, let's help the people who are being chased.

I waved my hand to Arisa and the others who are heading toward the royal capital, produced the newly developed artificial spirits [Griffon Riders] and then nose dived to the ground.

After all, if there were only a few people, there would probably be some who would guess our identities.

◇

"Hyahha! Run, run, you garbage!"

"If you're caught by the sca~ry onii-san, you're going to become slaves y'know~?"

The mercenaries chasing after the screaming refugees are purposely not catching up to them while smiling sadistically.

"Boss, that!"

"You fools, call me captain!"

The mercenary leader who look up at us after getting urged by his friend looks terrified.

Looks like he realized that they've become the hunted now.

『Everyone, permission to trample.』

--PYWEEEE!

The knights riding on the Griffons' backs cannot talk, so the Griffons are abiding my order.

More than 100 [Griffon Riders] hunt the mercenaries.

Of course non-lethal is the default.

The Griffons' claws and beaks have the anti-personnel [Soft Stun] and [Paralyze] magic effect added on them, while the lances that the knights riding on the Griffons' backs hold have [Pain Force] in addition to the two above.

This [Pain Force] is a mind magic that will cause sense of pain without inflicting physical injury.

It's an original magic remodeled from the torture-use [Pain] magic exclusively for punishment, it has a limiter to limit the pain only at the level of [Tooth extraction without anesthetic] so it won't mistakenly kill people.

Rather, I think the remodeled version is better suited for torture, but all is good since I'm not going to tell it to others anyway.

Voice of suffering and dread roll up from among the mercenaries who are getting trampled down by the Griffon riders.

I can leave arresting the mercenaries to them. The automatic AI of the artificial spirits are truly capable.

"We've taken care of the slave hunt! You don't need to run away! I repeat--"

Without taking part in the mercenary trampling, I go around telling the escapees that there's no danger anymore.

--Huh? Aren't they running away more frantically compared to when they were chased by the mercenaries?

"It's the weaselkin's magic beast troops!"

"We'll get eaten if we don't run!"

Attentive Ears skill picked up such desperate voices from the tumult.

Dang, people who aren't used to seeing Griffons will think that they're not mythical beasts but monsters huh....

I deport the Griffon I'm riding, take out a single-seater small airship from my storage and ride on it.

"We've taken care of the slave hunt! You don't need to run away! I repeat--"

This time it went well.

Several refugees stopped, and some people began to wave their hands at me.

"Isn't that elf-sama's Light Ship from the fairy tale?"

"There's no way demi-humans would save us."

"It must be the silver ship that Saga Empire's Hero-sama rides."

Looks like there are some people who discriminate against elves too in this country.

I go around and repeat the announcement to the leaders of the refugees.

There was only 5 KM wide of area to cover so it completed shortly after and then I landed in front of the leading carriages.

A woman in her twenties wearing red dress comes out of the carriage before I show my face.

For some reason, she's carrying a rod-shaped thing wrapped in cloth.

According to the AR-reading, the inside of the cloth seems to be a fire booster type of wand called [Crimson Wand].

"Thank you very much for your help. My name is Shelmina Dasles, the chief administrator of Marquis Dasles's territory."

Marquis Dasles was the house name of the pyromaniac noble who was chasing after the white tigerkin princess.

This woman brings about calm atmosphere you wouldn't have guessed that she was from the same family as the pyromaniac noble who felt abnormal.

"Li-Lizard."

"I thought it was an elf, turned out it was a frog-eater."

The one who exchanged insults that could be heard from afar were the young nobles behind Miss Shelmina.

"Toger, Besso, what are you doing abusing the person who saved us! Shame on you."

I was going to ignore them, but Miss Shelmina harshly rebuked them with the force of raging fire.

After the young nobles opened and closed their mouths like they had forgotten to breath, they apologized to me.

It was a completely superficial apologize, but since I'm not going to meet them again, I lightly ignore it.

"Umm, could you give me your name?"

"I'm the Dragon Knight Outis of the Lion Knight Order."

For this case, I've picked the famous name from the Greek mythology which means [nobody].

My affiliation is a bit tangled, but since my companions are going to appear as Dragon Knights, it's probably better for me to be the same as them.

"Outis-sama, it might be shameful of me to ask you of this while not even being able to reward you for saving us--"

Miss Shelmina put her hands on her chest and entreated.

She's probably going to ask me to escort them to a safe place.

"--There are several people who have been caught by the Weasel Empire slave hunters. I would like you to please help us save them."

Fumu, that one huh.

She asked me to help them, but her force only consists of 10 knights and around 50 nobles of which only five who have battle skills.

"Okay. I'll grant your wish."

I look for the locations of the captured refugees on the map and deploy the Griffon Riders there.

There are channels between the artificial spirits and the user that connect our consciousness, it's really useful in cases like this.

"Thank you very much. Please use me and the knights as decoys."

The nobles are scowling at Miss Shelmina from behind, as if saying 'don't say unnecessary things'.

I don't feel like saving the ones who run away for their self interest, but I tell her, "There's no need" briefly.

That is because the Griffon Rider unit who are moving at high speed are already infringing the mercenaries.

"Please don't belittle me just because I'm a woman! Even though I look like this, I've been entrusted with the Crimson Wand by uncle. I can't use secret art of the Crimson Wand yet, but I can handle being a diversion."

Without listening to the nobles who told her to stop, she unwrapped the cloth and showed me the wand.

The ruby-like jewel on the tip of the wand is quite beautiful, but the miasma lump that's moving like a wriggling black snake inside the jewel looks gross. It looks like it'll curse you just by seeing it.

"I already said that it's unnecessary. My subordinates are already heading there."

"Subordinates?"

Come to think of it, she didn't see the Griffon Riders did she.

I let a Griffon Rider who was hunting at the nearest place to fly pass above us, showing its figure.

"Raptor head with lion body--that's the mythical beast Griffon!"

"Moreover, there's a knight riding on its back."

"It's a Griffon Knight!"

The ones who shouted were not Miss Shelmina but the young nobles behind her.

Putting aside their personalities, it looks like they're knowledgeable.

"The person just now told me. They've saved all the refugees and taken care the mercenaries--"

"I suppose that you are related to Silga Kingdom. Would you escort us to the neighboring country?"

An old noble who suddenly showed up beside Miss Shelmina demanded as such when I was talking.

The other nobles rode on his coattails, asking the same in chorus.

"Very well--however, the Griffons only allow people they recognize to ride on them, and my ship can only carry one person. Gather the people here as I will send a big airship to pick us up."

"Thank you for your kindness."

The old noble conveyed his gratitude.

The nobles who wanted to ride on my airship sighed dejectedly, but they regained their spirit after hearing that a big airship would come.

I take food out of my Storage.

They're cereal bar-like food made from a mix of Giant Kelp powder, miscellaneous dried fish and sea serpent's meat.

Echigoya Firm didn't make them, I used a personal manufacturing magic so no one can trace it back.

I distributed these in the Snow Kingdom, but they're convenient in this kind of situations.

Next, I make a huge reservoir with earth magic and put in a large quantity of drinking water from the Storage.

I can use magic to produce water, but it'll just be a waste of magic power.

Lastly, I make a clay wall covering an area wide enough for a city and exterminate some pest.

I leave behind several Griffon Riders to guard the refugees and leave the place.

"Outis-sama, could you escort me back to Makiwa Kingdom's royal castle? Now that the safety of the people has been guaranteed, I have a duty to fulfill as a noble, I've to hurry to His Majesty's side."

"I already said before, my ship can only hold one passenger. Give it up."

It's not like it's impossible if we try, but I'd feel somehow guilty to Aze-san if I were to spend some time glued with a beautiful woman with a nice body.

◇

『Jaryuu One speaking, Guruu Head please reply.』<TLN: Jaryuu= Evil Dragon.>『Griffon Head speaking. Don't get the call sign wrong. Is there something wrong?』

『It's terrible!』

According to Arisa, besides the tamed monster battalions, it seems there are also tank-like armored vehicle units.

At first I thought they were manned golems, but it seems they're really shaped like tanks.

Tanks are certainly amazing, but even if they have the latest model of the modern tanks, I don't think they're that much of a threat.

However, just like Corpse in labyrinth's lower has said back then, it'll be bad if it violates the god's taboo.

If the weaselkin were to be destroyed, it'd be their own fault, but I imagine god's divine punishment to be sketchy.

From the info I got from various sources, the weaselkin troops should have been formed of tamed monsters and manned golems.

If Arisa really didn't mistake it, I might have to investigate the reason as to why these scientific weapons suddenly appeared.

Of course I'll interrogate the tanks' and the armored cars' crew members, other than that, I'll also extract information from the weaselkin merchant who should be in Silga Kingdom's underground jail.

If they don't know, maybe I'll just infiltrate Weasel Empire and directly investigate it?

It might be a good idea to visit the hero who's trying to defeat the demon lord while we're at it.

『Ah! The battle has begun!』

『Master, permission to charge.』

『Arisa, are there something like anti-aircraft gun and missile tanks?』

『Doesn't look like there's any of that. There are 20 tanks and 10 armored cars.』

I feel that the armored cars are too few.

『Don't get hurt no matter what happens.』

『Aye aye sir~』

『Roger nanodesu.』

『Nn, leave it to me.』

The youth troupe replied energetically.

『Lifting off the stealth system. Nana and Lulu, please get ready.』

『air-to-surface defense has been put into operation, so I report.』

『Liza-san, I'm ready too.』

Liza who's riding on the father Evil Dragon is taking the command.

While watching the spectacular battle with [Clairvoyance] magic, I also manage the refugees' rescue and guidance.

It might be a good idea to recapture one nearest city from the weasel force and secure accommodations for the refugees.

14-45. War Kingdom (3) The Weasel's Aim

Satou's here. When I went abroad, it made me realize the virtue of Japanese service, at the same time, I also felt its lack of fortitude needed to handle guests with bad attitude. Although not to the extreme as the Code of Hammurabi, I don't think there's any need to be overly polite to someone with no manners.

◇

"Your Majesty! The scout dispatched to the east gate has found the honorable body of His Excellency Jizaros among the golem's wreckage."

"Jizaros of the earth right after Mizaras of the water...."

When I came to Makiwa Kingdom's royal castle to talk about the post-war processing, the young king was currently receiving reports about the death from his close associates.

Reading the mood, I abstain myself from butting in for a while.

I wanted to end the war right before it started, but it seems there are many deaths still.

Good grief, I just don't understand what's in the mind of the people who seek war. Is it really that fun to be the king of the hill and domineer over people?

It'll be no exaggeration to call these people who love troublesome things masochists.

This time I bent my principle and intervened since I found refugees being chased by slave hunters on my map, but I'd like to make this a special case this once.

It's better for me and my congenial friends and companions to go on a humorous pleasure trip.

While thinking like that, the talk in the audience chamber progresses.

"So, was the Roaring Vibration Wand found close by the body?"

"No.... The retainers of His Excellency Jizaros are currently searching for it."

I tried searching for it since I was bored but the item called Roaring Vibration Wand didn't exist in this kingdom.

It probably fell on the east gate and got crushed under the super huge golem.

Further, we have finished saving the people who survived with space magic and Tama's ninjutsu.

"It was probably taken away by Izukoka spies. The Roaring Vibration Wand and the Surging Wave Wand have lost, the representative of Marquis Dasles who carries the Crimson Wand is also missing. In hindsight, Earl Muzaris who barricaded himself in his own territory and ended up being safe can be called an ironic result."

The one who sarcastically and verbally attacked the young king was not this kingdom's noble but a military diplomat from Saga Empire. Looks like he's an earl for once.

"--Izukoka? You mean the Weasel Empire."

"Minister, the enemies aren't only the ones in front of you. The Four Treasured Wands are also quite attractive in the neighboring Silga and Shiga Kingdom's eyes."

"Saga Empire is--No, do you really believe the fairy tale that says『Offer the four orbs and the sky city Nenerie from the age of gods that sleeps in the sea will be awoken.』?"

"Isn't it nice to have a dream. Moreover--"

Fumu, it's like the Shadow Castle of Rumooku huh--no wait, I thought the name Nenerie sounds familiar, wasn't it the undersea city in Marquis Ganika's trench.

Don't tell me, the huge undersea ruin I found when we were on our way to the labyrinth city from Boruenan was also a floating continent that sleeps in the sea?

Leaving aside the mysterious undersea ruin, since the undersea city [Nenerie] is vastly bigger than the Shadow Csatle, it'll be quite a mass weapon if it flies.

Since I know where it is, I'll mark it so I'll know when it moves.

I wonder if that was the reason the Weasel Empire invaded?

When I was going to mark Miss Shelmina's Crimson Wand just in case, I saw that it was moving at high speed toward the east.

Looks like it's been stolen by someone.

I'm amazed that it could happen considering I had left three Griffon Riders there.

I call Arisa through [Tactic Talk] while tying the knots.

『Arisa, there's an additional mission.』

『Okay, what should we do?』

I ask Arisa who replied immediately to recover the Crimson Wand.

I also tried searching the fourth Typhoon Wand while I was at it, but like the Roaring Vibration Wand and the Surging Wave Wand, it didn't exist in the kingdom.

Looks like it's been stolen already.

I felt like I couldn't find the wand's owner, Earl Muzaris, somehow so I ignored it.

"And, who are those Dragon Knights after all?"

"They are the heroes who saved our country from ruin."

The minister replied the young king with a non-answer.

It'll be at least an hour before the generals who departed to where Liza and the others were come back, so he's probably just answering randomly.

Apparently, these ministers are taking this young king lightly.

This is just right, since they're talking about us, I'm going to appear now.

"--That's right."

"Who are you!"

"Dragon Knight Outis. I've safeguarded Shelmina-dono."

"T-the Crimson Wand is!"

Oy oy, at least worry about Miss Shelmina formally, mr. King.

"She had it when I saved her."

I said it like such since I didn't want to tell the truth somehow.

"I-I see..."

The king who looked relieved sank down the throne.

My log indication moves at that time--.

The golem unit that was doing the rescue at the western part of Makiwa Kingdom changed to [Waiting Order] state according to the log.

Looks like the Griffon Riders that were with them have begun to move toward the royal castle where I am.

I'd have no job for them even if they got here so I made them go to other cities to save the captured people.

"Dragon Knight-dono, you've done a great job. A fitting reward for the great hero who saved our country would be--"

In place of the hopeless king, a scheming minister tried to negotiate while pretending to praise me.

I have a hunch that he'll try to make an empty promise.

I have no need of rewards, but there's no need to hold back when the other party is fully intending to shirk on it anyway.

"I have three demands--"

Thus, I thrust my demands without hesitation.

"--We will claim all the monsters and the prisoners of war related to Weasel army we defeated, and armaments we confiscated. In addition, as a reward of recapturing the western city of Makiwa Kingdom, 100.000 gold coins--"

The king and the ministers screamed the moment I said [100.000 gold coins].

I think it's cheap compared to the value of the City Core, but it seems to be excessive from their sense of value.

"--we wanted to demand that much, but if you can make a firm promise to do an all-out aid for the people who were chased out of the city, we will withdraw from that."

These demands are light, I can't ask for more than than a verbal promise since the king can unilaterally revoke a normal [Contract] using the City Core power.

Of course I can perfectly bind him with my [Geass], but he's probably going to keep the promise since it's about his own nation.

I should know whether they fulfill the promise or not the next time I visit here as Satou.

If it's not kept, then I'm sure that they'll remember about it if I just ask Pochi and Lyuryu to circle the sky above the royal castle once.

"And, the third, you're prohibited from marching your troops to the Weasel Empire as a retaliation for three years."

The retaliation is probably needed for the king to save his face, and the people probably can't endure it, so I force it as a demand from the Dragon Knights who saved the country.

In addition, in the case the Weasel Empire re-invaded, the third term would be annulled.

Although, since the fact that the Dragon Knights are allies of Makiwa Kingdom should be well known by now, there's probably little chance of Weasel Empire invading again.

Oops, even though I said three demands, I forgot one more.

"By the way, King."

"....W-what."

Called by me, the young king replied while having a cramped smile.

"I heard that your people call us lizardkin as『Frog-eaters』derogatorily--"

I glare at the young king while being careful not to put Coercion skill on it.

I continue before the king whose mouth is flapping open and closed can spin words.

"--That is not true right? We rushed to your rescue exactly because of our tolerance to humans and respect to the late king. If it was a gathering of low-life who speak such a derogatory term--"

I execute [Coercion] skill this time, the people around besides the king are so terrified they forgot to breath.

"When that happens, you can imagine where the Dragon Breath which befell the weasel people will be pointed at."

"A-alright. I-I will endeavor, m-my ruling while engraving, your w-warning in my heart."

The only one whom I didn't use Coercion skill on, the king replied my threat disjointedly.

I don't think the discrimination against demi-humans will be gone with just this, but once the top people's sense change and the ones who push the discrimination are gone, the people's perception should gradually change once they get help from the demi-humans.

It might even be a good idea to visit the country as Satou and popularize a dish secretly made with frogs.

◇

"Welcome back, Master!"

"I'm back, Arisa."

I reunite with my companions after finishing my business in the royal castle.

Oops, Arisa jumped while yelling like Pochi.

Arisa whispered "I never heard about the biplane" in my ears.

"Did the recovery go well?"

"But of course!"

After giving me the Crimson Wand, Arisa made a space from the space magic [Garage] and showed a biplane inside it.

It's certainly an airplane although it looks retro.

"You're too close."

"Carrying out Mia's instruction, so I inform."

"Ahn, isn't fine for a bit."

Mia ordered Nana to tear Arisa off me.

I extend my [Magic Hand] to Arisa's [Garage] and move the biplane into my Storage.

Surprisingly, the biplane isn't equipped with magic device but a scientific internal-combustion engine. I'll bring it to Corpse in the labyrinth's lower layer to look at.

While I'm at it, I invoke spirit magic [Misty Fog] to make a fog wall so we can't be seen from the royal capital.

"Master, Evil Dragons are watching the disarmed captives in the royal capital surrounding."

"Thank you, Liza."

The spoils from the defeated monsters and the seized things are gathered in one place, so I extend my [Magic Hand] there and put them into my Storage all at once.

"Master, the generals and officers are separated so I tell."

Nana who was next to the Evil Dragons, holding a horse-riding whip in one hand while keeping watch informed me.

I invoke [Weariness Field] and [Mass Sleep] whose range is expanded by a wand to make all the empire's troops fall asleep.

"Master, are you going to make these people into slaves and sell them to Makiwa Kingdom?"

"I'm fine with that if they're thieves."

I shook my head to answer Liza's question.

As they have killed the country's lords, I have no doubt all of the demi-humans will be killed if I sell them to Makiwa Kingdom.

"I'll shut them in the Sub-space for now and release them once the time is right."

"You're soft as always~ It's better if you at least ask ransom from Weasel Empire you know."

"You're right, I'll think about it."

I agreed to Arisa's advice and started moving the captives.

I separate the common soldiers and the slave soldiers and send them to the Sub-spaces I own.

I will eventually send them back to Weasel Empire, but they'll probably do indecent things in Makiwa Kingdom if I release them here, so I'll imprison them here until I can open Gates in the empire.

There are agricultural land and dwelling houses inside the sub-space so even leaving them there for months is probably going to be fine.

Further, I send the 'Hyahha' human mercenaries to the [Wasteland] sub-space.

Once they're emotionally cornered, I'll put them into the agricultural area if they look like they can be reformed, if not then I'll take them to Makiwa Kingdom's prison.

I put the generals, officers and crew members of the modern weapons into the prison in the Blue Territory.

There are various things I have to ask them after all.

I sent back Arisa and the others to the solitary island palace, and then I ordered the Griffon Riders and the Evil Dragon family to bloodlessly suppress the remaining weasel empire troops who were stationed in the towns and cities to keep watch.

The aggressive war in this world is quite gruesome.

Several hundreds and thousands of soldiers' bodies are left in front of the cities, the bodies of noble-like and bureaucrat-like people are also swaying inside the cities.

I sent back my companions since I didn't want them to see these scenes but.... I didn't want to see it too if possible.

While feeling that it was too late, I put mosaic in my view with illusion magic and mechanically threw the captives of weasel empire into the sub-space.

There were several units who had escaped outside Makiwa Kingdom, but since the outside of Makiwa Kingdom is monster dominion stretching several kilometers wide, it seems they've become snacks for many monsters there.

◇

I served full course hamburg steak as promised for the dinner, but since I had no appetite, I finished with cold tofu and cold sake.

"Sorrowful hero isn't like your character you know?"

When I was gazing at the swaying palm trees from the palace's terrace dead at night, Arisa appeared with oden which let out vapor and warmed Dragon Spring sake on the tray.

It seems she didn't intend to drink them herself, she put it in front of me and then picked up a cup of cola while snacking on some hampen.

"You shouldn't drink cold things when you're feeling down. Since you'd feel sad enough you'd want to die with it--it's best to drink warm things, eat piping hot Oden, and make your body and mind lukewarm!"

As advised by Arisa I sip the hot sake.

From the warmth of the sake, the mellow aroma stimulates my nose.

Bite, I chew the daikon, and then the flavors of the daikon and dashi paint the inside of my mouth with the color of happiness.

The oden and the warm sake that fell into my stomach warm my body from inside.

I feel like crying somewhat even though I don't feel sad.

"Un, you look a bit better."

Arisa moves to the top of the handrail with short-range teleport and peek at my face.

"Master might be able to do everything, but that doesn't mean that master has to do everything okay?"

She said it jokingly, but Arisa's eyes were serious.

"Master's character is not suitable to be a ruler after all. The role of defeating demon lords as hero can't be helped but aside from that, isn't it fine to just be 『I help them cause I don't want to abandon them』."

Those vaguely irresponsible lines aren't like Arisa.

"Unlike abandoned cats or abandoned dogs, they're people who have to live themselves. Save them when they can't do anything about it no matter what, after that they can manage somehow by themselves. Kings and nobles exist for that sake after all. They get the tax so they have to work, as in 『<<Noblesse Oblige>>』 isn't it."

I'm a noble for once though.

"Moreover, you know, if you help anything and everything, you'll gradually be corrupted and broke. Kindness is needed but excessive kindness is going to be poisonous. Master should just be whimsical without thinking too hard about it."

Arisa laughs with a joking tone.

"You're right--"

Sometimes saving people during the sightseeing, sometimes being a hero--having a stance like that looks good for my mental health.

I thank Arisa for cheering me up, call my companions who are peeking on the entrance with their heads looking like a totem pole, and treat ourselves with oden party under the night sky.

Together with everyone noisily like this is peaceful and nice.

14-46. War Kingdom (4) Interrogation

Satous' here. Interrogation changes with time. Interrogation which involved physical pain in the past has seemingly now become something that uses truth serum nowadays. Those are all something I learned from manga and movies though.

◇

"Now then, shall I have you answer my questions?"

After a slightly awkward breakfast, I began the weaselkin's officers interrogation.

The officer looks up at me who's wearing lizardkin suit with scornful eyes.

"Hmph, you think a soldier would easily leak information? This is why dumb lizards annoy me."

"As expected of the empire's soldier, truly excellent. Those magic beasts and tanks are also great."

The harsh words of the weaselkin gets converted in my brain as I talk to him with the [Weasel Language] that I just got.

It's hard to use the language with human's mouth so I use the usual [Ventriloquism] skill to help.

"That's exactly right! Bestowed by His Majesty the emperor, the invincible magic beast army trampled the knights, and the special vehicle corps crushed countless golems! Our Empire is truly unrivaled!"

"The speed of which you invaded Makiwa Kingdom cannot be compared to anything in the past."

"Of course! I cannot stand that bald tactician but that person is the only one that can materialize His Majesty's plan..."

I interrupt the officer, who's blabbering indiscreetly, at the right time to get the information I want.

I didn't use truth serum, it was the support from mind magic's [Honesty], [Speaker], [Foolish Field].

With the synergy of the skill [Interrogation] at max level and these magic, it's easy to make him talk about their secret.

"Hoo, what kind of plan is that? It must certainly be amazing isn't it?"

"Of course! The iron smoke car which connect cities will be used to transport goods and the soldiers to the front lines! With excellent logistics and magic beast corps as the key, and combined with the Magic Eater of the special vehicle unit, even Shiga Kingdom and Saga Empire are nothing to us!"

The special vehicle should be about the tank.

The Magic Eater is probably the magic device which generate magic nullifying field that my companions reported.

We couldn't secure it in one piece, but I can understand its structure to a degree from the wreckage.

I must quickly make something to oppose it.

Still... The smoke car must be a steam locomotive right~.

According to Corpse of the labyrinth lower layer, advancing the civilization means violating the god's taboo, so why is the Weasel Empire fine?

I remember Corpse saying, "Radio tower and railroad network had brought upon the god's wrath."

I should ask his opinion abouot it once I'm done with the interrogation.

"By the way, are you aware of the god's taboo?"

"You really are a lizard. Repeating the same ignorant things as the priests said."

The officer grimaced unpleasantly like he was a child who had got enough of sermon.

"There is no taboo."

"--Really?"

To the officer who answered full of confidence, I make a face like I can't believe him to make him talk about the reason.

"It's been 10 years since the science began. God's wrath or whatever never befall us."

--It's already been such a long time?

He's saying that there is no divine punishment since it's not a taboo, however--.

"Did the empire advance science on the premise that the divine punishment wouldn't happen?"

"There is no way the great emperor would endanger his subject right? In order to see if it violated the taboo, we manipulated the rebels to create a puppet state, and then once we confirmed that it didn't violate the taboo, we brought it back to the empire."

I see, so they prepared a test site beforehand.

By the way, about that puppet state--Gufut Commonwealth isn't on the map of Shiga Kingdom's tourism book, not even the country's name remains in the related documents.

According to the officer, that puppet state was disposed of five years ago since it bared its fangs to the empire.

"By the way, why did such a grand empire's army invaded mid countries like Makiwa Kingdom?"

"Hmph, you lizards are clueless."

After having an expression like "You don't even understand that?", the officer lost to the allure of talking and continues to talk.

"Of course it's for the Four Treasured Wands needed for His Majesty's plan and to field test the Magic Eater and the special vehicle."

Fumu, so Makiwa Kingdom's side guessed it right.

It seems three of the treasured wands were taken by the empire, but fortunately, we were able to secure one.

I was going to hand it over to its owner, Miss Shelmina Dasles, later, but it seems it's better for me to keep it.

If I carelessly return it, the empire might re-invade or send some unit to seize it, I don't want to let the sincere girl who doesn't look like she's related to the pyromaniac noble die a meaningless death.

I--Dragon Knight Outis should grandly show off that I have the wand and then I can just return it to Miss Shelmina after some time.

I have to be careful as to not put the brunt of the attack to Silga Kingdom.

Now then, the interrogation went smoothly as such but there were some who were quite stubborn among the officers.

"Empire Army's Western Force, ID number I-0700835, Iscast Tol Usantokujo."

The weaselkin officer stated as if he was a US military captive.

After that he shut his mouth like he has finished his duty.

This officer who was the Wheel Chief of the scientific special vehicle unit isn't talking at all.

Looks like he's the type on which mind magic is hardly effective.

--Can't be helped, I'll use my trump card.

I waved my hand to give the signal, and then the excellent cold-blooded torturers showed up from the door.

They're gripping well-used torture apparatus in their hands.

"Let's start the interrogation."

The smiling torturers started their performance.

"Kocho kocho~?"

"How far can you endure it I wonder~? Nanodesu!"

Tama quickly took off the officer's sturdy boots, and Pochi who was carrying a handmade feather duster began to skilfully tickle him.

We didn't have to wait long before he surrendered while laughing.

We didn't get much new information even with Tama and Pochi's dedication though.

Due to the first officer who chattered a lot, the new information we got from the rest weren't much.

The new information are--

Weasel Empire has closed trading with other foreign countries, they're only doing it with Dejima Island which has a labyrinth.

Science has spread on more than half of the 21 states.

The royal prince is staying in Dejima Island as a foreign diplomat.

The emperor never shows his face among the people, only a part of the senate are acquainted with him.

--Only as such.

Further, I got more information about the tactician from the elite who boarded the biplane.

Half of the army detest the tactician while there's a fixed number who worship the person.

The tactician is wearing hooded robe and a mask, their body line and voice are such that it can't be determined whether they are a woman or a man.

The origin is unknown, it's not clear whether they are a human or a fairykin, according to the rumor the emperor brought them out of nowhere 10 years ago.

It appears the tactician is the emperor's favorite, he called them [Touya] intimately.

....The name sounds like a Japanese.

I can't be sure of it though since the illegitimate child of the previous Shiga King was also named Souya.

Come to think of it, even though I know that their names are of their previous life because the gods name them, why do the reincarnated people are all Japanese?

Oh right, the Heroes were also all Japanese.

Are the gods here partial to Japanese people?

◇

"--I don't know no god's thinking."

At the labyrinth lower layer's palace which I haven't visited for a long time, I consulted about the Weasel Empire to Corpse the King Mummy, and he replied back coldly.

"Oy oy, Corpse. Ya shouldn't be that cold to the boy who relied on the rustle-rustle you y'know?"

"Sorry for being rustle-rustle. Aren't ya clang-clang too though."

Hearing Armor the Iron Stalker's mediation, Corpse glanced at me after joking with him.

"The way gods do things are relatively haphazard. There is no clear standard. It's like『I don't like it so I hit it』or something like that."

He makes the god sounds like [a spoiled child who grew up being pampered].

"During the frequent happening of disasters when I made radio towers and railroad, I heard that it was『God's Divine Punishment』from the priest, but I never exchanged words with god myself."

"Hyo? Didn't you threaten the god with the nuclear bomb?"

"I negotiated with the『Oracle Miko』after doing a little demonstration in a monster's dominion ya see. Gods never once showed themselves despite their big talk, and I only ever fought with the Nopperabou god's apostles so I couldn't have a conversation."

--So apostles are [Faceless (Nopperabou)] huh. <TLN: Nopperabou can mean featureless, but it's also the name of an apparition with no face from Japanese folktales.>

Further, even though the god's apostles weren't that strong, his attacks couldn't work on them so he dealt with them using sealing-type magic tools and magic.

"Hey it's Kuro! You should come and say hello to me too if you visit!"

The one who intruded with noisy voice was a charming beauty with wavy black hair and pale skin.

She's a greater vampire who lives in the labyrinth's lower layer--Vampire Princess Semeri.

"Is Shin doing well?"

"Ou! I'm disciplining him with Armor y'see."

Semeri smiles brightly unlike a vampire would.

Apparently, the former artificial demon lord and a local hero, Shin boy is reforming well.

Semeri shamelessly began to put her hands on the dishes and liquors from many countries that I had bought as souvenirs.

"Oy, Semeri, don't eat them all."

Armor reproved her.

It seems they can take in and enjoy consumables despite being undeads.

Corpse only drinks the liquor, he rarely touches the dishes.

"Kuro, gods are whimsical. I only know this from reading ancient slates and documents, but it seems they've been destroying cities and countries through disasters and divine punishments until around 20.000 years ago."

Yup, I knew.

I heard such story from the matter of the Shadow Castle.

"They've been quiet recently since monsters and demon lords are acting as the disasters, but the gods here are fundamentally different than the『Kind Gods』 and『Guardian Gods』that we Japanese are familiar with. Think of them as relatives of the nasty demon lords."

Corpse muttered in a way only I could heard during the party.

I etch the special advice in my mind.

Further, since Corpse shared about the magic spell and the magic tool he used to seal the apostles to me, I think I can do something about it even if the divine punishment spreads outside the Weasel Empire.

I stopped by the Castle of Perpetual Night in labyrinth's lower layer when I was going back and delivered the『Lesseu's Blood』wine to the True Ancestor Ban, he gave me some Blood Spheres as thanks. I was running low on it so I'm really glad.

I also visited Goblin Princess Yuika while I was at it and presented her with various products from my travel, it also served as thanks for putting up the barrier on the solitary island palace.

The Nukazuke I got from Yuika when I was returning was more well-received by the hikikomori demon lord Shizuka than Arisa and Hikaru.

I think having Nukazuke as the tea-cake is quite refined.

◇

"So the Weasel Empire was really aiming for the Four Treasured Wands!"

I disguised myself as Dragon Knight Outis once again and went to Makiwa Kingdom's royal castle to tell the truth.

I've visited the refugee camp and told the situation to Miss Shelmina before I came here, she has agreed to entrust me with the Crimson Wand.

"Fortunately, I have the Crimson Wand with me."

"Oo! Good work defending it to the end! His Excellency Dasles truly has good eyes for people!"

The prime minister who saw Miss Shelmina holding the Crimson Wand stretched out his hand as if he was going to snatch the wand from her.

Miss Shelmina backs away to avoid that hand.

"In order to prevent re-invasion of the empire, I have decided to entrust this Crimson Wand to Outis-sama."

"F-fool! Giving Makiwa Kingdom's most valuable asset to someone of unknown origin--"

Hearing Miss Shelmina's remark, the young king made a verbal slip.

"Crimson Wand is the treasure of Marquis Dasles House. Until Uncle--Marquis Dwot Dasles comes back, I've promised Outis-sama to leave Crimson Wand in his care."

"How are you going to defend the east! If the weasels invade again, isn't

Dasles Territory going to be the foremost to bear the attack!"

The young rattled on, but there's no way the person concerned didn't think of it.

"King, there is no need to worry. Outis-dono has offered to lend four guardian golems in the shape of 『Flame Dragon』, 『Blazing Giant』, 『Fire Lizard』, and 『Phoenix』."

Four level 50 class golems should be enough for defense.

I made all of them besides the Blazing Giant using golem creation spell furnished with Magic Cores, I created the Blazing Giant using a complex method I learned in the elf village.

The Blazing Giant is equipped with a structure to cope with the [Magic Eater] inside.

Just in case the golem's AI stopped, I've loaded it with a remote control function using a primitive electronic circuit which I made by analyzing the cell phone I had and Lost Knowledge skill, but it's probably unnecessary.

The supply of magic power from the [Philosopher's Stone] to the golem is stronger than the magic essence (mana) draining force of the weaselkin's [Magic Eater] from the surrounding, so the golem that uses the [Philosopher's Stone] as its core should not stop moving.

"O-Outis-dono, not only in Dasles territory, please put golems in the royal capital too--"

"I don't mind of course."

"--R-really!"

I've expected this.

"However, I require 100.000 gold coins for each one of them."

The king's smile freezes to hear me.

I don't mind providing the ones that can be made with the spell for free, but they will stop moving if the weasels use the [Magic Eater].

There were some slightly troublesome dialogs after this, but since I was under no obligation to compromise, I had the king and the territory governors to work hard for the country's revival.

Of course they have to fulfill my reward, that is supporting the people who were chased out of their lands.

◇

"Outis-sama, are you leaving already?"

"Yeah, the next battlefield is calling for me."

Miss Shelmina sounds strangely amorous.

Does she likes lizard's face even though she's a human?

"Stay healthy."

"--Yes. I will bring every one who has been saved by Outis-sama back without missing any."

I brushed away my mantle with a thud, rode on the Evil Dragon son's back and flew away.

Once the Evil Dragon son ascended enough to be unseen from the ground, we moved to the labyrinth's lower layer - Evil Dragon area with Unit Arrangement.

For some reason, this area has fallen under my rule.

"You've done good. Here's your reward. Share it with your family."

As thanks for the Evil Dragon parents, I put a truck-sized cut block of the whale meat.

The savory smell of the grilling meat which has been put on the bedrock heated by lava spreads.

--GWLORWN.

--LURWOORWN.

--GWLOROROO.

Yup, the Evil Dragon parents look happy.

Starting with the Evil Dragon son who couldn't wait anymore and bit the half-roasted whale meat, the other Evil Dragons also scrambled and began to enjoy the whale meat.

After watching them for a little, I transformed into Kuro and went to Echigoya Firm.

It's to arrange the refugee transportation.

Even though Miss Shelmina said it as she did, from the refugee camp to Dasles

Territory is dozens of kilometers away, so some of the refugees are probably going to be lost if they keep at it as is.

"Kuro-sama! Two large airships have successfully departed!"

When I came into Echigoya Firm's office room with Unit Arrangement, Manager drew closer on me with eyes that were more dazzling than usual.

Tifaliza's eyes are colder than usual somehow.

"Thank you, Manager."

"....Manager."

--Huh?

Manager's tension is dropping fast, perhaps the thanks weren't enough.

As I thought, it should not be just with words, I have to also present her with goods.

I've already given her an amulet, a wand and also a [Magic Bag].

"Manager, do you like sweets?"

"Y-yes. Like everyone else."

Fumu, I'll give her handmade sweets as the token of appreciation.

"I-isn't this the phantom『Lulu Shortcake』!"

"I baked it myself, do eat it during your break."

"Ku-Kuro-sama's handmade!"

Manager is staring at the cake while posing like she's praying to heaven.

Looks like she's gotten back to good mood.

"--Elterina, me too."

"I know. But, keep it a secret from the girls okay? Those girls don't know restraint."

"Understood."

Manager and Tifaliza are exchanging secret talks in whispers.

Glad to see them getting along well.

I wait for the two to finish their talk and make the arrangement for the alibi and the transportation plan.

14-47. Follow-up Processing

Satou's here. Ending things are several times harder than starting things. It's not only once or twice I thought of having someone else to do the last debug. I wonder where the utopia without debug is located....

◇

"Well well, you're Sir Pendragon aren't you?"

"White hair with a cut on the cheek--You must be Kuro-dono of Echigoya Firm right."

I'm doing this farce in the royal castle of Tonaoku Kingdom, a small kingdom located next to Silga Kingdom.

Kuro who was visiting to thank for the permission to open the branch office accidentally met Satou doll who were together with the entourages, and then they had a chat.

Since we're in the hall leading to the audience chamber, the eyes and ears of the people of Tonaoku Kingdom are gathered to us.

"Let me borrow your ears for a bit--"

"What! Weasel Empire invaded Makiwa Kingdom!"

Using Amplification skill, Kuro's loud voice reaches all the nooks and corners of the royal castle.

"--Kuro-dono, please lower your voice slightly."

"Oh sorry! Even if there's Silga Kingdom inbetween, this matter is not unrelated to Tonaoku Kingdom. Have you informed Tonaoku King?"

"Not yet, I'm going to after this. I've stopped by precisely to inform the matter."

The people in the surrounding look anxious.

Since a person who looked like the errand of the king showed up from the interior door, I move the farce forward to end it.

"However, please do not worry--"

"Hou? The dragon knights of the『Dragon Valley』went there huh! That's splendid! However, my master would reprove me if I didn't at least help transporting the refugees."

"That's reassuring. Please give my best regards to Hero Nanashi-sama."

"Understood, I have come here to pay my gratitude to Tonaoku king who's given the permission to open a branch office here, however I'll leave such thing to the branch manager, I'm going back to accomplish my duty as the Hero's servant."

In order to finish the farce, I create white smoke and disappear from the place like a ninja.

Secretly changing places with Satou doll is quite easy then.

I tell my entourages that I've changed places with Satou doll with eye contacts.

It seems only Lady Karina acting as Lady K after a long while who hasn't noticed.

There's no particular problem with that anyway, so I'll leave her as is.

"He disappeared?"

"So that was the rumored Elusive Kuro-dono of Echigoya Firm."

"As expected of a hero's servant."

The bar for being a [Hero's servant] has raised somehow, but since the story is an embellishment of the people who created the rumor, I guess there's no harm done.

After creating witnesses, I quickly ended my audience with the king, used the gift I brought, [Chestnuts of Land and Sea], to dispel the anxious mood and relished on Tonaoku Kingdom's specialties in the banquet.

This is a small kingdom located between Shiga Kingdom and the Wyvern Kingdom--Silga Kingdom, it's also next to the Black Dragon Mountains, but there were many more uncommon dishes than I thought that I enjoyed.

There were variety of dishes developed from substitute foodstuff like nuts and wild plants, there was even a mysterious dish made from pickled moss pine skin, but the bean sake of Tonaoku Kingdom was especially good. Every one of them has complex flavor, it's interesting.

While lightly ignoring the marriage proposals from the artless Tonaoku Kingdom's nobles, I got to know many specialty dishes of the kingdom.

I'm going to secretly visit the place with everyone as commoners once we depart after the formal tour is over.

I can't really enjoy this relaxedly before finishing the plan to transport the refugees.

◇

"Kuro-dono, what happened to the entire crews of the warships!"

"Don't worry, I'll bring them back safely--"

After making them fell sleep, I sent the crew members of the two Shiga Kingdom's large warships to the underground camp of Echigoya Firm in Royal Capital.

Going with them will be bad in many things since I plan to move the warships to the border between Makiwa Kingdom and Silga Kingdom with Unit Arrangement.

"--I expect great work from you."

"""YES"""

I leave the interior decoration to the brownies as I do the final tuning of the unfinished aerodynamic engines.

Since I completed it in less than half a day, I brought the two warships to the destination with Unit Arrangement in turns.

I had prepared heavy fog using the spirit [Misty Fog] beforehand, so there was no problem even if two large airships appeared out of nowhere.

"The weaselkin flying units are coming!"

"R-run away! Escape into the mountain!"

--Oops, I should have announced beforehand.

"We're from Echigoya Firm of Shiga Kingdom. By the request of the representative of Marquis Dasles, Dame Shelmina, we are to transport you. Please prepare for departure calmly. I repeat--"

I gave names that would calm the refugees through the external speaker to clear the misunderstanding.

"Da-Dasles-sama?"

"Oh good, the young lady is safe."

"Isn't Dasles the great lord of the east?"

"Yeah, if it's that man, he would even use his private funds to move Shiga Kingdom."

U~n, I wonder.

Was the pyromaniac noble originally a splendid noble?

My impression of him is that he's a troublesome noble who has lost his sanity from grudges, but to think it's this different just from a different perspective.

I'm intrigued with the things that happened between the time of the pyromaniac noble that I know and Marquis Dasles that they are familiar with.

According to the weaselkin's Wheel Chief, Weasel Empire's army was quite cautious with Marquis Dasles, they might have done something to turn [Marquis Dasles into a pyromaniac noble].

It might be a good idea to be cautious with the Tactician when we visit Weasel Empire.

Since the refugees weren't all from one city, I ended up transporting them to many places.

I crammed them into the airships and carried them after making them asleep.

It was easy since I had created several base points for Unit Arrangement in Makiwa Kingdom.

It unexpectedly became a practice for transporting immigrants from Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital to Muno Earldom.

◇

"So you're Kuro of Shiga Kingdom huh. Rumors about you reach even here."

I stopped by Silga Kingdom as Kuro after I was done transporting the refugees.

Under the pretext of flying large warships near the kingdom.

My real intention is to ask the true intention of the weasel merchant, who's inside Silga Kingdom's underground prison, as to why he was meddling with Shadow Castle in Rumooku Kingdom, the country of the pink-haired Princess Menea.

"I've heard that you specializes in doing shady businesses that Hero Nanashi can't."

I don't know no shady businesses.

They're fundamentally good deeds you know?

"Are you paying the weaselkin merchant who did a grave sin out of the prison for the sake of such shady business?"

--Grave sin?

In a world where people's live worth almost nothing, killing someone is never called a [Grave sin].

I wonder what did the weasel merchant do to get him caught?

Strangely enough, the weasel merchant's Offense status is white.

Perhaps he was caught on false charge?

The one who told me the answer was the Macho Warrior who broke in.

"King! Is it true that you're going to release the fools who intruded the sanctuary of dragons-sama!"

"It's still under negotiation. Step back unless you're interested in becoming the next king."

"Gu, gununu."

Handled by the experienced king, Macho Warrior groans in vexation.

"One airship. I won't ask for the big one. Just one like the small airship that Viscount Pendragon rides on."

"Outrageous. It's totally unbalanced compared to the life of one weaselkin merchant."

I can make a private airship's aerodynamic engine immediately and I have plenty of the material needed for it, however, since Shiga Kingdom has asked me not to sell them outside the kingdom, I refused the king.

Silga king probably isn't demanding an airship for real, it's probably a light check before the actual negotiation.

"Then what would be balanced?"

I don't want to do troublesome transaction since I'm not a professional merchant.

I'll go with something that will make Silga Kingdom immediately agrees and has little influence in foreign countries.

"--How about a ship that can be used on the wetlands?"

"How disappointing, Kuro of Echigoya Firm. The fact that you have manufactured large airships for Shiga Kingdom is known even by spies of a rural kingdom y'know."

It appears the Silga King didn't like my reply, he glared ferociously.

Please don't snap back before I could finish explaining the ship.

"Do you not like ship? Perhaps it can't be compared to a wyvern, but it's a high-speed craft which makes use of wind magic device y'know?"

It's a magic ship called Wind Ship modeled after the hovercraft that can operate in wetlands in modern earth.

It needs littler magic power compared to an airship, and an aquatic hovercraft similar to this one has also been deployed in Oyugock Kingdom for emergency contact use.

After glaring at each other for a bit, he was pleased with the Wind Ship when he saw it himself, and agreed to get the weasel merchant released.

And then, when we tried it on-site--.

"Ooh, this is great! It's sliding over the wetland's reeds!"

"Truly! Wind Ship is truly the right name for it!"

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

--From the beginning to the end, it was a big hit for the king and the prince.

The Macho Warrior who was smiling till the end was noisy, but now he's probably going to overlook the weasel merchant with this.

"By the way Kuro-dono. The ones who broke into the sanctuary were not only the weaselkin merchant, there were also a male rabbitkin slave and a female human slave you see. If you want to save them, give another Wind Ship--"

"I don't mind if the negotiation breaks down. I will withdraw, taking the Wind Ship with me."

"Wa-wait! Forgive the prince's impertinence. We will give you the slaves as an apology."

I tried to take an attitude as supported by [Negotiation] skill when the prince was trying to ask for another Wind Ship, the king restrained with great force.

--He likes the magic driven hovercraft that much huh.

"Fumu, I won't say no if you're willing to. Then it's a deal, King of Silga."

After getting the Wind Ship's startup key, he took along the queen and their children toward the port in high spirits.

◇

"Are you the great criminal who trespassed the dragon sanctuary and tried to destroy Silga Kingdom?"

When I called out to him, the emaciated weasel merchant quickly jumped to the prison's lattice.

"Human? Judging from your speech, you're a Shiga Kingdom's man right? I want to make a deal."

"Do you wish to be freed? What can you give in return? I'll say it beforehand, I have no interest in money or women."

"My family has a seat in the senate, you can demand anything you want. I can grant you most things you see."

I thought he was just a merchant, but it seems his family is quite prestigious.

"Right then, I demand three things. What were you plotting in Rumooku Kingdom? That's one of--"

"Shadow Castle's investigation. I needed to know whether the sentries of god were really there. Don't ask me what for. It was a request of my uncle who's in the senate. I don't know the details. It would be quite an achievement if I were to get magic tools from the age of gods, but the Saga Empire's adventurers seemed to have failed."

The weasel merchant gave information quite readily.

I haven't even used mind magic's [Honesty], [Speaker], and [Foolish Field]--.

"--You're quite eager to talk."

"There's no point in keeping it a secret here. I don't know what kind of foresights His Majesty the Emperor has, but living creatures are ones who put importance on their safety above all. There is no need to weigh my options even if it's something that involves the life and death of the empire."

I did think that they were a selfish and rational species, but it's quite extreme.

"Then, my second demand. Why did you sneak into the dragon sanctuary?"

"I wanted to employ the people from the Silga Branch and Silga Kingdom's crime guilds, but everyone shrunk back, saying『We're afraid of the dragon's wrath』, so I had no choice but to go myself."

Fumu, the people of Silga Kingdom revered them as gods, so it's understandable.

"Don't dodge the question. I asked not『Why are you』but『What is your purpose』for going into the dragon sanctuary."

"You did huh, so the criticism I felt in your words was just my imagination. My purpose was simple. I sought dragon's scales for my company's profit, and searched for fallen dragon's claw and fang as requested by my uncle."

I know that there demands for lesser dragon's scales since they can be used to make lesser version of holy tools.

However, [The request of the uncle] who belongs to the [Weasel Empire Senate] huh....

"What are you going to use dragon's claws and fangs for?"

"There is no point to the question. What can they be used for for anything but weapons. Are you telling me to use dragon fang as a cutting tool?"

The weasel merchant spits as if sneering.

However, that may be unexpectedly possible. The dragon fang that [Penetrates All] is very useful to whittle super hard metal.

I have the fang of the lesser dragon after all, might as well use it as a lathe tool.

"Then, my last demand. I want to meet the emperor. Mediate between us."

"W-with the emperor eh--"

The weasel merchant stiffens after hearing me.

Arranging a meeting between a suspicious man and the one who holds the most power in the empire should be quite difficult.

"--Can it be with His Excellency royal prince instead? That person is in Dejima Island as a diplomat, so I should be able to arrange a meeting with him if I ask my uncle."

It seems I can meet that one normally, so there's no need to ask for a mediation.

Leaving that aside, shouldn't the honorary title of a royal prince be 'His Highness'?

"There's no point if it isn't with the emperor."

"Are you scheming to assassinate him? It's useless even if you can meet him. The Temple Knight of the Imperial Castle is filled with knights that even Shiga Eight Swords are no match against."

Temple Knight huh, the name seems strong.

"Simply put, you have to be at least level 50 to become a holy knight of the Temple Knight. And there are 100 of that kind of knight. Even if you're outside the norm as a hero's servant, you'll just be crushed to death by the sheer number."

--That's amazing.

Where did they get that much experience point?

The life span of weaselkin should be lower than humans', can they really train that many people in just one labyrinth?

That aside, I'd like to refrain from having power inflation like in a manga with declining popularity.

Our girls are stronger, but since instant death techniques and tools exist, I can't be at peace.

Maybe I should make new equipment without restraint....

"I'll say this again, give up with the assassination."

"Nonsense. I do not plot to kill the emperor. Do you know smoke car? I only want to talk about that."

"--Smoke car? What's that? Are you going to promote your product?"

Strange.... There's no need for him to play dumb about the train now, and there's no way someone of his position never saw the smoke car....

Come to think of it, even if I have few contacts with weaselkin, I've never heard any rumor about the smoke car.

Perhaps, by using [Geass] or other skill and magic to impose gag order, they delete or bind memories regarding things that can't be brought outside the empire.

I add that concern in the memo pad for weaselkin of my menu.

"You don't need to know the content of my talk with the emperor. It's over if the other party refuses. I don't care if the empire is destroyed by the god's wrath, but it'll be troubling if we get dragged up so I only want to meet to talk about that."

I've said most of the things, but since it looks like he'll laugh it out if I talk about the taboo and such, this much information is enough.

"Even if it's not comparable to my own safety, I do have some attachment to my motherland. Moreover, even if by any chance the emperor is assassinated, that just means His Excellency royal prince will replace him.... Very well, the cheerful royal prince who's easy with business and diplomacy is more convenient than the emperor who dislike other people."

Like I said, I'm not going to assassinate him....

"I vow that I will strive to arrange the meeting with the emperor...."

"I can't put any trust in your vow, I'll have it in a written contract."

"Very well--"

I take out a parchment from Item Box and sign a contract with the weasel merchant.

"You haven't written the penalty for not fulfilling the term within the promised time."

"Kuh, you're good for a human...."

Such was one dispute during the contract writing.

The experience I got when I accompanied Mr. Overweight who was the project leader to sign a contract with the client was made useful.

◇

"So this is freedom--"

The weasel merchant stretched his body while still wearing prison uniform outside the castle.

A robust rabbitkin man appeared.

He's the former slave of the weasel merchant.

"Yo, boss. I'll take you to Dejima Island for 100 gold coins, how about it."

"Uzahi, you weren't executed?"

"Yea, looks like I was saved by the human over there."

The weasel merchant sent an asking glance at me.

"You'll need transportation right."

The price of the confiscated tamed wyvern was a bit steep, but it's something needed.

"My uncle in the imperial capital needs to make a move in order to fulfill the promise. I want three, no, two month time. Once the preparation is complete, I'll send a messenger to the office of Norouino Firm in Dejima Island."

"Okay. I be waiting for good news in Dejima Island."

The rabbitkin who sensed that our talk was over blows a whistle to call his wyvern.

Before long, a wyvern lands, the two rides on it and then they make a long run before the gate.

While they were only glancing at the screaming fleeing people, it flew and then went to the south-east direction after circling the sky twice.

The next time we meet, it's probably going to be in the Weasel Empire.

"You sure you don't want to go?"

"It's OK."

I call the woman who was watching from the shadow.

Like the rabbitkin man, she was a slave of the weasel merchant.

She only has [Item Box] skill even though her level is at late 20.

Of course, all of the contents inside the Item Box have been confiscated by Silga Kingdom.

"If you have no place to go, do you want to go to ours?"

"Echigoya Firm?"

"That's right."

"Then, I'll go. Employ me."

Looks like she's not from Shiga Kingdom, her words are disjointed.

"What's your name?"

『Safe』

Oy, weasel merchant.... don't call her 'safe' in weasel language.

"Do you have a name before you became a slave?"

"Myu."

"■■ Name Order, Myu."

I change her name back.

Thus, Myu got a job as a new treasurer of Echigoya Firm.

Looks like she's going to get along well with Tifaliza as fellow taciturn.

For some reason, Manager treated Myu harshly, but after a while, her attitude became normal with her.

--[Getting along well with each others is a beautiful thing] isn't it.

◇

"Sharu, I'm counting on you to take care of this girl okay?"

"Yes, Kuro-sama. Uwaa, can I really have this much travel expense?"

"I don't mind. You can replenish the fund in Echigoya branch offices along the way, I also don't mind if you donate them to poor villages or churches."

I hand over a bag with 50 gold coins to the former chivalrous phantom thief now working as a trade member of Echigoya Firm, Shararuruuun.

There wasn't much she had to do as a phantom thief in the Royal Capital, so I asked her to become the fake apostle Kei's teacher.

I feel that a type of person like Kei would rebel against hot-blooded type like Armor or straight type like Arisa and Hikaru, so I picked Shararuruuun who was doing good deeds even while dirtying her hands as she walked the outlaw road.

"Let's go, Kei."

"U-un."

Kei who's wearing a brown wig is looking at Satou doll with eyes like that of an abandoned cat.

I felt slightly guilty seeing such face, but she needs re-education. I'll be an ogre here and send her off.

"Kei, be careful with injuries and monsters okay. Sharu-san, please take care of Kei."

"Leave it to me, Sir Pendragon."

Shararuruun sticks out her chest to answer Satou doll.

They departed with Shararuruun pulling Kei's hand.

Tracing back her path as a fake apostle, she's going to walk as a normal traveler this time.

I actually knew several means to collect prayers in order to revive God Zaikuon, but since I felt that pushing the answer to her would be wrong, I restrained myself.

"--Kuro-sama, then I'll be leaving too."

"I've talked with Shararuruun so be careful not to be found out by Kei only."

"Understood."

Two women traveling together would be easy targets for bad people so I've added the former phantom thief, now Echigoya Firm's slave, Pipin to support them just in case.

After sending them off and going back to the Royal Capital with Unit Arrangement, I changed to Hero Nanashi form and conveyed the matter about

Weasel Empire and taboo to Shiga King and the prime minister.

It looks like the problem with taboo hasn't been actualized yet in Weasel Empire, but I'll be visiting the Imperial Capital after getting the appointment for the meeting in two months and talk about the taboo with the emperor.

Let's continue doing various experiments and creating magic tools which, were stopped at time, in these two months.

I absolutely need to meet the ancient dragon who's on another continent, I also need to continue the development plan of the floating continent, the more things I can do, the more things I have to do like an exponential graph.

--Right!

Making weasel suits and then infiltrating Weasel Empire to sightsee the science sounds nice as well.

14-Intermission 1: Ancient Dragon Continent and Primeval Magic

Satou's here. Perhaps due to the influence from picture books and foreign anime geared toward children, when I think of magic, I imagine an old magician using a wand and invoking a spell. It was denied by a friend who was experienced in fantasy from home console though.

◇

『So this place is that continent?』

I asked my fellow traveler while surveying the wasteland that spread in front of us.

『That Ancient Dragon guy should be around here somewhere. That wasteland over there must have been what left after Ancient Dragon's Breath of 『Ruination』』

Black Dragon Heiron who's carrying me to the south continent keeps his confidence.

Whoa, looks like we're going to come out of the marine area into the south continent area soon.

This continent doesn't have a World Tree so this is the first time I've come here.

I acquire the information about the south continent area with [All Map Exploration].

Looks like the acquired map is for the northern half part of the continent.

The map's name is [Wasteland of Ancient Dragon], there's only a small number of people with only a few villages and small towns along the eastern and western coasts.

Looks like the Ancient Dragon is rowdier than I thought.

『Heiron, fly a bit to the right toward that mountain ridge you can see far away.』

『Your eyes are good Kuro. It's too far I cannot see it.』

Well I also can't see it you know.

I have him flying toward the point reflected on the map.

--Crisis Perception.

In accordance to my bad feeling, I create a square shaped magic shield using advanced force magic in front of Black Dragon.

The surface area of the protection is small, but it's an excellent little thing that could directly defend against Black Dragon's breath many times.

『What's wrong, Kuro--』

Heiron suddenly made a sharp turn to the left when he was still talking.

My view inclined nearly 90 degree.

Something sparkled from afar, and then at the next moment, a black jet passed through near Black Dragon's stomach.

It's probably the Ancient Dragon's breath.

The other party shouldn't have been able to see us from this distance, it must have shot it using perception.

Still, that's some tremendous range.

With a roaring sound, Heiron let out a breath toward the Ancient Dragon.

Maybe it was a retaliation, but Heiron's breath disappeared in the middle of the way before even arriving at the Ancient Dragon.

『Fumu, now that Ancient Dragon guy should notice me too.』

After saying that, Heiron corrects his direction.

Rather, I feel that it was a declaration of war.

◇

--In the end, Heiron's act was the right thing to do.

After using the breath to reply, there was no more breath coming from Ancient Dragon.

Before long, we could see the Ancient Dragon lying sprawled on the mountain's ridge.

--Huge.

The ancient dragon in Fujisan mountains was already twice as big as a true dragon, yet this Ancient Dragon is an order of magnitude bigger. Its length is at least one kilometer. It looks like it'll be 20% longer if the dragon stretches its body.

How does a living being maintain such size I wonder, but it's probably of something magical.

The Ancient Dragon is basking in the sunlight, its crimson scales are glittering.

『Black Dragon the wild kid huh, wait until the afternoon if you want to have a match. Today is a fine day to take a nap. Fighting is nice, but having a pleasant nap is even better.』

『Umu, agreed.』

Heiron agreed with the Ancient Dragon who spoke with very low frequency sound which shook your body, then he landed on a ridge near the Ancient Dragon and began to sunbathe.

How do I say this, they really are on their own paces.

I came here to ask the Ancient Dragon to teach me after all, as they said 'when in Rome, do as Romans do', thus I decided to take a nap together with the dragons.

There were cold strong wind like in alpine and intense sunlight like in the southern region, but I was able to adjust them making them feel like comfortable wind and sunshine by wrapping my body with light magic power.

I open my eyes when I feel someone's gaze.

According to the clock on the menu it's been two hours.

Right in front of me, there's the face of the Ancient Dragon and its ruby-colored eyes that's bigger than me.

『--Are you Riui?』

『No, I am Kuro.』

I remember this Riui that the Ancient Dragon mentioned.

The founder king of Silga Kingdom should be called Riui.

Perhaps the legend of King Riui I heard in Silga Kingdom's Dragon Shrine is a historical fact.

I'm intrigued as to whether the suspicious story about dragon turning into human is true.

At least the Silga Kingdom's dragon weapons were of lesser dragons'.

『I see--』

Looks like the Ancient Dragon lost its interest in me after I denied the question, after blinking once, it turned its attention toward Black Dragon.

『--Should we fight now, Black Dragon?』

『I have obtained a name, Heiron. Call me Heiron instead of Black Dragon.』

The battle junkie Black Dragon snapped at the matter about his name rather than about the match.

『Hou? Did Dragon God-sama bestowed you the name?』

Oh? They normally get it from the Dragon God huh?

Come to think of it, Black Dragon didn't name himself even though he has Naming skill.

『No, my name was given by Kuro. I also gave Kuro his name y'know.』

『You got your name from a human child?』

『Umu, Kuro exchanged blows with me in equal term y'know.』

『Exchanged blows you said? Fighting a dragon by exchanging blows in close combat rather than using magic from afar, that's quite an admirable youngster.』

Ancient Dragon laughs out loud pleasantly.

Since its laughter is like a shockwave attack, please leave it at that.

◇

『So, you're not going to fight?』

『Umu, I'm fine with fighting, but I've brought Kuro here cause he has some business with you.』

Black Dragon told our original business faithfully to the Ancient Dragon who looked eager to fight.

It seems like he's already satisfied since he fought with me plentifully the other day.

Ancient Dragon turned its line of sight toward me uninterestingly.

『I had heard that Ancient Dragon-dono excels at ancient magic, so I'd like to learn from you once.』

『Fumu, I do not mind, however.... Magic (majutsu) is faster in invocation and needs less magic power than Primeval Magic (mahou) y'know?』

I answered the Ancient Dragon who looked wondering.

According to AR reading, the Ancient Dragon doesn't have [Primeval Magic] skill.

『Teach him without grumbling over the trivia. We're having a banquet after you teach him the magic.』

『Fumu, drinking Black Dragon liquor after a long while is nice too.』

『Besides, the dishes Kuro makes are tasty y'know.』

『Hou--better than whole roasted goats?』

So Ancient Dragon also uses goats as the standard?

They like goats too much.

『Fumwu.... About the same.』

Black Dragon concluded so after thinking hard about it for a bit.

Looks like even the whale meat with the spicy mayonnaise couldn't win against the demi-glaced roasted goat.

It got derailed a bit like such, but the Ancient Dragon's lesson finally starts.

『Primeval magic is all about spirit.』

With just that, the Ancient Dragon shuts its mouth as if it has told everything.

『Do you mean using magic with thought?』

『Roughly like that. Desire for something strongly, and make it happen using magic power and spirit.』

That's quite a lackadaisical magic.

『Is there no need for spell and prior-preparation?』

『That's magic (majutsu) right? Don't you want to learn about Primeval Magic (mahou)?』

Apparently, Primeval Magic is really a magic that create phenomenons only with imagination.

『I'm hungry y'know....』

『Now that you mention it, I feel hungry too.』

Black Dragon and Ancient Dragon said those things even though the lesson had just started.

These guys really do things as they please.

『Experience is the best teacher. I'll show how it's done, imitate it.』

The Ancient Dragon stares at a rock.

Looks like it's going to do something with that rock.

I motivate myself and observe the process.

I can see the magic flow of enormous magic essence (mana). It seems the spirits aren't moving.

There's nothing happening even after 10 minutes.

However, the amount of magic power gathered on the rock is substantial.

There's at least enough magic power to cast several advanced magic spells that's wrapped on the rock.

『I'll get some fish and octopus from the sea for a bit.』

Black Dragon yawned and then he went toward the shore.

Seafood from an unknown place sound good, but I have to concentrate on the Ancient Dragon's Primeval Magic right now.

After about an hour, Black Dragon came back while carrying a huge squid-shaped Kraken and a Deep Sea Serpent.

『What, not yet huh--this is why I dislike Primeval Magic.』

It's true that this can't be used as attack magic if it takes this long.

--Crack.

A small sound entered my ears.

I turned around and saw the figure of a sheep emerging from the transparent white rock.

Its realness accelerates as the rock as big as an arm turns into a statue of goat.

However, it doesn't end with just that--.

The statue's fur became tinged with real-looking fur, the statue's eyes blinked, turning into a living creature's eyes.

I reflexively stretch out my hand.

The fur that my hand touches feels exactly the same as a goat's.

——MWEEEE。

The goat cried once and then it began to walk.

Its first few steps were awkward, but it's hopping normally now.

Amazingly, even the AR reading shows that it's a [Goat].

『This is Primeval Magic. You understand?』

『Y-yes, thank you very much.』

It's strange for me to be surprised at a rock turning into a goat since the forbidden spell [Another World] can create plants and fish, but looking at a rock turning into a goat before my eyes was amazing.

Unlike all the magic up until now, I didn't get [Primeval Magic] skill.

Since the Ancient Dragon itself doesn't have the skill, I guess it's only natural.

『You just do it like that. Kuro, cook this goat.』

『Fumu, one is not enough, but using Primeval Magic is tiring so I don't want to do it again.』

『Then, I'll bring them here from a certain place.』

After telling so, I brought around 20 goats from the live stock-farming [Another World].

I take out the whale meat too while I'm at it. I chose half the body of the whale since I'm treating the huge Ancient Dragon.

『That's quite a huge fillet.』

『Umu, it's the Great Monstrous Fish's fillet. It's good y'know.』

『T-that Great Monstrous Fish huh. Those guys can eat my breath and they're quick to escape into the bottom of the sea, they're bothersome so I've never eaten one.』

The Ancient Dragon is looking at the whale's half body interestingly.

I start to cook using [Magic Arm] and [Forge].

The dragons are smiling at the smell of the roasted meat.

I think back upon the Primeval Magic earlier while looking at them.

You probably have to do something after saturating the magic power, but I don't understand what to do after that.

Like sending signal by pulsing electricity, I think you need to create waves from the saturated magic power and produce some kind of magical phenomenon from it, but I don't have any proof in that.

--Hm?

A music with megavolume pulled me back to reality.

Apparently, the Ancient Dragon and Black Dragon are humming.

--Ooh, amazing.

Green buds have begun to sprout from around the Ancient Dragon and Black Dragon.

I can feel waves of magic power, this appears to be a type of Primeval Magic.

The greenery spread vigorously, flowers are blooming spectacularly. There are even some rare things called Spirit Grass and Bewitching Flower among them.

Looks like trees and shrubs have begun growing in far-off.

The spring and lake created in a slightly distant place must be of the Dragon Spring Liquor.

I guess the one created by the Ancient Dragon should be called Dragon Lake Liquor huh?

『Kuro, put demigla on this goat.』

『On mine too please.』

It's easy to put on the sauce since it's whole roasted, but my demi-glace sauce stock is running low.

Using space magic [Telephone] I ask Lulu to make more.

『So good, this tastes so good! Heiron, you've found yourself a good servant!』

『Wrong. Kuro isn't my servant, he's a friend.』

『Fumu, friend huh. I will use Primeval Magic to make the things you want if you give me more delicious dishes. At present, you want to turn dragon's fangs and claws into weapons right?』

When I was listening to the two while dismantling the Kraken and the deep sea serpent, the Ancient Dragon told me that.

Might as well, I take out Bouryuu's fang for the occasion.

I've cut it a bit to make some tool, but it's mostly intact.

『Could you turn this into a sword?』

『Fumu fumu, I can but after the banquet is over. Humans must not be hasty.』

The dragon is right, you've to enjoy the time to enjoy yourself fully.

I make fine white noodles from the huge squid and sashimi from the deep sea serpent.

The sashimi's accent isn't enough since I haven't meet any wasabi monster. As expected, using common wasabi isn't enough for this size.

I deep fried the deep sea serpent's bone with meat, creating a super huge bone senbei.

I can make deep-fried food using little oil with fry cooking magic, it's quite convenient.

『The senbei is better than the sashimi. This is how it's like when you fry things in oil huh.... Humans sure come up with amusing things.』

『I don't like it much. Goats are better after all.』

Crackle crackle, with very loud sound the Ancient Dragon bit the super huge bone senbei.

Black Dragon who was attracted by that tried the bone senbei, but he didn't like it much.

Once the two's appetites were appeased to a degree, I was also freed from cooking and began to drink the Dragon Lake liquor while snacking on the squid dish.

The moment I put the Dragon Lake Liquor into my mouth, strong smell pierced through my nostrils. After a bit, I got used to the tongue-numbing strong alcohol, then a rich mild flavor permeates.

The taste is different from the Dragon Spring liquor, but this one is quite a good liquor too.

I'd like to let my dwarf acquaintances who like liquor to drink this.

I'll share the remaining liquor later.

『Still, it looked like you really rampaged violently, did your Inverse Scale got wounded?』

Black Dragon suddenly turned his head and asked the Ancient Dragon.

『Fuhahaha, such idiot has not appeared for the past 10.000 years. I just couldn't put up with the scuffle between the demon lord and the little ones on the mountain nearby.』

Apparently the wasteland on the northern half part of the continent is the trace from the time the Ancient Dragon rampaged to defeat the demon lord.

I see, so this is an example of the [the damage is great when the dragon intervenes] talk.

The damage is bigger than my Meteor Shower combo for sure.

The [Demon Lord of another continent] spoken in the oracle was probably from here.

Only the ones in the Weasel Empire and the Ratkin Principality remain.

I had tried searching in the Ratkin Principality near Shiga Kingdom, but I couldn't find anything that seemed like the demon lord.

The [Trazayuya Maze] is located near the Ashrat Principality after all, perhaps the last demon lord is what Zen would have become.

◇

"Eh? So you went today and were taught immediately?"

"Yeah, these are the Dragon Fang swords and Dragon Fang daggers that I got."

Affirming the surprised Arisa, I show her the swords created by the Ancient Dragon.

I had more of the lesser Dragon Fangs, so I asked the dragon to create two Dragon Fang swords and several Dragon Fang daggers.

Looking at the fang's volume, there should have been some left, but most of the huge fangs were absorbed into into the Dragon Fang swords. Primeval Magic is quite fantastical.

"Normally you'd get turned down and get to stay sitting down in front of the gate no matter how many times you got sent away, the readers won't feel the suspense like this."

As always, Arisa still loves mixing up fiction and reality.

Even though it's better when they teach you easily.

"Satou, there's a lot of daggers--don't tell me?"」

"Yes, I have one for everyone."

I nodded to Hikaru and put all the weapons on the table.

The Dragon Fang swords are for Pochi and Tama each, the Dragon Fang daggers are for everyone including the late-starters.

I didn't give the Dragon Fang sword to Nana who could use a sword because she won't be able to use her defense with the sword that's too sharp.

The members who are used to getting weapons from me and Lady Karina were simply overjoyed, but Hikaru, the princess, Sera and Zena-san received the swords with trembling hands due to their surprises.

"Amazing, this is a Jingi created from dragon's fang with Primeval Magic...."

Hikaru traces the dagger in her trembling hand.

Calling it Jingi is exaggerating, but there's no mistake that it's of higher class than a common Artifact.

"It can cut the inside of the magic bag, so make sure to put it into the sheath before storing it into the bag okay."

"Aye aye sir~"

"Yes, nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi stretch out greatly to answer me.

"Satou-san, is it alright for us to receive such amazing weapons?"

"Yes, Zena would be fine, but Her Highness and I can't use weapons...."

"That dagger can cut barrier, so please carry it in cases of emergency."

It cut through the barrier I created with space magic, so they should be able to break through most barrier.

"Dagger that can cut through barrier huh.... I feel excited somehow."

"Nn, anticipation."

Arisa and Mia are smiling while picking sheaths with different colors.

Lulu tilts her head while holding the dagger like a kitchen knife.

It seems she's going to use the Dragon Fang dagger to cook.

"Master, what is that, so I ask."

"This? This is a failure you see."

Nana points at the ill-formed dagger in my hand.

I was able to invoke Primeval Magic somehow after spending half a day and used up most of my magic power, but it felt like I needed more training before I could use it freely.

Looks like it'll be a bit longer before Liza's magic spear reinforcement.

"So, in the end, what is Primeval Magic anyway? Is it an『Iya Boun』type of technique?"

"The Ancient Dragon said that it was magic invoked with your spirit, but if I have to say, I guess it's the root of the『Current Magic』? It's hard to be used by humans so the『Current Magic』is the form after it's been improved, or something like that."

The part that isn't included in the current magic (mahou)--magic (majutsu) skill has no merit.

I can understand why Primeval Magic became obsolete and the current systematic magic succeeded in the natural selection.

The current magic (majutsu) with the skill support is far easier to use and more efficient.

The support from skill is big after all.

--By the way, I wonder what's the [Iyabon type technique] that Arisa said in Japanese?

Arisa's reference is too old sometimes, I don't know them.

14-Intermission 2: Immigrants of Governor Pendragon

※ This is not from Satou's point of view

◇Royal Capital - Downtown◇

"Good work today, how 'bout we get some drink after this?"

"Sorry, my family's waiting."

"Yer' an unsociable old man."

I waved my hand lightly to my co-worker who cursed me and left the place.

The pay from the construction site today is good, but I've to go to the middleman office first thing tomorrow.

This Royal Capital which we arrived at after fleeing from Lesseu Earldom for our life wasn't a paradise at all.

It's a life where I can't even drink a bottle of ale easily even if I work from morning till night.

"Boruto-san, it's been a while."

"Akindo-san! Long time no see!"

The one who appeared in front of me as I walked sluggishly was a male merchant who saved us when we were attacked by monsters in Lesseu Earldom.

"You're not with the dogkin and catkin children this time?"

"Yes, that is so."

This man is awfully humble even though he said he was a merchant exclusively contracted by a noble-sama.

He's speaking politely even with a mere village liker me.

"How is the life in Royal Capital?"

"Thanks to Akindo-san for getting a place for us to live, we're getting by alright although barely."

I'm really indebted to this person.

"Is that so--if it's hard for you, since Viscount Pendragon-sama is looking for immigrants, how about applying for one?"

"By immigrants, you mean for pioneer village?"

"Yes, that's right."

Looks like Akindo-san who's a merchant doesn't understand how difficult a pioneer village is.

Shaving off your hunger by eating weeds and tree skins, several people will die within three years.

And even when you can finally harvest some crops, the officials will take 'em all.

I don't mind if it's just me, but I don't want to let my child and wife to live such a life.

"I hope you can keep what I'm about to say a secret, about that pioneer land--"

"Is that true?"

"Yes, it is."

Unbelievably, on top of having fields where crops can be planted right away, it's fully equipped with houses complete with the minimum furnitures, what's more there's even water wells that the village can use.

It's too good to be true even if you take it with a grain of salt. You'd normally think it's a fraud.

However, I can't imagine Akindo-san, who lent me several gold coins with no pressure in payment when we just got to the Royal Capital, tricking me.

Rather, if he wanted to trick and turn me into a slave, he'd have asked for unreasonable interest from the first loan.

In fact, the tax collector and village elder who fled from Lesseu Earldom earlier were turned into slaves by that kind of trick.

"T-then I can ask it from you?"

"Echigoya Firm will be acting as the contact. I'm rarely in the Royal Capital after all."

Echigoya Firm huh.... If I'm not mistaken it's a firm managed by the servant of Hero Nanashi-sama.

My wife is also working as a contracted employee in Echigoya Firm's mill, she said that the pay was good even though the work was hard.

Think she was surprised that it was a firm that properly paid as much money as promised in the beginning.

"Thank you, Akindo-san. I'll talk about it with my wife."

"Yes, that's a good idea."

Akindo-san left after smiling.

◇

"Eh~ Pioneer village~. I don't want to!"

"Dear, you forgot the story of our great grandfathers' pioneer village?"

I immediately talked about the pioneer village with my wife and daughter once I got back home, but they strongly rejected it as expected.

Our village only became easy to live in starting from 20 years ago, I and my wife lived our childhood in fear of starvation, so this reaction is normal.

I told the story I heard from Akindo-san in a hurry.

"You're being tricked dad."

"That's right dear. There's no way such thing like having ready fields and houses with furnitures can be true."

"No but, Akindo-san said--"

"That's cause Akindo-san is being deceived too isn't it?"

"That person is a softhearted person who was even worried about us after all."

I still want to plea back, but no way I can win against two women's mouths.

However, even if we cling on Royal Capital forever--.

"We'll hit the wall if we keep this up. We can live without starving cause the food price is stable, but the construction works from the monster disturbance from back then are going to disappear soon. Once the day laborer works decreased, I've to start to seek job in the crowded job market. If my wage decrease, we can't pay the rent here."

"But but, there's also wages from me helping in the bar, and mom's work in Echigoya's mill."

Looks like my daughter who hasn't become an adult doesn't know that being a waitress in a downtown bar is no different from being a cheap prostitute.

The crime number has decreased thanks to the scary guys from the downtown mutual aid society patrolling the area, but that doesn't mean there's no more prostitutes or perverted drunkards.

As a parent, I don't want to let an unmarried daughter to work there forever.

"Our live would become easier if I became a regular worker instead of contracted in Echigoya Firm...."

My wife put her hand on her cheek and sighed.

I've heard that the people employed in Echigoya Firm in the Royal Capital are well-paid enough to buy their own house, but only educated people and trained in skill can become one.

"That's the Echigoya y'know."

"What is?"

I didn't say it?

"The mediator for the pioneer thing is that Echigoya."

"I-is that true?"

"Y-yea."

I nodded to my wife who suddenly was in high spirits.

"Hey, dad. Where's the pioneer village at? Is it Lesseu Earldom?"

"No, seems to be a village under Viscount Pendragon-sama's administration in Muno Earldom."

"Pendragon! By Pendragon, it's that Pendragon right! 『Pendragon the Woundless』--A Mithril explorer and the one whose female lizardkin spearsman retainer defeated a Shiga Eight Sword!"

My daughter put her feet on the desk and thrust her fist toward the ceiling.

I also know what my daughter is talking about. My daughter heard it from some drunkards, I heard it from someone who liked rumors on the construction site. The story sounds faked, but apparently it's the truth.

"Dad! That story earlier might be true after all!"

According to my daughter, it seems the treasures Viscount Pendragon got from defeating the [Floor Master] were sold for more than 30.000 gold coins.

A merchant's maid who was in the bar seemed to have heard it it by accident in the auction venue.

"Guess it's okay if Echigoya Firm is the mediator. Cause Echigoya is strict with lies after all."

My wife murmured seriously.

Something probably happened at her workplace.

"Then, we're applying?"

The two nodded, and then I went to Echigoya's branch office in the downtown the next day.

It seems they only started the open recruitment in the noon today, the receptionist woman was surprised.

The recruitment was overflowed in a blink of an eyes it became a raffle but it seemed we were treated as referrals from Akindo-san, so we were accepted to be ones of the immigrants.

I haven't met him again after that time, I want to thank him properly at least once.

◇

"A-airship?"

"Dad, we're really immigrating right?"

"We're not being led to become slaves are we?"

My wife and daughter pulled my sleeves from the sides.

I can't comprehend the situation before me.

I heard that Muno Earldom we were going to was on the opposite side of Fujisan mountains, so I thought that we would go around the mountains on foot for sure.

Who'd have thought we'll be moving with an airship....

"Dad, we're like nobles."

My daughter who acted daringly pulled my hand to the airship.

The ceiling is low. When I sit down on the floor with mat, my back touches the neighbor's already.

"This must be why there's a restriction to the luggage."

"Yes, that seems so."

I thought it was strange that there was a restriction from carrying household items even though we were immigrants, but I can understand why now.

I grasped my luggage and tally tightly and waited for the departure.

--Hm, looks like I fell asleep before I knew it.

"Everyone, thank you for waiting. We've arrived at Brighton City of Muno Earldom."

A girl wearing Echigoya uniform opened the door and went around to ask us get down from the ship.

Is Muno Earldom near enough from Royal Capital for the ship to arrive in a nap?

"Unbelievable.... It should have taken three to six months on the land route, two months on the sea route...."

A young man who said that he was a merchant's third son muttered alone.

My daughter is looking at the man creepily from behind my back.

"I heard that even regular air lane needs three days from the Royal Capital and the Duchy Capital, so how..."

"Oh my, you know well. It was a five day trip from the Royal Capital to here. Since we stuffed five time the normal capacity of people, it'd have been difficult in various ways if we flew normally so we put the people to sleep with magic."

The Echigoya female guide cheerfully explained the situation to the merchant's third son.

The reason why they didn't explain it beforehand was because the magic would not work effectively if we knew.

Getting locked in that jam packed place for five days would surely make me lose my mind for sure, so I'm not going to complain.

Come to think of it, I don't feel that hungry even though it's been five days.

You don't get hungry if you're made to sleep with magic huh, the magician employed by a wealthy merchant of the Royal Capital sure is amazing.

"It's a beautiful town."

"It really is, I sure want to stay at this place at least once."

"This area is probably for noble-sama mansions."

My wife and daughter are looking at the white mansions lined up in the townscape longingly.

I want to fulfill their wishes but we're just mere immigrants. No way that dream can come true even if the whole world got toppled.

"Everybody, your attention please!"

An Echigoya Firm's girl shouted out loud from a tall platform.

There are a young girl who looks like a noble and a white haired young man with a wound on his cheek standing behind her.

"Who's that princess?"

"Maybe she's the lord's wife?"

"No way, why would the wife greet mere immigrants herself?"

Rustles spreads amongst the immigrants.

"Quiet please! The acting lord will make a greeting."

"Nice to meet you everyone, I'm Lina Emlin the acting lord. I may trouble you due to my lack of experience, but please consult to the city hall freely if you're troubled with anything."

Looking at the teenage acting lord who was desperately spinning her words, I have mixed feeling of anxiety and wanting to support her.

"Thank you very much acting lord-sama. We have a lot of experienced public employees in the city hall so do consult to them."

Echigoya Firm girl added something, it seemed she sensed the immigrants' worries.

"The villages everyone is going to can already accept new people anytime, but since the day will end if we go now, we'll be going tomorrow."

Then we're going to sleep in this city today huh.

Since grass is growing on the open space for the airship, looks like we'll have some good place to sleep on.

"Please head to the lodging inn. Land lord-sama is paying the lodging charge, today's dinner and tomorrow's breakfast, so please use them freely. I'll be guiding you according to the tally's color. And also, we've taken your luggage to the inn."

....This too much good treatment made me feel anxious instead.

Isn't it too generous no matter how you look at it?

Letting us sleep in the open space and providing warm soup would have been enough to make us shout "Hurray for Lord-sama", yet they even provided lodging and meals....

What does the lord want from us?

◇

"It was an amazing inn wasn't it dad."

"The food was delicious too~"

"You're right...."

I'd be happier if I didn't know that the lodging cost one gold coin for each room and the meals cost three gold coins....

I accidentally heard that from the employees' conversations.

When I think about earning five gold coins, just how many years would that take.

We put our luggage in the cart in the lodging's courtyard.

Pulling the cart was an unfamiliar animal called yak. It was like a big goat with brown fur.

Looks like the shepherds who are guarded by envoys are traveling with us.

There are around 50 people going to the same village as us.

There's a lot of unmarried youngsters, and it seems there are some families who have girls as if matching them.

We parted way with the shepherds along the way, and arrived at an open place after climbing a mountain road. There are two wolf statues on both sides of the village's entrance. It's probably the village elder's hobby.

In front of the vast maintained farmland, there are lines of splendid houses that are as good as the village elder's mansion.

"Oy, this soil is great see."

"You're right, it's soft like the soil in a forest."

The men who couldn't wait anymore and jumped to the field and exchanged words.

Don't tell me, the settlement village we're going to live in is this splendid?

Such wishful thinking floated in my mind.

"Everyone, please gather here."

The guide girl called us, and then we gathered while leaving the carts.

Several people came from the village. Everyone is wearing fine clothes. They must be the tenants of the lord here.

"Good work. This is the settlement village everyone is going to live in."

--What?!

I can't believe it, I look at the other people with asking glances.

I'm too surprised I can't speak.

"These people here are the workers who will help everyone getting used to the village. Please ask them about the village's facilities."

It's really unbelievable.

Field that's twice as big as the one in the Lesseu Earldom's village, and a big mansion that can hold 10 people complete with a barn. There's even a livestock hut even though there's nothing inside.

They say that in one month, land lord-sama will provide us with goats and orange chickens.

Right at that time, the northern part of the village became noisy.

"Oh no! Look at the sky!"

Geh, aren't those rhinoceros beetles.

Even though they look so weak, they're strong enemies, the knights in Lesseu Earldom couldn't win unless they fought in a group.

"Oh my, they're the leftovers from the hunt huh~"

The guide girl muttered carefreely while holding a short wand.

"There's no need to panic. Look--"

The girl points at winged statues knocking down the beetles to the ground.

And then, two wolves which ran from the village's entrance rushed to the beetles.

"Dad, aren't those the stone statues on the village's entrance?"

"Y-yea..."

The one-sided battle ended quickly, and then the statues went back to their places while leaving the beetles' bodies behind.

"I was going to explain later, but there's no need to now. Those statues are state-of-the-art golems provided by Echigoya Firm by land lord-sama's request.

They will defend against burglars and monsters, but they can't cope with harmful animals like wild boars and monkeys, so please keep that in mind okay."

I never hear any village protected by golems.

But, looks like they can defeat most monsters with their strength.

My eyes became hot as I remembered the time when we were prepared to die to repulse monsters while sacrificing several people in my village as we waited for the land lord to get off his heavy ass.

Our life has been made this much easier, I'll grow enough vegetables and wheats to pay the tax next year.

"Dad, this is amazing."

"Dear, we'll have to work hard."

"Yea, let's start the planting today!"

I stepped toward the field while holding a brand new hoe in my hand.

※ Akindo-san is one of Satou's disguises

14-Intermission 3: Satou's Research (1)

Satou's here. In this world, there are people who are puzzled to hear that doing research needs money. Do they think that you can research things with just a pen and paper?

◇

"Satou speaking. I've collected the void sky's probe."

『Saze of Beriunan Clan speaking. Is it possible to reuse the probe?』

"Yes, the Ether Drive is just dented, the Mana Accumulator Branch is fine."

While having a long distance talk with no lag with the high elf of Beriunan Clan through [World Phone] magic, I repair the void sky probe.

This void sky probe has been deployed by Beriunan Clan's initiative in order to investigate the jellyfish's nest.

I was asked to investigate probes whose communication had been cut, and then I found one of them stuck between the inner and outer planetary debris when I searched with Flash Drive and visual-based Unit Arrangement.

Since I've come this far, I might as well create several space houses with earth magic from several debris and put carved seals for teleport magic inside.

Next I shot the debris toward the deep space, each with different velocity while only leaving one here.

Now I don't need to repeat visual-based Unit Arrangement to go around.

After finishing the extra work, I replenish the void sky's probe magic power and put it back to its planned course.

"Satou speaking. The void sky probe has departed. I've checked the beacon deployment, so you should be able to receive the signal by tomorrow."

『Thanks Satou. Come to Beriunan Forest after this, we'll have a party to show our gratitude.』

"Thank you, Saze-sama."

It seems the research about preserved food is currently getting popular amongst the elves of Beriunan Clan so I'd like to bring Echigoya Firm's new products and talk about various research.

According to the info from the map, there are a lot of large debris on the brink of the current map, so I'm going there to see.

◇

"Ooh, it's a mountain of treasures."

There's a lot of rock debris, but around 30% have iron mixed within. There's even pure iron lumps among them.

Inquiring the map, a lot are alloys, but I also found marble blocks and gold lump.

It's as if they were discarded into the space on purpose.

I was slightly suspicious, but since they're undoubtedly useful, I put the debris

I found en route into my Storage.

Every one of them is as big as a small island, so it's quite a profit even if they were all just iron.

--Crisis perception.

"Geh, aren't these radioactive material."

I erase the radioactive material with space magic [Space Disintegrate] while being surprised with the information on the AR.

Even though it's usable even in time of peace, there's no need for nuclear substance in a fantasy world.

Corpse said that, [Gods used their miracle to turn every radioactive material into lead], but it seems it didn't reach the void sky.

And anyway, when the time comes for me to need it, I can just use space magic or force magic to create nuclear fusion magic.

Further, even though there are cosmic ray in the void sky, there's no problem as long as I use [Astro Suit] magic since the density is low.

I found an especially big lump of iron when I was loitering around the group of debris.

It's shaped like a sword, but there's no way you can swing such a huge sword like this. There's no point to it unless the opponent is as big as the moon.

When I tried to put it into my storage, I was able to without problem. Looks like my storage's size really is infinite.

I thought of using the iron as a base for the floating continent, but it's too big.

I want something a bit smaller. Thinking the damage possibility if it crashed, perhaps I should make it a floating island instead of continent.

The candidates increased when I lowered the size I wanted.

I found a huge crystal of hard quartz so I put it into the list of candidates.

I also found lumps of corundum and topaz which were even harder, but since they were only as big as the solitary island palace, I wrote them off the list.

Let's make a floating island using this as the base.

The solitary island palace is better as our base camp, but I couldn't resist the appeal of floating island.

Due to my pondering, I forgot to consider the danger in the void sky.

Without realizing it, I had crossed the map and entered the next map.

◇

"Woooo"

'Zuin, zuin', metal-like sounds reached my ears who was protected by [Astro Suit] magic.

The barrier created by the automatic defensive item repelled some silver spears.

The spears look like spear squids.

Apparently, I was attacked by mysterious creatures in the vein of the jellyfish.

They're accelerating in the void sky while leaving red light behind on their paths.

The spear squids which failed its attack disappear into a huge black body I could see in the distant. It's huge enough to be an asteroid.

I did not chase them carelessly and collected information with [All Map Information].

It seems the ones in this are are only 100 of the [Spear Squids] like the ones earlier and the black body ahead.

That's right, that black body is also a mysterious creature read as [Unconfirmed Object].

The [White Ball Space Kaijuu] and [Dark Grey Space Kaijuu] I saw back then were also [Unconfirmed Objects] weren't they.

When I got a certain distance closer, the black body spread itself.

At first it looked like a black starfish, but then its eight tentacles stretched toward me.

--It's a Black Octopus Space Kaijuu!

The tentacles whose tips are divided into small string-shaped things stretched.

The thin strings on the tips look like feathers, but I know that each one of them is as big as a skyscraper.

--Huge.

The diameter of the main body alone might be around 100 kilometers.

No no, that's way too big.

Even the moon is only around 3500 kilometers in diameter.

What's up with its astronomical size.

Even the biggest one yet, the dark gray space Kaijuu's diameter was only about 3 kilometers....

However, it'll be bad if this thing comes to the planet orbit.

I take out an Orichalcum wand and use a forbidden spell suited for long-distance attack.

--Divine Banishing Laser.

The light of the forbidden spell that's been said to cut a continent burns the void sky.

The spear squids that were trying to make a surprise attack on me from behind the tentacles were evaporated in an instant.

When I had cut two of its huge tentacles, it dealt with the laser quickly.

Jet black spheres that are floating around the other tentacles and the main body curved the laser that should have flown straight and absorbed it.

Don't tell me, are those black things black holes?

The octopus that should have been 60 kilometers away got close to me in a straight line like dropped frames.

I managed to escape since I reflexively used Unit Arrangement, but its acceleration is odd.

....Come to think of it the White Ball Space Kaijuu also accelerated like this eh.

The octopus suddenly accelerated again without taking a breather.

Would love to have this inertia-canceling acceleration to be more moderate.

I tried looking for points of attack using advanced light magic [Photon Laser] which only consumed a little magic power, but unfortunately it ended in vain.

It seems the main black body surface can also absorb magic power like the jet black spheres as the [Photon Laser]'s composition loosened when it hit it.

With the help of [Parallel Thought (Thread Think)], I keep thinking while keeping a distance away from the octopus.

There were too many notices from Crisis Perception it's blocking my thought, so I temporarily put them into the log.

Since the combination attacks of the octopus and the spear squids were too annoying, I created a void sky artificial spirit Full Burnern 4 to play with them.

It's the artificial spirit I remodeled from Beriunan and Burainan clans' research result, on top of being furnished with high powered laser, it's also highly mobile.

It has short operating time, but that's a fair trade-off for its performance.

Even though it's a big artificial spirit that's more than 500 meter long, it looks small since the surrounding scale is just too big.

I'll record the anime-like dogfight of the artificial spirit's fight to enjoy it later, while I myself will fight the octopus.

I repeat several Unit Arrangement and fly about on the center of the map.

--Chiiiii.

It looks like it had read my pattern, the black body waited ahead of me on the teleport point.

With its size, its speed is like a short-range teleport.

My magic power is being absorbed at far higher force than the weaselkin's [Magic Eater] machinery whom I repaired.

If this keeps up my magic power will be exhausted--.

An idea flashed on my mind suddenly.

I landed on the black ground with Unit Arrangement.

It's the octopus's body surface.

Just as I thought, the octopus's body surface can also absorb magic power, my [Astro Suit] has been canceled.

However, don't think you're the only one that can absorb magic power you know?

I execute mid level force magic [Mana Drain].

Unfortunately, there's no advanced or forbidden spell that's more efficient than this one. Of course that's only if I use it.

As its magic power got tremendously absorbed, it's losing its black color, turning white.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

The octopus's scream is transmitted on the black body.

It tried to escape from me in panic, but it's useless no matter what inertia-canceling movement it uses. My [Magic Arm] is firmly wedged on the octopus's white body.

I use the fire magic forbidden spell [<<White Inferno>>] on its defenseless body.

The white flame scoops out the octopus without even leaving an ash.

The spell created a crater several hundred meter wide, but it seems its fat could also absorb magic power so the destructive power of the spell wasn't as high as I hoped.

Even my forbidden spell can't instantly kill this one due to its unrealistic size huh....

--The stars over my head suddenly disappear.

The jet black spheres are approaching to wrap me up.

It seems the octopus wants to kill me using the jet black spheres even if it means injuring its body.

The white liquid from the gouged octopus spews into the void sky.

◇

I look down at it from the void sky.

I was able to somehow escape with the little chance I had. After repeating Unit Arrangement and getting separated around 1000 kilometers away, I wait for the replenishment of my magic power that has been used up on the forbidden spell.

The sword-shaped lump of iron that looks like it can even pierce the moon flashes on my mind.

"If magic is useless, then I can just hit it physically."

The difference in size is too extreme, but I'll do something about it.

I summon the void sky artificial spirit Full Burnern 3. Unlike the Full Burnern 4 earlier, this one cannot shoot laser. Instead, it has long whip-like feelers.

It's an artificial spirit created to launch and carry things into the void sky.

I link eight artificial spirits and make it accelerate toward the octopus.

With speed that can tear one's body, even 1000 kilometer distance is over in an instant.

The octopus ran away in a hurry, but this time its gigantic body becomes its undoing.

I take out a lump of rock from my Storage and fling them to the octopus's body.

The lump of rock broke on the octopus's body surface, but the broken pieces gouged the octopus.

The suicide attack of the artificial spirits expands that wound even bigger.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

The octopus's scream echoes in the void sky that can't transmit sound.

It's probably transmitted through Ether.

"The way to exterminate a gigantic creature like this is by--"

I plunge into the huge hole opened by the rock buckshot and the artificial spirits.

The wound is closing at great speed, but there's quite enough gap for me to enter.

--Moreover, my velocity isn't slowing down.

I throw a second lump of iron toward the meat wall of the octopus that's closing in.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

The meat wall that's not as tough as the outer skin was pierced by the iron lump.

The lump seems to have arrived at the gastric region of the octopus--in the huge space of the central part. The gastric region is shaped like tear drops, even the shorter ones are several kilometer long.

Jet black spheres appear inside the stomach.

Creatures that looked like the White Ball Space Kaijuu also appeared inside the octopus's body.

I'm amazed to see that it also has ways to attack inside the body.

--However, it's too late.

I take out an item from my Storage.

The sword of iron lump that can even pierce the moon.

Since it's bothersome, let's just call it Moon Piercer Sword.

--VOWVOOOOOWWWN.

Torn by a foreign object from inside, the octopus's scream reverberates in the stomach.

I repeat storing and taking out the Moon Piercer Sword, shaving off the seemingly unlimited HP of the octopus.

The mock-White Ball Space Kaijuu and the Jet Black Spheres come attacking to stop me.

The White Ball Space Kaijuu which boasted high mobility couldn't show its potential inside the stomach with the limited space and got easily mowed down by my advanced light magic [Photon Laser].

The jet black spheres were a bit tough, but once I knew that it could be annihilated with [Mana Drain] by robbing its magic power, it was easy.

More of them came after that, but it was simply a work once you knew how to handle them.

After more than one hour, it finally ends.

>Defeated [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu: Cast-off Skin]!

--Huh? Cast-off Skin?

I store the Black Octopus Space Kaijuu's body into the storage and return to the void sky.

Thousands of White Ball Space Kaijuu that were living as parasites inside the Black Octopus Space Kaijuu are floating in the surrounding void sky, they all simultaneously run away toward the outer space.

An object that looks like the [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu] is escaping ahead of them while leaving a trail like a meteor.

--I won't let you run you know?

I put a marker on the [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu Small].

All set.

I start to chant without chasing it.

It's a magic that I haven't had the opportunity to use even after its completion and has been left sitting on the Magic Column since it's dangerous to use it near the planet.

Once the long spell is over, the [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu] has left the map's edge.

It'll be difficult if I chase after it now.

Therefore, I'll pull it.

I pick the forbidden spell of space magic [<<Aport Any Object>>]

Even though I have completed the chant, I'm only able to choose the second magic from the Menu thanks to [Parallel Thought (Thread Think)] skill.

The [Black Octopus Space Kaijuu] that appeared in front of me is floating in the void sky in blank amazement after losing its velocity.

Then I execute the original forbidden spell that's on stand by.

The Flame of Genesis overflows in the void sky, thoroughly burning the octopus that was trying to leave again. Unlike before, the direction is perfect this time.

The octopus reveals its black body to try to absorb it, but it's meaningless.

It'd be a different story if it was a black hole, but a technique that can only absorb magic can't go against this flame.

Because, even though it's invoked by using large amount of magic power, the flame is thoroughly a physical phenomenon

"Is it over?"

After the octopus has burned out, something is floating.

I thought it was a small octopus or an egg, but I was mistaken.

"--Sacred Tree Stone?"

The color is black, but the Sacred Tree Stone--a huge object equaling the so called [Philosopher's Stone] is floating.

Did the enormous mana contained within the Flame of Genesis condensed and crystallized the jet black body of the octopus?

I put it into my Storage since it looks useful for many things.

It seems usable as the power source of the floating island.

Since the octopus's cast-off skin has the ability to absorb magic power, using it to make a [Magic Eater]-like tool might also be a good idea.

◇

"Takoyaki yummy."

"This akashiyaki is good too."

The crispy takoyaki with sauce is good, but I also can't leave the dashi-dashed limp-textured akashiyaki alone.

I made them not with the Black Octopus Space Kaijuu's body, but the normal octopus I caught in the sea of the solitary island's archipelago.

"Both are very good it's hard to say which one won."

"Delish~"

"Trivia nanodesu."

"Nn, tasty."

The princess, Sera and Zena-san were repulsed by the strange appearance of octopus so they didn't come to the octopus meet, but Lady Karina was delightfully eating it.

Looks like Mia can eat octopus normally.

I'll retort for once, Pochi, it's très bien, not trivia.

"Putting jerky inside instead octopus would be delicious too wouldn't it."

"Ufufu, would you like to try one?"

Lulu smiles at Liza who said some meat-lover remark.

"Lulu, I also want the prototype, so I inform."

"Tama too~"

"Pochi too, nanodesu!"

Nana, Tama and Pochi were also eager.

Lady Karina looks like she's in agreement, but she doesn't seem to have time to mind it while putting the piping-hot takoyaki into her mouth.

Relaxedly eating snacks with everyone really is a special time isn't it.

I'll have to think of menu that can be enjoyed by Zena-san and the others too next time.

◇

"It sure is big~"

"It can only float yet though."

I put the debris island installed with floating engine from space into my storage and then carried it into the desert sub-space.

It's far smaller than the Moon Piercer Sword that defeated the black octopus, so it was easy.

The floating engine which makes this island floats isn't using the Darkness Stone manufactured in the elemental stone factory in the void sky, but the lump of Darkness Crystal Orb I found in the black octopus's body.

The Darkness Crystal Orb is a high-purity crystal that's rarely created during the darkness stone production.

I also found some high-purity metal crystal, lumps of corundum and topaz and many others inside the octopus.

Looking at its structure, they were all near its excretion hole.

The lump of crystals in the group of debris were probably the octopus's excrement which were processed and not needed inside its body.

The figure of the black octopus gnawing planets flashes on my mind.

"Must've been my imagination."

"What is?"

"--It's nothing."

I smile at Arisa who looks worried.

"Oh right, I've created some new gravity control magic and inertia control magic. Do you want to try flying together?"

"Really? I want to fly--you've tested it before right?"

"Isn't it obvious?"

I immediately denied Arisa's remark.

Using it on my companions without testing first is too dangerous after all.

I invoke gravity magic's [<<Gravity Control>>] and force magic's [<<Inertia Control>>].

In case anything happened, I could just use [<<Inertia Cancel>>].

I fly with Arisa and look at the dolls that are working to shave off the surface of the floating island.

"It looks like it'll become a seedling ship that flies off into the outer space. Master and me like Adam and Eve, oh how wonderful."

I heard some thoughtless words from Arisa, but I lightly ignore it.

Moreover, the void sky is a danger zone worse than this world you know.

Normally it'd be straight path to the bad end in nightmare mode.

It's totally not possible until I've conquered the whole map of this star system.

Moreover, the floating engine can only absorb gravity, it has no way to move in the void sky.

If I can put the magic I used just now to practical use and make the gravity control engine, the island should be able to move in the space.

First, maybe I should make an artificial spirit graviton version to investigate out of the system.

I smile complacently, having got a new idea for my research.

14-Intermission 4 Satou's Research (2)

Satou's here. The world's distance has narrowed down since the introduction of the internet, but it seems it's not zero. Transmission lag in conference calls with people from overseas weighs on my mind.

◇

『--Master, can you hear me?』

"I can. It's a bit too far, so the voice is lagging."

I talk with Arisa who's in the solitary island palace through the space magic [Unlimited Telephone (World Phone)].

While waiting for the reply due to the long lag, I gaze at the fountain of blue light gushing out from a black disk.

Dear me, I never thought the day would come for me to look at such superb spectacles.

I want to let everyone see this someday.

『But, didn't you say that World Phone had no lag even if we were far away?』

"Normally, that's the case--"

Since I've made a base point for the Unit Arrangement here, I move to the desert sub-space.

Looking at the Menu, my magic power hasn't been consumed besides for the [World Phone] usage. My [Unit Arrangement] really does not consume magic power regardless of distance.

『--Normally?』

Arisa said in askance through World Phone.

"I just went to somewhere slightly far this time."
『Huh? The voice isn't lagging.』

I put the void sky clothes for use in the outer space into my Storage and came back to the solitary island palace.

"That's cause I've got close to you."
"Master~?"
"Nanodesu!"
"Satou."

I catch the jumping youth troupe and confirm Arisa's business.

"Oh it's nothing urgent. I heard from Aze-tan that high elves from another clan were asking for Master so I wanted to tell you."

It's probably an invitation to banquet from Burainan Clan.

"Burnt smell."
"Burnt burnt~?"
"It's the smell of burnt meat nanodesu."

The children who are rubbing their faces on me are looking up at me with worried looks.

"I just got a bit too close to a fire source."

I was nearly charred.

It seems the smell from the spectacle I watched earlier that was on the void sky clothes remained.

"Mou! Don't do anything dangerous."

"I only realized at the actual site that the heat was that scattered."

"Geez, I don't know if you were in a volcano or the planet mantle, but please stop being rash."

Arisa is unexpectedly a worrywart.

I show the crystal I got from the fire source this time to Arisa and the others.

"Pretty~?"

"It's glittering nanodesu."

"Fire Crystal Orb? Light Crystal Orb?"

"What's that? It looks pretty but I can feel vast magic power from it."

It was something I created from experimenting with Primeval Magic.

"This is an elemental crystal that has both fire and light elements. Right then--"

I stare at the crystal that looks like a small sun.

"--Should we call this Sun Orb?"

I've decided to fuse the Sun Orbs into Arisa's and Mia's wands.

Of course by using Primeval Magic.

Primeval Magic needs enormous amount of magic power and makes me tired, though not as bad as Ancient Dragon's, so I don't want to use it much.

However, it sure is useful for making peculiar magic tools like in this case.

◇

As expected, Aze-san's business was about the banquet invitation from Burainan Clan.

Since Aze-san couldn't leave Boruenan, I went with my companions and attendants.

"Hohou, gravity magic huh--interesting."

"Yes, it was something used by a greater demon."

I give the introductory book of gravity magic to the high elf-san of Burainan Clan.

Only 10 basic spells are written in it.

Magic that can be used once I can chant them are not limited to human magic. I'm now also able to use dragon language magic to create dragon spring liquor and demon magic.

Gravity magic was a magic used by the blue-skinned Nari demon that appeared in the opening performance of the [Golden Wild Boar King] fight in the Duchy Capital's underground.

I had trouble analyzing it since there were only two spells which I copied by ears.

After understanding the way to interfere, create and annihilate graviton, everything after that are all my original magic.

I might even be able to create a small black hole if I gathered all the magic power on the planet.

"You're only teaching Keze of Burainan, it's unfair!"

The one who forced her way between me and the high elf of Burainan Clan was the high elf of Beriunan Clan.

Both of the clans like to research, but unlike Burainan Clan who are like investigators, Beriunan Clan regards Burainan Clan as a rival.

"Saze of Beriunan huh. Can't you at least greet when you're visiting other clan."

"Oh spare me, we've known each other for 100 million years. We're like family right."

Miss Saze slides onto my lap like an eel.

Tama and Mia who were absorbed in the banquet looked at Miss Saze with

"Oh no!" expressions, but it seemed they lost to the dishes' charm and went back to eat them.

"This is a thanks for letting me inspect the library of Burainan Clan freely."

"What! Then you can also look at Beriunan's library all you want, so give me magic book too."

"That's fine by me."

I took out a gravity magic book from my satchel and gave it to Miss Saze.

I'm not hiding the introductory books anyway, and I've also given it to Aze-san and Boruenan Library.

"Hee, so this is also preserved food... There's no taste?"

"That is because these Chlorella pills are specialized for mass production and long-term preservation."

The reason why it's lacking taste unlike the ration in the snow kingdom is to prevent it from destroying the market of the existing preserved food. Rations created with Lulu's involvement are too delicious.

I've developed this to help places where disaster or famine occur.

Lulu's and Chlorella rations are being endlessly produced by the dolls in the satellite factory in the void sky.

The most troublesome process, freeze-drying, can be done there with low cost.

The factory can create 100.000 of the former food in a day, and 10 times of that for the latter as long as the ingredients are available.

Moreover, since the latter's ingredients only consist of Giant Kelp and Deep Shellfish that clings to the kelps, there's no fear of them running out for the time being.

The Giant Kelps that extend from the trench to the surface are ridiculously big.

"Might as well make sweet preserved food."

"Mold grow easily on sweets you know."

"Then you can just seal it."

"The canned peach pickles with syrup are delicious aren't they."

The high elves of two clans are talking about the preserved food in excitement.

Looks like I've successfully planted interest about preserved food to the two.

"Right, I've got my hands on this thing--"

I ask them to analyze the pitch black [Philosopher's Stone] crystal that I got from the black octopus.

"What is this?"

"It looks like a kind of Sacred Tree Stone."

The two high elves look at the crystal's light with interest.

I think the only difference is in its color, but I sure want to know if there's any meaning behind that.

◇

After the banquet was over, we went back to Boruenan Forest.

"Aze-san, I've brought you some souvenir."

Aze-san who usually welcomed me pleasantly keeps looking at the other way.

"Is there something wrong?"

"I don't care about Satou."

Aze-san who turns her face away again makes me want to tease her.

"Aze-sama is burning with jealousy about the matter of Saze-sama of Beriunan Clan sitting on your lap."

"W-wait, Lua!"

Lua-san who usually looked like she'd vomit sugar at us flirting made the first move.

"It seems she's also sulking about the matter of you receiving『Solemn Harp of Beriunan』from Saze-sama and『Tranquil Bell of Burainan』from Keze-sama."

The things Lua-san mentioned are a sign of friendship from a particular clan, you can get various accommodations if you show them to that clan.

Leaving that aside, I'll explain the thing with Miss Saze.

"I'm sorry, Aze-san. Since Saze-sama's gestures are childish, I inadvertently reacted like I was with letting Tama and Mia sit on my lap."

"Mwu."

Mia seems dissatisfied with my apology.

Tama who's on my lap muttered "Don't worry be happy~", and made happy sounds with her throat in contend.

"Then, would you consult me about the preserved food too?"

"--What?"

Aze-san, what are you saying?

"I can't?"

"No, that's not it, I consulted about it to Nea-san first and foremost you know?"

It's basic to consult about it first to the elf chef of Boruenan Clan, Nea-san.

"Is that so?"

"Yes, I got various idea."

In the first place, Aze-san declined about it with a single word before I could even consult her, but she might have forgotten since I didn't express it as something important.

"Alright then."

Aze-san pushes her hand in front of me while still looking at the other way.

She's holding a wooden bell on her hand.

"This is?"

"It's the Calm Bell of Boruenan. It's something given to trusted people who come to this forest to study."

Huh? Does that mean that I wasn't trusted?

"I-it's not like that! It's not that we didn't trust Satou! I forgot to give it to you since I felt that you were always a member of our clan."

I act coolly by not smiling my whole face with the help of Poker Face skill.

"Thank you very much, Aze-san."

Thanking her for two different things, I take the [Calm Bell of Boruenan].

I'll wear it always when I'm Satou.

"Right, although this is not meant to be gift in return--"

"It's a beautiful amulet."

"It's an equipment to cope with magic absorption called『Magic Eater』."

This is only effective for its wearer, but it can protect against 10 times the power of the Weasel Empire's [Magic Eater].

Since the power of the [Magic Eater] created from the black octopus material is unbelievably high, even the equipment I gave to Aze-san can't prevent it.

I intend to store the material away since it's too dangerous.

In addition, since the material from white gem space kaijuu has the same ability as the black octopus's, I've created magic-sealing tools from them.

This one can be prevented easily by the equipment I gave to Aze-san.

Nothing can replicate it since the material (black octopus) is too peculiar anyway, so these equipment should be quite useful for my companions.

◇

"Satou-san, what are you searching?"

"Records about divine punishment in the past."

This place is the forbidden library of Tenion Temple in the Duchy Capital.

I came after getting the permission from the elder head-miko, presently a miko apprentice, Lily. Of course, Lily got the permission from the present head miko and temple head.

According to Princess Shistina, books regarding belief and miracles are more complete here compared to the books in the kingdom's forbidden library.

Apparently, these books have been handed down from the time of the Orc Empire before Shiga Kingdom, or even older than that.

"There sure is a lot of priests that misrepresented things as god's divine punishment."

"Yes, unfortunately, there's always some imprudent priests no matter the age."

When the little girl Lily said such things with a serious look on her face, she looks like a child who's trying her best, it's heartwarming.

"Satou-san, this slate here has records older than Furu Empire era written!"

"Ara ara, oh Sera. I was going to guide him there later."

Lily sticks out her tongue and makes a face that looks like a child who's failed in her mischief.

"Let's go, Satou-san. Records about big divine punishment probably only exist in things that are more than 1000 years ago."

Are the gods more mild than I thought?

I imagined them like [Wrathful Gods] from the Dog-head's and Corpse's talks, but perhaps they seldom intervene directly.

Let's stop judging them as evil unilaterally.

They do give forecast of demon lords and great disasters through oracle after all.

That said--.

"These divine punishments seem to be quite merciless."

"Oh my, you can read the slate from the age of gods?"

"Yes, it's the same language as the ancient language dictionary that Sera-san found."

Written there, a divine punishment made 80% of the people living in a continent to go extinct through flood and glacier. It's quite severe.

Such a severe divine punishment happened several thousands years ago, after that the scale got gradually reduced.

Most calamities come from the rampages of monsters from dungeons and monster dominions all over the world, attacking cities near them.

◇

"I have read the document you submitted."

After saying that, Earl Seryuu throws the copy of the report onto the table.

As Kuro I'm visiting Earl Seryuu's castle and meeting the earl.

The report the earl read is titled [The Possibility of Divine Punishment and the Critical Situation of Seryuu City].

I've also given them to the king and the prime minister, and also to the important people of Labyrinth City Selbira with slight alterations for the city.

In case of the labyrinth city, they have various ways to deal with monsters before they can jump out of the labyrinth, and there are explorers and former explorers that can fight in the city itself.

However, that's not the case here in Seryuu city.

Their military is powerful, but the common people are all ordinary people. They don't have ways to cope with monsters that overflow from the labyrinth.

"As long as you understand the content. What I want to know if there is an impregnable defense line situated around the labyrinth's entrance."

"None. There is no budget to set up such a ridiculous thing."

Figure. Seryuu city is currently in the midst of investing things.

They won't have enough money before the labyrinth is on track.

"No need for money, that line should've been written there I believe?"

"I do not intend to create a debt."

I'm not going to demand gratitude, but there's no way Earl Seryuu can believe that with his position.

As for me, I don't mind as long as the people of the Gate Inn and Nadi-san of worker guild, and also Semone-san are fine.

I guess I'd be happy if Viscount Belton family are safe.

"I see, then you should at least take proper measure for when monsters overflow into the city."

After saying that I teleport away from the earl castle.

The destination is a large warehouse inside Seryuu City. Since there's no Echigoya branch office in Seryuu City, I've bought it as Akindo-san with Viscount Pendragon's letter of introduction.

It's just a stone's throw away from the labyrinth.

There's no one here, not even Echigoya Firm's personnel.

I've only contracted Nadi-san of worker guild to go around here once a week.

I summon Zena-san here with Unit Arrangement.

"So the negotiation broke down?"

"Yes, regrettably."

Looks like she understands the situation after seeing herself got summoned.

"Then, I'll be counting on you to persuade them."

"Yes, Satou-san."

Zena-san gathered 10 people.

As Kuro of Echigoya Firm, I plan to power-level these people in 10 days to be the emergency defense force while also thinning out monsters in Seryuu City's underground labyrinth.

Aside from Zena-san's little brother and the handsome middle-aged Garleon priest, the remaining eight people are all female soldiers of the territory army. There's no magic soldier, but since I'll be the one exterminating the enemies anyway, there's no problem.

◇

Without succumbing to the rumor about a dangerous group gathering in the warehouse every night, we've successfully cut down about 80% of the monsters in the labyrinth's middle layer and deeper.

Since the territory army was patrolling in the upper layer, I opened a teleport gate in the middle layer and deeper, but there were only small fry contrary to my expectation.

Due to that, everyone besides the handsome middle-aged priest only barely broke through level 30.

Among the eight female soldiers, three have learned [Earth Magic], and the remaining five have learned [Water Magic].

Since I've made them learn the way to fight monsters using golems like Princess Shistina, they should be able to be the defense even if Labyrinth Hazard happens.

<TLN: Resident Evil is called Bio Hazard in Japan.>

"If the monsters overflow from the labyrinth, destroy the water tank there to flood the labyrinth."

"""Yes, Kuro-sama!"""

The young female soldiers gave a good reply to my instruction.

"Take these, you two."

"Is this wand made from an old tree? The circulation of magic power is wonderful."

"No, that's made from the World Tree's branch. It's a valuable item granted by the Fairy Queen, so treat it carefully."

The handsome middle-aged priest received it timidly.

The thing about getting it from Aze-san is a lie, but it really is made from the World Tree's branch.

"Magic sword? N-no it's not--Kuro-dono! Isn't this a holy sword!"

"That's right, it has special effect against monsters. Do not ever assume yourself a hero and plunge into swarms of monster. Think of that as a flag to evacuate the people."

I've thoroughly trained Zena-san's little brother to be the shield-user and guide.

His technique is equal Nana when she was level 30. Furthermore, unlike Nana's force art, I made him learn earth magic that were optimal for defense.

He hasn't learned Magic Edge yet, but he has [Diamond Shell], [Endurance Reinforcement] and [Physical Reinforcement].

I'm sorry for this young one, but his duty is to guide and evacuate people until the reinforcement come.

Further, I've given the basic equipment set disguised like territory army's equipment and ring-shaped magic invocation object to the female soldiers.

The golems commanded by the girls are shaped like stuffed toys so that the common people won't get scared of them.

I've asked Nadi-san to lend small stuffed toy golems to the minstrels inside the city.

Their movements are traced from Tama and Pochi's cute movements, so I have no doubt that they'll be quite popular.

"Take care of Seryuu City okay."

"""YES!"""

Leaving the students, I came back to the solitary island palace.

Now then, it's about time we go to the Weasel Empire.

SS: The Territory of Marquis Ganika, Later

"--This is, an old document?"

"Yes, it's in the castle's library, look at this Nereina."

"Is it a modern translation?"

Five days after Princess Shistina visited, I was called by the young lady to the castle.

"If this is true--"

"Yes, it should be an evidence of the undersea people's existence."

A servant of the marquis house, most likely someone of talent that could read ancient documents must have found it.

If we show this to marquis-sama, we might be able to persuade or even push marquis-sama to launch a full-scale investigation.

I feel clear like a small bird that sees the morning sun after a long while.

◇

"Excuse me!"

The young lady and I came to the work room of Marquis-sama.

Normally we would have been stopped along the way, but today there wasn't anyone stopping us. It's strange.

This must be my lucky day.

"That was quick."

--Eh?

I exchanged looks with the young lady hearing unexpected words from Marquis-sama.

"This girl is the one who has promptly raised the warning about the matter this time, she's Nereina-dono."

A young woman with golden hair cut to her shoulders stands up from the sofa in front of Marquis-sama.

She's wearing expensive looking clothes and graceful jewels as the accessories.

There's no mistake that she's an upper noblewoman, moreover, she must be a noble from the Royal Capital.

"She's Sala of Echigoya Firm."

--A merchant?

She looks like a noble no matter how you look at it right?

"Marquis-sama. Today I've come as a retainer of Duke Mitsukuni."

"So you were."

Duke Mitsukuni.... That famous Duke Mitsukuni from the time of Ancestor King-sama's world reformation!

While still feeling surprised we exchanged greetings with the woman who looks like she was born in a noble house.

"Now then, regarding the matter of undersea people---"

"It's true! Undersea people do exist!"

I impatiently interrupted Sala-sama.

It's already far more severe than impoliteness. If this keeps up, it won't end up with just scolding, I might be sent to my parent house's reflection room.

Now that it has come to this, I prepare myself.

"I-if you look at this book, the existence of undersea people is--"

"There is no need."

It seems Sala-sama was angered with the thing earlier, she flatly shut me down.

"Sala-sama, would you please listen to Nereina."

"Understood. Let it be after you hear me."

Thanks to the young lady, Sala-sama somehow agreed to take the time.

As expected of young lady! She's dependable.

After clearing her throat, Sala-sama starts to talk.

"After hearing the rumor about the undersea people, hero Nanashi-sama had gone and investigated it and found the undersea city, Nenerie, he judged that the undersea people (Neroids) in the actual site were warlike monsters after he got in contact with them and sealed the site with magic. After further investigation, he found the descendants of the ancient undersea people (Elder Neroids) living a primitive live on a solitary island near Nenerie, and after gathering the documents in the community, he identified that they were former citizens of the undersea city Nenerie."

Umm, isn't it just too fast?

We only started to perceive the abnormal situations half a month ago....

"Is it possible to use the undersea city?"

"It is not. The teleport gate which is the mean to go to the city has been broken, and unless you are like Hero Nanashi-sama who can stand high pressure, it is not possible to approach it."

"Is that so...."

The conversation that's happening between Marquis-sama and Sala-sama feels like a tale from some faraway country.

"--Nereina!"

Called by the young lady, my thought that was flown far away came back.

"I'm sorry."

"It is fine, accept this Nereina. It's a reward from His Majesty."

It's a gorgeous necklace that can be said to be luxurious even for a daughter of an earl house.

Moreover, there's a piece of highest grade Shiga Pongee under it.

Furthermore! There's even a letter of commendation from His Majesty!

"Accept them."

"I will respectfully accept."

I received the letter of commendation and the reward with proud feeling.

Of course, the young lady also received them too.

Because this is an achievement of us both.

"Then, I'll be going around to each village in the territory."

"--Villages?"

I inadvertently asked the question after hearing Sala-sama's unexpected words.

Villages are places where commoners and officials go, as nobles, we've never set foot in them.

"Yes, besides young ladies, there are storytellers who had warned about the undersea people in every village, so I'll be going to reward them too."

"Is it alright for me to go too?"

"Yes, if Nereina wishes for it."

'I promised to listen to your story after all', Sala-sama teased me.

I felt that my face reddened up to my ears, but right now my interest is ahead.

I wonder what kind of tales are told by the village storytellers.

I thought of that while riding a small airship with Sala-sama.

The thing about me getting upset and shamefully crying and shouting when the small airship levitated is a secret.

※ Sala is one of the earliest Echigoya's executives like the Manager. This should be the first time she's mentioned in name.

TLN: Chapter 14 is still on-going

14-SS1: People of the Ancient Dragon Continent

※ Not from Satou's point of view.

"Darn it, not even one dragon scale despite walking this far...."

"It probably means that even the demon lord couldn't hurt Ancient Dragon-sama at all."

Knights in traveling outfits are exchanging words with each other.

A group of 50 people including knights who were dispatched by a kingdom on the south of the Ancient Dragon continent have come to investigate. Everyone is riding a highly mobile Running Bird.

"Ooy! Come here quick!"

One of the soldiers who had gone ahead of the wasteland as scouts greatly waved his hands.

The other four who are with him are captivated by the ridge on the other side of the wasteland, they're not waving their hands.

"Th-this is...."

"I can't believe it."

The young captain snatches the Farsight Tube from one of the scouts and stare at the scenery before his eyes.

A red haired woman vice-captain who appears beside him does the same thing and peer into the Farsight Tube.

"For fertile land to spread beyond the wasteland like this."

"That's not the surprising part, look at there! The city is safe."

"Impossible. I saw it myself when the royal capital of this Katahira Kingdom was burned to the ground by the demon lord's army. The rampart was also half destroyed by a huge demon beast from the demon lord's army."

Unlike the wasteland that the investigation team has witnessed so far, there are lush greenery and a city with systemically built houses before their eyes.

"We won't know anything from here. Let's go into the city."

"H-however, it might be the demon's trap."

"Then have the summoner to summon a carrier bird and send a report."

After giving the order, the captain whipped the Running Bird and went ahead.

"Scout unit! Go ahead of the captain! Don't miss any danger!"

"""UNDERSTOOD."""

With the vice-captain's order, the scouts hurriedly jumped onto the Running Birds.

Since they're lightly dressed, they probably would quickly catch up with the captain.

The vice-captain takes along the following unit toward the solemn and mysterious city.

◇

"--Does nobody live here?"

Even though there are houses lined up which look ready to live in anytime, there's not even one soul.

There are furnitures installed inside the houses, yet no tablewares nor food can be found.

Unbelievably enough, every house has waterworks and drainage system installed.

"Captain, the door of the central castle is open."

"I see, the rampart gate also opened by itself when we touched it."

"Is it inviting us in?"

"I don't know."

The captain and the others continue their search without stopping even while feeling weirded out.

After wandering in the wasteland for two months, arriving at a ruined city--nay, a city with virtually brand new houses that are left unattended, there's no way they can leave it alone.

"However, such mysterious buildings they are. I've never seen buildings like them before."

"Yeah, they look weak against earthquake."

Apparently, Shiga Kingdom-style stone buildings are unusual on the Ancient Dragon Continent which has a lot of volcanoes.

Houses made with Architecture magic are stronger than they look against earthquake, but none can see through that on their first sight.

They finally get off the Running Birds when they've trespassed the central castle, and then they dip their hands into the fountain in the front garden.

It seems they've judged that the water is safe after looking at the Running Birds poking their heads into the water.

"Looks like it's safe. Let us drink the water too."

"Alright! It's been half a month since we have such clear water."

"Yummm, this sfuff's not gritty to drink."

Unlike the captain who could get drinking water from water magic, the team members plunged their heads into the fountain and began to drink the water.

The following group who arrived later lost themselves when they saw their companions plunging their heads into the fountain and rushed up to them, the vice-captain scolded them.

"And, does that seems to be here?"

"Yeah, the rampart's gate opens by itself and the fountain is working. It's possible."

Accompanied by the vice-captain and escort soldiers, the captain heads toward the underground passage the scouts discovered.

The escort soldiers were repelled by the barrier on the passage's entrance, but the captain and the vice-captain were able to enter into the lower floor without problem.

"As I thought, only upper nobles can enter huh."

"Probably only people who can become a landlord."

The captain runs toward the blue light shining in the lower floor.

『Welcome, qualified one.』

An overlapping voice of woman and man of unknown age could be heard.

The source of the voice is the crystal body floating in the air--City Core.

『I've been ordered by the previous lord [] to hand over the throne to the first qualified one who come here. Which one of you will be registered as the Land Lord?』

The captain steps forward to answer the City Core.

It seems the two who are bewildered with the situation don't notice that the previous lord name told by the City Core was blank.

"I will inherit it. Former Prince of Natenha, Jeba Natenha will become the new Lord of this land."

『Registering Jeba Natenha.』

The captain's body is wrapped in light, a mysterious light crown appears on his head.

Figures of people living a poor life in a foreign country appears in the captain--King Jeba's mind.

And, the cheering voices of his subjects whom he leads to the new land.

"Your Highness, you look splendid."

"Stop with Highness. I'm the king of this new Natenha Kingdom from now on."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

Disregarding the two who were overwhelmed by their emotion, the City Core asked『Would you like to change the city name from Katahira to Natenha?』at its own pace.

Thus the captain became a prince who obtained a foundation to revive the fallen kingdom as a godsend, but only later on they found out that the city was only made to look like the city before it was destroyed.

The one who reconstructed these cities were not a god, but it was beyond their imagination as ordinary people.

Much less about the purpose of that person; a practical site for magic experiments and expectation for the revival to complete when he comes to sightsee in the future, none could imagine it was for such a random reason.

"Also, Haryu. You be the first queen."

"Jeba-sama."

Apparently the new king has also found his spouse following his kingdom.

As if blessing the two, the song of the Ancient Dragon that rules over regeneration is echoing on the continent.

※ This is the sequel to 14-Intermission 1: Ancient Dragon Continent and Primeval Magic ※ Satou only made the city's buildings, the City Core had existed from the start.

15-1. To the Weasel Empire

Satou's here. In my primary school days, I remember asking my parents and teachers what kind of plant is [wayside grass] from the catchwords [do not eat wayside grass]. I remember their troubled faces, but I don't have any memory of their answers.

<TLN: It's an expression that means 'don't loiter on the way'.>

◇

"....■■ Laser."

Sera's mid level light magic shot through the swarm of Soldier Ogre Ants and got repelled by the barrier of General Ogre Ant on the back.

We're currently inside a huge nest of the master of a monster dominion located between Makiwa Kingdom and Weasel Empire, the Huge Queen Ant.

We found the dominion was saturated to the point of verging into a stampede when we on the way to the Weasel Empire, so we went here to prune it while also leveling up my companions.

Currently the late-start troupe is fighting on the front, while the regular members are watching on the back.

It should be about time for the [Weasel Merchant] to fulfill his promise, but the merchant hasn't come to the promised Dejima Island even now.

Thus we were going to tour the remote regions of the Weasel Empire until the merchant went to Dejima Island, but due to the reason earlier, we ended up loitering in this underground nest.

"....■■■■ Air Hammer."

Zena-san's magic pushed back the giant ants that were approaching them.

"As expected, mid class magic are resisted by higher ranked enemies aren't they. ■...."

"That seems to be the case--"

"....■■■ <<Wind Protection>>"

Zena finished her second spell while Sera began her next spell.

Invoking magic at such speed, even though they're lower class spells, is not normal, it's thanks to the [Chant Shortening] skill Zena-san learned from Sera-san recently.

The wind wall repelled the crystal arrows shot by the enemies' rear guard, Zena-san shot down the fireballs fired by the Magic Ogre Ant with the Anti Magic Rifle installed on the other end of her long wand.

In the meantime, Zena-san already started to chant her third spell.

It seems Zena-san has established her specific position by relying on the lower magic [Magic Shield].

Its guard is paper thin compared to Nana's standard [Physical Shield] and Ninja Tama's [Evasion Shield], so looking at her makes me feel anxious.

"....■ Photon Laser"

Sera's advanced light magic mows down the Soldier Ogre Ant swamps, and tears the General Ogre Ant's barrier that was giving orders on the back.

The glittering spectrum on the wall of the barrier inside the dark tunnel is quite beautiful.

"Now's our chance desuwa!"

『Karina-dono, it's still too early!』

Lady Karina activated Flickering Movement, rushing toward the ant swarm.

Raka the [<<Intelligent Item>>] tried to stop her in a hurry, but Lady Karina had already jumped before the enemies.

Two Knight Armored Ogre Ants that are protecting the General Ogre Ant push their shields toward Lady Karina.

"How impudent, desuwa!"

She kicks the upper part of the shield with her beautiful leg, and then she makes a lovely jump by using the enemy that has broken their posture as a stool.

Arisa who was acting as the peanut gallery shouted, "She used the ant as a stoooool!" out loud, but nobody reacted since Arisa raising odd voice was just the usual.

She looked a bit lonely, I'll care for her a bit later on.

".... ■■■■ Air Hammer"

Zena-san's wind magic blew away the Claymore Ogre Ant that was going to attack Lady Karina as she landed.

Unfortunately, the Heavy Soldier Ogre Ant that was on the opposite side resisted the storm created by Zena-san.

"Raka-san!"

『Acknowledged.』

A whirlpool of spiral light appears on Lady Karina's hand with the magic tool Raka controlling it.

"Karinaaaaaa, break!"

While shouting out loud, Lady Karina's fist clad with light infringes upon the Heavy Soldier Ogre Ant.

The Magic Ogre Ants and Archer Ogre Ants at the deepest part took attacking positions while making screeching noises.

『Karina-dono!』

"Yes, Raka-san--"

Lady Karina rotates once while leaving a spinning top-like afterimage clad in light.

The dance of her ringlet hair clad in light is quite beautiful to look at.

"--Breakeeeer, shoooooot!"

Shot with the centrifugal force, the spiral bullet pierced through the Heavy Soldier Ogre Ant and crushed the Magic Ogre Ant with a flash.

"Karina, it's dangewrous~?"

"You'll get surrounded nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi who are being carried under Liza's arms are flailing around trying to go help Lady Karina.

"It's alright you two."

The two look up at Liza with blank expressions as Liza guides their line of sight toward the group who has appeared behind the enemy line.

"Everyone, I'm sorry for being late. Golem Shield Unit, forward!"

--MVA!

Responding to Princess Shistina's order, the golems equipped with great shields close their distance with the ants.

Hikaru and Nana who were with the princess are standing behind her.

The ants that were trying to encircle Lady Karina went into disarray with the appearance of the new opponents.

『Now's the time! Karina-dono.』

"Yes, Raka-san!"

Lady Karina kicked one Heavy Soldier Ogre Ant with a roundhouse kick and jumped back here with hassou tobi knack.

<TLN: From Minamoto Yoshitsune's legend. Literally means "Eight boat jump".>

"Karina-sama, your assault was too early. Even if you have solid Raka's protection, it's by no mean perfect. What would you do if you got seriously injured and left with scars?"

Sera scolded Lady Karina's recklessness.

『Sera-dono, I apologize on behalf of my master.』

"Since Raka-dono is Karina-sama's supervisor, you have to restrain her well or else--"

"Sera-sama, please leave the scolding after the battle. Her highness is on her wit's end."

Zena-san who was diverting the ants with lower class wind magic told Sera-san and started her next magic chant.

"I'm sorry Zena. You're not injured anywhere right Karina-sama?"

"I-I'm sorry...."

"As long as you're not injured, please don't worry. It'll be bad if you're scarred before you can become Satou-san's bride right."

"....B-bride."

Lady Karina's face reddened to hear Sera.

I don't have any such plan right now.

"Mwu, Satou."

Mia who's beside me rubs her head on me.

Seeing that, Arisa tried to rub her head too, but since she was aiming at a delicate place, I lightly guarded her and continued looking at the battle.

◇

"What's wrong, Satou."

"Ah, there's a bit--"

Just when the mid-boss battle ended to an extent, I found some luminous points with strange movements.

I ask Hikaru to take care of Lady Karina and the others as I check the details of the luminous points.

The luminous points are the spy group from Makiwa Kingdom that I had found earlier before we came here.

Apparently they tried to infiltrate into the Weasel Empire and failed.

I invoke space magic [Clairvoyance] to look at the spy group's state.

--Gegeh, grotesque.

It's truly as the saying goes, "A beast never miss a corpse."

It seems Makiwa spy group and the guard unit of Weasel Empire match each other, bodies from both parties are lying on the national border.

Looks like the last two of them are facing off right now.

The Weasel Empire's black panther rider seems to have the slight upper hand.

Even though I said black panther, it's not a normal animal, it's a monster called Shadow Ripping Panther which has screw like magic tool installed on its head, it's moving very shrewdly.

I cancel [Clairvoyance] since I'm not into watching people fight to death.

I'm not going to interfere spies killing each other.

◇

"Nyu~?"

"Tama, what's wrong nodesu?"

Tama and Pochi who were giving some drinking supplement and towel to Lady Karina during the umpteenth break time were conversing as such.

"W-wait, is some greater demon going to appear?"

Tama shakes her head to deny Arisa's question which somehow coaxed with anticipation.

"Feel that someone is calling me~"

It appears Tama doesn't really understand it herself, she tilts her head and her whole body while thinking hard.

I tried to listen carefully, but I couldn't hear anything even with the reinforcement from [Attentive Ear] skill.

"Then, why don't we go see it. Hikaru, please take care of things here."

"Un, leave it to me."

I entrusted everything here to Hikaru and teleported away to the entrance of the nesting hole.

"Do you know what it is?"

"Nyu~"

Tama who's riding on my shoulder folds her arms and frowns.

It shouldn't have been the ant's scream.

We wait for a while as is.

"This way~"

Tama whose ears twitched suddenly jumped, pointed at somewhere and ran.

She's changed her clothing to ninja costume before I knew it.

Since she's moving like a ninja by jumping from branch to branch, I carry Pochi on my shoulder and follow her with Sky Drive.

Unlike Liza who has learned Sky Drive recently, it seems Pochi who has just been able to do Sky Steps can't keep up with Tama when she's serious.

"Something was there just now nodesu."

Pochi mutters so and looks behind.

I felt sensing-type barrier when we passed through the Weasel Empire's border.

The Makiwa spy group from earlier was probably caught in this barrier and got intercepted.

I use [All Map Exploration] while following Tama.

This place seems to be a territory called [Weasel Empire, Sixth Parish]. There's one city and two mine towns, among the numerous highways that connect them to the city, there's a main one that link the north and south of the territory, there are only a few villages that are situated along the road to those towns.

No matter how you look at it, there's too few farm villages needed to supply food to the urban areas.

Next, I look at the other group of luminous points on the map.

It seems a group riding demonic wolves has departed from the nearby fort.

They're quite fast--some additional Elder Parakeet Riders have also departed to act as scouts.

I take out a small blimp for decoy from my storage and make it fly toward the territory's capital. Since it's used as a decoy and disturbance, I've filled it with hydrogen instead of helium.

Tama is heading toward one of the relay villages along the road that I found earlier.

The movement of the luminous point on the map look strange--.

"Master, there's smell of blood at the front nodesu."

When Pochi is still talking, I teleport ahead of Tama to the destination.

There's a black panther from earlier in the center of the village enveloped with bloody smell.

It seems the one who was riding it had died together with Makiwa Kingdom's spy, there's no one that fits the rider around on the map.

I quickly use magic for disguising, transforming myself into blond haired Makiwa Kingdom man and Pochi to tigerkin girl.

"Pochi, you can use magic potions. Save the injured people."

"Yes nanodesu!"

I stitch the black panther, whose claws are painted red, in the air with the space magic [Binding Entangle].

"To the village elder! Gather the injured at the center of the village!"

I shout out loud using weasel language with the help of [Loud Voice] skill.

I use healing magic while walking, prioritizing the ones who are badly injured.

There are a lot of villagers who are so injured they can't walk, but since the attacks were aiming at their legs, there's no casualty. It seems the black panther has received combat training to incapacitate its enemies.

30% of the population are weaselkin, the other 30% are lizardkin, the rest are all various beastkin.

I heal the frightened villagers while thinking so.

"Master~?"

Tama approaches while carrying a catkin child on her back.

The child's clothes are dirty with blood, her back is badly torn. It seems her injury has been healed with the magic potion Tama gave her.

"This child was crying."

"I see, you did great Tama."

I pat Tama's head as she puts the child on the ground.

She shouldn't have been able to hear it judging from the distance--Or so I thought, when I checked Tama's skills, her Gift column had been added with [Insect Notification].

Obtaining congenital skill (Gift), just how....

Well, guess it's fine since it seems useful.

"Myu."

"Mom!"

A catkin aunty rushed out of the villagers, hugged the child and thanked us while bowing her head.

Then an elderly weaselkin carrying a wand appeared from behind them and urged them to go back to the villagers.

"We wish to express our gratitude for saving our village from predicament."

The elderly weaselkin said it haughtily, or rather, with full of suspicion.

"You are not someone from the fort. Just who are you people."

"I'm just a meddlesome retired crêpe merchant from Echigo."

<TLN: Reference to Mito Komon.>

It'd be problematic if I revealed our identities since we were illegal trespassers, so I spoofed some random ones.

"Crêpe merchant? Never heard of such products... Don't tell me you're not from the central, are you foreigners?"

"That's right--"

The elderly weaselkin makes a sour face when I nod.

"Don't you know that this country has been closed off? You'd be massacred by the people of the fort if they found you even with children along. If you need anything, no, we can't offer you everything, but for our benefactors we can at least prepare something you require."

"Then, tell me about this country."

I asked for information instead since asking goods from a poor village would be too much.

"I cannot answer something so vague. This place is the 17th relay village of the sixth parish of Weasel Empire, do you seek that kind of information?"

I assent the weaselkin elder who asked for confirmation.

"The nine parishes on the outer edge of the Weasel Empire, including this, are territories that have been discarded by the emperor. To the emperor who has abandoned his faith, we who cannot abandon ours must be useless."

I can't swallow his story whole, but I'll add it on the memo pad for Weasel Empire.

"Are you prohibited from going outside the territory?"

"No, we are not. It is simply impossible in practice."

"Impossible? Can't you just go on the highway while avoiding monster dominions to escape to other territory?"

"The highways are only connected to other 『Parish』, the same as here. We the castoffs have talked and come to a consent, but there is no highway that leads to any territory besides the 『Parish』. And if you fly in the sky--"

Explosion sound reverberated from the northwest direction of the village in the middle of the elderly weaselkin's talk.

The surprised villagers crouch down and look at the direction of the sound.

The blimp I released earlier probably exploded.

"It seems there were some people who have infiltrated. There are several small forts inside and on the border of the parish. The imperial army from these forts have screw-tamed flying monsters and cannon trees, they shoot down anyone flying like such."

I see, this [Parish] is like a country inside a country, or rather it's treated like a penal colony huh.

I asked the elderly weaselkin the way to enter the [Parish] city and its custom without him getting suspicious.

And then a panicked catkin man rushed in.

"Elder--It's the imperial army from the fort."

"Umu."

My radar also shows the imperial army soldiers coming here.

"You heard him benefactor-dono. You should escape while we buy you time."

"There's no need of that. And also, I do not mind if you talk about us to the soldiers. Tell them that a man in black clothes followed by a black panther came, snatched your food and water, and then he ran away."

I raised my hand to signal Tama and Pochi, and then they went to the black panther and threw it, "eiya~" toward the village's entrance.

I canceled the binding magic when it was still in the air, then it landed like a cat and ran toward the soldiers.

It was not because of my [Coercion] skill, it must be scared of Tama and Pochi who were muttering, "Steak~?" and "Hamburg is better nodesu!" full of appetite.

Leaving the surprised voices of the villagers and the black panther that started attacking the soldiers behind, we teleported back into the ant nest were our companions were waiting.

The soldiers will probably get hurt, but looking at their levels, there should be no one dying.

◇

"Satou! I've finally reached level 50!"

When we came back, Lady Karina jumped while shouting so.

She's smiling with her whole face, which is rare for her.

I was going to evade reflexively, but I receive her lightly and put her down.

There was plenty of distance between us, yet the wonderful soft sensation still reached my chest.

Demonic breasts are frightening--.

"Congrats~"

"Congratulations, nanodesu!"

Once the chorus of the congratulations song from the girls ended, I talked about the things at the village.

"Parish is it.... It's worrying."

"Then since we have some ample time, let's go investigate it."

Thus, I, Sera and a guard are going to the parish city for reconnaissance.
The guard was Liza, selected with the fair [Ladder Lottery] method.

However, I have to prune the monsters here a bit more before that.

15-2. Parish

Satou's here. When we're talking about city, the stereotype would be concrete jungle, but recently I feel that there has been more greening in city center than the rural area. There are spots of gray and navy blue in half-baked rural areas.

◇

"Tenion Holy Emblem huh, very well, go on in."

"May the blessing of God be upon you, gatekeeper-sama."

"Yes, blessing."

The unmotivated gray-clothed gatekeeper made some prayer gestures and allowed us to pass the city gate.

He's still one of the better gatekeepers, the other ones are playing with dices.

"They were quite insincere guards weren't they."

"You're right--Liza, you don't have to be that tense."

While answering Sera, I warned Liza who was looking around with coercive sharp glances.

The three of us are wearing disguises masks, so no one can see through the disguises unless they have original Yamato Stone or Arisa's level of appraisal skill.

There's only a few people in the city, everyone is wearing gray clothes and walking with hunched back.

There are some stores here and there but not many items on the shelves so the customers are also sparse. Judging from the transactions between the shopkeepers and the customers, it seems this city also uses notes as payment.

Looking briefly at the map, there are seven huge temples worshiping the god pantheon except the Demon God and the Dragon God. When I checked them with Clairvoyance magic, they were all under construction.

"I wonder if those are altars?"

"That's right Liza. It seems the seven altars are carved with each holy emblem of the Gods."

I moved my line of sight at the seven altars that Sera and Liza mentioned.

There's a small altar on every intersection like a Jizo statue. Instead of statues, there are holy stones carved with holy emblems on the altars.

The order of the altars seem to be fixed, it starts from God Heraruon whom I'm not too familiar with and ends with God Parion.

According to the documents I read in the Duchy Capital's Parion Temple--.

God Heraruon the [Top Seat of the Pantheon].

God Garleon of [Strife and Victory].

God Urion of [Trial and Judgment].

God Karion of [Wisdom].

God Zaikuon of [Passion and Change].

God Tenion of [Solace and Love].

God Parion of [Infant and Righteousness].

--Such were written.

Though it's not that the gods declared themselves, "I am god of~", but it came about from records of the circumstances of things in the era each god governed.

Now then, leaving that aside, we heard some troubling voices coming from a small temple when we were in the middle of the way to the big temples in the city's center--.

"I beg of you, Priest-sama! Please give your mercy on the『Healing Garden』!"

"Didn't I tell you before. We can only pray to the gods. We have no mean to heal epidemic."

Such conversations happen often in Shiga Kingdom, but looking at the map, it seems the situation is a bit different here.

The priests in this city are low leveled in contrast to their number. Everyone is lower than level 10 except the the few in the central temple.

Thus they probably can't use the mid class holy magic [Remove Disease] and advanced class holy magic [Purification Virus].

"Satou-san."

"Please wait a moment."

I stop Sera who were suggesting to help them, and check the situation on the map once again.

It seems infectious disease has spread inside the city but the statesmen appear to know the importance of isolating the carriers, most of the patients beside very few minority are gathered in a plot of land.

After investigating the book about diseases in my storage, the disease name written on the map is a lethal one, but since the incubation period is short, it should be hard for it to become a pandemic.

"I've confirmed it. It's a kind of epidemic that can be healed by Sera-san's holy magic."

After telling that, I put [Astro Suit] magic on my companions to prevent infection.

"Well then, shall we go?"

"Yes, Satou-san!"

We went to the small temple with Sera in the lead.

◇

"Priestess-sama has come!"

The [Healing Garden] that the man who was making the appeal earlier took us to seemed to be a sanitary building.

"Priestess-sama, please change to purification clothes in this changing room. We've prepared new clothing to prevent the epidemic, so please don't worry."

A staff member handed surgical robe-like clothes and new masks and guided us to the changing room.

When I nod at Sera and Liza who looked doubtful, the two head to the changing room with relived looks. Unlike me, the two must have not understood the concept of sanitary clothing.

The man earlier was waiting when I came out of the changing room, so I chatted with him until Sera and Liza are done.

It seems he's the director of this facility, he's previously worked in the hospital in the capital of the empire.

"I couldn't use magic so I worked as a nurse instead of doctor. If only this place had the medicines and equipment of the central hospitals, I wouldn't stand idly while the patients were dying...."

There's an organization under the direct control of the emperor called [Breinz] in the empire's central, apparently medical institutions in the imperial capital have been rapidly progressing thanks to the knowledges brought from that organization.

"What kind of equipment are they?"

"Umm--Huh? I'm sorry, I couldn't recall the term. It's hard as you get older isn't it."

He beats his head while smiling wryly.

"Coming from such a convenient capital, there was a time when I was depressed to be dispatched to an antiquated parish, but in the end I couldn't leave the suffering patients alone."

He couldn't abide the emperor's [Renunciation] policy, so he was sent to this [Parish].

"I was told to 『Abandon the irrational god and revere the emperor who has bestowed prosperity and well-being upon his subjects』.... But I couldn't abandon my faith to Tenion-sama."

Does the emperor want to become a god?

Or perhaps he wants to weaken the gods who flourish from [People's Faith]?

Either way, I think he's picking a fight with the gods.

This, paired with the scientific weapons and the rumored train, it's strange how the Divine Punishment hasn't befallen them yet.

I'm intrigued at just how does the Weasel Empire's emperor manage to evade gods' wrath.

I really want to hear it once I meet him in person with the weasel merchant's mediation.

◇

"Over here, priestess-sama."

We enter the isolation ward as guided by the director.

Looks like they've put dual layer doors properly here.

There seem to be some ventilation and air cleaning magic used in the sickroom, the air isn't muddy.

The staff here are good, I sure want to head-hunt them to Shiga Kingdom.

Or maybe I can send some Echigoya personnels to train here.

"Let's heal the patients who can't move first. Please gather them as close as possible, since I'll be using ranged magic."

"Eeh, expanding the range of『Remove Disease』magic which consumes a lot of magic power is too reckless!"

A priest who belongs to the hospital ward expressed his surprise hearing Sera.

"Don't worry about it. Liza, help me carry the patients along with their beds."

"Understood. Master."

I can't rely on [Magic Hand] magic here, so I carry the beds together with Liza.

We haven't done physical labors in a while, but since I and Liza each have enough strength to carry the whole ward, it's easy.

"■■...."

And then, Sera begins her chant with a long wand.

The accessories for magic boost that Sera wears are glittering, bringing about sublime atmosphere on her.

The enormous magic power that she's gathering begin to sway people's clothes and hair.

I stand behind Sera, secretly fully opening the Spirit Light to make it easier for Sera to gather magic power.

".... ■■■■■■■ Purification Virus."

The moment the chant is completed, pure warm light that overflow from Sera wrap the patients.

I pick forest magic [Stamina Charge] and water magic [Calorie Charge] from the Magic Column the moment Sera invoked her magic and invoke them to ease the patients.

"Aah, what a comfortable light."

"Feels like my body is filled with power."

"Our gratitude to Tenion-sama who has led priestess-sama to us."

The patients who have been healed are muttering incoherently while shedding tears.

At first we planned to cure the patients who weren't in immediate danger after this was done, but since it was troublesome, I secretly used water magic [Cure Disease] at the same time Sera healed the patients who were seriously ill.

Right now they probably think of it as Sera's, or rather, a [Miracle caused by Goddess Tenion's servant-sama.]

◇

"Satou-san, I'm sorry for poking my nose into unnecessary things."

"No, don't worry about it. I would have gone myself if Sera-san didn't."

After the treatment, the patients almost made Sera into a saintess and the ward's priest almost became Sera's apprentice, but we were able to somehow escape from the [Healing Garden].

"Next, shall we see how to use the ration coupons?"

"It's the notes we got as thanks from earlier right."

Sera took the coupons and looked at it curiously.

We originally got a bundle of coupons for the ration as thanks, but since we wouldn't have no use of it, we only took three pieces.

I thought it was the normal currency at first, but apparently it can only be used inside the parish.

There are two kinds of ration coupons; food coupons and necessity coupons, you can exchange them with the goods at the distribution center which gets the items transported from outside the parish.

It seems there's also service coupon which you can exchange for luxury and medicines.

"Master--"

Liza unusually puts her face close to my ears and whispers.

"--It's a flock of flying magic beasts. Please look to the east."

I looked up as urged by Liza and saw around eight Rocs flying toward the city.

The city's alarm bell resounds.

"It's the imperial mail!"

"The rationed goods are coming!"

"It's our chance to get the service coupon, hurry up!"

The men pull the carts and trolleys left in an open space toward the city's gate.

Apparently, it's not an attack but an air transport.

"Let's go see it."

I called the two and went to see the situation.

"--T-that was a rough unloading wasn't it."

"Yes, I wonder if the goods inside aren't broken?"

Sera's and Liza's surprises aren't surprising.

The Roc birds dropped the baggage without even landing in an open space slightly farther away from the city's gate.

There are screw-shaped magic devices on the Roc birds' heads, similar to the one on the Black Panther's from yesterday.

"Carry them to the central warehouse!"

A female weaselkin who looks to be high-ranked appeared riding a horse from the gate and ordered the men pulling carts.

"Matriarch-sama! There are 40 food goods and two daily necessities. There's a list of goods in the daily necessity bundles."

"Give it to me--no luxury goods huh. Only the reported medicines and nutritional supplements.... So the Emperor wants us to die from epidemic disease."

Apparently, the news about Sera curing the epidemic hasn't reached her ears.

"There's a lot of cloths. They're not dyed as expected. We don't have any choice but to collaborate with the black market guys to get the dye used in the ritual."

"Can't be helped. I resent working with a bunch who don't even a fragment of faith, but we can't disregard the color written in the holy book for the ritual magic."

I thought of getting in contact with the top people of the city with some dye as a present, but I decided not to for now since we were still gathering information.

◇

"It seems the staple food here is boiled sweet potato and beans that are crushed and hardened into bamboo shaped. It smells bad but it doesn't taste awful enough to not be edible. The bundle beside it is a lump of dried meat made for long preservation. It's moderately hard."

I receive the food bundle from the distribution center while Liza is explaining.

The calorie is questionable and the smell of fermented plants assails my nose, it makes me hesitate to try it. It's salty on top of getting praised by Liza for being too hard, so normal people probably eat it by chipping the meat with a knife or dip it into water.

Judging from the surrounding people, it seems they get one bundle for a day.

Since we didn't dare to eat bad things, we re-wrapped the food, and then we went to the mentioned black market after seeing the big temples that were under construction.

Due to the shops and people gathering in the narrow back lane, the crowded black market looks like the one I saw in a movie about Pacific War.

The people walking at quick pace in the hustle bustle look contrasting with the languid people walking in the main street.

"They're open in daytime even though it's called black market."

"The black part doesn't mean dark at night but something that isn't formally recognized, you see."

I answer Sera who's watching the surrounding restlessly.

"There doesn't seem to be anything unusual. Master, please look over there."

There's a yakitori stall at the place Liza's eyes are glistening at.

"Fumu, we need to investigate it."

"Yes, then I shall scout ahead."

I told Liza to be careful in order for me to not laugh at Liza who was devoted to her appetite, she ran toward the stall with a smile.

Making use of Flickering Movement, Liza moves between the crowds while leaving afterimages.

....You don't have to be serious at a place like this okay?

"--10 ration coupons for one yakitori skewer? Isn't that too excessive?"

"Go somewhere else if you don't like it. That's the market price here."

The shopkeeper blew Liza's complaint.

Other customers who bought a yakitori skewer for 10 ration coupons were the proof that he wasn't ripping her off.

It's not like we have to buy it, but thanks to the smell of the burning fat of the bird meat, my mouth has turned into yakitori mode.

I'll negotiate with the shopkeeper in Liza's place.

"How much is it with normal money?"

"Money from central are just junk here."

I was going to pay with the weasel money I got at Silga Kingdom but he refused.

Then let's barter.

"How about this kitchen knife?"

It's an item that I acquired from a local noble from one of the various small kingdoms we visited.

It's just made from normal iron, but it's a relatively good knife.

"Hmph, how many yakitori do you want for this kind of high quality good?"

"Just give us 10. Kitchen knife should be used by a cook after all."

The shopkeeper timidly receives the knife.

I genuinely think that it's better for someone who can use it to have it rather than leaving it to become a fertilizer of my Storage.

I give the bundle of yakitori I got from the shopkeeper to Liza, and then have one for me and Sera each.

It seems to be of chicken skin and thigh sprinkled with salt.

The flavor from the charcoal fire tastes good. I'd like a bit more flavor from the thigh, but I won't ask for the impossible.

"Pal, you've just arrived at this parish right. Do you have any liquor?"

A man with stubbly beard talked to me when I was wiping the fat on my hand with a handkerchief.

"It can be distilled liquor or ale. I'll give you this gem for one bottle."

"Isn't that spinel? You can buy a barrel of high-quality liquor with that kind of gem you know?"

He rolled a beautiful red gem that can be mistaken with a ruby the 'Pigeon Blood' on his palm, and then he let the sunlight shine through it.

"That's if you're in Central right? We rarely get liquor here."

Is it prohibited by law?

Looking at the map, I see that liquor is really rare.

They're being made locally at the wayside villages, but there's barely any inside the city.

I take out a small bottle of distilled liquor from my cuff and press it on the man.

It's just something cheap sold at the Duchy Capital, but I think this goes well with the salty dried meat as a side dish.

"Ooh, haven't smelt this fragrance for a long time."

The man pushed the gem on me and disappeared into the back alley as if running.

I was intending to give it for free, but I guess it's fine. It's a bare gem after all, he probably didn't steal it from his wife's jewel box or something.

"D-do you have liquor? T-trade with this holy emblem."

"You sinner! Don't deal with that sinner. Trade with the gold coin I have."

"No, mine."

"You fools, step back--"

The magical power of liquor is amazing. The heavy drinkers in the black market gathered in an instant and it became an uproar.

"Oy, you guys! What is this uproar!"

Since some men riding horses who looked like the guards came, I teleported back to the Solitary Island Palacen with the two.

Looks like I can get quite a few collaborators here if I offer them liquor.

◇

"Wlcome~?"

"Welcome back, nanodesu!"

"Welcome back, how was the parish?"

While changing clothes, I went to the living room with the children who welcomed me.

After sipping the tea Lulu served, I spoke about the situation of the city.

"Hm~m, rationed food, what's more, supply from outside the city huh...."

"It sounds like an open prison."

"Rather than prison, it's more like a monastery for nobles who have committed a crime."

Hikaru gave her opinion to Arisa's mutter, and then Sera told her impression.

"Still, what does the Weasel Empire's Emperor intend to achieve by making such a troublesome place."

Lastly, it seems Princess Shistina has the same question as me.

I wrote a report about Weasel Empire's [Parish] with Kuro's handwriting, gave it to Echigoya Firm's Manager, and asked her to give it to the king.

"Master! The costumes for undercover operation are ready so I tell."

"Nn, spy."

When I returned to the Solitary Island Palace, Nana and Mia were waiting in sexy spy-like costumes.

Arisa must have implanted the wrong idea of spy into them.

Those flashy clothes are bad if we're investigating the territory outside the parish.

"I've prepared the costumes here for you. Change into them."

"Master, don't you think they don't have enough charm value, so is my humble opinion."

"Mwu, character costumes?"

The two people frown at the weasel costumes.

"It's alright Nana. You'll be popular with the children with this costume."

"That's! Wonderful, so I praise Master."

Hearing my words, Nana took the costume in high spirit, but Mia dragged hers to the changing room.

Now then, while waiting for Nana and Mia, I'll gather prior information using [Clairvoyance] on the map I got.

Using advanced space magic spell [Teleport], I moved to the eastern end of the sixth parish of the Weasel Empire.

15-3. An Ordinary Village

Satou's here. There was a time when the words [Assault Reconnaissance] became popular due to some anime or manga when I was a child. Going to an unknown nearby city with a train, and prowling the streets like a spy was also a good memory of mine. I mistook the meaning of the words cause I was a child though.

◇

"Master, found a village ahead. Advising to scout ahead with an artificial spirit."

"Nn, shadow."

Nana and Mia who are wearing weasel costume are in unusually high tension.

Sorry, but there's no need to do that.

"It's alright. It seems they're all just your friendly villagers."

I pull the hands of Nana and Mia who look slightly disappointed to go toward the village.

Even if the villagers point their blades at us, they can't possibly damage these costumes anyway.

"Yoo, traveleers."

"Heya, villager. We've come to sightsee the construction of the smoke car, is it close by?"

I talk to an old weaselkin man who's speaking slowly at the entrance of the village.

The reason why I choose this village is because, as I've said earlier, this place is the closest to the railroad construction site.

There are more ratkin and rabbitkin people than weaselkin in this village.

The surprising thing is the fact that there's no noble or slave not only in the parishes but also in the Weasel Empire territory.

However, it appears the citizens are divided into three classes. Whether the third class citizens are actually treated like slaves, we will see it ourselves as we tour the country.

I've infiltrated this area dressing as a typical liquor peddler to see the situation.

"That the souund you can heaaard? That one's over that hiiill."

"Thank you, villager. This is what I'm selling, have a cup."

"Aww, thank yaa."

I pour sake into a bisque cup and offer it to the kind old man.

"Kaah, this stuff's goood."

"That good?"

"Lemme taste too."

I sold the sake to the two other villagers not for free, but for blue copper coins that's generally used in the Weasel Empire.

While selling the sake, I gather information by pretending to chat with the elderly.

I let Nana and Mia to take care of the selling along the way.

"Sake seller, want to taste this?"

"Ah, thank you."

I take the dried meat the old man recommended while matching his tone.

It's a salted dried meat just like the one I saw in the [Parish].

"Did the village make this?"

"--Hm? Which village ya came from?"

"From beyond that mountain."

The elderly looked like they were in doubt when I replied.

Oops, it seems I said something wrong. I invoke the [Foolish Field] usually used for interrogation to befuddle them.

"Can't be helped theen."

"Ya can't buy cheap provisions from the military if there's no smoke car."

According to the elderly, it seems the stinky fermented calorie bar from back then will become tasty if you make it into a rice gruel and put some herbs to delete the scent.

"It be niiice since the construction done and the smoke car came."

"Riight. The growing children can now eat their belly full cause we can sell the crops and buy the military provisions."

"Gracious Emperor ee."

Unlike in the parish, it seems the Emperor is well liked in these remote agricultural villages.

Further, it seems merchants who come riding the smoke car are buying their crops.

"What're you doing, what's with the liquor smell in the middle of the day even though the young ones are working away in the construction site of the smoke car road."

"Aah, village elder. Have a drink."

"Hou, sake huh.... How much?"

The village elder shouted, "Cheap!" when I told him the price, and then he bought all the sake jugs I brought with me.

That's fine and all, but for some reason the villagers gather and it's become a feast.

I was a bit surprised to see them spending that much even though it wasn't the time for harvest.

The people enjoying the sake are wearing rural-like clothes with a lot of patches, but every one of them is smiling and looking healthy.

"This village sure is prosperous."

I returned to my usual tone but there wasn't already any villager who minded it.

"Yeah, since the current emperor took the reign, the tax changed from 7:3 to 4:6 you see. So even such a remote village like this can be relatively prosperous."

From the government taking 70% and villagers 30% to them taking 40% and villagers 60% huh?

I thought the tax would be high since this was a military nation that developed the high-cost low-return scientific weapons.... Apparently, that's not the case.

"Long live the Emperor!"

"""Long live the Emperor!"""

With one leading, the villagers held a cup in one hand and shout together, then they laughed 'Gahaha'.

Mia who was free after selling all the sake plopped down on my lap as I was sitting on the ground and then she abruptly played her lute.

It's a fun melody with "I hate drunkards" tones sometimes mixed in.

Next to Mia, there's Nana carrying some children who have come to pick up the dishes.

"Master, secured the young organisms so I report."

The children carried under Nana's arms don't look like they dislike it as they're absorbed in gnawing rice crackers.

"You've a beautiful wife and a cute daughter."

"Nn, happy marriage."

"I see, the daughter must be happy too."

Mia looks satisfied hearing the old weaselkin.

She must have thought that she is the wife, but unfortunately I think she's mistaken.

However, there's no need to point that out and displease Mia.

While patting Mia's head as the lute's tone changed to [Fun Feast], I mix in with the villagers' chat.

"So I've come here to sell my sake, but is it alright for you to take a break from the field work?"

"Yea it's fine. Emperor-sama has distributed pesticides you see."

"Thanks to that, we got rid of the troublesome pest."

Mumumu, pesticides huh... I'm a bit worried as to whether they get the dose right.

"We also got the mowing rabbits."

Mia who heard rabbit mentioned moved her line of sight at us.

She must be interested in it.

"What kind of rabbits are they?"

"It's a kind of rabbit that only eats weed without caring the crops."

One of the elderly points at the field.

It's a small rat-sized rabbit.

"If ya don't put them in the hut during the planting and budding seasons, they'll eat them all with the weed like what happened at Gozan's place ya see."

"I've failed as rep of the village."

I see, it has a habit of eating the plants that have just grown huh.

"Thanks to them, farmwork's easier now."

"During the free time, the young 'uns often went outside the village to make more fields."

"Ain't it fiine, something or otheer, the new fields will be theirs, young 'uns must pull themselves together."

Are they developing new private fields in long term?

Hearing that, Nana tilted her head and entered the conversation while still carrying the children.

"Monsters outside the village are dangerous so I warn."

"It's alright. The empire force comes and defeats monsters and bandits y'see."

"Not bandits, they're tigerkin liberation army right?"

"People who're brandishing weapons and steal food from villages are bandits enough."

I tried searching the map around here and just as the villagers said, there was no monster around here, even on the mountain foot, there were only weak monsters whose levels are in single digit.

"The knights come patrolling here once a month even now."

"They went sword hunting and took the village's swords and spears away, the peeps were maad, but--"

"We got farming tools instead."

"After getting something this good, we'll get punished if we complain ya see."

An old man carrying a sturdy looking farming tool made from iron is showing it off.

"They also made the well with clickety-click."

"Not clickety-click, it's water pump!"

"Oh ain't it fine. Yer' the only one who calls it water pump to look smart."

Apparently, they even have a hand water pump.

The government here seems to be doing quite good.

I might have come to respect the emperor unconditionally if I hadn't saw the parish.

"What'd you say!"

"Try saying that again!"

The two old weaselkins who have been quarrellings since earlier catch each other's collar and glare un-befitting of their ages.

"Good grief, weasels are easy to pick a fight."

"Don't say that, our blood boil fast since the time of ancestor-sama."

The old weaselkin that I met first covered for his race hearing an old rabbitkin's grumble.

As it looks like it's going to devolve into a fist fight, the village elder finally stands up, unable to remain indifferent.

"You fools! If ya want to fight, do it in front of His Majesty the Emperor!"

The village elder shouted while carrying a sake bottle in one hand.

He looks like he's ready to enter the fight.

I feel that there was a lot of intellectual and rational ones among the weaselkins I met outside the Weasel Empire, but looking at the villagers here, I end up thinking those people must have been an exception.

Still--Emperor?

No way there's a teleport gate in such a remote village, is it some kind of term?

My doubt quickly clears up.

◇

"Here I go, Gozan!"

"Come, Banga!"

The old weaselkin men who have taken off their coats are exchanging blows with magnificent telephone punches.

As the two made a clean hit at each other, they staggered and fell backward.

Old Gozan stood up while wobbling, but old Banga seems to have gotten a cerebral concussion, he's not getting up.

"What's wrong, Banga!"

"Stand up, Banga!"

"His Majesty the Emperor is laughing at ya!"

"That's right that's right! Look sharp before the Emperor!"

The surrounding villagers are cheering, or rather, jeering at old Bangan.

The 'Emperor' that they're referring to is a statue of weaselkin made from obsidian-like thing put in the center of the village's square.

Its left eye is a red stone, its right eyes is a blue stone, suspicious light coming from the statue gets stronger every time the villagers roar.

....It's a statue of evil god no matter how you look at it.

In fact, there's a magic square embedded in the square though the villagers don't seem to notice it, every time the villagers enthusiastically shout out, their magic power and stamina get drained.

We resisted the drain aimed at us, but the magic power leaking from our equipment couldn't seem to, thus quite a lot of magic power got absorbed into the emperor statue.

I don't know if that's the reason, but I feel that the statue has begun to emit red aura-like light.

"Wooooo!"

"Duryaaaaa!"

Old Banga was able to stand up somehow while shouting, old Gozan replied back with a shout too.

The telephone punch earlier was bad enough, but now the two are swinging their arms around to exchange baby punches.

It must be some kind of weaselkin sense of beauty that I do not understand.

The two's fists sunk onto each other's cheeks, and then they fainted, a double knock out.

Geez, it's not a fight between elderly.

"They've been fighting for idiotic reasons since they were kids."

"Unlike that time, now we have His Majesty the Emperor's statue, ain't it fine."

"Yer' right, that times one of the sides would die after several matches in a fight like this."

"Weasels can't hit the brake once they see blood, it's scary."

--Huh?

Perhaps the emperor statue is for the sake of the villagers so they won't die needlessly from a fight by exhausting their strength?

Nevertheless, preparing such expensive magic tools that can drain magic power in many villages should have cost them enormously.

The rational and selfish weaselkins I know can't be that generous out of only goodwill.

"Village eldeer, the emperor's statue is shining reeed."

"Fumu, the impurity gathered fast this time. Usually it takes a year.... Well fine. Let the young ones going to the smoke car site tomorrow carry a letter to the city."

"Would be niice if the official-sama that bring the replacement statue is Moton-sama. That persoon would be willing to repair the bank with earth magic."

"Oy oy, ya shouldn't think of first-class citizen-sama as a substitute of oxes and horses."

Fumu, judging from their conversation, it seems that even though the first-class citizens are treated like their superiors, they don't seem to be a privileged class like noble.

We bid our farewell to the village elder and went toward the smoke car construction site.

◇

"Master, it's full of muscle men so I tell."

"Mwu, clank clank."

Mia quickly gave up from the noise in the construction site, Nana lost her interest since there were no children in the site, so the members changed.

The backup are Arisa and Hikaru.

"The smoke car is a train alright."

"Yeah.... The smoke car road also looks like railway track complete with railroad ties."

It seems the smoke car's carrying power also plays a big role in laying the new rail track.

The construction site not only has beastkin and scalekin men, there's also manned normal golems and ones that look like bulldozers and excavators.

The latter are not using internal combustion engines, they seem to be types of golem.

Looks like the science is not that all-encompassing.

"I've seen it earlier, I think the emperor statue is suspicious after all."

"Right right, it's not often there's an item that much suspicious."

Arisa, Hikaru and I are of the same opinion in this matter.

"Then, next we should follow where the emperor statue is getting transported to."

Speaking of chasing, it's ninja.

I should ask Tama to track the transport route of the emperor statue from the village earlier.

Now then, will an ogre or a snake come out of it....

<TLN: Idiom meaning you never know what will happen.>

Ideally, I'd love it if it was [The mountains have brought forth a mouse]. <TLN: Much ado about nothing.> I think world peace is the best after all.

15-4. An Ordinary Town

Satou's here. I like train in itself, but I only have bad memories of commuter trains. Having yourself jam-packed in it everyday, it feels like it even wears my mind. Surely, were crowded trains ceased to exist, wouldn't office workers' stress level decrease to 30%?

◇

"Revolution, nanodesu!"

"UGGYAAAAAAA"

Arisa is scrambling her purple hair while Pochi sharply points at her in front of her.

"This is the cicada sound huge harvest nanodesu!" <TLN: She said ミンミンの五穀豊穣 read "Mimmin no Gokokuhoujou".>

Pochi who's holding cards in one hand takes the shupin pose, but I don't know where to even begin to retort her mistakes.

Looks like Arisa is not good at playing Daifugou card game.

"That should be『Social upheaval of the poors』so I correct." <TLN: This is the correct term, 貧民の下克上 read "Hinmin no Gekokujou".> "As expected of Nana nanodesu! Pochi was also going to say that--it's true nanodesuyo?"

Pochi commends on Nana's correction.

The last of her words had some hesitation in it so it must not be the truth.

"Satou, are you going already?"

"Yeah, it looks like there's some movement at the emperor statue, I'll be going for a bit."

Hikaru who noticed me carrying a weasel costume on my arm called out.

Apparently, Hikaru and the others are playing Concentration card game.

"Her Highness is really strong."

"Since this game is just about memorizing things, it's simple."

"Oh Tina you cleaned the house."

"Yes, I might be stronger in card games, but I cannot win against Her Highness in Concentration."

Hikaru is calling the princess using nickname. Zena-san is muttering alone, looks like she's trying to memorize the card positions.

Even Sera who's unparalleled in poker is weak in memorizing game like Concentration.

"Tama, take care okay."

"Works hard for Pochi's share too nodesu."

"Aye aye sir~?"

Once the beastkin girls finished their talk, I teleported to near the village from yesterday using Unit Arrangement, taking Tama along.

◇

"Fumwu, so the letter was telling the truth.... Gathering impurity this fast, aren't there too many hot-blooded people in this village?"

A weaselkin wearing official-like clothing who's watching over the exchange of the emperor statue mutters with his hand on his chin.

The ones who are doing the actual work are a man and a woman wearing magician-like clothes using force magic.

"Hokku-sama, we've finished the fixture."

"The miasma rate of the emperor statue is normal for the period of its installation. It seems only the magic power that has been accumulated."

It's probably because of the magic power leaked from our magic tools.

Those male and female magicians seem to be quite an analyst.

"Fumu, Maiazuma paper is blue, and the Mana paper is purple, the maximum huh.... It's just as you guys' analysis. However, we've already come out of our way here. Let's take this back."

"You're right. I'd hate to end this in vain, and the military bunch would call the researchers salary thieves if they don't get to work once in a while."

The magicians gave a tanzaku-sized litmus paper-like thing to the official.

Apparently, that's a tool to measure magic power and miasma levels.

Putting the magic power aside, I'd like to know the way to measure miasma.

I'll look for some researchers they mentioned and see if any of them is selling the thing in the back channel.

It looks like an expendable after all, I think I can buy it normally from a merchant if that's being produced outside the research institute.

◇

"Ticket for Magyuba is 30 swen for one, 20 swen for a child."

"Tickets for two please."

I purchase the smoke car tickets from the conductor of a temporary station.

Swen is the currency used in Weasel Empire, one blue copper coin is one swen.

Come to think of it, this might be the first country that has a name for its currency.

It might be translated to like '●● copper coins' by language skill because it's called the same.

I don't mind this since memorizing them would be a pain, but it does make the sense of exoticness decrease.

"Yes, thank you. If you're going from Magyuba city to your next destination, please buy the ticket from the ticket box or the conductor of the next train there."

The weaselkin conductor told me so while giving the tickets.

It seems to be a fairly placid system.

I thank the conductor and then go toward the smoke car with Tama.

"Second class citizens can only ride on the general car, so don't make a mistake and enter the noble car that's immediately behind the smoke car."

"Yea, understood."

Assenting the conductor's warning, we board the general car.

Looks like this one is of unreserved seats. Villagers from the nearby villages heading to Magyuba town to peddle things are carrying huge luggages on their backs.

"There~"

"Quietly."

"Aye."

The officials carrying the emperor statue had finally arrived, we got here first since we used teleport magic.

The whistle signaling departure echoed the moment they got on board, apparently it was waiting for them.

It might be more efficient to just track them, wait for them to arrive at Magyuba City and then teleport there afterward, but for the sake of later on, I confirmed whether the forged citizenship ID could be used to buy tickets here.

There was not even a simple ID check at this station, so I'm planning to confirm it once we arrive at Magyuba city.

"Gatan goton~, gatan goton~"

Children really are fascinated by the unique rhythm of a train and the flowing scenery on the window.

Tama is rooted on the window since awhile ago.

"We will be entering a tunnel soon. Everyone, please close your window."

The conductor showed himself from the window in car ahead and shouted.

The other passengers begin to close their windows.

Window?--Is it because the vibrating sound is noisy?

"You folks, it's tunnel soon, close yer' windows."

When I was racking my brain to think of the reason, the ratkin aunty who was sitting next to us bent her body and closed our window.

All the windows here are fitted with glass.

"Yer faces would become pitch black from the soot if you don't close the window in a tunnel."

"Is that so, thank you very much."

"It's alriight, if one's open, everyone's face will become pitch black y'see."

The aunty's anger dissipated once she knew that I was a beginner of smoke car.

Apparently, everyone does the same at first.

"Mountain~? There's a hole on it~"

"That's called a tunnel."

Tama who's sticking her cheeks on the closed window says so while desperately looking at the front.

Don't put too much strength into it since the glass will break okay?

I secretly put force magic [Enchant Physical Protection] on the window.

"Pitch black~"

Looks like there's no illumination inside the tunnel.

The car in the front probably has headlights.

The wall of the tunnel isn't made of stone from earth magic's petrification, but from concrete-like thing.

"Did ya know? This tunnel is--"

According to the knowledgeable aunty, the tunnel itself was made by 100 earth magicians of the empire in one go.

Looks like they don't overemphasize the use of science, they do use magic when it's convenient, kind of hybrid.

To capitalize on the unexpected source of information, I offered some baked sweets made by Lulu to stimulate the aunty, thus I got to hear various things about the remote regions of the Weasel Empire.

◇

"We will be arriving~ at Magyuba City Station~ We will be arriving at~ Magyuba City Station. We will be arriving at Platform 3 of Magyuba City Station. As Platform 2 is for train arriving from Gajuma City, please be careful not to mistake the platform."

The conductor who appeared from the car ahead informed the train arrival at the city with a peculiar tone.

After passing through two unmanned stations along the way, we arrived at the city after an hour.

Distribution of goods should be considerably quick with this.

"Town~?"

"It's in sight huh."

After passing through a forest, we could see Magyuba City surrounded by a tall white wall.

The smoke car sounds its steam whistle twice to announce its arrival to the city.

"""KYUPOO""""

Tama and the surrounding children imitated the sound of the steam whistle.

Due to the noisy sound of the smoke car, there doesn't seem to be any adult who's annoyed by the children.

The smoke car heads toward Magyuba City while slowly turning to the left.

Thanks to that, I can see the state of the city.

Looks like there's an exclusive gate for smoke cars.

"Gaate Oopen~?"

The metal lattice rolls up, and then the massive door inside it opens to the side.

There's a lot of beastkin children watching the smoke car from atop the gate even while getting their fur black.

The smoke car is advancing slowly in the city and then it enters a traditional station.

The station looks like a downscaled version of the old tokyo station, it's more magnificent than I thought.

◇

"Crowd crowd~?"

"It's somewhat crowded isn't it."

We were met with crowds after getting through the ticket gate.

The crowds reminds me of the nostalgic rush hour.

We walk in the crowd while hearing voice of boys and girls selling their goods.

Among them is--.

"Newspaper~ This week's newspaper~"

--Someone selling newspapers.

I think 5 swen for a thin four page newspaper is a bit too expensive, but it doesn't seem like he's overcharging.

"....It really uses printing."

You're challenging them too much, Weasel Emperor.

Good grief, just how is all this not violating the God's taboo.

The content of the newspaper is mostly about the troop deployment at Makiwa Kingdom.

There's even an article of an interview with the special inspector Usan of Scientific Vehicle unit.

According to the articles, Makiwa Kingdom invaded Weasel Empire's remote region without warning, so this was a retribution war against Makiwa Kingdom that had done all kinds of atrocities.

These are fabricated news without a doubt.

Makiwa Kingdom has no national nor military power to cross through the monster dominion overflowed with many high level monsters.

It's impossible even for the four lords with the special elemental wands unless they resort to terrorism.

We have reduced the monsters in that dominion quite a bit, but we didn't completely wipe them out as there are those that act as deterrent on the circumference.

In one or two years, they should increase enough to stop military campaigns from happening.

Preparing for war should take time, and since they're aware that their army have been defeated by the dragon knights in one-sided battles, they will probably hesitate to march.

"Found it~"

Tama pulled my sleeve, I raise my face from the newspaper.

The officials came out of the station on a state car. The state car is a convertible type with thin wheels like the one you see in a film about the dawn of car.

Pursuing them by running would attract attention, so we went ahead of them by teleporting to their destination that I guessed, the government office at the center of the city.

I can just move to the right place if I got it wrong.

"Good view~"

"It is."

The center of this city is on a slightly elevated ground, so you can see the city well from here.

Searching the map for a bit, there are seven temples in the back street, and there are only priests who can't use holy magic in the temples.

There's no priest who can use holy magic in the territory, not even one.

Of course, there's also no ordinary people with holy magic gift and skill. They were probably forcefully deported to the parishes.

Instead, there are several hospitals in the main street, they're packed with magicians who can use healing magic from earth magic, water magic and such.

Unlike in other places where orphanages are often found besides temples, there are only public orphanages here.

It seems that the emperor intends to make the citizens perceive that temples are unnecessary over time.

"Unifoorm~?"

Tama curiously moves her sight at a street while her ears are twitching.

There are children wearing school uniform-like uniforms roaming that street.

According to AR reading, it appears they're students of empire state childhood schools.

Looking at the map, this city has more school buildings than Shiga Kingdom's Capital.

Since the number is still too few compared to the population, it doesn't seem to be a compulsory education, but it feels like they're increasing the foundation little by little in order to support science and technology.

"Here come~"

Tama pulls my sleeve.

Looks like the car the officials ride on has arrived at the government building.

"Now then, let's go."

"Aye!"

Tama transforms into her pink ninja costume with a white smoke.

Un, she looks like quite a ninja.

15-5. An Ordinary Town (2)

Satou's here. When someone is insisting that they're extremely normal, it makes me doubt that they're hiding something abnormal. Even though I know that I'm only jumping at shadows, I still end up looking for it.

◇

"Fatty mouse~?"

"Wonder what's that? It looks like a capybara."

In a room we found in the middle of the way as we chased the officials who went to the basement, we saw babies of capybara-like animals with plasters and people in white robes.

I think they're beastkin but since they're wearing big masks and visor-like sunglasses, I'm not really sure.

When I look closer, I see that there are red crystals which look similar to fragments of magic cores on the plasters.

The capybaras that have been plastered are sent to the next room through a slippery slope.

"Confiscateed?"

"Looks like it's a bit different."

I carry Tama under my arm and peek at the next room.

There's a bath tub filled with entrails and pieces of meat in the room, and the plastered capybara-like animals from earlier are greedily munching on them.

Are they some kind of lab animals?

Men wearing the same clothes as the men from the next room are sprinkling white powder using ladles on the entrails.

They're doing it roughly, yet the capybara-like animals are not minding it as they're busy with the entrails.

"Tch, ran out of powder."

"We're out of stock too, make more of them."

"What a bother."

A man carrying a ladle goes to one part of the room while cursing.

--That's?!

The pill the man took out from a bottle are shown as [Reborn Seeds] on the AR.

It's the same medicine which transformed the creatures in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital's sewer into red-rope monsters.

Perhaps, this is the secret factory which produces the red-rope monsters?

"Master, here too~?"

Tama who had slipped out of my binding before I knew it is beckoning me in front of a room next to this.

"Those peculiar vines, are they Hopping Potatoes?"

"Of cour~se."

Tama nods.

Those are monsters that are hunted by rookie explorers and baggage carriers in the Labyrinth City Selbira to raise money.

They're one of the pillars supporting the low earners' food bill in the Labyrinth City.

Perhaps this place is....

Supporting my guess, the next room have [<<Walking Beans>>] and [Dancing Corns] being raised.

The true nature of the cheap military provisions I saw in the village--or rather, these must be the raw materials.

That means the capybara-like animals earlier are the origin of the dried meat huh....

◇

"Welcome back, civil official Hokku."

"We've returned. Head Researcher-dono."

We almost forgot about our purpose, but we arrived at the place right on time using Ground Shrink.

The official from before gave the emperor statue and the litmus paper thing to a weaselkin wearing showy clothes in the innermost room.

There are also several other male and female researchers here.

"The miasma is less than ideal but the magic power is slightly over capacity is it...."

"With this we don't need additional supply of magic power from the city even if the Consul complains."

By city magic power, he must mean the magic power from the Source that can be gotten through the City Core.

"Didn't you say that the you were low on miasma before?"

"Not anymore, thanks to the rookie from Hokku-dono division."

"The one from the imperial university?"

The official frowns, not understanding the researchers' explanation.

"He seems to be upset for getting demoted from the imperial university to here, he's been spewing venom in many places."

"Entrusting that kind of guy to distribute food, I pity the slum people."

"The miasma collected in the emperor statue installed in the slum is three times the last month's amount."

The researchers told the reason while laughing unpleasantly.

When the official told them, "Correct the rookie's attitude", they laughed again.

"We originally take care of them by giving them food so they won't die of starvation in order to collect the miasma from their fatigue and envy anyway, isn't it fine."

"Tha-that's true but...."

They're probably using the miasma to produce the pill and raise the monsters.

Still, even if it's efficient, it's terrible for the slum people who have to endure getting abused unilaterally. I can't help but sympathize.

"It's not like there's a rebellion or rise in crime rate, so it should be fine as is."

"The production amount is increasing and the knights-sama who have come from the central in an official trip are also leveling up smoothly, all is good."

Don't tell me they're power leveling by defeating the monsters they're cultivating themselves?

I don't have the right to fault them since I'm doing the same thing in the labyrinth's underground, but unless this city is a special case, the whole Weasel Empire must be raising high level people systematically as such.

No wonder that they're able to rear more than 100 level 50-class Temple Knights.

◇

"Here we go, Knight-sama."

"Umu, I'll be trying my new sword."

A cage in the inner part of the room is opened, and then five Log Rats as big as wild boars jump out of it.

A weaselkin knight produces magic edge on the great sword he's holding, waiting in the center of the room.

Even though the magic power is leaking, the magic edge itself is stable, he's excellent for a level 30 knight.

However, it's clearly too excessive against level 7 rats, he cuts three rats in one swing of the great sword.

The remaining two rats were going to escape from the room, but the knight rushed at blinking speed and skewered them.

"Fumu, thanks to the magic edge device, there's not even a nick on the blade even after cutting the fat bones of the Log Rats."

Hohouo, so that great sword is a magic sword equipped with a device to generate magic edge huh.

I think there are more efficient magic circuits if you're going to put that magic device into it, but I'm not going to criticize someone else's plan.

"Then, should we take out the next rats?"

"Umu, let them come!"

We've seen enough, so I leave that place with Tama.

There should be nothing else to be seen here.

◇

"Master, scream~?"

Tama muttered while pointing at a vent.

According to the map there's another floor below and the vent is connected to there.

--There's a prison below huh.

According to the map, there are numerous isolation cells with people with serious crime inside, there are also a lot of people with mental disorder and zero HP and stamina.

I have a bad feeling about this somehow.

I'd like to return without seeing it if possible, but I'd hate it if I felt hazy once I did that.

"Private Tama, go back to the surface first and secure the route."

"Aye!"

Tama followed my order with a shupin pose, and so I went to the cellar alone.

◇

"Help me help me help me help me help me--"

"Don't eat me, no don't! Stop it stop stop it--"

Among the scratching and grinding sounds, screams and shouts like they're from madmen are reverberating in the cellar.

It seems this dungeon has been sound proofed with magic.

--Rather than prison, I guess this is more like a torture chamber?

I go to the room in the back where some people who seem to be the guards are.

A man suspended in the air hanging from the ceiling and two jailers are there, there's a transparent wall between the two parties.

There's the usual emperor statue put inside the room where the man is.

"--St-stop it already."

"Of course I won't rite'? Did you stop when the 29 women you killed asked you to stop? You didn't rite'?"

The jailer who cut off the criminal's appeal lowers a lever on the wall.

The man who's suspended in the air hanging from the ceiling gets lowered and then the capybara-like animals below start munching on his feet.

Screams are echoing in the dungeon, the other criminals locked in their isolation cells begin to voice their resentments.

Apparently, they're using this place to carry out punishments and collect miasma.

"Geez, this is disgusting."

"Don't say that, the emperor decreed to instill『Don't want to go into prison ever again』and『Not worth the crimes』into the prisoners rite'?"

"Even if it's a national law, disgusting thing is disgusting."

I totally agree.

"Wish my transfer request gets accepted quickly."

"Thatsso? Executing justice on the bad guys, this is the best workplace for me though~"

Unlike the man who looks like he's going to get sick from the stress, the jailer who's been rhythmically operating the lever looks cheerful without a hint of stress.

It feels like I'll get mentally ill if I remain here any longer, so I teleport back to the top of the spire where Tama is waiting.

◇

"The way they're doing things is similar to Master if we exclude the science and humanity parts isn't it."

Once we got back to the solitary island palace, I told everyone the things we saw in the Weasel Empire's city, and then Arisa said that.

"Arisa, what do you think you're doing likening the weasels to Master! We're talking about weasels here, they must be plotting something."

Liza who hates weasels openly shows her discontent.

"However, their rationality is very like the weasels. You'd normally hesitate to do many things even if you knew they were efficient."

Hikaru seemed like she agreed with several things about the weasels even though she sounded disgusted with them.

As a former king, perhaps she thinks that the way they're preventing the people from starvation is acceptable.

"Creating monsters by their own hands.... Such an immoral act as if they've sided with the Demon God."

"Maybe there's a demon lord lurking in the shadow of Weasel Empire?"

Sera and Zena find the fact that they're creating monsters deplorable.

"Satou, perhaps that emperor statue can be used to control monster outbreak if we put it in a monster dominion?"

"Master, I support the princess's suggestion, so I inform."

"Nn, possible."

Nana and Mia agreed with the princess.

It's certainly possible.

The problems are the way to replace the emperor statue and to purify the accumulated miasma.

I'll investigate the manufacturing process of the emperor statue when I visit the imperial capital.

Also, Tama and Pochi who had been quiet were embarking in the journey to the dreamland with Lady Karina in the sunny living room.

◇

"Amazing desuwa!"

"Fast nodesu! Truly really torebiaan nanodesu."

"Of cour~se?"

Behind Lady Karina and Pochi who are sticking their faces on the Smoke Car's window, Tama is nodding while looking slightly triumphant.

The next day after the meeting, we're enjoying the train trip from Magyuba City to Mogeiba City.

Hikaru and the princess are staying in the solitary island palace to accompany Sera who has expressed her non-participation since she was feeling hurt from to the persecution of the temples and the matter with monster creation.

Zena-san was also going to stay but Pochi and Tama pulled her hands, and she ended up coming.

I'm planning to enjoy things later with the three who stayed.

Further, since Liza didn't like the weasel costume, everyone is wearing ratkin character costumes.

"""Ensha~, ensha~""?"

"""Kyupopo, kyupopo, kyupopo"", nanodesu!"

"""Ensha, ensha, fast~"""

Matching the [March of Smoke Car] music which Mia made impromptu, the youth troupe and the children riding on the Smoke Car are singing in a chorus happily.

It seems the children like it since the song only has simple lyric that's easy to remember and match with the rhythm along with the repeating simple melody.

They'd be told off, "Shut up" if this were in Japan, but since there are minstrels going around asking money in every train here, there's no problem.

"Station~?"

"It's a small station nanodesu."

The Smoke Car lowers its speed and then stops at a small station in a village along the way.

"Something smells good."

"It smells like a stew perhaps?"

"Vendor."

Lulu reacted to Liza's remark, Mia pointed at the vendors rushing from the crowd.

Looks like they're selling boxed lunch.

"It's tasty and cheap, a set of provisional soup and stick roll, only for five swe~n."

"How 'bout a bento of boar meat and roasted pork? Only for 20 swen!"

"Would you like fatty bear stew~ It's 30 swen!"

They're quite expensive if we consider the ticket's price, but it seems the people riding on the Smoke Car are relatively well off, they're selling like hot cakes.

The stick roll in the provisional bento is a dish similar to the stick roll I ate in Kansai.

It's a dish where thin okonomiyaki made from corn instead of wheat is wrapped on a stick.

"Liza, purchase slightly more than for our shares."

"Understood. Tama, Pochi, let's go."

"Knowledged~?"

"Understood nanodesu."

Liza who consented with a sharp face goes to the bento sellers followed by Tama and Pochi.

The bento sellers who lose to Liza's intensity look slightly timid.

"Boar meat~?"

"Hard to leave the fatty bear meat behind too nodesu."

"You two, there's no time to be indecisive. Just like the stations we came across before, we should be only stopping for a short while here."

"Oh no~"

"Hurry nodesu!"

Looks like the beastkin girls have quickly gotten used to the Smoke Car trip.

◇

We enjoyed the Smoke Car trip as such and arrived at Mogeiba City.

Further, since the lunch boxes besides the cheap provisional bento were all delicious, I'm thinking of recreating them with Lulu once we get back to the solitary island palace.

"It's strangely crowded isn't it."

"Master, it's like the marketplace in the Duchy Capital downtown."

Arisa and Lulu are surprised with the crowd in the station building.

It's understandable. The crowd is at least three times bigger than the one in Magyuba City when we departed.

"It's somehow like Haneda aand Kansai airports before a superstar arrive isn't it."

Arisa expressed her impression.

Shouldn't it be Narita for international airlines?

The part where the crowd paid attention to the noble car and showed disappointment as they checked the last person who got off is also similar.

"It's not this Smoke Car huh...."

"Like I said. The one Temple Knight-sama is riding on should be coming from the direction of the Imperial Capital Tegaeba."

Judging from the conversation I heard from the crowd, it appears some Temple Knights will be coming from the Imperial Capital.

"They exterminated a Hydra when they came before, I wonder what are they hunting this time?"

"There's no news about strong monster recently, maybe the mayor invited them to make a triumphal return to their homeland?"

For the time being, all is good as long as they're not coming to fight us.

"Satou-san, looks like we should get off soon."

"Thank you, Zena-san."

Since they've announced the permission to disembark, we also get down along with the other passengers.

"Here it comes! It's the Smoke Car from Tegaeba city!"

The crowd who heard the whistle sound shook off the station attendants and rushed to the platform.

Since it's dangerous, we wait a bit until the panic settles down a bit.

After a while, a Smoke Car joined with a luxurious noble car arrived at the next platform.

"""WELCOME BACK! STAR OF MOGEIBA!"""

"""LONG LIVE LIEDILL-SAMA"""

The crowd are cheering while waving.

They somehow look similar to the people from the first half of Showa era.

"Thank you for welcoming us!"

A weaselkin knight carrying a great sword shouted so at the crowd and stepped aside.

"I am not really fond of such a welcome...."

"Liedill-sama, please understand that this is also a job for the Temple Knights."

I heard such conversations with Attentive Ears skill.

The one who appeared was not a weaselkin.

It's a young longear (Booch) kin woman with emerald eyes and straight blond hair befitting of the expression "white peach".

She's a level 57 knight, and possesses Flickering Movement, Dual Wielding and similar skills, she also has Wind Magic skill.

"....She's like someone's imitation huh."

Arisa muttered alone. Just like me, it seems she reminds Arisa of a heroine of a famous fantasy work where the setting is on a cursed island.

It's probably due to the long ears peculiar to the longear (Booch)kin she has and her straight blond hair.

The guards who entered the station creates a passage in the crowd, and then Lady Liedill walks in it with a sharp face while leading the weasel knights escort and echoing the clink-clank sounds of her armor.

"She might be more suited to fantasy than the forest girl."

I drop a fist on Arisa who naturally dissed the female knight and wait the line to pass with the girls.

Just as the she passed on the passage in front of us, her equipment showed up on my AR reading.

As I was reading it, my eyes met Lady Liedill's.

"Li-Liedill-sama."

Lady Liedill walks toward here with her line of sight fixed at here.

She's not minding her escort knights' bewilderment.

"--You, you're not an ordinary person right?"

Contrary to her cool voice, Lady Liedill's eyes are lit with dangerous light.

15-6. Temple Knights

Satou's here. Going out of fashion is a cruel thing in the society. The end-of-century type of story that took the world by storm in my school era has become a thing of the past now. I guess the only one that I still see today is the story about a supreme ruler in the post war end-of-century world?

◇

"--Are you pretending to not hear me?"

The longearkin (Booch) temple knight whom we meet at the end of our Smoke Car trip, Lady Liedill is glaring here with challenging eyes.

"Then, I'll say it again--You, you're not an ordinary person right?"

While watching her face from the side, I look at the people around.

The level 30 knights who are following her are prepared to cover her anytime even while looking perplexed, the other guards and followers are dumbfounded by the sudden turn of event.

"A-are you talking to me?"

"Feigning ignorance is futile. You cannot elude my Dragon Eyes even if you slip into the crowd."

Lady Liedill points her finger at the bewildered Lady Karina triumphantly.

An inexplicable atmosphere drift from the other girls besides Lady Karina.

There's no one who can break this atmosphere since Arisa and Mia have quickly blocked Tama's and Pochi's mouths.

"Looks like you're wearing some excellent recognition inhibition items that prevent appraisal. However, that's useless. My Dragon Eyes can precisely capture the sign of strong people."

To explain her own skill like that, what a kind girl.

I don't know on what basis that Dragon Eyes thingy judges someone as strong.

If we're only talking about outward appearance, Liza has been looking strong ever since we came out of Seryuu City's labyrinth, while the youth troupe, beginning with Tama and Pochi, don't look strong at all since the start.

Moreover, besides Pochi and Arisa who are equipped with [Thief God Harness], everyone is wearing the highest class of recognition inhibition magic tools, so Lady Karina and the other girls' situation are about the same.

All the members who are present here have acquired [Magic Power Operation], except Lady Karina, so perhaps Lady Liedill sensed it from the magic power leaking from her body?

Further, I think the reason why Lady Karina hasn't been able to learn [Magic Power Operation] is because Raka is just too convenient.

It's only been several seconds, but it's about time for me to save her.

"Shouldn't Temple Knight-sama know the true identity of this person already?"

With the help of Deception skill, I tried to befuddle Lady Liedill.

"True identity?!"

"Liedill-sama--"

Lady Liedill only frowned in puzzlement, but it seemed one of the escort knights hit an answer as he run up to her and whispered on her ear.

"--The crown prince faction?!"

Looks like they've interpreted my suggestive words as [crown Prince Faction].

They call him "crown Prince" even though he's the emperor's younger brother? Or so I thought, but the weasel merchant also referred to him as "His Majesty" instead of "His Highness".

Judging from the atmosphere, it seems there's a huge gulf between the emperor and the crown prince.

"What are the the crown prince faction doing in such a remote region?! Don't tell me the『Bud of Calamity』is--"

Hey hey, don't murmur all these dangerous words.

I've already had more than enough fill of such buds of calamity!

"Agaiiiin."

"Mwu"

Look now, you even made Arisa and Mia exchanged tired looks....

They're of rat and rabbit costumes' faces though.

"Well now, I don't know what is this crown prince faction you're talking about. We were just having a fun journey using the smoke car. Being fussed over by the important people of the empire like this is troubling."

After I said that, Lady Liedill scowls at me with a face that looks like it's saying "Gununu."

"Fine then--"

Lady Liedill catches the nape of my neck and continues speaking with her face close enough for us to kiss.

Since it's across the ratkin costume, the impregnable fortress pair, Arisa and Mia are lenient about it.

"--We cannot clash against the crown prince faction in front of the populace. However, the next time you show yourselves before us, I'll make you bathe in blood with this Blue Rose and Red Lily bestowed by His Majesty Emperor."

"Yes, we will bear it in mind."

I boldly smiled at Lady Liedill who threatened me in whisper.

After a bit, Lady Liedill thrusts me away.

Receiving Lady Liedill's anger, the stone floor of the station building is stamped by her soleprints.

Looks like it'll become a new tourist attraction--while thinking like that, we teleport away after slipping into the crowd.

◇

"Satou-san, are we going to continue the tour?"

"Yes, it'll be fine if we just change our attires."

The [Bud of Calamity] uttered by Lady Liedill intrigued me, but I don't want to end this long-awaited vacation like this.

Further, later I'm planning to give a one-to-one special lecture to Lady Karina, the impetus of that accident.

"Gao~?"

"It's tiger nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi who have changed into tiger costumes that look like it'll be popular in Osaka are taking poses with their hands up in the air.

After the two were done, Zena-san went to change.

Since Mia is also wearing the tiger costume, this time I'm the only one who's different with a gray-colored ratkin costume.

"Stripes stripes."

It looks like Mia who likes stripped pattern likes the costume next to the rabbit one.

They say that white and green stripes are good, but since there's no tiger with such stripes even in another world, I gave up.

◇

"This is the land of dream desuwa!"

"It's a really wonderful place isn't it."

Lady Karina and Lulu talk dreamily.

We're currently going around the attractions in the amusement park of Mogeiba City.

The line in every attraction was great but since the park has a fast pass function similar to the land of a certain mouse, we've been going around, enjoying them at shortened time with the power of money.

As a note, I had sold some diamonds and jewels for the needed money (swen).

Of course they're natural products from the labyrinth.

"One more~?"

"Master, Free Fall next would be good, so I propose."

"You two should go by yourselves next."

I bluntly declined the appeal of Tama and Nana who had become addicted to shriek-inducing attractions, but--.

"We can't~?"

"Master, can't we got together, so I ask."

I can't possibly leave the two who implored while looking like abandoned cats.

"Then, this will be the last time okay?"

"Aye!"

"Let's go quickly, so I urge Master."

With my hands pulled by Tama and Nana, we went toward the Free Fall queue.

"Pochi and the others aren't going?"

"Pochi is already satisfied nanodesu."

"M-me too, I've had enough of scary things desuwa."

I was trying to increase my companion but, not just Pochi and Lady Karina, it seems everyone has had enough of shriek-inducing attractions.

--Afterward, I was finally released after accompanying them for seven more times.

"Satou-san, we found something interesting!"

"Master, it's called house of mirrors."

Zena-san and Lulu who were resting at the bench came inviting me.

The two hold my arms with unusual assertiveness and pull me to the house of mirrors.

I somehow feels like a suspect taken by police.

"Please look, tiger-san is everywhere no matter where you look at."

Lulu said to me happily.

If I had to say, I'd rather see Lulu's true appearance multiplied infinitely in the house of mirrors.

"Satou-san, please look up! The top is reflecting too."

I look up per Zena-san's words, our whole bodies are reflected on the top from sideway too, I don't know how it works.

I don't think it's good to have the image of underwear shown in public like this, though I don't really care since we're in animal costumes.

Arisa and Mia were waiting outside the house of mirrors.

"Master, let's go to the haunted house."

"Nn, horror."

I went into the haunted house with the impregnable pair whose ulterior motives were in plain sight, but it wasn't that scary.

If anything, I feel that there were a lot of jack-in-the-box type of surprises.

"U~n, cultural difference sure is cruel."

"Complicated."

An attraction that requires an explanation for 'where is the scary part' is not good.

Just Arisa's said, it's probably due to the cultural difference.

"Karina, let's spin and spin around more nodesuyo!"

"Yes, I won't lose!"

I rode on a questionable playground equipment that looked like both coffee cups and spinning attractions with Pochi and Lady Karina, and then I'm riding a swan boat that goes around a pond with Liza in the end.

"This is quite difficult."

"There's no vehicle that operates by pedals in Shiga Kingdom after all."

Liza pushes the pedal with serious expression on her face.

And then, the water wheel behind the swan's wings begins to rotate and the boat advances forward.

"Liza, stop pedaling. The wind feels nice."

"Yes, it's very refreshing."

Letting the boat advances by itself, I stretch myself on the boat's seat.

Urged by me, Liza also relaxedly let her body rest on the boat's seat.

"Even though we've played with boats in the solitary island palace, some things feel different with a boat in a pond don't you think."

"Yes, Master. It somehow feels very relaxing."

I think that's because I'm with the calm Liza.

◇

That healing time with Liza didn't continue for long.

"--Noooo"

Attentive Ears skill picked up mosquito-like small scream.

"Liza, I'm sorry but please take care of the boat."

After telling that, I moved to where the scream was with short-range teleport without waiting for Liza's answer.

"It should be around here."

It seems the opposite side of the amusement park is a slum.

People wearing poor clothes are sitting on the sides of the dirty road, muttering something with vacant eyes.

Simply looking at them is suffering.

"Don't come hereeeeeee!"

--That way!

I move to where the voice is with Ground Shrink.

It should be nearby.

Light footsteps of a child--above huh!

A girl is falling down from an apartment-like building just when I look up.

If this were a Soft Inc. anime, this would have been the scene to start a two-hour movie.

I extend [Magic Hand] to catch the girl.

Her bones would be broken if I caught her normally.

She's around 7-8 year old. Roughly first or second year of primary school.

She has bunny ears and a round tail.

She's probably a bunnyear-kin unless she's wearing a bunny ears accessory.

"Cross Sword!"

I could hear a cool shout from the top of the apartment.

I might have been charmed by the voice if it wasn't the Command Word for a technique.

I block the down-pouring red light slashes with [<<Flexible Shield>>] I picked from the Magic Column.

It's considerably weaker compared to Liza's Magic Edge Cannon.

The two slashes seemed to be a rapid-fire type of technique.

The after waves cut the apartments on the left and right, the slum populace scream.

Fortunately, there doesn't seem to be any casualty.

"Killing Steel Brandish!"

The shadow who was jumping from the rooftop let out two light blades which tore the road.

A radial crack runs on the ground, the broken asphalt are flying in the air.

Two swords are clad with red light on the other side of the dust cloud.

The assailant jumped along with the scattered asphalt pieces.

Judging from the speed, it must be Flickering Movement skill.

It seems the assailant is wearing a dark brown overcoat with recognition inhibition function, although it's meaningless to me.

"Grass Star Tearing Slash!"

The two swords emitting red light assault us from both sides.

I repel the assailant's dual swords with the magic armor I produced on my right arm.

I can't use my left arm since it's holding the child.

Red sparks are scattered every time the magic armor touches the swords.

I haven't taken off the rat costume.

It's hard to fight unless I go for the win.

I produced magic edge on the costume's claw to try destroying the assailant's swords.

The assailant who sensed that took a distance away from me.

Quite perceptive.

The dark brown overcoat the other party was wearing fell down when they jumped.

"Eluding all three of my secret arts--"

The one standing on the other side of the dust cloud is the Temple Knight we met this afternoon, Lady Liedill.

"You, even though the color is different, you were the ratkin who was beside the female ratkin this afternoon weren't you."

--Her breath is rough.

Looks like she's talking to buy the time needed to readjust her breath.

"As I thought, the crown prince faction has set their sight on the『Bud of Calamity』too."

I feel sorry for Lady Liedill who looks triumphant, but I came to save her because I heard a girl's scream by accident, I didn't have any intention to meddle in that kind of troublesome things.

"What are you going to do to this girl?"
"Of course, I'm going to sever her life right here and now."

The girl is surprised and shakes in my arm.
According to AR reading, her level is only 2. And she has three gifts, [Crisis Perception], [Oracle] and [Short-range Teleport]. She has no title.

Summing up all the information I got in Weasel Empire so far, I think the [Oracle] skill is the main cause of someone getting called [Bud of Calamity].

"Killing a young subject with my own hands is painful, but this too is for the sake of the empire's peace. It's necessary to cut off the future anxiety here."

"What can this child possibly do."

I've got the rough idea already, but I'd like to hear something more concrete from this seemingly loose-tongued girl.

"The very existence of that girl is a crime. Lament at the filthy peepers for the misfortune of having the skill carved onto you."

My guess that the skill to channel god, [Oracle], being the problem seems to be right after all.

In a world where gods exist, is it alright for her to call them [Filthy Peepers], I'm slightly worried while thinking that it's none of my business.

For now I understand that this girl is in danger as long as she has the [Oracle] skill.

Lady Liedill fixes her posture, readying her dual swords.

Her appearance makes me want to take a picture of her.

"--Karina, Kiiiiiiiiick!"

A blue meteor coming down from an apartment rooftop created a crater in front of Lady Liedill.

"You, from that time--Tigerkin?! What does this mean."

Blue luminous points reflected on my Radar are lined up on top of an apartment.

Apparently, everyone besides Lady Karina has gathered.

Everyone is shining blue light and with [Coercion] skill in full throttle.

"I-impossible.... Such masters in such a countryside.... So the crown prince is really making use of the hero in Dejima Labyrinth to mass produce strong warriors!"

--Mumu.

I'm bothered by "Making use of the hero."

Rather than asking her the details, meeting the hero directly in Dejima Island seems faster.

From our correspondence last time, it looks like he doesn't want Nanashi to visit them, so I probably should go as Satou.

Leaving that aside, I have to close the curtain here soon--.

"Withdraw from here."

I urge Lady Liedill who's shaking in fear to escape.

"A Te-Temple Knight does not reteat."

"Then, it can't be helped."

I take out a magic sword clad with evil aura from my Storage and execute

[Coercion] skill in full throttle.

Next, I turn on the [Grim Look] preset of the animal costume, transforming into something that will appear in your nightmare if you see it once while you're in [Fear] state.

Lady Liedill screamed briefly, drew back several steps, tangled her legs and fell on her back.

Scary thing is scary even if you're level 57.

Since the attack is worse than Wraith's and Lich's fear assaults, I guess it can't be helped.

>[Bloodthirst Projection] Skill Acquired.

>Title [One who is Feared] Acquired.

>Title [The Great King of Dread] Acquired.

For some reason, I got some strange skill and titles.

The Nostradamus great prophecy-like title slightly bothers me, but since it's not like anyone will see it anyway, it's all good.

"Kuh, so this is it...."

Arisa who heard Lady Liedill's muttering of resignation shouted, "If you're saying, 『Kuh』, the next line should've been 『Kill me!』, don't you understand!", but let's just ignore her.

"Well then, farewell. I'll take responsibility of this girl and take her out of the empire."

After telling that to Lady Liedill who was crying bitter tears, I moved to a safe house at a rural town in Oyugock Dukedom using Unit Arrangement.

Of course, I went with all of my companions, not just with the girl.

◇

"U-um.... are you going to kill me?"

That was the girl's first utterance once she had calmed down after I gave her a hot milk.

Since I've healed her bruises and traces of abuse, and let her take a bath, she looks refreshed compared to when she was in Mogeiba slum.

"I will not. I will give you three options."

"Oftion?"

Oops, I forgot that she's a child who doesn't understand difficult words.

"Choose one among three, I mean."

"Un."

Once I corrected myself to make it easier to understand, it seemed the girl comprehended too.

"First, live in a temple as an oracle miko in Shiga Kingdom."

"Miko?"

"They're the people who are tasked to convey the words of gods to the populace, like this person here."

I explained while showing the vision of the former head miko of Tenion Temple, currently a maid apprentice, Lily to her.

"Prettyy."

The girl stares at Lily's image with glittering eyes.

"The second choice, concede the power of oracle to someone else and go back to your hometown."

It's normally impossible, but if we use the Unique Skill of demon lord Shizuka, it's possible to transfer this girl's [Oracle] skill to someone else.

"Consid?"

"I mean, giving up the oracle power."

"Un?"

The girl tilts her head in puzzlement with complicated look.

She doesn't seem to understand well.

"The third choice, live in an orphanage in Shiga Kingdom, and once you've grown big enough, you either discard the oracle power and go back to your home town, or live as an oracle miko."

"I don't really understand."

It's hard to explain things to a child.

"Geez, this is hard to watch. Leave this to Arisa-chan."

Arisa who appeared proudly with an jerked chin sits on my lap.

I tried to put her down since there was plenty of space left on the sofa, but she resisted more intensely than I thought.

"You shouldn't fight okay?"

"It's not a fight. It's just a kind of endearment."

Arisa replied back to the girl with a triumphant smile.

"Now then, continuing from before. Going back home or having lots of meals, which one you want?"

"Meals!"

The girl answered without any hesitation.

On the corner of my vision, I saw the beastkin girls nodded with serious expressions on their faces.

"You can play with other children but you can only eat a little, or you can eat a lot of meals but you have to work, which one you want?"

"Meals, a lot!"

It's an immediate answer too this time.

"You heard that. It seems this child wants to become an apprentice at Lily's place in Duchy Capital."

I felt awkward since it somehow felt like we deceived an innocent child, but we ended up entrusting the girl to Tenion Temple in the Duchy Capital.

Of course, they wholeheartedly welcomed an addition to the valuable [Oracle Miko].

Just in case, Household of Duke Mitsukuni will be her guardian.

She's wearing the translation ring from the elf village, so she can talk in Shiga Language without problem.

She's probably going to learn Shiga Language naturally during the course of her training.

◇

"I-it's about time to rest desuwa."

"You can't, Karina-sama. There's still five magic power potion left."

When I indifferently told the complaining Lady Karina about the remaining potion, her expression became miserable and then she shifts her imploring glance at Raka that's emitting light on my forehead.

『Do your best, Karina-dono.』

Raka encouraged her with a subdued voice.

"E-even Raka-san...."

"Now, Karina-sama. I'll add more magic power potion if you don't continue."

"....S-so cruel desuwa~"

We restart the magic power operation training while Lady Karina looks like she's about to cry.

It's just a simple training where she has to cut an adamantite pillar with a magic wooden sword filled with magic power.

Tama and Pochi who peeked from behind a nearby tree like a totem pole are secretly cheering for Lady Karina.

Looking closer, it seems the other girls are also watching over the special training.

Further, she had drank 27 more magic power potions by the time she learned magic power operation.

15-7. Dejima Island

Satou's here. When I hear the words 'sailing ship', it reminds me of a great game where the actual sea chart change depending on whether you believe on the report or not. In order to prove which one was more interesting, I played the game all night with a friend who also remembered the game of the age of exploration.

◇

"Ship~?"

"Master, there's a ship in the distance nodesu."

Hearing the report from Tama and Pochi through the speaking tube, the Brownie who's steering the ship lowers the control lever of the Aerodynamic Engine.

With that, the sailing altitude of the ship got lowered and the ship landed on the water with a slight impact.

"It's been awhile isn't it~ Going with this ship."

"You're right."

This is an unfortunate ship that hadn't got its turn after the journey from Boruenan Forest to Shiga Kingdom's Trade City.

Since it's installed with an Aerodynamic Engine even though it's of low altitude model, I couldn't lend it to other people.

"I wonder if Hayato and the others are fine?"

"Oh they're fine."

I answered Arisa who seemed worried after glancing at the hero's status shown on the marker column of the map. There's no status abnormality nor extreme physical drop.

We're heading toward Dejima Island in order to meet the hero.

I was slightly worried about him after hearing from Lady Liedill the Temple Knight in Mogeiba City that he might be being used by the crown prince's plot.

We're riding on a sailing ship instead of an airship since this is not an official work of the Tourism Ministry.

We were forbidden from going to the Weasel Empire, but using, "To ensure the safety of the princess and the airship" as a pretext, I got the permission to have a vacation and do a "Hero's Symphaty Call" personally.

The wonderful thing is that Tourism Ministry personnels are still paid monthly on vacations. The fantasy world, or rather, the noble community is quite flexible.

Further, the entourage members of the Tourism Ministry are currently socializing at Pendragon Mansion at the Royal Capital in my place.

Their main purpose is to popularize shared information that are not confidential and unusual things and dishes we got in our visits in the various small kingdoms.

Since we can easily meet them if we go to the solitary island palace, it doesn't really feel like we're apart.

Zena-san stays behind to guard the princess and Sera, but Lady Karina is going with us for the purpose of her re-training.

"It's shaking once we're out on the open sea."

"Can't be helped, it's a small ship after all."

This ship's displacement is only about 100 tons.

It's probably quite small for this world's seafaring ships.

"How long does it take until we reach Dejima Island?"

"I guess around 3 hours?"

"Ugeh, that's too long~"

Arisa grumbled while looking fed up.

"If you don't like the shaking, you should take shelter in the solitary island palace."

"Un, let me take you up on that offer."

There's no problem since the brownies are steering the ship.

Since all of them are wearing sailor uniforms and sailor hats, it feels like elementary schoolers are leading though.

"Master, is there any tuna around here?"

"Unfortunately, it seems there's none in this sea area. We can take the ship offshore later if you're worried about the tuna stock."

"Yes! Thank you very much!"

When I promise her that, Lulu shows a shining smile that won't lose to the sunshine.

"Master, I found a heap of birds at the port side."

Liza is staring at me with glistening eyes.

She must be waiting for my permission.

"You can go hunt them, but be careful not to be noticed by the ships ahead."

"Yes, I will be flying on the surface of the sea."

Liza runs on the sea surface while holding a spear.

She's carrying a harpoon for throwing since she's going in a hunt.

I saw Liza changed her flight course in the middle of the way and threw the harpoon at the birds.

Looks like she got a lot.

Since I'm planning to have our lunch on Dejima Island today, let's use those birds for dinner.

◇

"Master, the water gate is opening so I inform."

Nana is pointing at a heavy-looking stone gate which protects Dejima Island's bay opening.

According to the map's information, that stone gate appears to be a big golem.

"Something's coming~?"

"There are people riding on top of the rays nodesu!"

A herd of flying rays which look like flying fish appeared from the gap of the opened gate, flying on the surface of the sea.

There are silver screws on their heads, the same magic tools that are used to manipulate monsters I've been seeing a lot, sealkin and gillman soldiers are riding on their backs.

Looks like they belong to the administration bureau of Dejima Island.

Five of the rays go around our ship, Tama and Pochi who are sitting on top of the mast as a watch are chasing them with their eyes, going round and round happily.

One of the rays jumped onto the deck, and a strong-looking gillman soldier landed on the deck after rotating stylishly once in the air.

He's somewhat cool despite having the head of a fish.

"I'm Guzze of Dejima Island Harbor Authority. Cannons of ships entering the harbor will have to be stamped. Who's the captain here?"

This ship has no cannon, but since normally a seafaring ship has several magic cannons equipped, telling him that there's zero here will make it suspicious instead.

I extend my [Magic Hand] toward the part of the deck on his blind spot and then put two samples of magic cannon covered with cloth from my Storage.

"I'm the captain. The ship's magic cannons are over there, the two covered in cloth."

"Just two?"

I nod at the soldier who looks suspiciously.

"Because more than that is unnecessary--"

I gave a sign at Liza with a hand gesture while saying that.

Liza took the harpoon that was getting dried on the deck and lightly shot Magic Edge Cannon at the horizon beyond.

"We can repulse any monster as long as she's with us."

After seeing Liza's technique, the soldier's mouth and gills were opening and closing greatly, then after awhile he said, "I-It's fine then", stamped the two magic cannons with trembling hands, and left the deck.

--Come to think of it, it was a legendary technique or something.

We follow the soldiers and advance the ship into the bay where a lot of boats are anchored.

"Trumpet?"

Mia muttered while tilting her head.

It's true, I hear sound of a trumpet out of nowhere.

The melody sounds kind of sorrowful, but it's quite good.

It seems a fat ratkin wearing gaudy clothes is playing it on top of the lighthouse at the end of the bay.

"The small boat of the harbor staff has come. We'll enter the harbor in accordance to their flags."

"Please."

Since the harbor is crowded with big ships, I entrust it to the skillful brownie to steer the ship.

"Have we finally entered the harbor?"

Arisa who heard that we had entered the harbor came back and looked restlessly at the surrounding ships.

"Saga Empire, Holy State Parion, Garleon Alliance, there sure are a lot of ships from various countries."

"Master, does that paddle steamer belong to Weasel Empire?"

Arisa pointed at a black colored big ship and asked.

"That's a Saga Empire's magic boat. The Weasel Empire's ship is that sailing ship with the oars."

"Hee, that's unexpected."

Checking the map, it seems the oars aren't rowed by slaves but small-sized living dolls and medium-sized golems.

"Is that volcano a labyrinth?"

"That's right."

Arisa points at an islet inside the bay.

It's raising white smoke similar to the Sakurajima in peacetime that I saw when I was touring Kyushuu.

It seems there's no lodging facilities on the islet, small boats boarded by people who look like explorers are shuttling between the main Dejima Island and the islet.

◇

"Arr-riv-ved?"

"Landing nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi who are wearing sailor uniforms like the brownies descend on the tramp with shutan poses.

"Are we going to meet Hayato first today?"

"The hero seems to be in the labyrinth still, so first I'll be going to meet the crown prince at last."

Guessing from the rotation of my regular communications with the hero so far, he's probably going to come out of Dejima Labyrinth in two to six days.

I already know from the map that the crown prince is away from Dejima Island, but if I don't at least try to do a courtesy call, they'll deem me as impolite so I can't ignore it.

The president of Norouino Firm who has promised to meet me as Kuro is still at the Imperial Capital even now, so it seems there's still some time left.

Judging from his stamina that keeps depleting, it seems he's running around everywhere to meet my demand instead of slacking off.

"Gii~?"

"Darii nanodesu."

Using the mast, a simple crane lowers our carriage, and I've asked Mia and Lulu to pull two horses down the ramp.

The simple crane is operated manually by Nana and Lady Karina's human power.

The current Nana should be able to lower the carriage with her [Magic Arm] but it seemed she wanted to imitate the simple cranes of the surrounding ships so she didn't use force art.

"Master, we've prepared the carriage."

In front of Lulu who's acting as the coach after a long while, the cart-horses, Gii and Darii, snorted.

They seem to be eager to do their long-awaited turns. It might be unexpectedly because of the fodders I made that I gave them before this--Heh, no way.

"Still, it's as lively as the trade city in Shiga Kingdom isn't it."

"Eel~?" <TLN: Utsubo.>

"Now that you've said it, that means grilled eel nanodesu." <TLN: Grilled eel= Tsuboyaki.>

Tama and Pochi said that while staring at the stalls for the port workers.

There's no such stall--Perhaps, they wanted to say "Melting pot of races"? <TLN: Jinshu no Rutsubo.>

"Master, then we will be off."

"Master, wait for good news so I tell."

"I'm counting on you, Liza, Nana."

Liza and Nana who are wearing formal dresses look fresh.

I've asked the two to send a letter asking for a meeting that I wrote to the Dejima Island's administration.

Liza and Nana ride on the carriage that Lulu operates.

Nana is at her own pace, but Liza who rarely rode a carriage looks a bit tense.

"Then, we'll be going."

"Once you're done with it, meet us at the inn with red rooftop in the square in front of the administrator bureau building, we'll be staying there."

"Yes, understood."

I told Lulu about the inn which I had checked beforehand with [Clairvoyance].

I waved my hands at the carriage that had begun to dash.

◇

"Shellfish skewers, delish~?"

"The shellfish muscle is crunchy and tasty nodesu."

"It'd have been tastier if you put soy sauce on it--too bad desuwa."

I've taken the youth troupe and lady Karina along to the wharf for the small boats of the explorers.

I just wanted to collect some information and snack a little but--.

"Mwu, gear?"

"Is that a crystal gear?"

Stalls selling junks gotten in the labyrinth are lined up here.

There's a lot of things made of crystals which piqued Mia's interest.

Since the stalls are also buying things instead of just selling, heated negotiations between explorers and shopkeepers can be seen here and there.

"Oy oy, 300 swen you said, that's too low for Iatsupista."

"The market is oversupplied since the administration bureau has decreased their spending. I'll buy it for 310 swen."

"Make it 500 swen at least. If that's no good--then I'll sell to Norouino Firm with the other junks."

"Oy oy, don't lump me with the rip-off shop of that weasel guy."

"Aren't ya tanuki guy yourself, yer' not that different."

It seems the tanuki shopkeeper is mad at the human explorer's words, he's threatening him with bared fangs.

On the opposite side, a sealkin doctor and a lizardkin explorer is disputing about magic potions.

"Oy, doc! What the hell is this magic potion!"

"Hahn? Wasn't that the muscle reinforcement medicine I sold ya awhile ago--you heard it, right?"

"Yeah and it's way effective! My offensive power did rise greatly once I drank the magic potion!"

"Ain't that good."

"Yea it is--if only blood didn't gush out of my arms and stopped me from even holding a sword after the battle was over that is! We ran away from the labyrinth with our life on the line!"

The sealkin doctor smoothly evades the explorer who tried to grab his collar.

His gleaming body looks elastic like it's been plastered with oil.

"I did wrote the instruction right? 『It may affect the users after battle, please be advised』, there."

"Kuh, like I can read!"

A brawny tigerkin soldier who happens to pass by seems to be trying to mediate the explorer who's still trying to catch the doctor.

The merchants here somehow feel like the diminutive version of the weasel merchants I happened to see in Shiga Kingdom.

"Hey~, do you have any interesting tool?"

"Hahn? You're wearing some good clothes--You a daughter of noble?"

"Yes, that's right."

When Arisa combed her hair upward in front of a gnome's stall, the other girls imitated her and took the pose of 'combing hair upward'.

The stall keeper's eyes were deprived not by the children but by the movement of the breast of Lady Karina who took the pose too.

It's not of amorous nature, his face somehow looks like he's seen some unpleasant things.

Looks like they don't match the aesthetic sense of gnomes who have round barrel-like figures.

"Master! Look at this, look at this!"

Arisa pulled me to a stall with music boxes and spring-powered toys.

The shopkeeper said that they're magic tools, but they're all extremely common tools.

And, the thing that Arisa found was not those.

"--Figurine?"

"Yes! And it's even Yamato-kun from 『Tennis X Hero』!"

I heard that name before--right, it's the protagonist of the shounen manga that Hikaru likes.

"Can I ask you where you got this?"

"'Course it's from the 『Phantasmal Labyrinth』. Bought it from my regular customer, an adventurer. Think he said that he found it in a gray illusory town inside the labryinth."

I thought it was something sold by a teleported person of the past to raise money, that doesn't seem to be the case.

"Master, perhaps there's a place that connects that volcanic island and former world--er, somewhere in Japan."

Arisa told me while grasping her fist.

However, if such a convenient thing does exist, the hero should have said something during our regular communication.

I was going to say that to Arisa, but I lost to the homesickness in Arisa's eyes and didn't put it into words.

Instead, I speak these words.

"It's probably going to be awhile before the hero come out of the labyrinth, do you want to enter the labyrinth for a bit?"

"Yayy!"

"Wa~y?"

"Winning the case nanodesu!"

"Nn, exploration."

Following after Arisa who was pleasantly surprised, the children jumped happily, while Lady Karina who missed her chance was shifting her gaze between me and the children restlessly.

I grip a Weasel Empire's gold coin into the shopkeeper's hand, and ask about the information about the labyrinth explorer--they're called adventurers in weasel empire--who sold him the figurine.

The shopkeeper was hesitating at first, but once I asked the price of his goods, the figurines and music boxes, and bought them, he let it all out like an oiled cog.

The adventurer in question can't be found with the map search. He's probably currently exploring in another map, the [Phantasmal Labyrinth].

Some unfamiliar voices called out to me while I was writing the information I got into the Exchange Column's memo pad.

"--Huh? Satou?"

"And there's Honey-chan too."

I turn around and see people who shouldn't have been in this place.

15-8. Dejima Island (2)

Satou's here. Talking with a friend you haven't met for a long time until you lose sense of time. When both of you laugh it off since neither remember who's the other one after talking for a long time, I wonder if that's also a form of beauty.

◇

"Tiger ears~?"

"It's the wolf ear person nanodesu!"

The ones behind us are the hero's followers, Rusus and Fifi.

Since I barely got in contact with them in the Duchy Capital, it would have been bad if I didn't have the information from AR reading.

Why are these girls who should have been in the labyrinth with Hayato here?

"Uwaa, that's some terrible injuries...."

Arisa becomes speechless after seeing the two's bodies.

Rusus has lost her knee to below and her right arm, while Fifi's right leg has disappeared to near the pelvic. Her right eye patch doesn't seem to be a fashion but something to protect the eye that has lost its eyeball.

"We made a slight blunder in our fight with the demon lord you see."

"We're hanging around here since we're useless in battle until the artificial arms and legs arrive from Saga Empire."

Rusus and Fifi ridiculed themselves with light tones.

Limb loss is not something that rare in labyrinth city Selbira, but as vanguards of the hero party, measures should have been taken by all means to recover them.

"Did something happen to Loreiya-sama?"

I uttered the name of the holy magic quiet-type big-breasted beauty in the hero party.

She should be capable to recover limb loss, but if she had died, then perhaps they're low on elixirs.

"That girl is still with Hayato."

"With Rin and Merry too."

I'm bothered that they didn't mention Miss Wiyaryi the long-earkin archer.

"You two, this is not something to talk about in this traffic."

There was a girl with short stature behind them, I didn't see her before since she was hidden by the two's heights.

According to AR reading, she's also one of the hero's followers, Nono the secretary.

I often talked with her in our telecommunications, but she feels different than during the calls.

She's unexpectedly short, her height is about between Arisa and Lulu.

Her face matches her age and her body line is undulated enough, so she's probably never mistaken for a child.

"Viscount Pendragon, please forgive our rudeness."

Nono who's more expressionless than Nana bows her head and apologizes to me.

It seems there's a custom to bow one's head when you apologize in Saga Empire.

In order to continue the talk, or rather, to hear the present situation of Hayato and the others, we went with them to the inn they're staying.

"Gi~?"

"There's Darry too nodesu."

"Nn, correct."

The children are looking at a carriage with the Pendragon House Crest.

I can't see Lulu anywhere, but according to the map, it seems she's in the rest area where the coachmen gather.

"You're right. Maybe that building is the administration office?"

I nod to Arisa's question.

"Can you tell Lulu that we're in this inn?"

"Nn, understood."

I was asking Tama, but the one answered was Mia who beat her flat chest full of confidence.

I let Mia be the messenger and ask Tama and Pochi to go with her just in case.

◇

"Demon lord's curse?"

"Yes, we were unable to lift the curse even with the『Wish Ring』."

When I asked the reason why they couldn't recover Rusus's and Fifi's limb loss, the hero's secretary Nono told me that it was because of the [Demon Lord's Curse].

There's no [Curse] status on the girls' AR reading.

"I'll get embarrassed if you stare that much nya."

"Want to rub them?"

Rusus is embarrassed, Fifi lifts her breasts from below.

Looks like they misunderstood me staring at their chests.

Fifi seems to like to tease people younger than her.

"Y-you can't."

"That's right, you can't desuwa."

Arisa and Lady Karina catch my arms from right and left.

Leaving Arisa's side aside, I can feel blissful sensation from the arm Lady Karina caught.

"It's a misunderstanding. I'm merely intrigued by this curse."

"『Demon Lord's Curse』 is not something that can be seen. Although, the Dragon Eyes of a true dragon might be able to see through the curse...."

By Dragon Eyes, it's the thing Liedill the Temple Knight has huh--.

I tried if I could see the miasma by using the same trick I used to obtain the Spirit Seer skill.

I wasn't expecting anything, but I can see something black wriggling at the edge of my view.

>[Miasma Seer] Skill Acquired

I immediately activated the skill and saw chains of black mist-like things binding Rusus and Fifi. That's probably the miasma--[Demon Lord's Curse].

I feel that I can get rid of them if I touch them directly, but since hex-like thing are located directly on top of their hearts, it's hard to do it without telling them the reasons.

I'll consult with Arisa and the others later for the best timing.

Once they're released from the curse, Loreiya should be able to restore their limbs with holy magic.

◇

"The demon lord has joined hands with the『Dungeon Master』?"

"Yes, we're convinced of that after the last battle with the demon lord. Before that, we thought that the demon lord himself was the Dungeon Master...."

Secretary Nono told us about the present situation of Hayato and the others.

"The rat demon lord escaped with teleportation in our first two encounters, and then we planned to seal teleportation for the third encounter and crush it to death."

"We used the『Magic Eating Binding Chain』, an『Artifact from the Age of Gods』, to seal his magic power, and then we just needed to defeat him but--"

Rusus and Fifi talked about their third battle with the demon lord.

Still, the demon lord here isn't a weasel but a rat huh. I was convinced that it was a weasel somehow.

"When the demon lord emitted purple light, he took out weapons from hero's country called『Masin gan』and『Klaymor』and went on a rampage."

"Really, we never thought he had such hidden tricks besides the transformation."

"I thought I'd die."

"At that time, we and Wi were seriously injured."

"We'd have died if Hayato wasn't there."

According to the two, while the [Magic Eating Binding Chain] was active, any magic, be it support magic or magic defense, were all nulled.

It seems only hero's and demon lord's Unique Skills that could be activated during that time.

It appears this [Magic Eating Binding Chain] is far more powerful than the [Magic Eater] the weaselkin used in the war with Makiwa Kingdom.

The [Magic Eater] is probably an inferior version recreated in present time.

"Nevertheless, Hayato managed to corner it to the limit, but then monsters suddenly flooded into the room from the exit and the demon lord escaped during that chance."

"Hey hey, from that story, it wouldn't be strange for the demon lord to be the Dun Mas right?" <TLN: Dungeon Master, abbr.>

Arisa asked Rusus who looked frustrated.

"The demon lord didn't touch the『Dungeon Core』you see."

"Your Highness Arisa, a Dungeon Master has to touch the『Dungeon Core』in order to manipulate the labyrinth."

The secretary Nono added Rusus's explanation.

They got the information from someone who was once a Dungeon Master.

Nono was being vague, but from the nuance, it seemed that either some past hero or their follower was a Dungeon Master.

"Shouldn't you just need to destroy the core first then?"

"That's impossible, Honey-chan."

"Right right, we'd have done it if we could."

Rusus and Fifi denied Arisa's question while smiling wryly.

"You can't interfere the Dungeon Core as long as the Dungeon Master isn't defeated."

Fumu, I've touched a Fake Core in the [Ivy Mansion] in the labyrinth city Selbira, but it appears the real Dungeon Core is something like a shadow.

◇

"In other words, from now on you need to defeat both the demon lord and the Dungeon Master right?"

"Yes, it's impossible with our current force, but we've requested reinforcements from Saga Empire."

According to secretary Nono, Dejima Island's [Phantasmal Labyrinth] greatly branches in the middle layer on top of having its layout change every time, thus finding the demon lord and the Dungeon Monster that are located in the lowest layer requires a lot of manpower.

Arisa who's sitting beside me is pulling my sleeve.

When I turn to her, Arisa's large eyes are glittering.

I nod at her.

"We will cooperate too. Our power might not be enough to defeat the demon lord, but it might be what's needed to curb the Dungeon Master of the 『Phantasmal Labyrinth』."

If the reinforcements from Saga Empire prove to be useful, we can just change with them then.

Even without them, Hayato should be able to easily defeat the demon lord as long as there's no obstacle.

After all, it looks possible for Hayato to defeat the demon lord if the Dungeon Master doesn't interfere.

"--Then let us perform that plan if Hayato-sama approves of it once he's back."

"Yes, we wish to express our gratitude for Viscount Pendragon's cooperation."

Secretary Nono worked on the details as to how we're cooperating to search for the Dungeon Master, but left the final decision to Hayato.

"Satou and Honey-chan, what are you going to do until then?"

"In order to grasp the 『Phantasmal Labyrinth』's atmosphere, we're planning to enter it lightly on a day trip."

"The maze in that labyrinth changes frequently, so be careful okay."

Rusus exchanged such talks with Arisa.

If this were a game, it'd have been the 100-floor dungeon to enjoy, but when you're actually thrust to capture it in real life, it's most troublesome.

It seems Hayato also had a hard time searching in the middle layer and beyond until the magic item, offered by the weaselkin, that could point at the direction of the demon lord came.

Rusus's and Fifi's ears are twitching.

At the same time, my Attentive Ears skill picked up the noise outside the inn.

"What's happening?"

"It sure is noisy outside."

Fifi nimbly gets up and goes to the window with a wand in hand.

"--Airships of Weasel Empire? And the three of them are of the high-speed destroyer type."

Fifi mutters while looking up at the sky, Secretary Nono who hears it stands up in surprise.

The crown prince seems to be visiting the imperial capital after all, maybe some political disturbance has happened in the Weasel Empire's Capital?

Opening the map, I see that there's a person with marker riding on that airship.

Why is she at this place... Political disturbance might be really happening in the central.

I heard noisy sounds of someone running up the stairs, and then a big-breasted woman wearing Saga Empire's civil official clothes rushed into the room without knocking.

She's never introduced her name, but it seems she's one of Saga Empire's officials who are stationed in Dejima Island working to support secretary Nono.

"Oh no, Nono-sama!"

Big-breasted aid-san hardened slightly.

She probably remembered that there were guests when she saw us.

"What is it."

"Y-yes! Actually--"

Urged by Nono, big-breasted aid-san recovered from her freeze and opened her mouth to report, but an intruder showed up faster than she could.

"P-please wait."

"You're in the way, move aside."

Someone wearing Saga Empire clothing outside the door resisted till the end, but a woman in armor forcibly pushed him away.

"Are you Saga Empire's hero? Pleased to meet you, I am one of the Temple Knights under direct control of his majesty the emperor, Liedill."

The one introducing herself while staring at me is the level 57 Temple Knight we met in Weasel Empire's Mogeiba City.

Leaving aside her incomprehensible pose, it appears she has wrongly guessed me as hero Hayato after seeing my black hair.

"Geh, it's the Kukkorosan."

Arisa muttered.

Even though Lady Liedill never uttered [Ku, Korose (Kuh, kill me)] even when she was cornered, it seems Arisa's mind has made up to give her [Kukkorosan] nickname.

"She didn't figure it out right?"

『All is fine, Karina-dono. You're heavily guarding it.』

Since Lady Karina asked Raka nervously in whisper, I stand up from the chair, and walk a step forward to hide her from Lady Liedill's line of sight.

"Nice to meet you, Liedill-sama. I'm Viscount Satou Pendragon of Shiga Kingdom."

"--Eh, Shiga Kingdom?"

I lightly cleared her misunderstanding and introduced myself.

Lady Liedill who had become aware of her misunderstanding froze in surprise.

Rusus and Fifi are openly showing their wariness as they grab the handles of largish knives behind the cushions.

Nono stands beside me with a firm manner.

"Temple Knight-dono, Hero Hayato-sama is currently inside the 『Phantasmal

Labyrinth』 to defeat the demon lord. Temple Knight-dono wouldn't have wasted her time in vain if you had just informed us beforehand...."

She was saying it politely but she clearly reproved Lady Liedill's visit without an appointment.

"Is that so, then it can't be helped."

Lady Liedill muttered without even being aware that she was getting reproved.

Her glare which was pointed at the air turned to me.

"Hey, you. Have we met somewhere?"

"There is no way that I would forget an encounter with such a beauty as you, just where have we met I wonder?"

While putting both my hands on Lady Liedill's hand, I befuddled the matter with a line from some smooth talker.

I could have said, "We've never met before", since I was in ratkin costume when I met her, but since the Deception and Crisis Perception skills told me that telling a lie would be dangerous, I decided to take the question-dodging route.

"Let go, how filthy."

Lady Liedill brushed my hand away and glared at me like looking at a dirt.

Apparently, she's a clean-freak.

Arisa is wiping my hand with a handkerchief while saying, "It really is."

--Please stop provoking her.

"My Dragon Eyes tell me. I've absolutely met you guys somewhere before."

"Perhaps it was in Shiga Kingdom's Royal Capital? Sorry but we've just arrived here at Dejima Island, so we've yet to attend any ball or banquet here."

Lady Liedill said so with eyes full of conviction.

Normally you'd have resigned here, but since her eyes are relatively bad, I'll just deceive her.

Lady Karina who's sweating waterfall behind me is a reason for anxiety, but Arisa and Mia should be doing something about her.

And then, a male temple knight I saw in the Weasel Empire before rushed in.

It's the escort knight of Lady Liedill.

"Liedill-sama!"

"Oh? You're late."

Contrary to the desperate escort knight, Lady Liedill replied normally while still not letting her eyes away from me.

"It looks like the hero is not here. Rather than that, have you ever seen this black haired kid?"

"No, I haven't--"

"Is that so.... That's strange."

Losing her vigor after hearing the escort knight, Lady Liedill was dragged away by the other knights who came later.

"Everyone, you might have taken offense from Liedill-sama's impoliteness, but we beg your forgiveness."

The leader-kun of the escort knights apologized for their master, and left after saying that they would formally apologize later.

"Somehow it seems like they'll barge into the battle with the demon lord too."

"Isn't that fine, they'll be additional forces then."

"Well yeah. Let them get stylishly beaten by the demon lord and become hero's and our stepping stones."

Secretary Nono showed a dark smile and said "That would be nice" to reply Arisa's dark remark, and then both of them are laughing "Hohoho" together.

The two's eyes aren't laughing, Lady Karina and even Rusus and Fifi look scared.

◇

"Delish!"

"Amazing."

Rusus and Fifi highly praised the karage Lulu made.

After the disturbance with Lady Liedill, my companions and the house-sitting group of the hero party met up and then we had a party in a reserved room of the high-class inn.

"Of cour~se?"

"Lulu's dishes are amazingly amazing nodesu!"

Tama and Pochi who saw Rusus and Fifi praising the dishes asserted vigorously, stepping forward on top of the table.

"Un, it's really good. This red sour fruit is especially nice."

"Wi, which one do you want next?"

"Then, please get the rod-shaped vegetable with meat wrapped around it."

Miss Wiyaryi, the long ear-kin archer, enjoyed the tomato dish.

The reason secretary Nono is diligently looking after her is because she's lost her limbs in the fight with the demon lord.

There are other aids here, but it seems Nono personally takes care of her.

The two seem to be close.

"Asparagus meat roll is tasty so I tell."

"Mwu, sukiyaki."

Nana nodded with Miss Wiyaryi's choice, Mia raised an objection, telling that the sukiyaki is better.

Looks like Mia still dislikes dishes with a lot of oil even though she's able to eat meat now.

"Here comes the main!"

"Yay~"

"Nanodesu!"

Arisa and the others who saw the main dish that appeared on the door raised their voices in joy.

"Thank you for waiting."

"The main dish is a whole roast cow."

Liza and Lulu put the huge plate on the middle of table.

Even though I know that they have mighty strength due to their levels, seeing young girls carrying whole roast of a one-ton class cow, that's impossible even for men with good builds to carry, is quite an unrealistic scene.

The reason why we're serving meat even though we're in a port town is because it was the request of the hero's staff who had gotten bored of fish.

Well, my companions like meat more than fish too.

"Master, here you go."

"Thank you, Liza."

Liza put a plate with the spoil from the scramble for the whole roast front of me.

"Yup, it's good. Liza too, eat it too before it's gone."

"Yes, then I'll kindly accept--"

Liza jumps into the scramble (battlefield) with eyes of a warrior.

The whole roast's shape changed in an instant into bones so clean it probably wouldn't be sufficient to even make soup stock.

Now then, now that I'm full, I'll finish the thing I have to do before going into the labyrinth.

DM-C15- 15-9. Phantasmal Labyrinth

Satou's here. I think I first learned yobai from a manga about nobles of Heian era. The figures of the main character of a shoujo manga who shouted molester and kicked the head of a noble and the dumbfounded expression of the kicked noble left an impression on me.

◇

"Good evening, thieves here."

"Stop saying unnecessary things."

After whacking the head of Arisa who's dressed up like a thief, I walk to the bedside where Miss Wiyaryi is sleeping.

This somehow feels indecent, like I'm a man doing yobai.

I'm not intruding a woman's room in the middle of the night to do lewd things.

It's to restore the limbs of hero's companions.

"Advanced mind magic is amazing isn't it. You can prank them all you want."

Arisa says some impolite thing while poking the long ear of Miss Wiyaryi who's in a deep sleep.

Miss Wiyaryi isn't the only one sleeping, everybody in the inn including the hero's party has all fallen asleep.

"Still, you wouldn't need to make them sleep if you just used 『Geass』 to keep it a secret you know."

"It's less troublesome this way right?"

Moreover, my purpose is restoring their limbs, I don't intend to make them indebted to me.

"Let's begin--"

While rejecting the idea, I put Miss Wiyaryi onto a transparent bed made from [Magic Mold] and ask Arisa to take off her clothes.

Of course I've asked her to cover her with a cloth since we're not going to do anything perverted.

"First, I'll cleanse the miasma."

I activate [Miasma Seer] and look at Miss Wiyaryi's stumps.

I can see ominous black mist coming from the stumps binding Miss Wiyaryi's body.

I've taken off her cloth in order to see her whole body, but during the activation of the Miasma Seer, my view becomes like a negative film on top of being monochrome so there's nothing lewd to it at all.

I tear off the miasma aka the demon lord's curse like untying entangled thread.

It was quite firm and complexly intertwined but I succeeded in about 10 minutes.

"Collecting samples."

I reproduce Miss Wiyaryi's limbs from the blood collected from her.

With advanced force magic, cloning is not a problem even without the pluripotent cell as long as it's from the person themselves, though people who know the particulars from modern science will probably look at it scrutinizingly. As expected of fantasy.

"Reopening the wound."

Using Magic Edge extended from my finger, I cut the stump and reopen the wound.

It'll be dangerous if she bleed too much, so I press the wound with a transparent cover made from force magic [Magic Mold].

"Lost limb, rejoining."

Once I press the limb I made earlier on the stump and sprinkle an elixir on it, it's stickied properly.

Using the advanced soul magic [Perfect Possession] I posses Miss Wiyaryi and check the connected arm.

"Success."

"Uwaah, I thought she woke up."

I inadvertently talked with Miss Wiyaryi's mouth since I was too delighted for the success.

I go back to my original body and apologize to Arisa.

"--Sorry, I forgot to come back. Let's continue, Arisa."

"Okay!"

I connected Miss Wiyaryi's remaining limbs and then went around to restore Rusus's and Fifi's lost limbs.

Of course, I had also restored Fifi's eye.

"Next, let's just leave a letter."

I put a letter with hero Nanashi's signature regarding the limb loss restoration and the way to rehabilitate for them afterward on secretary Nono's bedside.

Once we got back to our room I released the magic, called the girls who had evacuated to the solitary island palace back here and then we slept in the bed.

◇

"Satou! It's serious!"

"Get up! This is serious!"

Early in the morning Rusus and Fifi rushed into my room half naked.

They're only wearing low-rise pants and short shirts with exposed navels.

The lively dynamic movement is peculiar to no-bra.

"Good morning. Rusus-san, Fifi-san--You two, what happened to those arms and legs!"

While pretending to be surprised, I get up from the bed and walk toward the two.

Nana and the children in the bed raised their heads while rubbing their eyes.

In addition, Liza who has already woken up is swinging her spear in the courtyard, while Lulu seems to be doing morning exercise beside her.

"They were already restored when we got up this morning!"

"We thought you did something."

The two who are in high tension caught my arms and swung them up and down.

I'm troubled where to see due to the masses that are swinging together with the arms.

"Fuh, you two are fast!"

Miss Wiyaryi showed up from behind them.

She looks unsteady, it seems her limbs are still weak.

As she stagger, I extend my hands to support her.

"Thank you, Satou."

Even the calm Miss Wiyaryi seems to be happy with her restored limbs, she's overflowing with smiles.

"By the way, did Satou cause this miracle?"

After saying that, Miss Wiyaryi hugs me without even waiting for my reply.

She's the least sexy member of the hero party, but it appears she's simply the type who looks slender in clothing.

"W-wait! What are you doing to Master!"

"Mwu, guilty."

The impregnable fortress pair tried to crawl out of the bed, but it seems they're still sleepy, they can't move well.

"What are you doing this early in the morning."

Secretary Nono scolded the three with a sharp expression.

Despite being early in the morning, she's properly wearing her uniform--huh?

"Nono, skirt."

"You forgot it you know?"

"Fumu, so Nono has reached the age where she wants to seduce youngsters."

Nono couldn't understand what the three were talking about and had a face that seemed like there was a question mark above her head, but her face turned red when she looked below.

"I-I'm sorry, I'll go fix it right away."

Nono screamed and rushed out.

Apparently, she has airhead element too.

Nono who came back after a while told the three girls that it was hero Nanashi who restored their limbs, and the morning uproar came to an end.

◇

"It's such a shame~"

"Are you still going on about that?"

"I mean, it's a chance to increase Master's sympathizers."

Arisa grumbled when we were on the ferryboat going to the islet where the labyrinth is.

What am I going to do with having sympathizers in the first place.

Only the members of Team Pendragon including Lady Karina are going to the labyrinth.

Rusus and the others are doing rehabilitation in the training school at the verge of the town.

They said that they would return to form before the hero came back.

"Arisa, leave it at that."

"Nn, rivals unnecessary."

Liza reproved Arisa, Mia nodded at her.

The ferryboat arrived at the labyrinth islet when we were talking as such.

"Fish~?"

"There's a lot of small fish nanodesu."

From the wharf you can see a school of Sardine-like fish swimming in the sea.

Feels like you can get a lot just by casting a net.

"Oy, you guys over there, new faces right?"

A rugged middle-aged man who looked like a fisherman came over to us.

"You're being rude to Master."

Liza points her magic spear at the man.

"Whoops, what a scary Anee-chan. Lower your spear, I ain't here to pick a fight."

The middle-aged man took a surrendering pose at the threatening Liza and stepped back one step.

"The labyrinth entrance is over there, but first timer must go to that Adventurer Guild's assembly hall following the procedure."

After pointing at the volcano in the center of the labyrinth islet, the man jerked his chin at a gray building at the end of the harbor.

"There's a lot of adventurer applicants making trouble at the simple reception desk in front of the labyrinth so I'm telling this to first timers."

I see, both are quite far apart.

I can see many people complaining.

I thank the man, and make him grasp one silver coin worth of swen as thanks and apology for Liza's hastiness.

"Whoa, Nii-chan knows his stuff~. Talk with the racoonkin wearing ocher overcoat in the middle of that hill--he's a former adventurer and know a lot 'bout monsters ya know."

After saying that, the man charges at a nearby bar while swinging the swen paper money gleefully.

◇

"That really was the template wasn't it."

Arisa reminisces the things at the adventurer guild assembling hall while holding a guild license satisfyingly.

"Adventurer rank that goes from F to A, the long line for the beautiful receptionist, the old man receptionist who turned out to be the guild master, and the many requests on the bulletin board! Everything that should be in an adventurer guild~"

The other girls are looking warmly at Arisa who's chattering like singing.

Lady Karina is the only one who's in high spirit besides Arisa.

"It seems to imitate Saga Empire's adventurer guild desuwane."

"Hee, is that so?"

"Yes, it was written in father's literary work."

Lady Karina and Arisa had that conversation as we were climbing the mountain path to the labyrinth.

Lady Karina's father, Earl Muno is a guru of hero research so one of his research subjects was probably about the adventurer guild created by the first generation hero.

There's a racoonkin wearing ocher overcoat in the middle of the hill road to the labyrinth.

The racoonkin taught us about the main monsters of the labyrinth when I told him that were referred by a man in the harbor.

"--Well, that's mostly it. First, approach with wait and see attitude. Don't forget to bring Return Stick and Disturb Ball with you. Don't rely on maps."

I paid the information with swen notes and left the place after thanking him for the kind advice.

Besides Magic Cores, it seems there's only a few things that can be exchanged for money in the upper layer, and the enemies are mostly of Living Dolls and Iron Golems from beginning to the end of the upper layer.

"Potatoes~?"

"Grilled salted fish nanodesu."

"It seems there aren't any meat even though we're in front of the labyrinth are there?"

The beastkin girls are peering at the food stalls lined up in front of the labyrinth.

"Noble-sama over there! How about a map? 20 maps for 1000 swen, only for today!"

A peddling man came to sell a bundle of paper.

The path structure of Dejima Island [Phantasmal Labyrinth] changes everytime, so there's a lot of people who try to rip off beginners by selling maps.

"Guess I'll buy it if it's nicely made."

"Hehhee, our maps are awesome y'know."

The map he's showing full of confidence is filled to the brim you wouldn't have thought it was a fake.

There's not only the pathways, even room locations, danger zones, watering holes and many kind of information are written.

Doing this far, it's amazing even though it's a fraud.

The girls are looking at me with questions in their eyes, so I tell them that I have an idea with eye contacts.

Arisa replied with an awkward wink, but I continued without retorting her specifically.

"That is because they're made by a B-rank adventurer who's working as a mapper in Saga Empire."

"Looks good, I'll buy it."

"Thank you for your business!"

I put the map into the Storage through the storage bag.

"Why did you buy it even though you knew that it was a fraud?"

"Besides the passage ones, the information might be useful."

Even if it was a fraud, I only lost 1000 swen of money that can't be used anywhere but in Weasel Empire.

"Buy a Disturb Ball! They're a bargain cause they're made of volcanic ash!"

"Do you have Monster Wards ready? Ya can't take a break if you don't have them!"

"Phantasmal Labyrinth beginners absolutely have to bring a Return Stick! Or else you won't be able to go back!"

"We're the branch shop of Bosu Magic Store! Magic potion is currently 300 swen!"

Merchants are flooding to me with their goods, perhaps due to me buying the maps.

I might as well buy various local products.

They were overcharging the goods, so Arisa and Lulu quickly haggled it down.

Further, it seems Return Stick isn't a teleportation item that returns you back to the labyrinth entrance often appearing in games, but an item that lights up at the direction of the exit.

"Aren't they the same things as the ones in the labyrinth city Selbira besides this Return Stick?"

"They probably are."

I affirm Arisa's question.

These are souvenirs for Echigoya Firm's craftsmen.

Perhaps there are hints of unexploited technology in them.

◇

"How is it?"

"The hero seems to be fine. None of his companions have serious injury either."

After registering at the entrance, we went through the gate advancing through a downward slope.

Checking with All Map Exploration, it seemed the hero party was in the middle of the way to the supply base in the middle layer from the lowest layer.

It's confusing because this Phantasmal Labyrinth's structure resembles that of tree branches.

It's similar to the Seryuu City [Demon Labyrinth] where I made an escape with the beastkin girls.

The difference with tree branches is the existence of rhizome-like big empty holes here and there in the branches that extend to the middle layer.

The majority of the enemies are golems and undeads, they were clogging the passages in places of walls that have been broken down even while I was observing them.

I thought it would be like the [Trazayuya Maze] after hearing that the passages changed at fixed intervals, but unlike the Maze that somehow felt mechanical, the structure change feels like labyrinths in stories with Dungeon Masters.

The demon lord who's become this labyrinth's Dungeon Master might be someone who loves stories with Dungeon Masters.

If he acquired the figurines we saw the other day by using Dungeon Point, I'd like to ask if he is able to get the latest issue of Dradra Magazines.

I sure want to read the continuation of the currently serialized [The Golden

Legend of Army Only] and [Saeteru Kanojo no Trinity].

--Whoops, my thought wandered off.

I tried to search the map but I couldn't find the Dungeon Master.

I've expected this since I also couldn't find it in Seryuu City's [Demon Labyrinth] and Selbira's Labyrinth.

The Dungeon Master must be hiding in a different map.

And, the demon lord in question is still surviving even with wounds all over his body, he's in a different lowest layer where the hero party were.

His level is 64, slightly low, and just like Arisa, his skills are hidden, shown as [Skill: Unknown].

In addition to the orthodox [Demon Lord] title, he also has hidden titles; [Chased One], [Oppressed One], [Small Rebel], and [Artist].

Did this guy became a demon lord due to oppression?

I'm slightly intrigued by the demon lord's origin.

◇

"It sure is crowded."

"It's the same as Selbira right?"

Several adventurer parties are fighting against monsters in the hall we arrived at the end of a narrow downward passage.

Varieties of Mad Golem called Ash Mud Golems and Silent Ash Golems seem to be the starting enemies here.

There's a constant color-changing fog in this labyrinth, so the view is bad even in the hall.

Moreover, there are infinite varieties of projected phantoms inside the thick fog, ranging from realistic images to dim silhouettes, so even adventurers who are used to Phantasmal Labyrinth can get surprised by the projections.

Sometimes Silent Ash Golems slip in the fog and attack with no footstep, so it's quite a repulsive labyrinth.

I have Radar, so I know where the enemies are coming from, but it must be hard for common adventurers.

"Fiire~?"

"Lots of magicians nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi point at the firing line beyond the fog.

It seems there are magicians among the adventurers, red flames sometimes illuminate the dim cave.

Most of those flame users must be using Fire Wands since there's only a few who have Fire Magic in their skill compositions.

"This seems ideal for friendly fires to happen..."

"Nn, dangerous."

"Ah, the shield user was shot with a small fire ball from behind."

There's a lot of people who are used to it, maybe because we're near the entrance.

"High so~?"

"They're fleeing here nodesu."

Unable to watch the fleeing party, Liza turns toward me.

"Master, may I intervene?"

"Okay."

When I nod back, Liza throws a stone below into the air upward with her tail, and then Pochi strikes the stone with her sword still in the sheath.

The stone defeats the Ash Mud Golem in one strike, and the stone that pierced it is caught by Tama who has circled around before anyone knew it.

Tama announced, "Striike~", but if I have to say, I think it's a dead ball.

"Master~?"

Tama came back with a small magic core and an ocher colored stone.

"Uwah, it's a Golem Soul...."

"So something like that can pop up in this shallow place!"

"Alright, let's get one too!"

The adventurers who saw the stone Tama was carrying became noisy, and then the attack against the Ash Mud Golems became more furious.

Since the adventurer party that we saved had already left the room, there was no one who disputed the ownership of the mysterious Golem Soul item.

"T-thank you very much, elf-sama."

"Nn."

The female bearkin whose back was burned by the friendly fire thanked Mia for giving her healing magic.

It seems she's been abandoned by the party earlier.

I took a pity on her a bit so I presented her half a year worth of diluted healing magic potion as a charm.

They were something I hoarded in my Storage since I had no use of them, but with her level, one of them should be enough to recover her from a dying state.

◇

"Footsteps~?"

"Doka doka sounds nodesu."

"Looks like some enemies are chasing after adventurers."

"Geh, bringing Train here, what bad manners."

The radar shows monsters of varying sizes chasing after two adventurer parties.

As we advance while defeating some Ash Mud Golems, an agile-looking male scout shows up running in the corridor in front of us.

"You guys, run! Iron Golem is coming!"

Middle-aged adventurers carrying swords and wands who seem to be his companions run past us.

"Not good, it's catching up."

The second party seems to be adventures with heavy knight-like armors.

Since their movement was slow due to their heavy equipment, the Iron Golem almost caught up to them.

The Iron Golem is big enough to have to bend over in this three meter high passage.

Pale red driving light leak out from its inside.

"Damn it, I'll get one hit at least!"

"Fool! Don't stop!"

"Tsk, that idiot!"

The heavy armor party whose companion was trampled under the golem's foot stopped and turned back at the golem.

They tried to challenge it with a huge axe and a fire wand, but they got trampled under the feet just like their comrade earlier.

It seems they're still alive, so we can't desert them.

"Liza."

"Understood."

The Magic Edge Cannon shot by Liza pierces through the Iron Golem's head before it could trample the last heavy armor adventurer.

The golem producer here doesn't seem to know the true joke material as the golems aren't so easy as to be defeated just by erasing a letter.

Of course, Liza's Magic Edge Cannon would destroy it in one hit no matter where it hit, but--.

"KARINA--KIIIIIIIICK"

Clad in blue light, Lady Karina sunk her sure-death kick at the chest of the Iron Golem.

The red driving light inside the golem disappears.

"Goodjob~?"

"Karina, you're great nodesu."

It was actually an overkill, but Tama and Pochi praised Lady Karina without minding it.

Lady Karina turned around while looking like it was not all that bad.

"May I ask about the technique earlier?"

Lady Karina's smile froze at the owner of the voice who appeared from behind the Iron Golem.

Well now, how to get through this.

I refreshingly smile back at Lady Liedill's party who show fearless smiles.

15-10. Phantasmal Labyrinth (2)

Satou's here. It's said that there are three people who have the same face in the world, but looking at the likelihood of those people meeting with each other, I think accidental resemblance is more common.

◇

"U-um, this is, uh"

Lady Karina is flustered to see Lady Liedill who appeared from the opposite side of the Iron Golem.

However, there's something else that has caught my attention.

"H-hey, Master, what should we do?"

"Nothing."

I lightly cut off Arisa's worry, pats her shoulder and points at Liedill.

"--Ah"

"You understand?"

"Y-yes. Shall I do it instead?"

"No, I'm happy with just the thought."

I don't really want to do it but it'd be a mistake to let the children to.

This is something that I must do.

"Sa-Satou."

"It's alright."

After nodding at Lady Karina who looks uneasy, I step forward in front of her.

"....U-uu."

A groan came from the golem's wreckage.

Oops, I've got to deal with that one first.

I chantlessly healed the trampled adventurers who were dying and then I made them sleep with mind magic chantlessly too.

After I'm done with the emergency task, I head to Liedill.

"Oh? Perhaps you'd be the one explaining--"

Without waiting until the end, I kick Liedill's stomach, flinging it away at the line of the escort who are standing still behind.

As an insurance, I also use earth magic's [Toss Drill Stone] to skewer it and the escort together.

"M-Master?"

"Sa-Satou?"

Seeing my brutality, Liza and Lady Karina are shaken.

The other girls are also shaken with different reactions.

"Uwah, gross."
"Don't worry be happy~?"

Only Arisa and Tama are reacting differently.

However, besides the two's, the voices tapered off.

"Uhyaa, so that's what Doppelganger like."
"Nopperabou~?"
"It dissolves like, slush nodesu."
"Master, requesting provision of information."

I explain to the girls while glancing at the log.
The brief words from Arisa already explained it all though.

"The monster earlier is called Doppelganger, a monster that can steal a part of someone's memory and assume the appearance of a person."

Arisa was deceived at first, but she realized immediately once she appraised her.
In the first place, there's no way that I won't notice Lady Liedill, who has been marked, once she enters the Radar's range.

"You can't let your guard down with people you meet in the labyrinth even if you know them okay?"

The girls cheerfully replied me positively.

The reason why I'm telling the girls that is because judging from the fact that there was no one we met who warned us about the monster and that there is no other Doppelganger inside the labyrinth, that means it was probably prepared by the Dungeon Master who got flustered since some high level adventurers entered the labyrinth.

There's a room fully loaded with water and paralyze traps at the end of one of the long passages from the large room where the Doppelgangers and the Iron Golem appeared.

The Doppelgangers earlier were probably going to lead us there.

Further, there might have been a gentler way to defeat them, but I did what I did since I wanted to defeat them before my companions did.

I don't want to see the girls killing beings that look like people after all.

◇

"Putting your name in your technique's name is really not a good idea."

"--Uu."

"Why~?"

"It's cool nodesuyo?"

Lady Karina faltered with Arisa's frank advice, Tama and Pochi covered for her.

"Even after you hide your figure, if you shout a technique name like that out loud, you can end up in trouble like just now right?"

"Oo~ops~?"

"Ah, nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi who heard the explanation were surprised.

Don't tell me, they only noticed it just now?

"Recommending to change the name so I advice."

"That's right...."

Nana spoke calmly, Liza hesitated.

As for me, I don't intend to force Lady Karina to correct it since her clumsiness is within my tolerance, but it appears the other girls don't think so.

"Sa-Satou won't tell me to change it too right?"

"Yes, it's fine--"

Lady Karina looks relieved when I affirm her.

"--As long as you stay behind when we're on missions where we need to disguise ourselves that is."

Even though I followed up with a smile, Lady Karina's face looks like she's having a monologue, "I've been betrayed."

--Incomprehensible.

"Then, since Karina-sama agrees too--"

Arisa begins to take ideas for the new technique name beside the dispirited Lady Karina.

"The first meetiing~ Karina Kick new technique naame~ Naming conventioon~"

She's using some strange intonation, it must be some kind of reference.

"The safe one would be 『Oppai Kick』 I guess?"

"Arisa, take this seriously. How about 『Jump Kick』?"

"『Inazuma Fall』 is nice so I suggest."

"Mwuu, Swooping Kick Strike."

Liza reproved Arisa for her joking remark, Nana and Mia suggested some acceptable names.

And--.

"Meat Attack~?"

"Hamburg Steak sounds stronger nanodesu. Hamburg Steak Kick is good nodesu!"

--Triggered by Tama and Pochi, the suggestion for the technique names all became of dishes name, so the naming convention came to a close prematurely.

◇

"This is the place where the figurines were found?"

Arisa tilted her head at a shrine-like place inside the labyrinth.

She probably feels the gap between the anime figurine and the place.

"Nope, there's a hidden passage inside that shrine, and that place seems to be at the end of that passage."

The inside of the shrine is decorated with many stone statues.

"Uwaah, the Star Oni Girl Lovely Momo, and there's even Mecha Girl Version of the Space Warrior Random. The guy who created these must be quite an enthusiast."

Arisa voiced her admiration, but I don't know the sources for half of the statues.

I pulled the excited Arisa's hand and we entered the hidden door.

"The fog is thick. Tama, Pochi, be on the lookout."

"Aye aye sir~?"

"Roger nanodesu."

Tama puts her hands on her ears strengthening her hearing, Pochi closes her eyes and sniffs the surrounding smell.

Before long, we see the shadow of buildings beyond the fog.

This place seems to be a phantom town block filled with gray rocks.

"This looks like a gray rock street doesn't it."

"Yeah, it's like a petrified Akiba."

This place is not that large, yet there are several multi-floor buildings and asphalt-like road carved from gray rocks.

A familiar townscape with unfamiliar signboards--the one who created this real-sized models of the street is probably a reincarnated or a transported person from Japan that resembles mine.

"This upright cabinet is empty inside too."

"That seems to be the case."

Apparently there's nothing of worth here.

"Master!"

"Master, a discovery so I inform."

When I turned toward Lulu and Nana, I saw half-petrified manga books on the ground.

Many badly made figurines are piled up beside them.

It looks like they're transformed into stone from material build-up.

"Master, that!"

Arisa pointed at a scribble-like brush writing.

"『I want to go home』 huh--"

The scribble is hard to read, but that's certainly what's written in Katakana.

We didn't find a gate that connects to our world, but it's certain that a reincarnated or perhaps a teleported person had come here.

Perhaps, the demon lord in this labyrinth created weapons using the same mean.

◇

"That reminds me, is the real Kukkorosan in the labyrinth?"

"Yes, it seems they're exploring in the middle layer."

They were already there when we entered the labyrinth.

They must have gone into the labyrinth not long after their intrusion incident yesterday.

Lady Liedill's stamina gauge has decreased more than half, it seems they're forcing themselves.

"--Huh?"

"What's wrong?"

Lady Liedill's state on the map has changed to [Panic].

When I peer the room where she is with space magic [Remote View]--.

"They are in serious trouble somehow."

The scene and sound projected by Remote View magic in mind is just like pandemonium from a disaster film.

『U-uwah, there's something inside the slime.』

『Ma-magician-dono? Where are you Magician-dono!』

『Th-there's snakes inside the slime!』

『Liedill-sama, please escape alone!』

『I will not abandon you guys.』

Lady Liedill and her party are sinking into a sea of slime inside a room that's similar to the room we were going to be entrapped earlier.

Furthermore, there are tentacle-shaped monsters called [Slime Leech] that are in symbiosis with the slimes, they appear to coil around their enemies and pull them into the symbiotic slime to suffocate them to death.

Defeating the slimes is easy by using ranged attack, but unlike in the game, their bodies won't disappear even after they've died so it won't really help the situation.

It's as it were flooding by slimes.

Im addition, the slimes are called Lake Slimes, they seem to be of a different species than the common slime.

『This level of slimes, I'll just burn them down!』

『Fool! We're in underground here!』

『Suffocating to death would be better than getting eaten like this!』

This is bad.... The desperate magician has begun to chant an advanced fire magic spell.

If she used that in such a closed room, every one of them wouldn't come out of it with just major burn.

『Don't give up! We are not warriors that will fall behind this degree of enemies!』

Lady Liedill's clear voice remonstrates her companions who are consumed by despair.

Lady Liedill fills her two-handed magic sword with magic power, the red light shines on her companions.

『True Temple Knights are--』

And then, the Slime Leechs twine on her legs while her expression is still serious and pulls her into the Lake Slime in an instant.

I don't know how to react since it was too embarrassing.

『Revenge for Liedill-sama!』

The magician fires the advanced magic and shouts while crying bitter tears.

No no, she's not dead yet.

◇

"Uwah, erotic."

I put Lady Liedill and her companions I pulled here using space magic on the floor.

This is one of the room at the end of a passage from the place where we defeated the Doppelgangers earlier.

It's not the trap room one of course.

Just as Arisa said, on top of their disheveled armor and clothing, they're covered in slimy liquid, so they look like inhabitants of the 18+ world.

The slimy liquid is the remain of the slime which had undergone change after getting burned by the fire magic.

I entrust Lulu and the others to care for Lady Liedill and the female magician, while I recover the burly men with healing magic and life magic in a pack.

Half of them were charred by the advanced fire spell, but they all barely made it thanks to their levels, resistances, equipment and support magic.

I recovered the people who were drowned in the slime with my original magic

[Lifesaving: Respiration].

I also have a magic to shock the heart [Lifesaving: AED] though there's no opportunity to use it now.

"T-this place is--"

"Have you awaken?"

Lady Liedill who woke up first muttered with hoarse voice.

Lulu and the others have fixed up their clothing as much as possible.

They'll get undone if they move too much, so I probably have to warn the careless Lady Liedill.

"--Did I survive."

Lady Liedill stares at the finger in front of her face, gets half of her body up painfully and looks around.

Her body seems weak, so I support her back.

"Good, everyone is alright..."

After putting her companions into her view, she breathed a sigh of relief.

I offer Lady Liedill whose voice is hoarse a cup of water.

"Ah, thank you--"

Our eyes meet as Lady Liedill inclines the cup.

Her relaxed expression changed in an instant, her eyes opening wide.

"--You're, Satou!"

While gushing water out of her mouth, Lady Liedill stepped back vigorously enough to use Flickering Movement.

As promised, her armor and clothes which were only fixed as needed couldn't endure the inertia and scattered away.

"Hyaaa--"

She covered her thin breasts in a hurry.

I hand over a cloth I took from the storage bag to Tama who was watching on the sideline.

"I'll leave it to you."

"Aye~"

Tama used Flickering Movement while crouching, moving next to Lady Liedill.

Is she mimicking Lady Liedill's movement earlier?

"Use it~?"

"M-my gratitude."

After I've made sure that she's finished wearing the cloth, I step forward while being careful not to alert her.

"It was really surprising. Just when were taking a break in this room, Liedill-sama and her companions appeared out of thin air."

"--Appeared out of thin air?"

Hearing my fabricated story supported by Deception skill, Lady Liedill's raised her eyebrows as if she couldn't believe it.

"Yes, you must have an excellent space magician."

"N-no, none of my subordinates can use space magic."

"Then it was a Weasel Empire's magic device for emergency escape wasn't it. Giving such an important item like that, His Majesty the Emperor must really cherish the Temple Knights."

"Y-yes--That's right."

I forcefully steered the talk to a good story type.

We're in the upper layer, so normally one wouldn't think that the we saved them who were in the middle layer.

◇

"Then please excuse us. The exit is nearby, but please be careful."

"Ah, you too be careful. There's something different about this labyrinth--"

Lady Liedill leads her companions who have woken up toward the exit.

"Satou, if you're interested in Temple Knights--No, you're an authority of Shiga Kingdom aren't you. Our gratitude for the support and treatment earlier. We will properly thank you later."

Lady Liedill tried to invite me, but she changed her mind and stopped in the way.

Her gaze feels like they've softened up somewhat, is it just my imagination I wonder.

"Wait now~ stop raising flags here and there please."

"Nn, affable."

"You're right, I'll be careful."

I lightly waived off Arisa and Mia's complaint, and we went back to the labyrinth exploration.

Our destination today is the hero's relay base.

While watching the girls' peerlessness, I think hard about what kind of Japanese sweets should I serve to commemorate our reunion with the hero.

15-11. Phantasmal Labyrinth (3)

Satou's here. Dungeons that appear in games are generally made clearable. No matter which nightmarish difficulty you choose, someone from the development staff will always make sure to adjust it so that you can finish it until the end. However, the real life dungeon doesn't seem to be like so....

◇

"Isn't it getting hotter?"

"I can use Air Conditioner magic if you want?"

"Don't~?"

"Noticing labyrinth's abnormality would be harder so don't nanodesu."

I replied Arisa's grumble like so, but Tama and Pochi raised such objections.

Their remarks are proofs that they're more experienced in exploring labyrinths than me.

While feeling a bit proud, I pat the two heads, saying "You're right."

"Nihehe~?"

"It's been awhile since Master patted Pochi nanodesu."

Was that so?

"Master, I also wish for magic power refill later so I tell."

"Sure thing."

When I made a promise to Nana without thinking, Arisa's eyes shined.

"Sexual harassment-type of requests are forbidden."

"No way~"

Getting shot down by me prematurely, Arisa pretends to break down crying.

"Master, we arrived at an open space, so I report."

"It looks like a cylinder isn't it."

"I wonder if the red thing on the floor of this large room is lava?"

Lulu and Liza followed up after Nana.

There's a large cylindrical room with diameter of around 100 meters at the end of the passage, and there's a narrow passage along the wall that goes spiraling below.

Just as Liza's said, the floor at the bottom is filled with bubbling lava and noxious gas.

There are several tunnels along the passage, it seems they connect to the labyrinth's middle layer.

The tunnel closest to the lava is connected to the hero's relay base--the goods depot.

"Ah, he fell."

About at the same time Arisa muttered, Liza threw a steel spear.

One of adventurers had lost his footing and fell headlong toward the lava--or rather, he was going to.

He's dangling on the wall, stitched on the spear thrown by Liza.

Of course, the spear didn't pierce through his body but his study fireproof mantle.

The companions of the adventurer shouted from afar at us to thank you.

After seeing off the adventurers who went into a tunnel, we continue on the passage.

Before long we found ourselves before an impasse.

Stepping stones are floating in mid-air, you'll need to jump over them like in an action game.

"Stop!"

Tama uses this kind of tone when she finds a trap.

Tama who opens her eyes wide is staring at the floating stones seriously.

"Illusion~?"

She points at one of them with her usual tone.

Looks like she found an illusion among the stepping stones.

"That looks to be the case. And this one will rotate and drop you down below if you step on it."

Another stone with a different kind of trap is located right beside it.

The Dungeon Master of this place seems to be a nasty one.

◇

"How long till the relay base?"

I open the map to answer Arisa's question.

--This is?!

"Let's hurry! Everyone prepare to teleport!"

"Understood!"

I waited only a breath after Liza's answer before teleporting us away.

There's a clearly different kind of red flowing on the slanting passage with lava.

"Over there~?"

Faster than Tama pointing her finger, I moved with Ground Shrink to the place where there were sounds of weapons clashing.

"Damn, damn damn, why isn't the Mithril sword working!"

"Kekekekeh, although it'll be different with the lowly Blood Stalker, such attacks won't work on true vampires the followers of darkness--"

I cut the vampire who's saying some stupid thing in two with the Mithril-made Fairy Sword.

Vampire is a troublesome race that can immediately revive even after they're turned into ashes, but that's the more reason I can attack them without reservation.

I ignore the Blood Bead and Magic Cores drop item on the ground and prioritize healing the man.

"Oy, are you still alive? Drink this magic potion."

"Stop, it's already too late. My blood has been sucked by the vampire earlier. I'm already losing my self and wanting blood."

The man spun words while gasping.

According to the AR reading beside him, his statement is true.

"--Item Box, open."

A black square appeared beside him.

"There's supply for hero-sama inside....Take out as much as possible and deliver them to hero-sama...."

I'm moving my hands while hearing him.

He--no, they seem to be the transport troops tasked to carry goods to the hero's relay base.

They're not only composed of Saga Empire's people, it seems there are also adventures from Dejima Island.

"Everyone else in the hero transport troops has died. The items inside Item Box will disappear when I die. While I'm resisting the power of darkness, quickly--"

"It's alright, leave it to me."

I powerfully assure him, the man endures the pain while gritting his teeth.

Soon enough, I dispelled all the miasma, and the man's state changed to normal person after I used the highest ranked magic to recover status abnormality.

For me who is able to dispel demon lord's curse, there's no way that I cannot cancel infection from a mere vampire who isn't even a True Ancestor.

The member of transport troops who has been healed falls unconscious.

He probably has lost too much blood from getting sucked by the vampire.

I'll give him blood-forming medicine once he wakes up.

"Uwahh, there's blood all over the place..."

"Yeah, it seems a vampire appeared here."

The girls who have caught up frown at the disastrous scene.

"Tama and Pochi, gather the ashes on the ground and put it inside this jar."

"Aye, dustpan~?"

"Time to display Pochi's exquisite skill with broom nodesu!"

Rustle-rustle, the two gather the ashes that was originally a vampire into the jar.

The magic core among the ashes is needed for the vampire to revive so I'll put it in a different location than the other magic cores.

I'm going to leave the punishment of this vampire to the [True Ancestor] Ban in the labyrinth's lower layer.

He will no doubt give the appropriate punishment to a vampire.

I start the next high priority work.

"Satou?"

"Just look."

After telling Mia who looked puzzled, I concentrate on the opposite side of the space.

I thrust my hand at the slightly wavering space.

--There's a reaction.

I forcefully expanded it just like that and then the goods that were inside it fell down.

"W-wait, don't tell me."

I affirm the surprised Arisa.

I interfered with the Item Boxes whose users had died from outside and took out the contents.

"....Geez, you're absurd like always."

Arisa sighed, looking astounded.

"Arisa can do it too right?"

"It may be possible if I have several bottles of high-ranked magic recovery potion, and a mid-level space magician assistant for measuring the position of the space. "

--So it's not like she can't do it.

In my case, it's just that I don't need the prior preparation is all.

◇

Now then, next we'll be heading toward the relay base but....

"--Annihilated?"

I affirm Liza.

"Yes, they were caught in a surprise attack by some strong monsters and annihilated."

I found the survivor earlier after seeing that the relay base was annihilated and searched the circumference for any survivor.

Two monsters are lurking at the place where the relay base was, a Mimic Salamander that has [Mimic] race-specific skill, and an Illusion Golem whose race-specific ability is [Optical Camouflage].

Both of them are level 50, it seems they hide their bodies when there's no enemies.

Worse, a level 60 Lava Golem is lurking on the floor above the relay base.

Since the ceiling is thin, it's probably going to drop down when the hero is fighting against the two monsters.

"Now then, what should we do--"

I'd like to hand over the revenge battle to the hero, but it's probably going to be tough for them who have been exhausted from the battle with the demon lord to fight the three monsters.

I don't think the hero himself would lose, but his followers and fellow travelers won't get out of it without any victim.

I evacuate the sole survivor to the [Sub-space] that's been copied from the Phantasmal Labyrinth and head to the destroyed relay base.

"Over there and there, monsters~?"

"Not yet, wait a bit okay."

"Aye."

Tama was going to dispose of them quickly, but even though the two level 50 monsters are weaker than her, their HPs are too high, so I refrained her.

I think Tama can win against them alone, but it would take time and destroy the relay base further.

"First, let's bring them to a place that's easy to fight in."

I execute the second [Another World] today, and create a sub-space for battle.

"It's like the mysterious magic space that often appears in Tokusatsu isn't it?"

Without minding Arisa's remark which had various meaning mixed in, we pull the three monsters into the sub-space I've created.

--BUWARETWEEEERYWA. <TLN: Likely from "bareteru", literally means "exposed."> --MVA.

The Mimic Salamander that was mimicking as a huge rock and the Illusion Golem that was being transparent showed themselves up.

"Guess I'll call the one above too."

It'll be troubling if it enters the battle later, so I destroy the ceiling with the Short Stun magic.

--MUWAGUUUUEMVA.

While roaring incomprehensibly, the level 60 Lava Golem fell down with the ceiling splinters.

It's scattering sparks around, so it looks quite showy.

"Master, your order please."

Liza who's concealing quiet fighting spirit asks.

The other girls are also waiting for my reply.

"Defeat them--you can go at full power."

"Understood."

We're in the center of the sub-space created by [Another World] so there should be no problem even if the girls go at full power. Probably.

"Mia, create the appropriate artificial spirit."

"Nn, Water Dragon (Leviathan) ■■--."

Per Liza's instruction, Mia spoke the artifical spirit's name and began to chant.

"Nana, take care of the enemy in the middle. Keep them at bay until the other vanguards join."

"In agreement with Liza's instruction, so I inform. Equipment Installation."

When Nana muttered so, the artificial magic equipment (Raka Clone) in the form of a choker opened an entrance to sub-space behind her with space magic [Garage].

Transparent [Magic Hands] that extend from it strip off Nana's equipment and install the new golden armor.

The transformation scene looks similar to the ones in various media, but the transformation time is too long compared to ones in fiction.

I won't ask for it to be one millisecond long, I just want it to be one second at least.

Nana who's been equipped with the golden armor activates the『Castle』mode and takes up defensive position with the great shield ready.

The girls who saw Nana's equipment change begin to change theirs similarly.

The enemies are coming to attack of course, but they're trapped in Arisa's space magic [Labyrinth] and can't get close.

"Lulu, remain on stand-by and prepare to shoot anytime. Arisa, please command the support and rearguard appropriately."

"Yes, I understand."

"Okay, leave it to me."

Behind Lulu and Arisa, Tama and Pochi are waiting Liza's instruction with impatient faces.

Liza probably leaves them for the last since no doubt these girls are going to jump out the moment they've been given the order.

"Pochi, overrun the enemy on the right. Tama, assist Pochi."

"Roger, nanodesu."

"Aye aye sir~?"

The two who took shutan pose just for having their turns took Liza's instruction.

"Physical Reinforcement."

"Magic Circulation and Accelerated Thought too naanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi activate their own support skills.

Arisa and Nana put buff-type skills on all the vanguards.

"Right on mark~?"

"Pochi wants Master's reinforcement magic too nodesu."

"Sure, 『Divine Light Blade』 and 『Divine Light Shield』."

Losing to Pochi's cute request, I used the advanced force magic I learned from Hikaru on her.

The names sound like they're of Light magic, it's confusing.

"Overflowing with power~?"

"Fully ready now nanodesu."

"Then I'll release the [Labyrinth] okay."

"Aye."

"Yes, nanodesu."

The girls replied back Arisa powerfully.

"Raka-san, we're going too!"

『Umu, I'll be supporting to the best of my ability.』

I grab the nape of Lady Karina who was going to rush out with Liza and the others.

"You can't Karina-sama. Let's watch them here with me."

It's dangerous for Lady Karina to be near Liza and the others when they're serious.

I think it should be fine with Raka's protection, but I can't guarantee her safety in case she's hit by Liza's dragon spear or Pochi's holy sword.

"I-I also want to fight together desuwa!"

"It's fine."

I'm thinking of letting her have enough battles to let the new name of her technique instilled in her heart.

We have to think the new name for the technique before that though.

"I'll let you fight all you want later."

When I tell her that with a smile, for some reason Lady Karina's face becomes blue and she begins to tremble violently.

Perhaps it's because I made her work a bit too much during the training to learn [Magic Power Operation] back then.

◇

"Labyrinth, release."

"There's no lost child~ so I coerce."

"Tou, nanodesu!"

The moment Arisa released her magic, Nana said some questionable provocative words, Pochi rushed out using Flickering Movement while drawing her sword.

The Illusion Golem intercepts Pochi by swinging its fist at her.

"Shadow Bind~?"

Tama threw kunai at the Illusion Golem's shadow, stopping its movement with Ninjutsu.

"Blue Fang Arc Moon Slash, nanodesu."

Pochi's holy swords draws an arc, cutting the Illusion Golem from below to above.

--Boom.

Pochi kicked the ground at the same time her sword touched the golem, and the golem got thrown up with enough force like it's going to be cut in two.

The holy sword drawing blue light sharply cuts the golem's body.

--Boom boom.

With the second jump, Pochi jumped up 10 meter high, and the holy sword came out of the golem's shoulder.

The golem's enormous HP has been decreased to 40%.

"Pochi, niice~?"

"Not yet, nanodesu!"

Pochi holds her knee and spins a bit.

"Blue Fang Rupturing Strike."

--Bang.

Kicking the air, Pochi pierced the golem like a cannonball.

The golem's HP decreased even further to 30%.

I'm going to overlook the fact that Pochi's body has been buried in the ground due to her over-enthusiasm.

The golem's splinters and dust are greatly scattered at the surrounding, Arisa and Mia who are hiding behind Lulu complain.

Even my Attentive Ears couldn't hear them since it was covered by the roaring sound though.

The golem raises its stout arm at Pochi who's stopped moving for revenge.

The Shadow Binding seems to have been removed by Pochi's attack earlier.

"Don't worry be happy~?"

Tama who's cloned herself before I knew it surrounds the golem with magic swords shining red.

"Crimson Fang Furious Hundred Slash, nyan."

More than a hundred slashes mercilessly assault the golem.

The golem's HP decreases slightly every time a red light flashes.

Her offensive power is lower compared to Pochi's, but the torrent of slashes that slip through the golem's defense break its hand, gouge its stomach, and drill its knee.

--MVAMMMMVVVVAAA.

Voice tinged with fear greater than when it was facing off against Pochi echoed, in the end, the golem became a mountain of crumbling wreckage.

"You did well you two. The next enemy is of equal strength. Give it your all."

Liza asked the two who had finished their battle for the last battle.

The Mimic Lizard that was fighting with Liza was quickly defeated by 16 stabs of Liza's Dragon Spear during Pochi's first attack earlier.

Please use your finisher at least.

I watched over the girls' peerlessness while thinking like that, and then we went back to the original labyrinth.

Because Hero Hayato is arriving at the relay base.

15-12. Hero in the Labyrinth

Satou's here. In games, there is a technique to throw off the rhythm of players who have grown accustomed to the same enemies appearing. by revealing an unexpected enemy The super popular Zombie Hazard game uses it effectively.

◇

"Then I'll be going ahead."

"Un, say hello to Hayato for me okay."

I bring only Lady Karina with me into the labyrinth outside of the [Sub-space].

Arisa and the others are going to join us once they've fixed up their equipment.

They're probably going to rest a bit since there's a light bath set and some light meals on the table.

"Oops, enemies."

During our absence, a large amount of doppelgangers have occupied the relay base.

Thoroughly enough, they're acting as [fallen friends with serious injury] in order to lure the hero to approach them defenselessly.

"E-enemies desuno? Raka-san--"

『--Karina-dono, pay attention to the surroundings in alert. Unfortunately, my enemy search function cannot find any sign of the enemy. However, if Satou-dono has said so, then there must be enemies nearby.』

Raka advised Lady Karina who was shaken.

It'll be troublesome if we meet the hero in battle so I exterminate them all at once with Remote Arrows.

I rain down the Remote Arrows on the doppelgangers pretending to be corpses in front of us, turning them into milk-white liquid.

"--Kya"

The surprised lady Karina hugs my arm.

Seeing people and their clothes melting probably feels bad even though she's seen it before.

"It's all right Karina-sama. The enemies have all been disposed of just now."

Lady Karina looks relieved, but now her eyes are spinning after noticing the fact that she's hugging me.

The impregnable fortress pair, Arisa and Mia aren't here, so I decide to enjoy the situation for a while.

◇

"Hero-sama! The relay base has suffered great damage!"

"Look for survivors! There might be monsters lurking, so always have someone with magic probe equipment with you!"

I could hear the hero's voice on the other side of the hall, they can't see us due to an obstruction.

I pull Lady Karina by hand toward the hero and his party.

There are pillars of stones and burnt wreckages in the center of the hall so the view here is bad.

"Hero-sama! There are people on top of the cliff."

"That's, Satou?"

A knight wearing black armor pointed at us and shouted, a woman wearing silver armor muttered my name quizzically.

The girl with the silver straight hair is Lady Ringrande, the [Sky-tearing Witch], one of the hero's follower. She's the big sister of Sera the [Oracle Miko] who's in my solitary island palace, the daughter of the duke and also a bit of a siscon.

I waved my hands at her and jumped down the cliff.

Lady Karina followed while holding down her fluttering skirt.

"Why is Satou in this place...."

Wariness floated in Lady Ringrande's eyes, she puts her dominant hand on her sword's grip.

When we've come close enough to have a conversation, I open my mouth to greet them.

"Good day, Ringrande-sama, for this occasion--"

"Hero-sama, over here!"

While I was saying my condolence, a black knight appeared, together with Hero Hayato.

"Satou--"

His macho handsome face looks exhausted due to the long-term labyrinth exploration and his battles with the demon lord.

His blue armor is also dented and dirtied, the brilliance of [Hero] that I saw back then has lost its luster.

"I-it's hero Hayato-sama in flesh desuwa."

『Karina-dono, I do not mind if you are delighted, but do not let your guard down.』

Lady Karina reacts like a fangirl when she sees the hero, it's probably because the education she's gotten from Earl Muno the hero researcher since childhood.

While feeling heartwarming looking at her, I turn back to the hero.

"Hayato-sama, please excuse me for my long silence."

My eyes met the hero's while saying that with a smile.

His eyes somehow remind me of the time when I was in a development death march.

They remind me too much of eyes which resent everything in the world, wanting sleep, peace, and liberation from work.

I should have come to help him sooner.

I repent the fact that I had left the hero alone in my mind.

"--It's you this time huh."

The laugh which doesn't suit him at all bothers me.

"Hayato-sama, what's the matter?"

"Take this, Satou!"

The hero drew the holy sword Arondight and swung it.

"<<Shining Blade>>."

The hero's technique which I haven't seen for a long time is faster than before.

I evade the blue light extending from the blade.

"Kyaa, desuwa."

『Gununu, as expected of hero's technique.』

Lady Karina and Raka who seemed to have taken the after-wave of the attack screamed.

Lady Karina seems suspiciously happy about it.

It's hard to understand, but as a hero fan, is she glad for taking the attack with her body?

Still the technique's focus is worse than I expected.

The after-wave of the technique he showed me back then would have not gone toward Lady Karina.

"Shining Strike Rush."

With the help of Flickering Movement, hero Hayato appeared before me.

The holy sword Arondight in his hand releases striking blue light.

"Oops, that's dangerous."

He wasn't aiming at my heart or other vital parts, but the sword strikes were going to pierce my lung and shoulder so I inadvertently evaded.

"Hmph, evading my blow like that, you damn impostor!"

"It's the real one you know?"

"No impostor would admit being one."

--Well, that's true.

They were probably attacked by doppelgangers many times before reaching here.

I keep the hero company to release his stress for a while, and when he had begun to run out of breath, I hurled him away.

The hero fixed his posture mid-air and landed on the ground.

"You can see that I'm the real one if you just appraise me you know?"

"Guess I have to...."

I'm intrigued as to why he didn't appraise me from the beginning, but doing that should prove my innocence now at least.

"Rin, be on guard with drawn sword."

"Y-yes."

Lady Ringrande and the black knights are encircling with drawn swords, and then the other hero's followers showed up behind while being supported by the black knights.

The 21th princess of Saga Empire with luxurious blond hair, Maryest Saga the [Witch] and the big breasted heartwarming-type, Miss Loreiya, a priestess of Parion Temple.

The last one, Seina the hero's scout is in the back with serious injury.

It seems Seina is guarded by the black knights of Saga Empire and red-armored knights dispatched by the weasel crown prince.

The scout-type adventurers whom they seemed to have recruited in Dejima Island are continuing their search in the hall and the surroundings.

There's no one who looks like the engineer dispatched by Weasel Empire.

They probably only showed up in the beginning and then left the rest to the red knights, never actually entering the labyrinth.

"--He's unmistakably the real Satou Pendragon."

The hero declared so after staring at me for around 30 seconds.

"I'm sorry, Satou."

I stopped the hero who was going to apologize with dogeza and asked why he suddenly attacked without appraising first.

"We were attacked by doppelgangers who took forms of Rusus and the others before getting here."

"After we dealt with them, we saw bodies of the relay base members in the passage, and when we checked them some directional antipersonnel mines (Claymores) exploded, seriously injuring Seina and the others."

"After that the doppelgangers persistently attacked us many times by posing as our acquaintances."

I see, so Hero's suspicion was nurtured in order to set up me and hero to crush each other....

"Furthermore, I need at least 10 seconds to see through the doppelganger's identity. It picks up fake information if I only glance lightly."

I see, so there's such a trap too.

My AR reading showed both [Human] and [Doppelganger] so it didn't trouble me, but if that's the case with him then I can understand.

But then, he can just appraise for 10 seconds right?

That question was answered by what the hero says next.

"Moreover, a guy who shouldn't have been here was accompanied by a woman while not even holding a sword nor a wand, that was way too suspicious."

I forgot that I've stored the fairy sword that's usually on my waist in my storage since it was dirtied when I dealt with the vampire.

Magic and magic edge are enough to take care of common monsters after all.

"I'm sorry."

I honestly apologize to the hero.

"I came here with my companions so I had left all the battles for them to take care of."

Next, I asked Lady Karina to demonstrate her rock-crushing fist and Raka's protection.

"Both of you are level 50 huh. You really worked hard."

I felt slightly guilty to hear the hero said that, but Lady Karina behind me was overwhelmed and turned red.

◇

"Master~?"

"Pochi can smell Master's smell over there nodesu."

I could hear Tama and Pochi's voices, so I call them aloud.

I use the [Magic Hand] to receive the girls who waved and jumped down the top of cliff.

The vanguards landed on their own just fine.

"My honey!"

"Hayato-sama, excuse me for my unsightly appearance."

Arisa coped with the hero's gleeful smile with formal graceful tone and behavior.

Tama and Pochi put their hands on Arisa's forehead in panic, going, "Fever~?", "Oh no nanodesu."

Liza who's read the atmosphere picks up the two away.

"Bringing children to this place?"

"They must be disposable slaves."

I heard such conversations from the black knights.

"--Satou."

Hero nonchalantly glanced at Liza and Tama, and then opened his eyes wide.

"Don't tell me, you... used Fiend Drug?"

"No?"

What's this suddenly?

Rather, your face is too close.

"Then why are some of these girls' level at 62?"

The hero vigorously swung his arm and asked passionately.

It seems that Arisa has put the [Thief God Harness] which she always wears on Liza.

Although, in this situation, I don' think he would react differently even if he saw Pochi's and Liza's titles.

"Trained~?"

"Pochi worked really really hard nodesu!"

"It's all thanks to Master's wonderful equipment and support."

The beastkin girls answered in my behalf.

"We were just continuously battling monsters almost to the point of making them go extinct in Selbira Labyrinth and destroyed a monster domain."

I didn't say anything about the Blue Territory since Saga Empire's black knights and Weasel Empire's red knights are here.

After pondering for a while, the hero stares at me with an earnest look.

"Satou, I have a favor to ask."

"Yes, if it's within my power--"

Thus, us team [Pendragon] undertakes the duty to subjugate the demon lord together with hero Hayato's party.

Of course, I'm fully planning to do things behind-the-scenes.

15-13. Hero in the Labyrinth (2)

Satou's here. There was a movie where the characters became small and had an adventure inside someone's body. I found it absurd even with my child's mind, but nevertheless, I still remember intently watching it until the end. I've forgotten the title, but I will surely watch it if they remake the movie.

◇

"Satou, this artifact『Demon Lord's Pointer』is really awesome."

The hero who checked the effect of the magic tool I gave him was surprised.

Apparently the Magic Prober that the Weasel Empire loaned is merely an item that detects distribution of miasma, not an item that can directly point to the demon lord.

"Yes, I found it inside a certain ruin and thought that it would be useful for Hayato-sama, so I brought it here."

The [Demon Lord Compass] that the hero is holding looks like a three-dimensional compass. It's a diamond sphere with hollowed inside and an orichalcum needle in the center.

Of course, it goes without saying that the thing is my creation, so the story behind it is so random.

I made this item before we arrived at Dejima Island, it can receive information from my map and points at the passages that go to the demon lord.

The item receives the transmission wave from neighboring sub-space connected to it, so common magic neutralizer and magic power restriction type of traps should not be able to hinder it.

"Are these small children really stronger than us?"

"Doesn't look like it~"

Rusus and Fifi who have made a comeback at the hero party look like they don't approve of it.

"Tama strong~?"

"Pochi is also very strong nodesu."

"You two don't be conceited."

"Nn, modesty."

Liza and Mia rebuked Tama and Pochi who have been excited since yesterday.

"Is that a magic gun? Is it true that it's better than a bow?"

Miss Wiyaryi is intriguingly looking at the rifle-shaped magic gun that Lulu is holding.

Today Lulu is equipped with the lovely floating shields extend version and a magic gun.

I've told them that these floating shields are something provided by Echigoya Firm, and the support members of hero Hayato, the black knights have also been equipped with them.

Since the black knights usually suffer the greatest loss every time, Loreiya and other priests who are parts of recovery team thanked me together with the black knights.

Further, the red knights are not participating this time since they received the order left behind by the crown prince to stand by.

"Yes, probably."

"Probably?"

"I think the bow Master shoots is even stronger than this."

"Fumu, so it's like that...."

Putting aside the golden armor's options; the Floating Forts and the Accelerated Cannon, the rifle-type magic gun that Lulu holds is only 2-3 times stronger than a Fire Wand.

It's only about half as strong as the military-use Magic Cannon.

"Satou, is it really alright to give us this many『Magic Bags』?"

"Not only that, you also gave us mid and high magic potions, and even precious Elixirs and Blood Beads."

"Yes, I've brought them for Hayato-sama's sake after all."

Lady Ringrande and Princess Maryest thanked me for the items.

Both of them look like they'd die when I reunited with them back then, but they look quite healthy now after having enough rest.

"Ain't it fine, it's a tribute from Rin's brother-in-law, no need to hesitate."

"I haven't acknowledged the marriage with Sera okay."

Lady Ringrande reacted to the scout Seina's words.

I am living with Sera, but we're not in such a relationship.

"Really?"

"Yes, it's just a misunderstanding, my relationship with your little sister Sera-sama is--right, I guess the most applicable term would be 'intimate friends'"

When I replied so, Seina put her hand on her chin and began to think about something.

"Then we have to thank you for the elixirs. I belong to hero so I can't give myself to you, but ya can snatch peerage and money from Saga Empire."

I'm intrigued by the snatching thing, but I myself am more interested in touring the Hero Summoning Magic Circle than materialistic things, so I tell them as such.

"I need not either. If I may ask the impossible, I'd be glad to be given the permission to see the Hero Summoning Magic Circle together with Earl Muno."

They'd be suspicious of me "What for", if I went by myself, but there's no doubt that they'll think of me as a young noble who likes his master if I bring up Earl Muno who's famous for liking hero into this.

Earl Muno must be happy with it too.

"I can ask that much from His Majesty the emperor."

"Are you sure Mary?"

"Yes, having been blessed by Parion-sama, Hero Summoning Magic Circle cannot be destroyed by any normal mean."

Is it like indestructible object that often appear in games?

Now that the princess has made her promise, visiting Saga Empire first might be a good idea if I can't meet the Weasel Empire's emperor after this fight is over.

◇

"Satou, don't die."

"Yes, I'll be praying for Hayato-sama's victory as well."

"Protect Princess Arisa by all cost."

"Yes, I promise."

After arriving at the place where the relay base was located at, Hero and I are going separate ways.

We're not in dispute, the hero party is going to where the demon lord is while we're going to the lowest layer to subjugate the mid-boss-like guardian.

In one of the hero's past battles, the moment they entered the room where the Dungeon Core was located, the demon lord was replaced by the guardian and the Dungeon Core was also changed into Fake Core.

It's quite an enigmatic feature, but according to Arisa, it seems to be an extremely common thing a dungeon master has in the web novel world.

We're in charge of destroying the Fake Core since it doesn't seem like they can be replaced if we destroy them all.

"Princess Arisa, once this fight is over--"

"You can't, Hero-sama."

Arisa stopped the hero who was going to raise a death flag by putting her hand on his mouth.

He seemed like he still had something to say, but it looked like he thought it'd be bad to do that so he didn't say anything more.

"Then, see ya."

"Yes, please be careful."

"Hayato-sama, may the fortune be with you."

After saying that, Arisa kissed the hero's cheek and then the hero's followers poked fun on the hero who was unusually confused. They're probably jealous.

Further, Lady Karina's anxiety was in full display, she couldn't say anything to encourage the hero no matter how hard I tried to push her.

Would have been nice if this was the driving force for her to heal her stranger's anxiety.

"Well then, shall we be going too."

We start to move to the lowest layer where the guardians are once the hero and his party disappeared from our view.

They seemed to be under the impression that there were only one Fake Core, but according to the map, there are seven fake cores and guardians.

Destroying them one by one will be troublesome, but it should be over fast if I just use Teleport Gate magic.

"Hey hey, let's quickly defeat the guardians and finish it."

Arisa talked while we were walking.

"Can we go and help defeat the demon lord?"

"Of course, that's what I'm planning to do."

I'm going to deal with the mysterious [Dungeon Master] who collaborated with the demon lord.

Moreover, if the demon lord can be reasoned with, I'll implant the [God's Fragment] to a different monster and let the hero defeat that impromptu demon lord to make him become the [True Hero].

I don't think it'll go that conveniently well though.

◇

"So there is not only one guardian."

"Master, there are nine bodies so I report."

"Hey, are they the real ones?"

"Yes, they are. That's why, don't make a move okay."

I instruct the girls to stay back, and head to where the guardians are alone.

"Good evening Liedill-sama, what a coincidence for us to meet in such a place."

"Satou, defeat me with all your might. I'll resist the control with all my power to return the last debt"

AR reading, state [Ruled: Dungeon Master] is shown beside her who's sweating a lot from her forehead.

The nine people behind her are probably her attendants.

The attendants are under Ruled state like her.

I want to know how they got under the control of the Dungeon Master, so I swiftly leap to under their busts and make them fall unconsciousness with light attacks.

"What should I say, that's a really blunt attack."

"Really?"

I lightly answered Arisa's muttering and released them from the control with [Magic Break].

It's easy compared to the demon lord's curse that isn't displayed on AR reading.

Now then, I'll check out what has happened.

Not by interrogation which is unreliable, I'm going to check the memory by using the forbidden spell of soul magic, [Soul Intrude].

I can also use the forbidden spell of mind magic, [Psycho Dive], but this one has a high probably of crippling the recipient, so I'm going with the former.

The former is a dangerous magic that can induce impairment if the user tries to read deep memory but there should be no danger of that here since I'm just going to see the recent battles. I can just cut the connection if it looks dangerous.

"Fumu, it doesn't feel that different from the advanced soul magic 『Perfect Possession』 huh."

"What a surprising magic like always."

Arisa was surprised when I talked with Lady Liedill's mouth.

I also feel odd talking with a high-pitched voice.

"Liza, restrain Arisa from playing with my body while I'm investigating."

"Yes, I understood."

After making sure that Liza is holding Arisa who was going to stealthily stretch her hands toward my body tight, I dive into Lady Liedill's consciousness.

◇

"Lady Liedill, although we have enough water and food, if we don't go back soon we'll run out of magic potion and support magic tools."

"It cannot be helped. Let's go back once we explore the next room."

I'm hauling Lady Liedill's memory with an overlooking point of view.

Apparently, Lady Liedill and her party have gone to the lowest layer.

There was a scout adventurer whom I saw in hero's party among her followers.

They were probably able to smoothly explore thanks to his guidance.

Or perhaps, they were led here by someone or something--.

"Is that the thing called guardian?"

Seeing something cowering in the corner of the room, Lady Liedill muttered so.

It seemed her mind knew that it was something different even while muttering.

I thought she had bad eyes, but apparently her [Dragon Eyes] has a power to see through the enemy's rank to an extent.

"Is that a turtlekin with purple shell?"

"No, that's not it--"

The adventurer negated with shaken voice.

"T-that's the demon lord."

Hearing the adventurer's remark, Lady Liedill was convinced, "Just as I thought."

"De-Demon lord?!"

"That's not a mere monster?"

"Looks like it's sleeping, let's escape while we can."

It seems she thinks that it's the right thing to do even while feeling disappointed with her followers' shaken and timid remarks.

"All members, retreat quietly. I forbid you to whisper hereafter."

After whispering that, there was a cliched sound of 'crack' under Lady Liedill's foot.

She stepped on and broke fragile pebbles, not a twig.

The thing reflected on the eyes of Lady Liedill who turned her head timidly is a purple shell that's standing up, and two purple embers-like things peering from its inside.

"Everyone, run with all your might!"

Whipping her body that's been withered by fear, Lady Liedill runs.

Fortunately, the demon lord hasn't stood up yet.

"There's an invisible wall on the exit!"

"Get away! Steel Cutting Flash!"

Lady Liedill shouted her technique name out loud, but that transparent barrier warded it off like bamboo against wind.

"Strange! It lets my sword pass but not my body!"

I don't know any magic like that so it's probably either the Dungeon Master's ability or the demon lord's Unique Skill.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

The demon lord's roar echoed in the room, everyone besides Lady Liedill is binded by [Fear] state.

"This much fear. Compared to the true fear, it's nothing special."

At this time, the thing that appeared in her mind was me in ratkin disguise.

That time I was just using Coercion skill a bit right.

"Lightning magic huh, that's troublesome."

Countless lightning balls that appeared beside the demon lord assault Lady Liedill and her party.

"Block them! Touya's Shield!"

Lady Liedill casted the magic tool she took out of her pouch, and then paper sheet-like thin films piled up, producing a defensive wall.

The wall blocked the demon lord's lightning balls, thunderous roar that could inflict pain on your ears and static electricity that could make your hair's end stand scattered in the surroundings.

The defensive wall was crumbling down, but it was able to block the last lightning balls somehow.

According to her memory, it seemed to be a disposable item given by the Weasel Empire's tactician.

"Touya's Key, open the door!"

She used a disposable item in the shape of a key, and then a black hole appeared on the mysterious barrier.

This is like the "Three Pieces of Charms" folklore.

Next, she sprinkled [Mad Warrior Breath] given by [Brains] on her companions to forcefully release them from their Fear state.

Quite rough, but I think it's an effective countermeasure.

"Go! Warriors, to the battlefield beyond this black hole."

Lady Liedill shouted out loud, her companions replied with a war cry and then they jumped into the hole on the barrier.

She was going to follow after the last one, but at the next moment, her view completely changed like there was a frame drop.

--It's Draw (Evil Snap).

It seems Lady Liedill cannot grasp what's happening, but this is a type of space magic that was also used by the red-body demon in my fight with the [Golden Wild Boar King].

The demon lord who got up on all four is glaring at the Lady Liedill.

Its face and and limbs were not of turtle, but rat.

"gaRYUIEri, DWYNi" <TLN: the raw is just as incomprehensible, that's just how this demon lord talks.> "Demon lord's technique huh."

While venting her frustration, Lady Liedill took an [Acceleration] magic potion from her pouch and drank it.

It's a forbidden reinforcement medicine that the hero Hayato used in his fight with the yellow-body demon.

"wan, naaaa, gohooooooom."

--Wanna go home?

Roar with a meaning reached the ears of her accelerated self.

"Touya's Chain. Let me exceed the limit--<<Selflessness>>."

Along with her words, illusionary sounds of chain could be heard.

Lady Liedill executes Flickering Movement while dodging the demon lord's attacks.

Resistance, like running inside water, assaults her body, the little skin that's exposed is cut by the wind.

Her twin swords are clad in red light.

"Steel-Cutting Grass-Splitting Flash."

Slashing attack that's far faster than the one I received in the weasel empire assails the demon lord.

Its bare rat limbs are torn, purple body hair and blood splash.

The afterglow draws hexagram-like traces, the demon lord falls down in its pool of blood.

"--I did it!"

The future might have changed if only she attacked more.

However, there is no [What if] in a battle.

--ZHWUUU.

Purple light shines in the pool of blood.

"What grotesque."

Lady Liedill took some distance away while muttering, and drank mid magic power potion from her pouch.

She blocks the lumps of silver shot by the demon lord with the swords in her hands.

--Rocket punch?

Wire-like things pull back the punches, they attach back to the arms of the mecha-like reinforced suit that the demon lord is wearing.

It somehow looks like a hero I watched in my childhood.

"It's my turn now--"

Lady Liedill whose magic power has recovered shouts out loud, but then she collapses as if she's lost her strength.

"--Time out already huh."

The sluggishness similar to when I collapsed from overworking in my company in the past assails Lady Liedill.

Her hands lost their strength, the sounds of the swords falling to the ground reached my ears while having no sense of touch.

"Heyaa, these natives sure are capable."

Unlike her hazy view that can't even distinguish the surrounding, her ears can still properly pick up the sounds from the surroundings.

"Yoo, you alright?"

"hu, HUNGryYY"

"Ok, ok. Mikudo Hamburger and Jukyuro Ramen, eat all you want--"

--MUESHIMUESHIHAYGUEEEEWN.

Sounds of the demon lord's roar, gouged ground and small rocks hitting her armor reached my ears.

"Ueee, how gross, that'd appear in me-chan's dream."

I smelt something putrid, sounds of something devouring greedily could be vaguely heard.

"Hey now, I'll put out proper food here, so don't eat, those things."

The accuracy of information that Lady Liedill is getting is decreasing.
Looks like she's about to faint.

"Fuhn, a beauty that I-chan like, but I-chan am not into bestiality."

For some reason, only his voice can be clearly heard.

--Bestiality?

Besides her slightly longish ear, Lady Liedill who's a longearkin (Booch) looks exactly like a normal human.
The term doesn't fit.

The recollection still continues while I'm thinking.

It appears there's no stop.

"It's a shame, but guess I-chan'll use her to keep that abnormal guy away."

I relive the experience of having Lady Liedill's soul binded by something.

It feels quite disgusting. The worst, I want to hit the Dungeon Master right here and now.

"Don't think she can win at all, but buy enough time for me-chan to run 'kay."

After saying that, the Dungeon Master left.

◇

"--Fuh, that was tiring."

After severing my connection with Lady Liedill, I catch the black mist flowing into my head and tear it off.

Apparently, Lady Liedill was also used as a booby trap.

He probably tried to see if I could be [Ruled] through Lady Liedill.

"Good work! Now Liza-san! Release me already."

Arisa who's taken her shoes off and desperately stretching her toes toward me appeals to Liza in a hurry.

She probably wanted to join the girls who are snuggling on me like cats in the cats pot.

Lady Karina was also resting hear head on my lap together with Tama and Pochi, but she quickly took some distance at lightning speed the moment our eyes met.

"Master, may I?"

"Yes, you can release her."

I nod to Liza.

The released Arisa was making a jump like a certain third generation thief, but I catch her with [Magic Hand], and tell Arisa, who's fuming in the air, the information I got.

"Arisa, it seems the Dungeon Master here is either a reincarnated or a transported person."

15-14. Hero VS Demon Lord

"Hero-sama, Seina-dono has returned."

The small Seina who went ahead during our short break runs up to me.

The excessive fat on her breasts seems obstructive. It's a shame, she has a childish face and all.

I think childish face looks better with super smooth flat line like of those little girl maids.

"He's there, he wasn't wearing the thin turtle shell like before, it's silver metal armor now."

"He『Transform』ed again...."

I recalled how the demon lord was like the first time we met him.

The demon lord at that time looked like a ratkin person with purple fur you can see anywhere but with persecution complex.

The moment he saw us, he screamed, made a strange pose, wore an insect animal suit and [Transform]ed with a purple muffler on his neck.

His level was only 55 when we first met, but it rose every time we fought him and his level the last time we fought was 62.

It should've been far lower than my 71, but his [Transform]ed self was surprisingly strong.

We probably wouldn't have the advantage if he didn't have the limitation of quickly running out of gas and stopped moving.

We lost our companions due to that carelessness though.

I don't wanna feel like that ever again.

"But, is it alright to leave it to Satou-chi? Shouldn't I go instead?"

"It's alright, Satou should be able to do something about the Dungeon Master."

I told Seina with confidence that has no basis.

That guy will be absolutely fine--he's a mysterious guy who oozes such atmosphere.

It's frustrating, but I can entrust Honey to that guy.

"I think Satou can do it somehow."

"It's rare for Wi to be that believing."

"Really?"

The other girls don't seem to have any objection either.

It was only Rin who said some siscon remark, "But, I still won't hand over Sera."

I've advised her that minding it too much would produce the opposite result, but it seems she loves her little sister too much she can't control herself.

"We'll defeat the demon lord this time."

Declaring so to my companions, I head toward the hall where the demon lord is waiting.

There's only two demon lords left.

Nanashi reported that the demon lord on a different continent was destroyed by the Ancient Dragon's breath.

The only two left are the demon lord ahead and the demon lord in the ratkin country.

I'm sorry for Nanashi, but I'll let him to handle the demon lord in the ratkin country that hasn't showed any sign at all.

--Once I'm done with this fight and win against the demon lord, I'll go back to Japan. Japan where my little sister and my childhood friend are waiting.

◇

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

The demon lord roared the moment we entered the hall, purple waves are running on top of his silver armor.

"Hayato."

"Yeah, I know."

I nod at Mary who looks anxious.

"He's transforming! Let's stall for time until the effect expires."

His appearance remains the same even after the effect expires, but he won't be in the overwhelming reinforced state anymore.

We're aiming for the time when the purple aura disappears.

"It looks weak somehow."

"Doesn't that Unicorn-like horn look dangerous?"

"And he's hunching a bit, he probably attacks mainly by charging and stabbing with that horn."

The girls are looking at the demon lord who's wearing (tokusatsu) hero-like costume, analyzing him.

I'm familiar with that appearance.

"Rin, Wi, attack him with the Fire Bird Wand and arrows!"

The two quickly attack as per my instruction.

"Have you forgotten Hayato, attacks won't work on him during the transformation."

"Yeah, I know."

While assenting Mary, I watch over the outcome of the attacks.

"Ah, it was blocked."

"Is that the Flexible Shield of Force magic?"

"The shape looks strange."

Just as I thought--.

It's the worst kind among something with a unicorn-shaped horn that I know.

"That's an absolute defense. I'll be the vanguard and restrain him. Do only attacks with knockback until its effect expires!"

"I'm going too."

"It'll be dangerous with only Hayato."

Rusus and Fifi grinned and volunteered to help restrain the demon lord.

It's dangerous, but I'm honestly saved if the two are with me.

"Let's see which's stronger, my great『Divine Power (Unique Skills)』or your『Transform』."

I activate my [Strongest Lance (Nothing cannot be Penetrated)], and [Invincible Shield (Nothing can Penetrate)], and close in the demon lord with Flickering Movement.

The assault rifle that the demon lord produced out of nowhere spouts fire.

"Tsk, explosive bullets huh!"

My Invincible Shield blocked the small explosions, but the shock still hit my body.

He must know the way to fight against someone with absolute defense too.

"Heee~n, here here~"

--ZHWUUUWN.

Provoked by Rusus, the demon lord averts his attention away from me.

The demon lord's stout arm grazed Rusus.

"Ouch."

Even though it only grazed her, Rusus's arm guard was blown off, fresh blood scattered in the air.

The demon lord shot Rusus to finish her, but she dodged the attack by using the terrain.

"Rusus, get back."

"I'll leave it to you Fifi!"

In Rusus's place who's fallen back to recover, this time it's Fifi's turn to restrain the demon lord while waiting for me.

"Kept you waiting, Fifi."

"Ehen, I still can go on."

I smile back at Fifi's fearless words and fling words filled with provocation skill at the demon lord.

"Let's test who's stronger between you and the great me--<<Shining Strike

Rush>>"

My holy sword Arondight clad in blue light stabs at his octagonal shield.

Metallic and heavy sounds echo, blue and purple light are intensely scattering in the surroundings.

The light splinters that went around the back of my shield burn my back, but I can't use the [Limitless Recovery] here yet.

Believing in Loreiya and the others healing magic, I concentrate at the demon lord in front of me.

"WOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

Not losing to my yell filled with fighting spirit, the demon lord roared deafeningly.

Responding to our shouts, intense light of blue and purple dyed the surroundings.

The magic power and after-waves that fill the place is warping the surrounding air and floors.

With a boom sound, my body fell down about 10 centimeters.

The ground below us probably sunk.

Without getting distracted by unnecessary things, I devote myself to strike the demon lord with all my power.

◇

"....A draw huh."

Our strength-on-strength competition was never settled as I endured the 180 seconds until the time-out.

The purple aura covering the demon lord's body has disappeared.

Judging from the terrible sights of the floors and the walls, my companions seem to have prepared various support attacks to stop the demon lord from fleeing.

"But, now's our great turn."

I declared as such to the unmoving demon lord.

--ZHWUUU.

The demon lord roared lightly.

"Dunno what you're trying to pull, but don't think it'll let you do that easily."

The slashing attack of the holy sword Arondight swings down on the demon lord.

Without being able to guard with his arms or weapons, the demon lord received the holy sword with his purple costume.

I can feel the sensation of magic defense destruction from the holy sword.

However, the costume that's not protected by Unique Skill can't possibly defend against the holy sword clad with the effect of [Strongest Lance (Nothing Cannot be Penetrated)].

--ZHWWUUUUN.

The demon lord's costume split open, purple blood scatter, the demon lord falls down behind.

The blood spilled on the ground cause white smoke.

The acid blood is dangerous enough to break through mid level defensive magic, but my [Invincible Shield (Nothing can Penetrate)] and Loreiya's advanced defensive magic block it all.

I stop thinking needless things and ready the next technique.

The blue light draws a perfect circle, matching the holy sword's movement.

"--<<Shining Blade>>"

Blue light assaults the demon lord crawling on the ground.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

The demon lord roared while emitting purple right before my finisher hit it.

He might be going to use the directional anti-personnel mine like before.

I jump back while still maintaining the stance of the technique.

"There's no change in equipment, only his appearance that's changed a bit. Purple light seem to be leaking from his joints somehow."

Don't tell me--.

I appraise him, his state's changed to [Berserker].

He's way too faithful to the original. I can feel yer love y'know.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

Together with the roar, the demon lord jumps up into the air.

With a woosh, dark purple wings of light appear on the demon lord's back.

"Convenient."

A bit later after Wi's muttering, Mary and the others who have finished their chanting releases the forbidden spell.

"""".... ■■■■■■■■■■ <<Divine Plasma Pole>>""""

The blinding pillar of light appears in the center of the hall, swallowing the demon lord.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

"We did it!"

"Yeah, with such a powerful magic, even a demon lord shouldn't get out of it unscathed."

I could hear the black knights' cheers.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

And, as if ridiculing them, the demon lord roared to signify his well being.

"I-Impossible! How could one who belongs to evil be unhurt inside the forbidden spell of light magic!"

"Oh, God Parion, please bestow upon us your protection."

The black knights and Parion priests who have just been added to this party have begun to panic hearing the demon lord's roar.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

His hands pierce through the light pillar, and then he shows up behind the hands that bend the light.

--He's truly unhurt.

Even the yellow demon whose level was higher than this demon lord shouldn't be fine after receiving such a forbidden spell.

Just why--.

"It's like the time when the demon lord was about to transform."

--That's it.

I understand after hearing Rin's muttering.

That berserker state was a second transformation huh.... I've made a huge mistake.

Purple light is flickering in the demon lord's mouth.

"Loreiya, block it!"

I shot <<Shining Blade>> toward the demon lord's mouth at the same time I gave the order. I couldn't even afford to shout out the technique's name.

"O Divine Talisman! 『Protection』!"

The Talisman that Loreiya holds high up produces blue light that protects my companions.

We shouldn't abuse it considering the compensation, but any other method would not make it in time.

The defensive wall created by the Talisman and the dark purple breath are scattering intense sparks and light on the surrounding.

The shocking thunderous sound is really making my stomach queasy.

My ears have been buzzing for a while, I can't hear well.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

After he had done emitting the breath, the demon lord roared at the ceiling.

Responding to that, oozing shadows beside the demon lord are--.

『Arrived as ordered. Brown Third, obtruding here.』

『The same, Brown First, obtruding.』

Two greater demons gushed out of the space.

Both of them are level 60.

Greater demons that we had never encountered so far, appearing at such timing....

"Hmph, greater demons are no match for me no matter how many they are!"

Even while feeling the absurdity, I rouse up my fighting spirit by feeding on that indignation.

However, the bad news continue--.

"Hero-sama, there's a big crowd of monsters behind."

"Please look above! So many slimes they're touching the ceiling!"

The black knights reported.

"Hayato, leave the greater demons to us."

"Yea, that's right. Having no moment to show up feels lonely."

Rusus and Fifi glare at the greater demons with their beloved swords in their hands.

"Wi and I will support Rusus and Fifi. Seina, please help the black knights to deal with the small fries and the slimes, Rin and Loreiya, fight the demon lord with Hayato!"

Mary gave orders to our companions without hesitation.

I feel we're at a bit of disadvantage, but we should be able to manage somehow.

In short, we can turn things around if the great me just defeat the demon lord.

"Hayato! Dodge!"

Crisis Perception skill reacted at the same time as Rin's warning.

I evaded the black sword right before it touched me, but I still got a shallow wound.

"Fumu, good reaction. Brown Zero, pleased to make you an acquaintance."

A brown greater demon whose upper body appeared from the shadow sinks back into it.

My counterattack didn't reach it, as the shadow I hit was merely a shadow.

"You shouldn't look away, Hero. Brown Seventh obtruding."

"Hoohoo, where are you looking at Hero. Brown Sixth obtruding--"

I couldn't even crack jokes while fighting against the despair of the appearing greater demons.

Compared to the school of the Great Monstrous Fish Tovkezeera the yellow demon summoned back then, there's still a hope to turn this situation around.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

The demon lord's roar echoed, its wings increased to six with the third transformation.

The halo on his back makes him look like a transcendental being here.

--However, that's merely a look.

He's still way off from being transcendent.

Ya can't be one if you're not at least as senseless as Nanashi.

"GUOAAAAAAAA"

"T-The monsters spurted out!"

While hearing the black knights' and Seina's screamd behind, my mind has made up to defeat the demon lord even if we both end up dying.

It's sad that I won't be able to meet my little sister and my childhood friend in the former world anymore, but My Honey who's in the same labyrinth will be in danger if I don't defeat him here.

"《SING》Arondight,《PLAY》Tunas"

I recited the Scriptures of the Holy Sword and the Holy Armor that had lost its effect once again, activated my trump card, the [Limitless Recovery], and drank the [Acceleration] magic potion last resort.

--Let's do this, demon lord.

I'll put some intense get-well gifts in your face.

Hero's life ain't that cheap y'know!

15-15. Hero VS Demon Lord (2)

Satou's here. I like protagonists who appears when the going gets tough, but I end up distrusting them if they always appear at the most ideal time. It must be just because they're loved by the goddess of fortune right?

◇

"Fuuh, this is the last one."

"Still, for it to be only breakable by the Dragon Spear or Master's fist, a shield created by these Fake Cores would be quite strong don't you think."

Arisa spoke of her impression as we destroyed the last Fake Core.

"Brittle~?"

"Pochi can easily break it with her fingers nodesuyo?"

Tama and Pochi picked the fake core's fragments on the ground and showed Arisa its brittleness.

"Master, we've collected several Golem Souls and a Golem Heart from the guardians earlier."

"Thank you Liza."

Liza collected softball-sized magic cores and an item specific to this labyrinth.

I put the loot into the Storage.

There were some movements on the map I had put on display at the smallest size.

Looks like the hero party has arrived at the demon lord's room.

"Master, this is bad! Teleport and Clairvoyance have been blocked."

"--You're right. It seems the labyrinth's wall is preventing it since teleporting by sight is still possible."

"Item Box, 『Open』--Looks like this one is usable."

It appears we can't get out using teleport.

Looking at the Menu, moving with [Unit Movement] is still possible.

Monsters were gathering in the room where the hero is fighting the demon lord while I was checking things.

"I'm worried about hero and the others. Let's quickly aid them."

After telling that, I head back to the relay base with the girls.

In order to increase our speed, Arisa and Mia who can't use Flickering Movement are being carried by Liza and Nana, and Lulu whose Flickering Movement skill level is low is being carried by me.

Thanks to using Flickering Movement and Ground Shrink alternatively, we arrived at the column-shaped magma room next to the relay base in only several minutes.

Lady Karina was slightly late, but she caught up somehow.

I recover the girls' magic power using [Magic Power Transfer] while they're having some drinks and light meals.

"Masfhew (Master)~?"

Her words were hard to understand since there was a beef jerky in her mouth.

"That looks like an enemy."

The space where Tama was pointing at warped, and a brown greater demon appeared blocking the narrow passage.

"As decreed by my master, Brown Fifth--"

"Liza."

"Understood."

Without listening to the end, Liza's Dragon Spear pierced through the greater demon's magic core.

The greater demon tried to bear hug Liza as its last useless struggle, but that never came to fruition.

"Aku Soku Zan~?" <TLN: Aku=evil, Soku=immediate, Zan=Slay.>
"Judgment, nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi swallowed their beef jerkies and delivered the finishing blow to the greater demon.

"Eii"

Lulu's new accelerated cannon shot out, and blew off the upper half of a greater demon that was appearing on the wall beyond the passage.

"Cleaning up the rest."

Arisa's space magic turned the rest of the demon's body into dust along with the surrounding wall.

"Mwu."
"Our turn will come, so I tell Mia."
"Everyone is too strong desuwa."

Mia, Nana and Lady Karina who didn't have any turn complained.

During that relaxed atmosphere, suddenly there's sounds of dropping stones and something falling into water.

"This time they're destroying our footholds huh--"

The footholds around us have begun to fall, the room becomes a <<Neutral Magic>> room where magic and skills that use magic power can't be used.

"Don't worry be happy~?"
"Good grief, if it weren't us, we'd have been wiped out long time ago."

The vanguard group sink their toes into the wall and forcibly hang onto it.

I secure the powerless rear guard girls by the same combination of movements I used earlier.

We forcefully enter the tunnel and resume moving.

We advance through the bewildering changing passages with the optimum route, heading to the boss room where the hero party is.

The incorrigible [Dungeon Master] kept trying to hinder us, but we easily cleared them all, continuing to advance the passages.

It feels like I'm hearing the Dungeon Master grinding his teeth, but I must be just imagining things.

Nana who acts as the vanguard gives her report the moment we entered the last passage before the boss room.

"Master, there's a crowd of monsters to the front so I tell."

"Liza, Pochi, take care of the front. Tama, support them."

"Understood."

"Yes, nanodesu."

"Aye aye sir~"

I received Arisa from Liza and gave them the instructions to eliminate the monsters.

It's a crowd of monsters with levels ranging from 30 to 50.

Every monster has troublesome abilities like paralysis and petrification, but as long as the girls are protected by my support magic, there is no problem even if their opponent is a greater demon.

I can't say that it's perfect though since there's a lot of abnormal demon lords.

"Breakthru~?"

"Nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi shouted from beyond the howling monsters and bloody smell.

Looks like they've arrived at the boss room.

◇

"Good, hero and the others are safe."

I grasp the situation while feeling relieved.

We're at the entrance of the hall where the hero and the others are fighting, it's an elevated ground where Princess Maryest, Priestess Loreiya, critically injured black knights and several members of the entourage who have fallen unconscious are located.

The black knights are fighting the monsters, piling up the bodies even while being mortally wounded.

Monster corpses and critically injured black knights are all over the slope to the hall too.

It's probably thanks to Priestess Loreiya's magic that they haven't died.

Those girls are collapsed on the ground due to the unusual [Overdose] state from overusing magic recovery potion.

Apparently, they're already at their limit just as we arrived.

In the back of the undulated hall, the hero and the demon lord is fighting, the hero is supported by Lady Ringrande the [Sky-tearing Witch] and Miss Wiyaryi the archer, while the demon lord is helped by two greater demons.

The children-like lesser demons split from the greater demons are hindering them.

And, Rusus and Fifi are being chased by three greater demons on a do-or-die marathon in the center of the hall.

I never thought that I would see a real-life spectacle of an MMO raid war.

There are flying monsters up in the air of the hall, attacking when they find a chance.

After confirming the situation in 0.1 second, I gave the green light to the girls.

"Demons! Jump in like insects if you do not fear your ruin, so I announce."

With Nana's ranged provocation which somehow felt chuunibyou-ish, five greater demons turned their attentions toward Nana and came attacking in.

Together with the flying monster and the children-like lesser demons.

"Like moths to flames! Three consecutive Blue Inferno, for all!"

The blue flames released by Arisa burned down the demons and the flying monsters in the room.

The roaring sounds are slightly painful on the ears.

Arisa didn't have enough magic power to consecutively shoot three Blue Inferno magic, so she drank a high magic recovery potion after every shot.

Her magic power should be replenished during the magic's casting time.

Rusus and Fifi are screaming behind a rock, but they're fine since they're protected by my space magic there.

The cloud of dust from the explosion is coming to this high ground so I blow it away with [Blow] magic.

"Monopoly~?"

"No fair nodesu! Pochi also wants to have a part nodesu!"

"You two, don't let your guard down."

After Liza reproved them, greater demons who used their friends as shield showed up beyond the white cloud. The one they used as shield lost all its health point and disappeared into dust.

Only two have survived.

"Nn, Tempest."

The gold-colored artificial spirit Garuda who's floating behind Mia shot out golden feathers clad in lightning.

The barrage of golden feathers blow the two greater demons to the ceiling, making a violent whirlpool that looks like cloud of blood, cutting up the greater demons.

"Pochi, Tama, let's back up with Magic Edge Cannon."

"Aye~?"

"Roger nanodesu."

Liza is using Magic Spear Douma, while Tama and Pochi are using their True Silver magic swords to shoot a barrage of Magic Edge Cannon.

It doesn't look like they're serious, the power seems a bit weak.

Lulu is cleaning up the small fries who escaped Arisa's attack with a sub-machine gun-type magic gun.

I walk to Priestess Loreiya and Princess Maryest while watching over the girls.

"I'm glad that you two are safe."

"Satou-san, thank you for your help."

"Did that little princess Arisa just use the magic that only exist in legend?"

"Yes, she did. She got a bit of help from an Artifact however."

I'm sorry for Arisa, but since Princess Maryest's reaction was a bit extreme, I made up some story a bit.

"More importantly, please use this. It's a recovery item I got from the queen of the fairy."

"Sir Pendragon, right now we can't--"

"Please don't worry."

I stopped Princess Maryest who was about to say their [Overdose] states, let her grasp a crystal pendant and pushed its tip.

Of course, since it's merely an accessory, I use [Magic Power Transfer] right at that timing to recover her magic power.

I do the same with Priestess Loreiya and the preparation here is complete.

I head to Hero Hayato to help him.

After rescuing Lady Ringrande from an Emerald Golem that appeared out of nowhere, I stand beside the hero who's fighting the demon lord.

"I've kept you waiting, Hayato-sama."

"Is that you Satou, thanks for coming."

The hero has wounds all over his body, so I sprinkle mid magic potion to heal his external wounds.

I used recovery magic at the same time since the effect would be too weak otherwise.

"Allow me to help."

After telling so, I draw the fairy sword and stand beside him.

My level is public ally 50 so there should be no problem in joining this fight.

Moreover, there is something that I must do on the front line.

"I won't let Satou to steal all the spotlight."

Lady Ringrande takes up her [Lightning Great Sword] and stands on the opposite side.

Miss Wiyaryi is standing-by behind.

Looks like she's focused to be the support.

"Don't die."

"Yes, of course."

Like a willow, I parry all the attacks of the demon lord who came attacking on all fours like a mad beast, and prepare the backhands when the hero attacks.

The demon lord's movement is agile and tricky, so it's quite difficult not to overdo it.

"Satou! Don't steep in too far ahead! The demon lord attack can scoop your meat even if it misses y'know!"

"Yes, Hayato-sama."

I kept close to the demon lord since there was a little something I needed to do, but since the hero warned, I took some distance away.

I should make it in time from here if I'm just ready with Ground Shrink.

"F-fast! Leaving Hayato and the demon lord aside, I can't believe Satou can also move as fast...."

Since Lady Ringrande was very surprised, I move as if I evade the demon lord's attacks by accident while consciously keeping my speed at the level of an ordinary person.

It seemed difficult at a glance, but it's actually quite easy thanks to [Foresight: Antipersonnel Battle] skill.

Of course Lady Ringrande isn't only watching without doing anything.

She hindered the demon lord's movement using quickly chanted [Explosions] at good timings.

"Thank you for waiting!"

"Don't forget about me too."

Rusus and Fifi also participate to cut up the demon lord.

Unlike Lady Ringrande, the two who are pure warriors seem to be able to catch up to the demon lord's agile movement.

"Hook, line, and sinker~?"

"Chop chop nanodesu."

Starting with the beastkin girls, the girls gleefully exterminate the monsters who rushed inside the hall at the entrance.

It seems the Dungeon Master has ran out of bullets, there's no strong monster to be found anywhere.

"Satou, behind you!"

"Thank you, Wiyaryi-san."

I cut up the Dust Golem that appeared behind me using the fairy sword reinforced with Magic Edge.

The magic core that fell from the crumbling golem revives into an Ash Mud Golem.

It's probably a harassment from the Dungeon Master.

"Tsk, don't get in my way!"

The hero seems to be piling up stresses from this harassment.

Let's curtail it at the source.

"Tama, please collect the magic core."

"Nin nin~?"

When I muttered in whisper, a pink ninja that appeared from the shadow made a hand signal for, "Roger", and disappeared into the shadow.

Further, a Tama doll takes Tama's place fighting the monsters.

"Done~?"

I heard Tama's small voice from the shadow.

"Thanks, that really helps."

"Ehehe~"

I said my thanks at the shadow, and then Tama's presence vanished after leaving a bashful voice.

The real body changed place with the doll and resumed the battle with the other girls.

"Looks like the small fry has stopped appearing."

"Even Dungeon Master's assistance is probably not inexhaustible."

I replied Lady Ringrande's muttering while dodging the demon lord's claw.

"Alright! The『Transformation』ended. Rin, Satou, let's press on him!"

Checking the hero's words, I see that the purple light that had been emitting from the demon lord since a while ago has disappeared.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

I wanted to persuade the demon lord if he could talk, but it seems he has lost his ego already.

Lady Ringrande erases the lightning balls that appeared around the demon lord with [Break Magic].

She's pretty great considering the demon lord's level is higher.

"Then, please excuse me for this--Magic Edge Rush (Vorpal Lance)."

Imitating Pochi's finisher, I perform a charging stabbing attack.

The fairy sword would break if I did it seriously, so I curb the power to be at the same as level 50 Pochi.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

I break the thick magic barrier that the demon lord created.

Stopping just before I hit the main body.

"Twin Sword Dance!"

"Great Sword Cut!"

Rusus and Fifi who showed up by slipping in hit the demon lord with two contrasting techniques.

The finishers cut up the demon lord's body that's been stripped off its magic defense.

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

The nimble Rusus was able to dodge the demon lord's counterattack, but Fifi who stiffened after using the technique got hit and fell to the ground.

Her health point decreased greatly, but it was still just a normal serious injury.

"This is the end, demon lord!"

Hero's holy sword, Arondight bursts out with intense blue light.

"<<SHINING STRIKE RUSH>>"

The hero's finisher on the demon lord--.

◇

"Fuuh, that was way too close, I thought I-chan would die." <TLN: He said 'Ore-chan'. Ore is a masculine form of 'I'.>

A weaselkin with purple body hair said with a jest while looking over the small ratkin demon lord on the ground.

His voice is trembling contrary to his tone.

This place is the <<Dungeon Master Room>> located in a different map than the one I was in just now.

"--Yeah, I was worried that you wouldn't come to help."

The weaselkin turned around in shock to hear my voice.

"Hello, nice to meet you, Dungeon Master-dono, or perhaps--"

He saved the demon lord at the last minute, it was worth it waiting on the front line.

"--I should call you Weaselkin Demon Lord?"

Toward the last demon lord prophesied in the oracle, I asked.

15-16. Hero VS Demon Lord (3)

Satou's here. I sometime see the argument, [Is human right necessary for villains] made in various media. I think there are mixed views about this particular topic, but I believe a lesson that incites "doing crimes is not worth it" thought is needed at least.

◇

"Acha~ This is it huh."

The weaselkin demon lord's expression stiffened for an instant, but then he went back to his usual jestful behavior.

I put a marker on the weasel demon lord during this chance.

"Rat fatty, looks like this is the end for us-chan eh."

--ZHWUU.

The ratkin demon lord in the corner of the room weakly replied the weasel demon lord.

He's pining his nose, it doesn't look like he's going to make a move.

His health point is running out too, he looks like he'll die if left alone.

"Sorry but, make it as painless as possible 'k?"

The weasel demon lord claps his own neck and turn a miserable face at me.

Strange. He's acting quite gallant--.

I see the other hand of the weasel demon lord who's in front of the Dungeon Core moving restlessly on the opposite side.

--Yup, that's that huh.

"I forbid the use of Dungeon Core."

Weasel demon lord's fingers on the control board of the Dungeon Core stop moving.

"Oh no."

Purple light flow on the weasel demon lord's body--.

"I forbid the use of Unique Skills."
"Bit too late, see."

--A missile-like thing appeared between me and the weasel demon lord.

The Crisis Perception made an intense reaction, I used Ground Shrink and touched the missile, putting it away into my Storage.
Its AR reading, [USA-made ICBM], was shown for an instant before it disappeared.

The modern weapons summon the rat demon lord used was this guy's power huh.

"Rat fatty!"

--ZHWWWUUUUUUUWN.

The rat demon lord who should have been half-dead roared.

The rat demon lord who's wearing a hero costume that looks like a creature with a medal on its forehead tears his own chest from both sides.

--What?

"Rat demon lord! I forbid the use of Unique Skills."

I used [Geass] on the rat demon lord while putting up Flexible Shields in front of me.

At the next moment, a cone-shaped radial heat ray burns down the <<Dungeon Master Room>>.

It's about as strong as the forbidden spell of fire magic that Arisa uses, <<White Inferno>>, or perhaps even more.

After shooting that, the rat demon lord fell down and began to convulse.

Apparently, he used the last of his power for that attack.

"As expected of Rat Fatty! Even that abnormal shouldn't be unscathed after getting that kind of attack--there's no corpse?"

"I forbid you to act."

I bound the weasel demon lord from acting before his question was answered.

"J-just how--"

"No need for you to know."

I also bound the rat demon lord and heal him enough to not die.

"What are you going to do?"

"I can overlook your life at least if you quit being a demon lord and Dungeon Master."

I'll let him live as a normal person and atone for his sins.

"You serious?"

The weasel demon lord looks surprised to hear my answer.

"Yea, I promise."

After I said that, weasel demon lord began to laugh out loud.

After laughing for a while, his face suddenly turns serious--.

"Aren't ya so sweet eh? I-chan feel like vomiting."

--So he spat out.

"By any chance, did you hear our-chan circumstances from the emperor?"

Circumstances?

"Huh? The things about us being bound by the emperor's geass, forced to become demon lords, and put to the depth of the labyrinth to become decoys for the hero, see?"

I see, the mastermind is the weasel emperor huh.

"Don't tell me, you were saying you wanted to help us without knowing that?"

I nod at the weasel demon lord.

"Uwaah, way too soft, I can't understand."

His face warped as if saying, "He's beyond help", his dark eyes look down on me.

"Just saying, I-chan is a scoundrel eh?"

I know that.

"I even like being a Dun Mas. Dun Mas is nice y'know. Toying with people's life brutally and cruelly, snatching people's dignity in cold blood erotically, and playing around crushing people's sense."

Pictures that match the weasel demon lord's words are floating around him.

There are many acts of barbarity so bad I want to look away.

A rare feeling of anger to punish the weasel demon lord wells up within me.

"You want to save the life of someone who's done atrocities that would have been left in history if we were in the former world? Or are you someone who's against death penalty?"

However, my mind which was blinded by anger notified me of something wrong.

"You should kill villains when you get the chance eh? I mean--"

--That's it! The pictures.

He shouldn't have been able to display them if he couldn't use the Dungeon Core.

My Geass isn't working on him, or perhaps it's been canceled along the way--.

"Timeout."

I was thrown into the air of the lava room at the same time the demon lord spoke.

The room is still under the effect of <<Neutral Magic>>, so I can't use magic or skill that uses magic power.

Pulled by the gravity, I'm falling headlong toward the magma.

"Bye bye by~"

The weasel demon lord's laughter echo in the dungeon.

--Unfortunately for him, only this much can't be considered an adverse situation.

I kicked and sent a big rock I took out from my Storage flying and pierced it with my hand in mid-air.

"Whoae?"

Ignoring the shocked Dungeon Master, I invade the Dungeon Master again.

He had left behind a trail for me to re-invade due to him uselessly laughing.

"Oy oy, what the heck! What the hell are you!"

The demon lord who operated the Dungeon Core turned his head at me in surprise.

"Are you God or something!"

"Nope."

Since I don't know how the weasel demon lord canceled my Geass, I open the entrance to the sub-space labyrinth and throw him there.

For now, my priority is separating him away from the Dungeon Core.

The rat demon lord's geass doesn't seem to have been canceled, so I leave him behind and enter the sub-space labyrinth.

"dIE, eH!"

Lines of modern weapons open fire at me all at once.

The bullets scooped out the walls and broke the stalagmites, the cannonballs made holes on the ground while scattering dust and roaring sounds.

Numerous warhead missiles created blooming explosions, huge ballistic missiles blew away the labyrinth's floor and walls.

"sTiLl, aliVE eH!"

The weasel demon lord is in a dangerous state. He's becoming gigantic while his body is burbling.

"I forbid the use of Unique Skills!"

"USeless, uselESS, eH!"

Unaffected by my Geass, the weasel demon lord brought up anti-aircraft cannons and main tanks around him, and let out rain of bullets and shells at me.

I mow down the modern weapons with a shot of [Laser].

--UHYOOOOWN.

Looks like he used too much Unique Skills, the weasel demon lord lost all its sense and went completely mad.

At the same time, his skills, titles and Unique Skills are now displayed on the AR readings.

Apparently, the concealment is gone when he went mad.

Weasel demon lord's Unique Skills are [Goods Summoning], [Freewheeling], and [Power that Brings Misdeeds].

That second skill probably neutralized my Geass.

I wanted to remove the [God's Fragment] with the power of demon lord Shizuka who's under my protection and let him live the rest of his life as a criminal, but that doesn't seem to be possible.

Since he's unaffected by my Geass, I can't guarantee the safety of demon lord Shizuka.

I don't want to do a hypocrisy that would endanger my friends.

--UUUHYYYOOOOOOOWN.

Combat helicopters and VTOL fighters appear on the spacious floor that has lost its walls and ceiling.

--UUUHYYYOOOOOOOWN.

He even brought up an Aegis warship an an aircraft carrier.

Although, there's no way the weasel demon lord would be fine after using that much Unique Skills power.

The demon lord's body is split, and then dark purple light leak out of the fissure.

I ignore all those military forces and jump near the weasel demon lord's foot with Ground Shrink.

Tremendous offensive attacked me, but everything happened behind.

"《TO VICTORY》"

The blade of the holy sword Excalibur shined dazzlingly after I recited the scripture.

With just a slight swing, the demon lord split in two, and the blue light overflowing from the holy sword evaporated the demon lord.

『That was cheating eh』

『How terrible』

『Poor I-chan』

I swing the Divine Sword at the [God's Fragments] that appeared on the place where the demon lord was, eliminating them all at once.

The dark purple particles are absorbed into the Divine Sword.

Still, considering the weasel demon lord was unaffected by my Geass, I should take his story about getting bound by the weasel emperor's Geass with a grain of salt.

◇

"Earthquake?"

The labyrinth was shaking when I got back from the sub-space labyrinth.

I check the control board of the nearby Dungeon Core.

>Title [Dungeon Master] Acquired.

Geh, you'd become a Dungeon Master just by touching it.

I can't acknowledge it, but I have to investigate things first right now.

"It's set to do Stampede?"

On top of having the recurrence speed of monsters inside the labyrinth set to maximum, it's set to do Stampede that will go toward the surface once the monsters reach a certain number.

Furthermore looking at the log, all of the magic power has been concentrated to make the volcano erupt.

If this keeps up, the monster Stampede and the eruption won't only swallow the labyrinth island, many people in Dejima island will also fall victim.

"Tsk, it's locked."

What's the point of having a password lock.

15 seconds until the monster Stampede, 20 seconds until the eruption.

『Hikaru! Give me a hand.』

『Okay.』

I asked help from Hikaru who was standing by in the solitary island palace.

"Kept you waiting."

"There's no time. I'll say it briefly. Stop the volcano eruption for a bit! 30 seconds is fine."

I actually wanted Arisa to help instead, but she must be exhausted from the fight with demon lord earlier, so I didn't want to strain her.

I move the monsters that were going to Stampede into the sub-space labyrinth.

As a Dungeon Master, this place is my home ground, and the labyrinth monsters are my units.

Therefore, there is no problem in moving the monsters with Unit Arrangement.

There were just a bit too many, it was bothersome.

"Thanks for waiting, Hikaru."

"Fast."

I clap the shoulder of Hikaru who's blocking the volcano's mouth with force magic.

It was just a few seconds, but there would have been victims in the labyrinth island if Hikaru didn't come.

"Keep blocking it for a little longer."

"Eh, wait!"

I jumped into the magma, and spread mesh-shaped [Magic Hand] and put all the lava it touch into my Storage.

It was a bit hot, but the heat only burned my clothes.

"You're being rash again. Arisa would scold you if she heard it you know?"

"I'll let myself be scolded if that happens."

And, at the solitary island palace--.

"Satou-san, I've finished moving the Unique Skills."

"Thank you Shizuka."

"Hikaru, take care of the rest."

"Un, I got it."

I entrusted the former rat demon lord to Hikaru, and transplanted the [God's

Fragments] he had to the [Armored Rat] and [Glutton Weasel] monsters I created with the power of [Dungeon Master].

Naturally, the monsters couldn't hold the [God's Fragment] and turned into demon lords. The rat demon lord had four god's fragments, so I pushed two on each one by force.

Of course, I made the demon lords' levels to be higher than the levels they had when we fought them.

I put both in a guardian room inside the labyrinth and then send them one by one to the room where the hero party are.

Of course, I've already told Arisa about it beforehand using [Telephone].

◇

"Hayato!"

"Now!"

I saw Rusus and Fifi cutting the Armored Rat demon lord's legs, snatching away its mobility.

Apparently, the hero party is fighting the Armored Rat demon lord while Liza and the others are up against the Glutton Weasel demon lord.

The Armored Rat demon lord's body is wrapped in dark purple light.

"I won't let you!"

Miss Wiyaryi hit the demon lord with her arrow, creating a large explosion.

It looks like someone shared the equipment for Mia to her.

"<<Shining Strike Rush>>"

Multiplied with the effect of the Unique Skill, [Strongest Lance (Nothing cannot be Penetrated)], the blow pierced through the demon lord's purple defensive wall, sinking deep into its body.

"<<PLAY>> Tunas! <<SING>> Arondight!"

The hero's holy armor flashed blue light, and the holy sword explosively shined inside the demon lord's body.

"Break, demon lord! <<Shining Strike Break>>!"

With a spirited cry, the hero cuts the demon lord using his whole body to spring up.

The holy sword that comes out above is then swung down, creating a pentagram on its track.

The hero who landed with his back facing the demon lord swung his holy sword to clean the blood and put it back into its sheath.

"Here they come!"

Princess Maryest points at two floating purple light that appeared from the demon lord's body.

"""Divine Gift Talisman! 『Seal』 the evils!"""

The hero's followers pushed out the [Divine Gift Talisman] at the demon lord and shouted.

The purple lights are wrapped in blue crystals and then absorbed into the big Talisman that Princess Maryest has.

I see, so every generation of hero handled the [Fragments] with that huh.

"Mary! I'll leave the rest to you. I'll go help Sato's companions--"

The hero jammed his words when he turned around.

"Big win~?"

"Victory nanodesu!"

"It was easier than I expected."

It was probably because he saw me taking photo of the girls, who took victory poses on top of the Glutton Weasel demon lord's body, with a Japanese-style cell phone camera.

Of course the [God's Fragments] were disposed of by my Divine Sword.

Without yielding to the awkward silence, I step toward the hero after coughing once.

"Hayato-sama, congratulations for your success on subjugating the demon lord."

"Ye-yeah, thank you...."

I'm sorry for Hayato who seemed unsatisfied, but for now, let's celebrate the victory together.

15-17. Celebration

Satou's here. Parting with close friends is hard--that is something of the past, now it doesn't feel like we're apart since we can communicate anytime with SNS (Social Networking Service). But in a parallel world where there's a few ways to communicate--.

◇

"Ha-Hayato!"

Lady Ringrande's desperate scream is echoing in the boss room.

Light falling from heaven is wrapping the hero.

The hero who seems exhausted is looking at the source of the light and saying something.

I couldn't grasp it well due to the glittering light around him, but the term [Parion] was certainly in his words.

The light disappears before long, silence rules the room.

"It was from God Parion. They'll pick me tomorrow morning y'see."

Looks like the hero is going back to his original world.

The one who breaks the funeral-like mood is Arisa.

"Let's have a celebration! After all the hard works defeating the demon lords, we have to have a super special feast!"

"Alright, it's a party!"

"Lemme take care of eating the food!"

Rusus and Fifi joined Arisa's suggestion the foremost.

"Un, let's cook the Saga cow meat roll and fried rice that Hayato likes."

"Let's bring out the special brandy too."

Miss Wiyaryi and Priestess Loreiya continued with cheerful voices too.

Lady Ringrande and Princess Maryest seemed to brood over it, but they don't seem to object the celebration itself.

◇

『Dungeon Master cannot leave the Labyrinth.』

When we were leaving the labyrinth, I was pulled back to the <<Dungeon Master Room>> along with that message.

『Master! Did something happen?』

"It's nothing. I'm returning soon, so you can go back to the inn ahead."

『Okay! If there's anything troubling you, call Arisa-chan anytime 'kay!』

I told Arisa that through World Phone.

『Dungeon Master is forbidden from leaving the Labyrinth.』

The owner of that voice seems to be the Dungeon Core.

"What should I do to hand over the position of Dungeon Master?"

"That's impossible. Only death will vacate the position of Dungeon Master."

I see, very inflexible.

However--.

"What's wrong, Satou."

"Nothing, only stopping by for a bit."

Hikaru and Shizuka were surprised to see me suddenly returning to the solitary island palace.

Looks like I can go out without problem with Unit Arrangement.

The [Dungeon Core] probably has the power to call me back only inside the labyrinth.

"Oh right, Tifa-chan from Echigoya called for you."

"Thanks, I'll go see her for a bit."

I enter the permanent gate and show up at Echigoya Firm.

Of course I didn't forget to change my appearance into Kuro.

"Kuro-sama, welcome back."

"I'm back."

Tifaliza who was doing paperworks stood and welcomed me.

She hit the bell that connects to the Manager room and then the manager rushed into the room accompanied with sounds of footsteps that weren't fit for a lady.

"Welcome back!"

"I'm back Manager. Your hair is disheveled you know."

I fix her slightly disheveled hair with my fingers.

"Kuro-sama, I have a report for you."

Tifaliza whose voice was subtly mixed with thorns called out.

After letting the Manager who seemed feverish to sit on a chair, I listen to Tifaliza's report.

"I believe you already know, but we've got a report from Lily-sama in Duchy Capital that two demon lords have been defeated in the Weasel Empire."

"Yes, the ratkin demon lord was defeated by the hero party, and the weaselkin demon lord was done in by our girls."

Tifaliza froze for an instant after hearing my reply.

"It was not by, Kuro-sama?"

"Yea, that's right."

Tifaliza seems to think about something.

"That's a spectacular feat! Since the dawn of history, there has never been a case where a demon lord is not defeated by hero-sama or the dragons."

Manager entered the conversation in her place.

"Were they defeated by the dragons before the era of Saga Empire?"

"There is a few records about the appearances of demon lords before that, but according to Earl Muno's research, many of them fought against the apostle of gods who descended."

--Fought?

"The apostles didn't defeat them?"

"Sealing the demon lords was the limit of what can be done at the time, less than 20 percents written in the ancient documents pertain the demon lords' defeat."

It seems apostles aren't that strong.

Perhaps, the Gods besides the Dragon God and the Demon God are weak.

"Come to think of it, you're quite well versed in the topic."

"Yes, many documents from Earl Muno had arrived at the Duchy House, so I read them with the permission of Mito-sama."

Manager told me so enthusiastically that if she were to have a tail, it would be buzzing around lively.

She looked like she really wanted to be praised, so I teased her a bit by saying, "Very diligent" and clapped her shoulder.

I almost patted her head like with the girls, but it would be rude to do that to a woman of blooming age.

For some reason, Manager looked a bit regretful.

"Kuro-sama, did your companions acquire the title of hero?"

Hearing a problematic remark from Tifaliza, I reflexively turn to her and urge her to continue.

Even after subjugating a demon lord, none of the girls besides Pochi gets the hero title.

"It seems that the Miko of Parion Temple has received an oracle about the appearance of a new hero...."

"It's probably not about us."

Pochi got her hero title a while back, and that title had changed to [True Hero] now.

I ask Tifaliza to notify me if she has new information, and then I go to the inn in Dejima Island through the solitary island palace.

I was a bit wary, but I didn't get pulled back to the labyrinth in Dejima Island.

◇

"Well then, cheers for the demon lord's subjugation!"

"""CHEERS!"""

Seals of various famous liquors are opened, I put remembrance dishes of [This World] that the hero's followers told me.

There's a lot of meat dishes, probably because the hero likes them.

I've banned the girls from drinking alcohol, so they're mainly eating the dishes.

Lulu and I helped prepared the feast at first, but after the banquet was underway, the brownies dispatched from the solitary island palace, and gorgeous sexy maids from Saga Empire took over the cooking and the preparation.

"Satou! You drink too!"

"Yes, of course."

The hero who appeared with a sake bottle in one hand pour it in my cup.

I also pour the Dragon Spring Liquor on my table to his cup.

"This great me wouldn't have won against the demon lord if you, Princess Arisa, and the others weren't there. My gratitude for your help."

"Please, we just helped a little. Hero-sama splendidly defeated the demon lord himself."

In fact, the manufactured demon lords was stronger than the original rat demon lord.

The rat demon lord's personality didn't seem to be suited for combat after all.

"No, none of us could have imagined that there were two demon lords lurking in that labyrinth. If Princess Arisa didn't shout in a thundering voice when Satou disappeared, I might have lost my composure shamefully."

"I'm sorry for making you worry."

I had told Arisa and Liza beforehand that I was going to invade the Dungeon Master room so they didn't panic and continued eliminating small fries in the boss room.

For some reason, Hero's face is close.

Asides from liking young girls, his sexual orientation should be normal.

"Thank you Satou, no, Hero Nanashi."

Hero whispered on my ear.

Huh? There shouldn't be any factor that could expose me though?

"What are you talking about?"

"Don't worry. I won't tell anyone since it seems you're hiding it. To begin with, from such a hopeless situation with having two demon lords and one being a Dungeon Master, I can't think of any other guy who could drive the demon lord away from the boss room and deprive the right of Dungeon Master."

Looks like he didn't think that the demon lord left voluntarily.

"Moreover, you're unscathed until the end."

--Come to think of it.

"Satou, I'm leaving my friends in your care after I've gone back to Japan."

"What do you mean?"

I know that he's going back to Japan and all, but what's that got to do with me taking care of his followers I wonder.

The followers who participated in the demon lord subjugation will be famous in Saga Empire and their country right?

"According to Nono, the center of Saga Empire is getting suspicious lately."

"Are they going to cause war?"

"Yeah, radical opinions like 'destroy the Weasel Empire' have begun to appear even from moderate noble factions lately."

Perhaps Saga Empire also knew about the Weasel Empire's science?

"Take them under your protection if they're getting recruited into conflicts between people."

"Yes, please leave it to me. I'll shelter them in a safe place that can't be interfered by the people above ground."

Aside from Tama, it's impossible for anyone to stealthily invade the solitary island palace, and even Tama can't do it without me noticing.

"It's damn reassuring when you're the one saying that!"

Once the load on his shoulders got off, he drank the sake cup while looking relieved.

"If you have something this great me need to do, say it. I can give you Arondight if you want."

He stares at me after saying that.

I'll take advantage of this opportunity since I do have something to ask of him.

"Then, could you mail these once you're back at your original world?"

"Letters?"

"Yes, it may not be the same world as mine, but I'd like to inform my family about my well-being."

I hand over a bundle of letters addressed to my family, friends and my co-workers including Mr. Overweight.

There are also letters from Hikaru and Arisa inside.

"Yea, I've got it. This great me will deliver it personally, be at peace."

"I'm counting on you."

I feel relieved since the hero accepted my request and hit his chest.

There's a high chance that Arisa's letter is mischievous, but Hero should be able to properly send it.

"Hayato, can I have a minute?"

"Rin?"

Lady Ringrande who looked somehow coquettish appeared with a wine cup in one hand.

The green silk dress she's wearing has an extremely adult-like cut, and she's scattering pheromones everywhere.

The black knights who are in casual wears have been stealing glances at her since a while ago.

"Satou, I'm borrowing Hayato."

"Yes, please take your time."

I saw Hero and Lady Ringrande off while feeling like a guardian.

"I-isn't this the NTR flag?"

"What are you going on about."

I lightly whack Arisa's head.

It's extremely normal to wish for the last memory when you're parting forever with your loved one.

I pray in my heart for Lady Ringrande's desire to be fulfilled.

◇

"Looks like it's time."

The hero who's in a suit that wouldn't look strange in earth mutters.

His trusted sword, Arondight, is being hugged by Lady Ringrande.

"Mary, thank you for always supporting me ever since I was summoned in Saga Empire."

"Hayato, my hero-sama."

After hugging Hayato, Princess Maryest kisses him on the cheek.

Come to think of it, the hero's first person pronoun has changed from [Ore-sama] to [Ore].

"Seina, it's all thanks to you that I was able to stand up again after the complete destruction by that yellow bastard."

"Ehen, come here again if you want another slaps on the cheek."

Miss Seina who's enduring to cry musters her courage and hugs Hero.

And then, Loreiya, Rusus, Fifi, Miss Wiyaryi, and Nono said their farewells one by one, lastly it was Lady Ringrande's turn.

"Rin, you were a stinking shitty noble when we first met--"

Oy, oy, Hero, what are you saying.

"--But now you're someone irreplaceable who understands me most. Reconcile with your little sister okay."

"Hayato, hayatohayatohayato."

Lady Ringrande hugs him tightly while sobbing.

Looks like she can't put it into words well.

"Arisa, are you fine without saying farewell?"

"Yes, I've said my farewell yesterday."

Arisa replied so when I checked on her.

And then, light falls from the sky.

"It seems there's a time limit for God Parion connecting worlds. I have to go now."

Hero's body floats and then it's begun to disappear.

Someone called "Hayato", and then the hero's followers start to call his name one after another.

We keep looking up at the sky where the hero who kept waving until the end has disappeared to.

◇

"Satou, are you drinking?!"

"Yes, I'm drinking. However, it seems Lady Ringrande has already drunk a bit too much."

After seeing the hero off, I was invited to the meeting to remember him with his followers, but for some reason, I got to accompany Lady Ringrande drunken rambles after the meeting was over.

The drunken Lady Ringrande has been complaining with her arm around my neck since awhile ago.

I think it's problematic for a lady of a duchy house to drink liquor straight from the bottle.

"Honestly, even though a daring woman who would even jump off a cliff approached him, that blockhead didn't even give me a kiss!"

"Hayato-sama is a gentleman with superior ethics after all."

It seems Lady Ringrande met a honorable defeat at her approach yesterday.

"Good grief, a man should become a beast sometimes!"

"That's right, yielding oneself to passion is needed once in a while."

After replying positively, Lady Ringrande became quiet.

Looks like she drank herself to sleep.

I asked the the girls who were peeking at the door like a totem pole to put her in a bed.

"Fumu, this is unexpected."

"About the letters?"

I assent to Arisa who sits beside me, and drink the fruit water that Lulu brought.

The letters with markers are on the marker column in the Menu.

Their current location is [N-World Line, Planet Earth, Japan]. By the way, the N part is a number with astronomical value.

Hero Hayato's name remains below the letter.

It appears Unique Skill works across worlds.

15-SS. The Melancholy of Dungeon Core

The new master is a strange human.

He tried to get out of the dungeon even though he's a Dungeon Master.

『Dungeon Master cannot leave the Labyrinth.』

After displaying that message, I activated the emergency Master summoning function to pull Master back to Master's room.

"It's nothing. I'm returning soon, so you can go back to the inn ahead."

The new master is talking with no one, there's some strange person among humans.

"How do I get out of the labyrinth?"

Master asked the question to me, the Dungeon Core.

Why is he trying to go outside when this place is the safest.

--Incomprehensible.

"Dungeon Master is forbidden from leaving the Labyrinth."

When I replied so, Master folds his arms and becomes lost in thought.

Rather than thinking so hard about such an obvious thing, I wish Master comes up with one or two traps to deal with the labyrinth's invaders instead.

"What should I do to hand over the position of Dungeon Master?"

--Hand over?

I cannot understand Master's train of thought.

Can't humans think logically?

However, I have to answer Master's questions.

Because I am a thing that obeys Master.

"That's impossible. Only death will vacate the position of Dungeon Master."

Master frowns to hear my answer.

I heard him muttering "Very inflexible", in a low voice.

Handing over the position of Dungeon Master which is said to holds the almighty power equaling Gods, even if it's restricted inside the dungeon, is what surely is beyond expectations.

--Eh?

Master disappeared from the Master's Room.

--No.

He disappeared from the dungeon.

Where? Why? How?

I couldn't feel any reaction of magic power.

I'm confident that I absolutely wouldn't overlook the usage of teleportation of space magic which requires vast amount of magic power.

"Master!"

『Master!』

--Master!

Master won't reply even after I called him with voice, called him with message boards inside the labyrinth, and called him with thought wave.

It's not like he's been annihilated, leaving a vacant post behind, yet my Master has disappeared.

I'll let the monsters outside the labyrinth to search--No.

I must prioritize Master's orders.

Letting the monsters go outside is impossible.

What should I do. I have to search for Master. Where's Master. What should I do. Master, Master, Master.

It seems I've hanged because my thought was going around in circles.

I might have self-destruct if I didn't reset the safety circuit of Dungeon Core.

It has been 1000 hours since Master's disappearance.

Since he's added monsters and traps on the subsystem, explorers can't get to here.

According to the log, the unit led by a long-earkin woman had invaded the lower layer nearby many times, but they were caught in the traps installed by Master and forced to retreat.

--I was protected by Master.

I feel a certain bond in my heart from that fact.

--That's right.

If Master won't come back, I'll go look for him myself.

With my right as Dungeon Master, I create a homonculus for exploration and transcript my thought onto it.

"--My body is heavy."

"You're just not familiar with muscles. It should feel lighter soon."

The path is open inside the dungeon, so the homonculus's current state is transmitted to me.

"Go. Core Two."

"Okay, Original."

I send the probe homonculus--Core Two to the entrance of the labyrinth.

With the search power of Core Two, it should find the lost kid Master who's wandering around aimlessly outside the labyrinth immediately.

In order to perform maintenance on my thought circuit, I entered into suspend mode.

I decided to dream about my reunion with Master inside the thing called sleep by people.

--Master, please come back soon.

15-18. Intermission

Satou's here. I've never been able to match a quick-witted person. There really are people who embody the saying, "to understand everything from only one part."

◇

"M-Master! Y-you won't secretly go home will you?"

"Yea, of course."

Arisa tightly grasped my hand and asked, I replied her immediately.

"Even if I were to go back to my hometown, I'd bring everyone along to sightsee the earth when that happened."

I'm sure that they'll be delighted to see Tokyo's skyscrapers and the subculture-overflowing Akiharaba.

"Y-you will, won't you."

"Moreover, even though I know the coordinates thanks to Hayato and the letters, it's not like I can visit there with the advanced teleport magic immediately."

I tried to calculate it and it seemed, using normal magic, moving a few grams of object was the limit even after using the magic power contained in a divine gift holy sword.

Apparently, the distance between worlds is way too far.

Looks like it's difficult if it's not with Yuriko of Rumooku Kingdom's『Power that Connects Worlds』and God Parion's Hero summoning, unique skills--that is, God's power.

I have a feeling that my Unit Arrangement can do it, but unfortunately that's not possible since there is no base point in Hayato's world.

If I knew that this would happen, I would have asked him to carry a folding doghouse and build it there.

I've got some tricks up my sleeves if the problem is just the amount of magic power needed, so I'll be seriously going to research it once things have calmed down with the matters regarding Weasel Empire and Saga Empire.

I have a promise to visit the hero summoning magic circle in Saga Empire after all.

◇

"Viscount Satou. Please come see me anytime you're in Saga Empire. I will fulfill the promise then."

"Yes, I'll be asking your help once I get back from Shiga Kingdom."

We're saying goodbyes to the hero's followers in front of the sub-dimensional ship Jules Verne.

Come to think of it, the other hero's followers besides Princess Maryest have also stopped calling me with my house name, Pendragon.

Did I do something to touch their heartstrings during the celebration the day before yesterday and the remembrance meeting of the hero yesterday?

"Satou-sama, please visit me if you have another good liquor okay."

"Yes, if I come across one that'll suit Loreiya-sama's taste, definitely."

I made such a promise with Miss Loreiya.

"Fifi and I will go on a journey to improve our skills once we get back to Saga Empire, have a match with us when we visit Shiga Kingdom 'kay."

"Un, have a match with me too. I never thought that there would be someone else besides Hayato and Rusus that could move like that against the demon lord."

Rusus and Fifi grinned and told me that.

I'll ask Tama and Pochi to be their sparring partners when that time comes.

"Satou, if you like to tour places, you should go to the earkin sanctuary in Saga Empire. It's possible for earkin to mate with humans so they surely will welcome the strong Satou."

Lady Wiyaryi appeared in front of me next.

I do have some interests in earkin but since it looks like I'll be treated like a breeding horse, I'm hesitating.

"See you Satou. I'll be visiting Shiga Kingdom as a secret agent."

"No no, please visit us normally. We'll welcome you."

Seina the scout made that disturbing remark.

"Satou-dono, we wish to express our gratitude for your cooperation. A letter from his majesty Saga Empire's Emperor should arrive at Shiga Kingdom at a later time. The content is probably in regard to medal conferment and honorary nobility ennoblement. Putting aside the ennoblement, the medal should be matching with us, so I'll be happy if you receive it."

And lastly, secretary Nono did a business-like report.

For some reason, her cheeks were flushed at the [Matching] part, so Arisa's and Mia's, the impregnable fortress combo, eyebrows were raised.

It was a complete misunderstanding, I'd love to plea for my innocence.

After seeing off the silver ship disappeared into the dimensional rift, our sailing ship left the Weasel Empire.

And then five days later, I visited Dejima Island.

As Kuro this time.

◇

"I am Kuro, Hero Nanashi's follower. My gratitude for this chance to meet your excellency crown prince."

This place is the audience hall of the administrator building in Dejima Island.

The slender weaselkin crown prince is sitting on the throne in front of me.

"Level 50 huh. Your level is low for a hero's attendant."

"Please excuse me. My role is merely for transportation and negotiation."

I lightly brushed off the crown prince's provocation.

Originally, I had no plan to meet the crown prince as Kuro even thought I was going to make a courtesy visit as Satou.

Then why am doing this? that is because I'm asking the weaselkin merchant to plan a meeting between me and the weasel emperor through the crown prince, so I've to meet him once at least.

"--Science."

The crown prince muttered.

"Hmph, your complexion doesn't change even a bit huh. Do you know that anyone leaving the empire's mainland through Rete city will have to undergo memory deletion?"

"Memory deletion? Is it mind magic?"

"Nah, it's a Unique Skill by the purple hair fellows."

Purple hair--reincarnated people like Arisa huh.

"And?"

"There's no meaning in meeting the emperor if your memory gets deleted right? I'll help you smuggle through the place to prevent the memory deletion if you help me."

This dealing isn't particularly needed since I can get out instantly with Unit Arrangement, but I'm interested in the crown prince's objective for doing this.

"Let me hear your request."

"Dejima Island is going to secede from the empire. I want Shiga Kingdom to back us."

Independence huh--however.

"There is no meaning in having the backing of the far away Shiga Kingdom right? If the empire attacked, it'd be destroyed before reinforcements from Shiga Kingdom came."

"That worry is needless. The empire will be destroyed sooner or later. In order to not get destroyed ourselves by proxy when that happens, we're gaining independence. The parishes on the outer edges of the empire should be moving behind the scenes too, but there is no problem in leaving them alone because those guys are all pious believers."

It appears that the crown prince is aware that the Weasel Empire is in precarious situation where it could garner the Gods' wrath.

Looks like he wants Shiga Kingdom's backing for providing supply and a place for refugees to flee when Dejima Island becomes uninhabitable.

"You don't think that they will avoid destruction?"

"The emperor's will is firm. From the beginning, he's been boasting that the Gods' intervention is included in his plan."

The crown prince replied my question as if spitting out.

"Does the emperor have the mean to oppose the Gods?"

"I asked him the same question, but he just laughed it out without answering back."

The crown prince looks displeased, but then his expression seems like he remembers something and he opens his mouth.

"That reminds me, the bald tactician muttered arrogantly, 『It is something that anyone knows, therefore no one arrives at the answer.』. I don't want to show off a reckless remark of a guy who acted as if he was a sage, but I'll tell you that one thing at least."

"I see, thank you for your kindness."

For some reason he laughs scornfully even though I thanked him honestly.

"Show that gratitude with acts instead."

"The matter about backing huh. I do not mind, but your fall might come sooner than Weasel Empire's ruin you know?"

I have no intention to intervene in a war between Weasel Empire and Dejima Island's independence.

"If something were to fall, that's only going to be this head. This is something that needs to be done to preserve weaselkin blood and cultures."

"Very well, I will talk to Shiga King about it."

After I said that, the crown prince who was bending his body forwards lets himself sunk into the throne satisfyingly.

"Well then Hero Nanashi, I will be waiting for good news."

"You're mistaken, I'm--"

"Hmph, such a poor acting, if you're going to pretend to be a subordinate, don't give an immediate answer to a matter that exceeds your authority."

Oops, I didn't put too much thought on that part.

◇

Now then, about the matter just now, I brought Hikaru with me to meet the king, but unexpectedly, he easily agreed to it even before Hikaru could support me.

Of course it's not unconditional.

We asked them to stop the production and research of forbidden medicines like the [Reborn Seed] used in the terror activities at Shiga Kingdom, and several other demands in order to silence the lineage nobles who don't like demi-humans.

At first we used pigeon carriers to fly about both countries, but since it was troublesome, I brought the crown prince to Shiga Capital to negotiate directly.

"Then let use enter the『Yamato Treaty』here."

Thus, one month after my meeting with the crown prince, Dejima Island gained Independence, and the treaty for Shiga Kingdom to be the backer was enacted.

During that period, a thank you letter and mountains of treasures from Saga Empire addressed to Viscount Pendragon who participated in the demon lord subjugation arrived, and the people in the royal castle were in uproar, but since as Satou himself was currently cruising in my airship, I didn't get involved in the uproar.

I pray that it'll be reduced into a lull before Satou arrives in Shiga Kingdom in half a month time.

Hikaru is attending every meeting while also serving as Shiga King's guard, so I can go far away at peace.

The destination is--.

◇

"Satou-kun, is that Saga Empire's old capital!"

"Yes, that's right."

I'm visiting Saga Empire with Earl Muno.

The ones traveling with me this time are Earl Muno, Lady Karina, Lady Soruna, and Lady Soruna's fiancee who has just been elevated to peerage recently, Honorary Chevalier Hauto, and also Tama and Pochi whom are Earl Muno's favorites.

The next Earl Muno, Orion-kun was also eager to go, but Consul Nina stopped him saying that it wouldn't be good for both the earl and the next earl to leave the country at once, so he tearfully gave it up.

I'll buy him some souvenirs in the old capital.

In addition, I also invited Lady Ringrande and Sera whom I accidentally met, but she curtly declined.

Looks like it'll be a while before they can reconcile.

Further, the hero summoning magic circle is not located in the current capital, but this old capital that's governed by a duke.

Besides our airship, there are three large airships anchored in the airport of the old capital.

The number of populace is larger than Shiga Kingdom's Duchy Capital's but less than the Royal Capital's, the temperature is low all year round so there's a lot of people wearing warm clothing.

Many are black haired, and I see Japanese-like flat faces here and there.

"It's slightly chilly isn't it."

"Soruna, you should put this on."

"Thank you, Hauto."

Lady Karina is enviously looking that exchange between Lady Soruna and Hauto.

Lady Karina's clothes are equipped with all-weather air conditioner, so she has no need of a jacket in this degree of coldness.

"Cold~?"

"This much is nothing nanodesu."

"Tama-kun and Pochi-kun are really strong against cold."

Earl Muno praised Tama and Pochi while trembling in cold.

"Earl-sama, please wear this coat."

"Ah, Satou-kun, thank you."

I saw Lady Karina biting her finger in frustration in the corner of my view.

What are you doing getting jealous of your own father.

"Satou, have I kept you waiting?"

"Not at all, we've just arrived just now."

We got on a luxurious carriage after Princess Maryest's who came to meet us, heading toward the [Hero's Hill] at the old capital's outskirts.

The other hero's followers are in great demands to attend parties with the nobles in the imperial capital.

There's a building made of white stones on top of the hill with unusually good views.

It looks like a Greek historic temple with only pillars ceiling and no wall.

"OOOOOOOOO! S-so this is the sacred place where heroes-sama are summoned for generations!"

"Y-yes, that's right."

Princess Maryest was taken aback by Earl Muno's high tension.

Both Lady Karina and Lady Soruna are also looking around the sacred place with glimmering eyes, though not as bad as Earl Muno.

The day will end if I wait for the three to calm down, so after a while I urge them to advance and enter building.

"Your Highness Maryest, are they Earl Muno and Viscount Pendragon?"

"Yes, they are. He contributed in the fight with demon lord so much I wouldn't be able to speak it all. Don't be rude with him alright."

"If that's what Hero-sama has promised, then it cannot be helped."

And elderly Parion Temple head spoke with Princess Maryest in business-like manners.

Both of them don't seem to get along well.

"Then, over here please."

Following after the temple head who released the barrier, we entered the temple.

--Ooh, this is amazing.

It looks like a common temple at a glance, but when I activate Magic Seer, complex engraved magic circles are laminated not only on the floors but also on the ceilings and pillars.

Each magic circles interact with one another, they're quite artistic and educative.

I've noticed after reading the magic circles that it seems the underground of [Hero's Hill] is a gigantic magic device that accumulates magic power.

The reason why the atmospheric temperature of the old capital is low must be because the magic power flowing in the earth's vein is absorbed by this magic device instead of the City Core.

"Are you satisfied now?"

I only noticed that I had been looking at the temple for quite a long time after the temple head call out.

"Yes, thank you very much. I had shamefully lost myself due to the mystical atmosphere."

I evaded the temple head's eyes that were full of suspicious with the help of Deception skill.

I've completely traced the magic circles here including the magic device hidden underground, so I can reproduce them as much as I like.

It would likely end up connecting with God Parion if I used it as is, so it needs several modifications it seems.

"Temple head! Meiko-sama is--"

"W-we have guests right now."

A miko rushed in when were about to leave the temple and made an obvious verbal slip.

After searching the obviously Japanese name, I see a new hero called [Meiko Kaname] is currently strolling the old capital.

She's carelessly not hiding her Unique Skills, her information is wide open to see.

She has four Unique Skills, [Strongest Katana (Nothing cannot be Cut)], [Unrivaled Mobility (Cannot be hit)], [Infinite Arsenal (Inexhaustible Swords)], and [Foresight].

I think she's just been summoned, yet her level is already 60, higher than Hero Hayato's initial level at 50.

"Satou, let's go."

"Your highness Princess--"

"I know."

Princess Maryest replied the temple head who was going to tell her to keep it a secret as if it was a matter of course and then she escorted us out of the temple.

The thing about Hero Meiko is probably a secret.

"I'm very sorry, but I have to go back to the Imperial Capital now."

"No no, we're sorry for troubling you in such a busy time."

I thanked Princess Maryest who really looked like she was sorry about it, and then we parted ways with her at the old capital's airport.

◇

"Then, let's go tour the castle town."

I strolled the old capital with the Earl Muno family, and went around the ramen shop and Japanese sweets cafés that the heroes in the past visited.

Next, we purchased hero's temple models and hero figurines as souvenirs.

"Mou! Why are all of them Japanese sweets and preserved sweets that are too sickeningly sweet! There's no cute cakes or parfaits anywhere!"

When I turn around at the voice, there's a 14 year old girl with an impertinent look on her face.

There's a handsome bespectacled priest as her guard.

His disposition looks weak somehow.

"I'm sorry, Meiko-sama. It seems that there is this cake called 『Lulu's Cake』 in Shiga Kingdom however."

"Lulu? That sounds like a cold medicine. Well fine, go buy it."

"Eh?"

"I'm saying that you go buy it. Don't make me say it twice."

She's quite unreasonable.

She's a girl from roughly the same hometown as me, but this time I shouldn't get involved and ignore her.

The girls should be able to live in this country splendidly.

"Hey! The black hair over there!"

Yet, somehow the girl is in front of me.

Looks like she used Flickering Movement.

"Me?"

"Yes, you! You're a local person right? Guide me to sweets shops. I'm starving for fresh cream!"

The girl is taking a threatening attitude, saying to guide her quickly.

"Me-Meiko-sama, you must not."

"Shut it!"

On the other hand, the attendant priest seemed to have inferred that we were nobles of a foreign country and desperately tried to change the girl's mind.

"Freesh creaam?"

"Pochi wants to eat sweets nodesu."

"Come to think of it, the cake we ate earlier was really delicious."

Lady Soruna mixed in with Tama and Pochi.

Not only the three, Earl Muno also said, "It's about time for having tea isn't it."

The good-natured Earl Muno seemed to sympathize with the girl who sought fresh cream.

"Is there one?!"

"Yes, there is. Let's go to that café over there."

"Meiko-sama, you mustn't be tricked! That café does serve blue tea but it has exactly the same kind of sweets as the ones we saw before."

The girl glared at me as if saying that she wouldn't forgive me if I was lying.

"The shop doesn't have one, but we have cakes in this bag. We can just pay the shop for bringing it inside."

"Really? Then let's go."

With the girl's quick decision, we enter the café with the calm atmosphere.

The bespectacled priest appeared to be a regular here, he immediately asked for a private room.

"Hee, that looks really good."

The girl said that arrogantly in front of the cut Lulu Cake.

However, contrary to her tone, her eyes are sparkling brightly.

"Wha! What's this it's way too tasty."

"Delishlish~?"

"Lulu's cake is delicious alright nodesu."

While watching over the children joyfully eating the cake, I slowly drink the blue tea.

Not only Lady Soruna and Lady Karina, Earl Muno is also fond of sweets, they've been savoring the cake absentmindedly.

"That was delicious~ Was that Lulu Cake?"

"Ofcour~se"

"Master made it nodesu."

Tama and Pochi boastfully replied the girl who praised the cake she had eaten.

"You're a hero's follower from now on! Follow me as a chief."

"I'm sorry but--"

A silver haired man wearing important-looking priest clothes rushed in before I could answer.

"Lawrence! Get Meiko-sama back to the temple! Didn't I tell you not to let her out since that Sir Pendragon was coming today!"

"W-Warren-sama!"

Well now? Why do they want to prevent me from meeting the new hero?

Seeing me, Priest Warren's face becomes pale.

"Nice to meet you, my name is Viscount Satou Pendragon."

"S-sir Pendragon?! W-why is the Demon Lord Slayer with Meiko-sama?!"

What an awful alias.

Perhaps [Demon Lord Slayer] is a praise in this world?

"Demon Lord Slayer? That Shiga Hero who defeated the demon lord together with the previous hero?"

"Me, a Hero? Perhaps, you're mistaking me with Hero Nanashi-sama of Shiga Kingdom?"

I replied Meiko's question with another question to dodge it.

"Meiko-sama, this Sir Pendragon is--"

The silver haired priest is whispering into Hero's Meiko ear.

The content of his talk was generally not wrong, but by no means could I agree with it.

Thus, I try to talk to her in order to reach a mutual understanding before the misunderstanding goes deeper.

"Meiko-sama--"

"D-don't come close! You sexual fiend!"

The frightened Hero Meiko jumped to the corner of the room.

Still, sexual fiend is cruel.

I could see the bespectacled priest desperately apologizing in the corner of my view, but such a thing can't heal my wounded heart.

"It's a misunderstanding--"

"You're served by more than 10 women, and sleep together with women from primary school age to adults everyday right!"

"That's the truth, however--"

"I don't want to hear it, I don't want to hear it!"

She closed both her ears and shook her head.

"Sir Pendragon, since Meiko-sama doesn't feel too well, please excuse us."

"P-please wait, Head Miko-sama!"

The silver haired priest held Hero Meiko's shoulder and rushed out.

The bespectacled priest called him Head Miko, but the silver haired priest's gender is undoubtedly male.

It's questionably strange, but let's ignore it since I'm not particularly interested.

"Vi-Viscount-sama--"

The chief of this shop asked to sample the cake with a desperate expression on his face.

"You don't want the recipe instead?"

The chef shook his head with a quiet expression.

"That will be too shameless of me. I am also walking the path of a cook. Once I eat it, I will arrive at that taste someday."

This person said some amazing things.

"Alright then, then I'll put out several kinds of sweets that will likely suit her taste."

Since it sounded a bit fun, I put out several cakes and Castella on the table.

Even Tama and Pochi's eyes are glittering.

I'm going to treat you two to Saga Empire's meat full course after this so right now, bear with it okay.

After encouraging the chef, we went on a meat dishes tour.

Of course, it goes without saying that I reproduced the meat dishes we ate in the tour for the girls who were staying behind.

Now then, now that I've recharged my batteries, it's about time to depart to Weasel Empire's Capital as Kuro.

15-19. Weasel Empire, at the Imperial Capital

Satou's here. It's said that news of bad deed travel quickly, but the true bad deed is concealed deeply and progressed quietly.

◇

"Mast--Kuro-sama, the city has come into view."

As Liza is reporting in, I lean my body at the window to check.

I'm heading to Rete city in Weasel Empire as Kuro, accompanied by Liza, Zena-san and a female executive cadet of Echigoya Firm.

Liza and Zena-san are wearing Echigoya Firm's uniforms, and equipped with mirror geass to cope with the emperor's geass.

Further, the reason why the cadet is with us is to take on a certain dangerous task.

Originally, I should have been the one who would be doing that, but since the executives of Echigoya Firm and the girls in the solitary island palace were against it, this girl who volunteered first undertook the job instead.

Even though I've prepared more than enough safety measures, I can't say for certain that it'll be safe, so I'm thinking of fulfilling one of the girl's wishes once this job is over.

"Quite a big city."

"Hmph, you Shiga Kingdom lot might not believe it, but that's not our Imperial Capital. Every city of our empire is as big and populous as the capital of Shiga Kingdom."

The one who quickly picked up my muttering and boasted was the owner of this airship, Lady Liedill, the temple knight of Weasel Empire.

In accordance to the crown prince's scheme, it seems that she didn't know that the demon lord had been defeated until recently and kept loitering around the labyrinth after her treatment, until today.

Due to that, her level has increased by one, and her escort knights have also leveled up although there are slightly fewer of them now.

She's currently acting as my guard and carrying a letter from the crown prince to the emperor.

"Are we descending?"

"We're changing our ride in that Rete city."

When I sensed the floating feeling and muttered, Lady Liedill kindly told me the reason.

She's probably bored with the air travel too.

◇

"You're slow!"

"Sorry, we needed to prepare for a bit."

After finishing the preparation, we got out of the waiting room in Rete city, and made Lady Liedill who got tired of waiting angry.

"The immigration check room is over here."

"It's emptier than I expected."

"Our country has been closed. Normally there are only several people, 10 at most."

We followed Lady Liedill and met a purple-haired girl surrounded by many guards.

There's a transparent magic wall between her and us, I think it can easily defends against normal mid-level magic.

The girl is a reincarnated person, her name is Louise. It's an unusual name for a Japanese, but it's not like a reincarnated person must always be Japanese--or maybe her parents simply loved light novels.

Her skills are hidden, I can't see it. Her level is 34, she's a cat ear-kin.

The twitching ears are cute.

"Please sit down on that chair."

The girl who said that with downcast eyes looked at me with upturned eyes and opened them wide.

『A-Alex that actor? But, but, his hair is white, I guess not?』

The muttering girl is staring at and appraising me.

I don't know the name Alex but he must be a foreign actor whose face is similar to Kuro.

"I don't mind if it's your job, but appraising people out of curiosity is not a good manner you know."

When I said that while playing innocent of my own doing, the girl cowered as if she was scolded and muttered, "I'm sorry".

It looks like this girl is a honest type.

"Leaving that aside, finish the immigration check thing."

"Y-yes!"

The girl's guards are frowning in displeasure at my arrogant attitude, but I'm not going to bother myself with background characters.

"If you don't have any objection to my words, please say 『I swear』."

After saying that, the girl is wrapped in purple phosphoresce.

She probably used a Unique Skill.

"Your memories in Weasel Empire, starting from the moment you enter this room, will be lost once you leave Weasel Empire."

After the girl said that in a tone like she was used to it, she fell silent.

She's probably waiting for us to say, "I swear".

『I swear.』

When the executive cadet said that clearly, a coronet made of purple light appeared on her head for an instant and then disappeared.

That was probably the mark of the Unique Skill's activation.

Now then, let's inspect it.

I move the executive cadet away from the room to Echigoya Firm with Unit Arrangement.

"S-she disappeared?!"

The girl was surprised to see the executive cadet disappeared, and reacting to that, her guards and Lady Liedill touched their sword's handles.

"Do not panic."

I wave one of my hands, and while maintaining that posture, I cut off the remote possession mode from the Kuro doll which had changed place with me in the waiting room earlier and return my consciousness to my real body at Echigoya Firm.

The scene changes from the immigration check room I saw as Kuro doll earlier to the Echigoya Room which I'm seeing as myself.

"How is your memories?"

I check the executive cadet whose consciousness has gone back from the executive cadet doll to her real body.

"The information on the log shows that it's interrupted on the arrival at Rete city."

"I-I can remember the time when I entered the immigration room."

I see, in remote possession mode, the effect is only valid for the doll.

"Thank you for your cooperation. I'll be getting back to my mission, for your achievement this time you'll get paid vacations and special bonus so you should take some rest today."

"Y-yes! Kuro-sama!"

When I rewarded her, the executive cadet saluted upright.

She seems to be quite nervous so I lightly wave my hand to prompt her to leave and I get back to the remote possession mode of the Kuro doll in Weasel Empire.

And then, after a slight time lag, my view returned back to the immigration room in Rete city.

I show the magic tool furnished with green and red gems in my hand.

"The green one is shining. Looks like my subordinate who has gone back to our country is fine."

"Wha! Are you doubting me?!"

After I said that, Miss Louise stood up and got outraged as if it was unthinkable.

"You think I will unconditionally believe someone I just met."

"T-that's true but...."

Miss Louise faltered to hear me.

Her guards unanimously reproached me, but dealing with them will be troublesome so I ignore them.

"Kuro-dono, please hand over that magic tool. If you have any other communication magic tools, please leave them here."

"This is an antenna only tool for receiving signal--though you won't believe that. I swear that I don't have any other communication magic tool with me."

A man who seems to be Miss Louise's aide enters the room and takes the magic tool away from me.

He checks whether I'm lying with his colleagues on the other side of the wall and then goes back to his room.

"By the way, is the vow still in effect? If it is, do we take one now?"

"Y-yes. Please do."

After Miss Louise nodded, we said, "I swear" and finished the ritual.

Needless to say, since Liza and Zena-san are equipped with substitute dolls too, there's no problem.

"U-um...."

"What is it? Is there another ritual?"

Miss Louise called me hesitatingly when I was about to go out of the room as urged by Lady Liedill.

"...Your name, um."

"Kuro."

The girl seems to like this foreign actor's face.

"Ku-Kuro? Are you Japanese--"

"I was named by the master of the Black Dragon Mountains. My lord, Nanashi-sama also asked the same question when he heard the name."

"Is, that so."

The girl who muttered weakly as I told her the history behind the name seemed disappointed for some reason.

I wonder what did she expect?

"--Are you living happily here?"

"Y-yes. Not only that there's zero overtime, half of the month are even holidays, and the people around me care for me kindly."

The girl who was speechless by my question answered honestly.

Looking at her condition, looks like it's just as she's said.

Then I don't have to go out of my way to take care of her.

"I see, if you're ever troubled with works, go visit Echigoya Firm in Dejima Island."

Nevertheless, I think I'm allowed to say that much.

◇

"We're taking an airplane heading to the imperial capital's airport from here."

"Is it not an airships?"

Zena-san asked back Lady Liedill.

Zena-san and Liza are wearing the translation rings, so they can perfectly understand the people of the Weasel Empire mutually.

"That's right. Airplanes are faster."

Lady Liedill boasted with a child-like expression.

A small 20-seater propeller plane is waiting at the airport we're guided to.

Its shape is similar to the airplane I know.

Inside the plane, each seat is wide, so each side of the plane only holds eight seats.

The seat looks luxurious, this seems to be an airplane for VIPs.

Liza and Zena-san screamed weakly when the airplane took off.

I thought the two were afraid of flying in the sky, but it seemed they had their own reasons.

"It is similar to when I got on the back of the dragon, the sudden floating sensation is unpleasant isn't it."

I see, in Liza's case, she probably didn't feel the floating sensation since she jumped when we took off.

"I was anxious, I thought the airplane might fall."

It's very like Zena-san to worry about that.

She was probably anxious since we could see the airplane's wings rocking from the windows.

Even if the airplane falls, it should only end with a scratch with Zena-san's equipment, so it's a needless anxiety.

"Is that line a railroad?"

"That seems to be the case."

"That's the smoke car's road (ensharl) that connect cities which our Weasel Empire is proud of."

Lady Liedill boastfully corrected Liza's question.

I think the part where she doesn't question why we know about railroads makes her fail cute.

And then, Liza found that as we got close to the Imperial Capital.

"I wonder what is that?"

"It's big for a barrier pillar. Is it some kind of tower?"

"It's reflecting light like it's made from metal isn't it."

The thing that Liza found and made Zena-san puzzled is--.

"That's... The white tower of『Brains』. It's been isolated away from the Imperial Capital since it's making some loud rumbling noises."

Lady Liedill said that with a displeased expression.

--Rocket?

It's too big to be a ballistic missile, or are they going to launch a man-made satellite?

It might really be a rocket tower though.

The airplane lowered its altitude during our conversation, and landed at an airport in the suburb of the Imperial Capital.

Unfortunately, I couldn't see the Imperial Capital due to the cloudy sky, but we're going to it anyway.

Liza and Zena-san crushing their seats' handrails during the descent were impressive.

I probably should use defensive magic when we're sitting on two or three seater.

◇

"This is the capital city of our empire!"

The moment the smoke car we rode on came out of a tunnel to a high place that overlooked the Imperial Capital, Lady Liedill boasted again.

"T-this is Imperial Capital."

"T-there's a lot of very big buildings."

Liza and Zena-san were surprised.

There, I saw a majestic looking dome-shaped structure in the center of the crowded skyscrapers.

"What do you think! Our empire is great isn't it?"

"Is that dome the emperor's castle?"

"That's right."

Lady Liedill answered my question.

"The shape looks strange."

"Fufuhn, that shape was chosen not out of whim or sophism you know?"

Lady Liedill are looking down at us with an air of superiority.

She's probably waiting for me to ask her.

I inadvertently want to tease her after she's showing this much dumb cute behaviors.

"It's a precaution against attacks from the sky right? Or perhaps, it's also a solar generator?"

It seems both of my statements were correct, Lady Liedill fell silent while looking dissatisfied.

I might have been a bit childish.

The smoke car we rode on passed through the huge Imperial Capital gate and arrived at an imposing station.

Now then, as for the information of the Weasel Empire's Capital from the [All Map Exploration]--

The population is more than 300.000 people, the most numerous ones were not the weaselkin, but the ratkin and the rabbitkin, the weaselkin is only a third of the population. There are also humans but ratio is not so high.

Special mention for the fact that there's no slave.

Since the citizens are separated by class, from first to third class, there's a possibility that the third class citizens are treated like slaves though.

The average levels of the empire's citizens are 3 just like Shiga Kingdom's citizens, but the soldiers' average is high at 10 and the knights' at nearly 30.

Just as the rumor suggests, Temple Knights where Lady Liedill belongs to have 107 people that are higher than level 50. Ten of them are more than level 60, the knight leader and number two have reached level 70.

If every one of them were deployed in the war against Makiwa Kingdom, it would probably have been over before we could intervene.

On the other hand, the court magicians' levels are not that high, the average is 40 besides two level 50.

Since half of the Temple Knights have magic skills, the court magicians' duty might be something other than battle.

Unfortunately, the emperor and the tactician Touya were not caught on the map.

They're probably lurking at a different map somewhere.

"Huh? Doesn't that face look familiar?"

"U~n, it looks like Alex, but isn't he a bit shorter?"

I could hear a conversation between a purple haired and a black haired women who were eating parfait in a parlor inside the station building.

They seem to belong to the Weasel Empire's research institution, [Brains].

The purple haired girl is a reincarnated person, and the black haired girl has an obviously Japanese face.

I searched again since I forgot to check it. There are more than 10 reincarnated people at various ages inside the Imperial Capital, and there's a lot of people with Japanese names yet without Unique Skill like the black haired girl in front of me who belong to [Brains].

It appears the [Japanese Summoning] experiment performed by Princess Menea's home country, Rumooku Kingdom, is continued by the Weasel Empire.

It looks like my job in Weasel Empire has increased by one.

It helps that the women in the parlor look happy.

◇Extra◇

--Guhehehe, I'm not Arisa-chan if I miss a good opportunity like this.

Walking on tiptoe, I go from Solitary Island Palance to Echigoya Firm.

"Elterina."

"Tifa please. Let go of that hand."

When I got to Echigoya Firm, a yuri-yuri conversation was happening in front of Master.

Tifaliza, the transcendental western-style beauty is tightly grasping the manager Elterina's hand that's reaching toward Master's cheek, holding her back.

Come to think of it, currently, Tifaliza is the only one that remains a slave of Master.

It feels like she has a special treatment somehow, vexing.

"I just want to touch those soft cheeks a little bit."

Yep yep, I can sympathize with El-cchi.

Poking those cheeks feels really good.

Master displeasedly brushing my hand is very cute, my delusion goes wild just by that reaction alone.

"Doing such a thing when the other party is unconscious is cowardly."

Tifaliza is too serious.

But but, you can't deceive Arisa-chan's eyes.

That's the face of her persuading herself while admonishing El-cchi.

Alright then, Arisa the evangelist will show her true ability here.

"I've heard it! You two!"

"A-Arisa-san."

"Another problem child...."

Oh you Tifaliza, you're so cold to me.

And she was really obedient when I taught her to do double-entry bookkeeping in three days.

"Tifaliza's right, poking Master's cheeks is the best when he's conscious!"

Tifaliza looks confused to hear me somehow.

"When he's unconscious, it's this!"

After saying that, I put my head on the lap of Master who's sitting on the sofa.

--Bliss!

I'd like for those slender fingers to gently brush my hair if possible, but I'll bear with it.

I want to caress his lap, but I restrain myself since the two's coiling stares are heavy.

"A-Arisa-san, me to...."

After having thoroughly enjoyed myself enough, I change place with Elterina who entreated.

Tifaliza is only looking with wistful expression, she doesn't stop or ask for it.

She sure is a child with disadvantageous nature.

Let Arisa-chan pitch in and help you here!

"Time to change."

"Al-already?"

"That's right, look at the line, the line!"

Saying that, I push aside the reluctant Elterina from Master's lap.

"You're next."

"I-I'm... um"

Tifaliza whose whole face is red looks down while fidgeting.

What is this cute creature.

"What are you saying now, after overlooking me and Elterina, you're already an accomplice you know?"

Hearing me, Tifaliza looks shocked.

"Eat poison till the plate, so they say, right."

I whisper so in Tifaliza's ear.

My face must totally look like a villain right now.

"Come on come on, this la~p is so~ft y'know~"

Succumbing to the temptation, Tifaliza lies down on Master's lap.

"How is it?"

"Err, um.... It feels nice."

Awright! I got me [Feels nice]!!

Tifaliza's silver hair is gently brushed as I laugh guhehe.

"--He?"

There, Master who's opened his eyes is kindly looking at Tifaliza.

"U-um, Kuro-sama, t-this is."

"Un, I understand, it's alright."

Master tenderly spoke to Tifaliza who was in fluster on his lap.

"The culprit is Arisa right?"

--Not good, I'm exposed.

Adieu, Master!

I told so in my heart and tried to teleport away but my magic was neutralized.

I also tried to escape by running but the gate to the Solitary Island Palace had been closed.

"You understand right, Arisa?"

"I-it's my first time. Be gentle okay?"

Master ignored me trying to soften the mood, and flicked my forehead to hard lump as the penalty.

It was super painful, but since I got to satisfy myself with lap pillow after a long time, this day was a good day.

15-20. The Empire's Subjects

Satou's here. Why do we become unconditionally friendly with people from the same country when we met them abroad? Is it because you feel a sense of security when you converse using the same language?

◇

"It's a really lively city."

"Yes, I can't get tired of seeing the attires of the people walking on the street."

Just as Zena-san and Liza-san have said, there's a lot of people walking on the Weasel Empire's capital street wearing showy clothes.

Of course, the working class people are wearing plain clothes, but their health doesn't seem bad.

"We've arrived, you'll be staying in this mansion while waiting for the audience with His Majesty."

Lady Liedill guided us to the Weasel Empire's guest house.

According to the map, it's close to the dormitory where the reincarnated and transported people are living, this is just right.

When our carriage entered the entrance, the gatekeepers who noticed us shouted at our arrival.

Apparently, Lady Liedill didn't tell them in advance.

A weaselkin wearing officer clothing came out behind the servants who had lined up in a hurry.

"Liedill-sama, are the people over there the emissaries of Shiga Kingdom?"

"--Why is an official of domestic bureau like you here?"

Lady Liedill is openly taking a hostile attitude at the mild-mannered weaselkin.

According to AR reading, he also has a position in the internal inspection department besides the domestic bureau.

That explains why his level is high at 39 with scout-type skills despite being an official.

"I will be attending them from here on. I've been entrusted with the message from Leader-dono to Liedill-sama, 『Come to the Temple Knights ASAP』."

"F-from Leader--"

Lady Liedill's face turns pale hearing that.

Don't tell me, did she come to Dejima Island on an airship without an order from above?

"It cannot be helped. I will entrust the matter here to you. Kuro-sama, please tell me about Sir Pendragon as you promised later. Don't forget it okay!"

Lady Liedill ran off while leaving those words behind.

I should have told her enough about Satou's history in our journey already, did she have more to ask?

Zena-san looks like she wants to say something, but asking that here would be bad so I'll leave it for later.

"Nice to meet you, Emissary-dono. My name is Dolg of the Weasel Empire's domestic bureau."

"I'm Kuro, an emissary of Shiga Kingdom. I want to hear the schedule for our audience with the emperor."

I asked the official while consciously acting as Kuro.

"The audience will be held in three days. Until then, please relax in this guesthouse and freely spend your time strolling the capital. We will provide you with a bodyguard who knows the capital well, so please ask him if you need a guide."

Fumu, bodyguard huh--looking at the search result on the map, the capable people who are as skilled as the official before us are concealing themselves, so I think the bodyguards are merely decoys.

"Thank you for your kindness."

After saying that, we entered the provided room.

It seems the bodyguard will come later to greet us.

I set up a barrier for counterespionage once it's just us.

"Alright, now the people outside won't be able to hear us--"

I turn toward Zena-san after saying that.

"--U-um?"

"Didn't you want to talk about something earlier?"

Zena-san's face became bright red after I asked her that.

--Huh?

It wasn't because she felt something suspicious with Lady Liedill?

"I'll get some tea."

Liza who perceived the mood stood up and went to a teapot in the corner of the room.

That teapot appears to be a kind of magic tool.

"Um, er... I was jealous."

--Jealous?

"I thought maybe Liedill-san loves Satou-san."

"That shouldn't be the case. Since Liedill-san is a martial artist. There is no mistake that she was gathering intelligence for a rematch."

"T-that's right isn't it!"

Thanks to the effort of the deception skill which I hadn't used for a long time, I successfully dispelled Zena-san's doubt.

Even though I said rematch, thinking again, I've never even fought once with Lady Liedill.

That girl must be a battle maniac who would want to fight with anyone strong.

There is no chance of me meeting her again as Satou though, so it doesn't matter.

◇

"Kuro-sama, I am Zakuga Norouyn, I will be acting as your bodyguard."

"Norouyn, that means--"

"Yes, I wish to express my gratitude for saving my esteemed cousin-dono."

The male weaselkin who appeared as the bodyguard seemed to be the cousin of the weaselkin merchant who facilitated this meeting with the emperor.

According to the AR reading, the weaselkin merchant's uncle who's in the senate appears to be his father.

"As a token of our appreciation, my father wishes to invite you to a banquet--"

Come to think of it, one of the special scientific vehicle captains said that his relative was a member of the senate.

I have to talk to them about the matter of prisoner exchange, but the mysterious dragon knight Outis has no diplomatic channel.

Let's push the matter to the crown prince on Dejima Island.

That able man must be able to handle it well.

The hyahhaa mercenaries who were hunting civilians have found employment first, perpetually at a Shiga Kingdom's coal pit.

I've no doubt that they will work hard for the sake of people from now on--compulsorily though.

"--Kuro-sama?"

"Ah, sorry."

I was late to reply since I thought of unnecessary things.

"Then I will take your offer."

Thus it's decided that I will visit the head family of Norouyn in the first-class estate, bringing Liza and Zena-san who have dressed up.

By the way, Liza is wearing red chic dress and Zena-san is wearing cute azure dress.

Both look like normal dress outwardly, but their defensive power is equal to the early days golden armor.

◇

"Uwaah, it's dazzling."

"What vulgar lighting befitting of weasels."

Zena-san is excited to see the luxurious mansion.

In contrast to her, Liza who hates weasels frowns.

The bodyguard who came with us had run inside to inform his father, the host of this party.

"Ah! It's Alex."

When I turned at the impudent voice, the two women I saw in the station were standing behind a reception desk-like table.

They're wearing bold clothes with open chest valleys unlike the other receptionists, so they're probably guests.

The black haired girl is pointing at me, while the purple haired girl is stiffened with a pale face.

"--Wait a minute, I can't see his."

"I can see him though?"

The purple haired girl muttered in panicked voice and caught the arm of the black haired girl who was going to rush out of the booth.

"Master?"

"Let me handle this."

I hold Liza back who's going to come forward with my hand.

I could hear Zena-san starting defensive magic chant in low voice.

The thing that prevents her magic power from leaking out during the invocation is my handmade.

"N-not that! I'm saying that his status is invisible!"

"Eh? Wasn't Miko-cchi said that there's nothing your appraisal can't see 'cause it's through God."

"That's why I'm surprised! Call the guards!"

"Eh! Me?"

"Quickly!"

"Mou, you'll have to treat me giga serving of the station's parfait next time 'kay."

Urged by the purple haired girl, the black haired girl reluctantly moved.

The difference between the temperamental purple haired girl and the 'my pace' black haired girl is extreme.

When I made a step forward, the purple haired girl's body got wrapped in purple light.

I don't know the details since she has Hide Skill on, but it's probably an activation of some kind of Unique Skill.

It's probably a kind of Unique Skill that will protect her together with the black haired girl.

"Do not be frightened--"

I walk toward the purple haired girl while taking off the [Thief God Harness] on my arm.

This [Thief God Harness] is like my [Mana Camouflage] as it can even prevent the divine gift [Status Check] reincarnated people have.

"--I'll let you see it, Tomiko."

"Don't call me Tomikoooooooo!"

I said the girl's name as shown by the AR reading to ease her tension, yet she denied it out loud.

Looks like she has a complex about her name, I should have called her [Kunelia] like the black haired girl did earlier.

"Stop at once! My automatic counterattack <<Tit for Tat>> will retaliate any attack by twofold back at the opponent."

Tomiko who looked nervous explained her own ability like some mob character in a manga.

It's probably a diversion to prevent me from going at them.

"You shouldn't talk about your own Unique Skill to your opponent--"

I release [Lesser Spark] from my finger.

It's Tama and Pochi's favorite [crackle crackle] magic.

"Kya"

The lesser spark increased by twofold came back to me from the screaming Tomiko, but it vanished before me.

Looks like I was protected by the wind magic Zena-san invoked.

On the other hand, it seems Tomiko who bounced the attack got some damage, her beautiful hair looks bad due to the spark.

"--Since I'd be forced to deal with you like this then."

After saying that, I tell her, "I've made it so you can appraise me now, just look."

Tomiko appraises me while being cautious like a cat.

『Ah, I can see--huh? It's not Alex, Kuro? Reincarnated person--no, there's no Unique Skill.』

Speaking her thought out loud to herself in Japanese seems to be her habit.

『Are you a new transported person called by the emperor like Asuka?』

『I have no relation with the emperor. I come from outside the empire.』

I replied back the question in Japanese.

Tomiko's attitude immediately softened.

『--Outside? Like Nezu-san?』

『I'm sorry but I don't know anyone called Nezu.』

『I see--that's right isn't it. He was a reincarnated person, a ratkin from the north.』

The ratkin demon lord's face flashed in my mind, but it must be unrelated.

Some armed male guards rushed in.

They're brawny lionkin and tigerkin men.

"Kunelia-sama, is the white hair over there the suspicious person?"

"N-no. It was a misunderstanding!"

"--Misunderstanding?"

The lionkin who seems to be the captain conversed with Tomiko.

『Miko-cchi! I called the guards!』

『A-Asuka--』

Seeing the black haired girl behind the men, the purple hair muttered awkwardly.

Then, our bodyguard came back.

"What is happening here?"

"Y-young master.... There was a slight misinformation, this person is--"

"Anything wrong with this gentleman? He's the guest of honor today called by father do you know?"

Tomiko and the guards' face became pale after hearing the bodyguard.

Apparently, offending a member of senate in this country is quite a dangerous thing to do.

"It was nothing. Forget about that, let's go now if you're done with the things there."

Nothing good would come leaving things in this situation so I urged the bodyguard to guide us to the host.

◇

"So you're the emissary of Shiga Kigndom. Since you're an emissary, is it correct to assume that you're an earl or a duke?"

"Neither. I am an ordinary citizen."

Wonder if that shouldn't have been the case for an emissary?

While thinking that, I'm with a member of the weasel senate in a uselessly gaudy room.

Since it's only Kuro who's allowed to meet him, Liza and Zena-san are standing by in the waiting room.

"--Ordinary citizen? Yet you wish to meet His Majesty the emperor?"

"I am a follower of Hero Nanashi-sama. Shiga King and the crown prince have given me their recognitions, have you not heard it?"

"His Highness Crown Prince...."

This man calls the crown prince with [Highness] instead of [Majesty].

He's probably in the emperor's faction.

I tried to probe various things out of the senate member, but he shrewdly dodged all of it.

During this chance, I also tried to ask about the emperor and the tactician Touya.

"--His Majesty is a great person. He has turned this once small country that had no choice but getting oppressed left and right by major powers into an empire in a single generation. An impossible task for ordinary men."

I wanted to ask about his personality, not achievements, but I couldn't get anything useful from him who adored the emperor.

On the other hand, as for the tactician Touya--.

"I do not fancy that bald tactician, but he is a capable man. His involvement in realizing the emperor's『Rich Country Strong Army』plan is big. I thought he was planning a rebellion when he established『Brains』and started to meddle with science, but that bald tactician's loyalty is genuine."

Wonder what he did to make this man think it's genuine?

An unexpected answer came out when I asked about it.

"He was the one who held back the rebellion of the foolish reincarnated person, Kazura's rebellion who was accompanied by the demon lord. He sacrificed his own body to protect His Majesty. After that, that guy has only an arm and an eye."

The name sounds familiar. The weasel demon lord's name should be Kazura.

I didn't call him by name even once so I might be mistaken, I should check it.

It'd be annoying if there were still other demon lord out there.

"Are you talking about the rat demon lord and the weasel demon lord at Dejima Island?"

"--Weasel demon lord? The only demon lord that appeared should only be the rat demon lord from the north. The reincarnated weaselkin certainly did many barbaric experiments and research befitting to be called demon lord however...."

It seems the weasel demon lord had been evil ever since he was an ordinary person.

"Then, Hero Hayato has already dealt with them both at Dejima Island."

"Is that so.... Reincarnated person Kazura's death is deserved, but his ability will be missed. The science products from Jipan were highly prized among the empire's high class society, and he was also the driving force behind the empire's scientific progress...."

Despite all that, his behaviors were so bad they forced him into Dejima Island's labyrinth.

Recalling my conversations with the weasel demon lord, I understood what happened somehow.

"Father, please excuse my rudeness while you're in the middle of a talk--"

I wanted to talk a bit more, but since the banquet was about to start we went to the hall.

"Amazing--"

Zena-san was surprised when she saw the large hall for the banquet.

Very long tables are lined up in the banquet hall, and great variety of dishes, so many they look like they'll spill out, are placed on top of the tables.

At first I thought they were trying to show off the Weasel Empire's prosperity, but judging from the guests' reaction, such festivities seem to be an everyday happening.

Many of the dishes make use of oil and butter, reflecting the chandelier's light off them.

They truly look heavy on the stomach.

There are grapes and fruits placed on tall bowls between the dishes, they're probably the palate cleanser.

Lots of flower decoration too, but no one even bats an eyelid at them.

We're guided to the seats near the host while exposing ourselves to the inquisitive gazes of the guests.

"Somehow, everyone is looking at us."

"Gazes from weasel worth less than garbage."

Liza replied the anxious Zena-san by looking down at other people which was unusual for her.

Both of them are talking in Shiga Languange, so no one around us should be able to catch it.

And the party began after the host's greeting.

"It's delicious isn't it."

"Yes, the dishes have no sin. Let us get tasting."

Oily meat dishes seem to be nothing for the young Zena-san and Liza.

I only took a mouthful of each for future references and enjoyed the rare liquor offered by a rabbitkin waiter.

"--Eh?"

Chasing after Zena-san's line of sight, I saw a weaselkin vomiting over the decorative plants.

It seemed he was used to vomiting, he came back to his seat and resumed to eat as if it was natural after he wiped his mouth with a cloth given by a servant.

Apparently, it's common here to eat for the sake of eating and then continue to eat the dishes after vomiting the content of one's stomach.

How do I say this, it's like the period of the ancient roman empire at its peak.

"How very like the gutless weaselkin. Throwing away the life of other creatures they received just like that."

Liza shakes her head as if saying there's no cure for them.

Come to think of it, Liza and Zena-san's stomaches aren't bulging even though they've been eating an amazing amount of food for a while.

"I'm glad that I've learned the Art of Eating in the solitary island palace."

"Yes, you can eat to your heart's content if you compress the food in your stomach."

--Art of Eating?

Come to think of it, I did feel that everyone had been eating a lot lately.

I thought that their metabolism were just raised due to the increased STR and VIT from the level up for sure.

However, I feel that Tama and Pochi are still often downed with bulged stomach even with this Art of Eating thing.

Don't tell me, they ate until their stomachs became round on top of compressing the content inside?

"Ooh! Is she going to challenge the『Whole Roast Dragon』! That Shiga Kingdom's Lizardkin is a monster!"

"Nay nay. She probably simply doesn't know that once one challenged the『Whole Roast Dragon』, one has to finish it alone."

Voices of surprise reached my ears.

Looks like Liza had begun eating the whole roast lizard on the center table.

It seems the strange unwritten law is the reason why no one put their hand on it.

"This is tasty."

Liza continues enjoying the whole roast without minding the noises around her.

Liza's meal scenery is really elegant thanks to the open manner lecture held in the solitary island palace.

"Damn it! It'd be a disgrace to the empire if we only look while doing nothing! Show them that Weasel Empire never gives up!"

The weaselkins swoop down on the whole roast on other tables with some strange sense of rivalry.

They said some cool lines, but it's ultimately a mere gluttony.

And surely they're no match against Liza eating meat--.

"S-she ate it all...."

"F-first time I saw it happened."

Shocked eyes and voices are directed at Liza.

However, Liza who's wiping her mouth with a handkerchief doesn't seem to notice it.

"Fuuh, I'm full."

"Zena-san, you're really a light eater."

"Here you go."

"Thank you, Sa-Kuro-sama."

While wryly smiling at Liza's words, I offered a fruit water to Zena-san.

"Eating the same dishes over and over again is getting tiring. Let's have some chicken next."

After muttering that, Liza asked a waiter for the whole roast bird.

Several Mr. and Mrs. who were eating greedily fainted after they saw that.

Lots of dishes are available after all, Zena-san and I are looking over Liza-san eating happily with warm eyes.

◇

The courtyard is opened after the banquet for people to amuse themselves with dances and games.

Liza is surrounded by the food fighters, being praised somehow or other.

Judging from what can be heard, it seems a lot of Liza fans were born after they saw her eating the whole roast earlier.

I asked Zena-san to be the stopper to prevent Liza from losing her temper from dealing with the weaselkins.

As for me--.

"I see, so Nezu-san was exterminated."

"He was a kind person when he wasn't a demon lord."

--I'm gathering intelligence while drinking together with the reincarnated person Tomiko and the transported person, the black haired girl.

According to them, the rat demon lord was bound by the emperor's [Geass] and got imprisoned in the experimental institution.

It seems the rat demon lord regained his sanity after they extracted the miasma out of him, he was called [Nezu] and they befriended him.

"Scumzura got what he deserved though."

"He demanded our body for the latest issue of the journal and pushed down Neka-chan into the warehouse."

The weasel demon lord was also a villain here too huh.

I got enough information about the two demon lords, so I changed the topic to the emperor and the tactician Touya.

"Ah, sorry. I can't talk about the emperor."

"Same with me."

"Could I hear the reason?"

"Sorry, that's not possible too."

Judging from their attitudes, the information is probably banned by the weasel emperor's [Geass] skill.

"What about tactician Touya?"

"That one's fine. I know he's level 55, but skills and other things are hidden like me so I don't know."

"We don't know his race or age either right?"

"Un, various numbers and terms I don't know floated if I tried to appraise him. Maybe he used an artifact from『Brains』they said."

"He's bald but handsome you see."

"If only he doesn't talk like an old man~"

I don't think they're lying, but I don't understand the point of hiding his age and race.

He's probably hiding the fact that he's long lived, but I don't think that's an important enough information to hide....

The ground shook while I was lost in thought.

"Guess it's about magnitude 2?"

"It's quite long isn't it."

"Sure there's a lot of them lately."

"It's strange you know, quakes should be few around here."

The two former Japanese are fine with the quake, but the people in the hall seem to be frightened by it, both the guests and the waiters are hiding under the tables.

"There's also rumors about monsters appearing in the slum and the underpasses, maybe it's some kind of omen?"

"As I thought, banishing people related to temples is--"

"Don't say stupid things. The temple people volunteered to go to the parishes in order to build God's gardens."

Hearing rumors about monsters, I tried searching the map thinking it might be something similar with the matter that happened in Shiga Capital, but there's no monster besides the food monsters like the one back then.

Some of the food monsters probably escaped and caused some uproars.

The edible monsters might be a secret to everyone but the people involved.

"Hey hey, why don't we slip out here and go to Miko-cchi's mansion?"

"Eh, my home?"

"I mean, mine's a dormitory--the wall's thin you see."

The black haired girl wrapped her arms around mine and said that suddenly.

It's not just my imagination, I can feel her amorous glance.

Thanks to Kuro's foreign actor's handsome face, looks like she wants a one-night stand.

I don't intend to have one with her, but this is quite a fresh experience.

"Miko-cchi's house is a mansion y'know! There's about 10 maids and sheep!" <TLN: Shitsuji=butler. Hitsuji=sheep.> "That's common around here. Look at the top people of 『Brains』, they're living in huge mansions with servants numbering more than one digit right."

"Ahaha, Harem Section Chief and Seraglio Deputy Director are like that innit."

Those are some amazing nicknames.

They're probably surrounded by many women.

"Sorry but I have something to discuss with the senate member after this."

"Then come visit『Brains』."

Fumu, not a bad invitation.

"I'll be coming if you're alright tomorrow."

"It's a promise!"

I exchanged pinky promise with the forceful black haired girl, and added the visit to the [Brains] in my schedule.

15-21. Brains

Satou's here. It's said that a genius and an idiot are two sides of the same coin, but since I've never met a genius in real life, I'm not sure about the authenticity of that saying. I think it's impossible to find a single genius among innumerable idiots though.

◇

"It's a cuboid building without appeals isn't it."

"So this is the base of『Brains』...."

Liza and Zena-san muttered while looking up at Brains's base.

It looks like a research institute or a business building.

Two Temple Knights are standing guard on the entrance while looking bored, they're glaring at us, or rather at the bodyguard.

The domestic bureau the bodyguard belongs to seems to not get along well with the Temple Knights.

"Ah! You came you came! Miko-cchi, Alex's here!"

The black haired girl whom I've gotten familiar with during the several days here is waving her arms while looking impatient at the the automatic glass door opening.

Three purple haired reincarnated people are behind the black haired girl.

One of them is Tomiko who invited me here, while the other two seem to be the director and the vice director here according to AR reading.

"Hee, so he's the actor-san emissary of Shiga Kingdom."

"Director, I've heard that the courtesy with nobles in Shiga Kingdom is strict. You should not be too frank."

"Eeh, that's annoying."

The angelic smile of the director who's wearing a white robe darkens.

Even if he's beautiful the director is a man, so I don't feel anything even if his good looks get cloudy.

According to the information shown on the AR reading, he's level 41 and, surprisingly, doesn't hide his skills, his Unique Skills are [All-Purpose Drafting], and [Precision Work].

He also has various other production skills.

The vice director is hiding her skills so I'm not really sure, but judging from the daisho katana on her waist, it's probably something related to them.

"I'm Kuro of Shiga Kingdom. I am merely an emissary without peerage, thus you don't need to use stiff polite speech with me."

I introduced myself when we got close enough to have a conversation.

"Huh? You heard us? I'm Kenji Orerian the director here. That might sound like a fake name but it's the real one in this life you see."

The director seems to be more easygoing than I thought.

His name is [Kenji] on the AR reading.

Yet he adds Orerian on his name, he must cherish his family after his reincarnation.

After briefly exchanging greetings, we walk in the hall with him guiding us.

We separated from Zakuga the bodyguard, so he's not here now.

"This place is bright--are you using Light Drops?"

"No no, those are『LEDs』you know."

The director answered my question lightly.

"Ell, ee, dee?"

Zena-san's pronunciation was somewhat cute.

"Now that Kazura-san's no more, we've got to work hard and reproduce them or else we can't replace them."

"We sure lost a valuable man."

The vice-director replied Tomiko's remark without a hint of regret.

"It'll be quick and easy if we just find a reincarnated person with a Unique Skill that can synthesize rare metal, but the merchants under the imperial command of his majesty the emperor couldn't find one even after scouring the whole world, it might be impossible."

I see, so that's the reason why there's a lot of reincarnated people in the Weasel Empire.

"Saeki-san or I can make them as long as we have the material though."

Looking up on the map, this Saeki-san is someone with single digit level and has no Skill, so he's probably a technician who worked in a company that dealt in LED production in his former world.

Right, I have to confirm one thing--.

"Since you have LED lights, that means you also have a power generator?"

"Un? We do. But since we got the gasoline from Kazura-san, now we're using Electric Turtles and Electric Frogs to charge electricity on batteries."

"Using monsters as a substitute of power generator huh."

Just when I was about to be convinced, I realized that he was joking.

"--That's a lie isn't it? You can just use common coals to run a steam turbine right?"

"Mou, you noticed too fast. And I've made a dummy generator room for visitors and all."

The director puffs his cheeks, the vice director and the black haired girl are looking at him with enraptured expressions.

Tomiko is the only one who's looking at the three with cool eyes.

Several glass cases are put on a side of the wide corridor, exhibiting various things like a microwave oven and telephone instruments.

"There's a lot of unusual things."

"Those aren't made by the weasels, they seem to be articles from Japan."

Liza answered the surprised Zena-san in Shiga language.

Liza-san knows more about Japanese culture than Zena-san due to my flip-phone and Arisa telling her about various things with illusion magic.

"The things over there are summoned by Kazura-san. We still can't reproduce most of them you see."

The director said that in a slight vexation.

Even if he can draw a blueprint of an LSI with that Unique Skill, he probably doesn't have the facility to actually make one.

After walking on the corridor for a while, one of the sides has changed to one fitted with glass, showing the place with Electric Turtles and Electric Frogs generator like he said earlier.

"Here's the room to explain our research to our patrons. If we show our thermal power generator recklessly, there might be someone who'd want to remodel the steam locomotives you see."

I thought he despises the weasels but it seems he's also relatively cautious against them.

"Once we can operate a large scale thermal power plant inside a building, the Weasel Empire will become a bright place like modern Japan. Installing telephone and electric lines are difficult though, so we'll need to make a power plant in each city y'see."

"How wonderful, director. The whole empire will benefit from science."

The vice director gives an applause with a serious look on her face.

"Do you know about the taboo of the Gods?"

"Un? Of course."

He calmly answered when I asked him in a low voice.

He's smiling and looking straight ahead but only his eyes aren't laughing.

"Can you see the black building over there?"

The director points at a neighboring big building that can be seen from a small window.

When I nodded, he said, "We have nuclear weapons over there you see."

Searching the map, every kind of modern weapons--even a nuclear submarine surprisingly, are inside the building. There's even SLBMs with nuclear marks inside a warship.

They're probably summoned by the weasel demon lord's Unique Skill.

I'm intrigued just how they're maintaining them, but it must be mostly with Fixture magic.

"Are you going to threaten the Gods with nuclear weapons?"

"We can probably launch an attack that has enough power to create another sun."

The [God's Fragments] that couldn't even be scratched by the holy swords flashed on my mind.

"It's futile. Physical attacks don't work on Gods."

"Hee, It's as if you've fought them huh?"

The director looks at me with squinted eyes.

Tomiko and the black haired girl have disappeared before I knew it.

Apparently the vice director who noticed our conversation sent the two away by asking them to do some errands.

"According to my Master, even the holy sword that could cut demon lords couldn't even interfere with『God』."

"Hmmm, Hero Nanashi of Shiga Kingdom sure treads a tough life."

The director said that with a voice slightly mixed with pity.

I also just want to have an easygoing sightseeing tour if I could.

"Well, putting that aside, Touya-san's probably going to do something 'bout the Gods."

"Are you close with tactician Touya?"

"Ahaha, don't even joke about it."

The director replied while laughing, but he spoke of it with chilly eyes.

"That person isn't someone who will fight head-to-head fair and square anyway, in order to defeat the gods, he's probably even willing to bump with your master and that thing whose name I hate to say you know?"

The director looks up at the sky from a small window while saying that.

What does he mean by 'that thing'?

It's probably not the new hero of Saga Empire, and judging from [thing whose name he hates to say] and an existence that can oppose the Gods--I see, that huh.

I can see a faint white moon in the noon sky the director is looking up at.

◇

"--What's that?"

"It's a mock-up of particle accelerator."

When I asked him about a ring-shaped object in the courtyard, the director answered as such.

"That, you see. I'm using that to find out the true nature of magic essence."

--The true nature of magic essence?

"You see. I cannot allow myself to not know the unknown. Once I understand magic essence, I'll investigate the reason why there are unscientific things like Skills and Level, and lastly--"

The director pulled my ears and whispered, "I want to find out the true identity of Gods" with a serious look.

"Keep it a secret from everyone okay. I haven't told anyone 'bout it."

After the director said that jokingly, the darkish anger burst out of the vice-director who has been abstaining herself calmly behind us. I clap Liza's shoulder who reacted to the anger and retaliated by coercing the vice-director to stop her.

Still....

Researching about true nature of magic essence and all, this director is a true scientist.

His way of thinking is fundamentally different from me, an engineer.

"But, you see, there's a lot of obstacles in this world, it's hard to carry experiments."

He said that while looking at the particle accelerator mock-up.

"That particle accelerator is about 10 kilometer long, but there's too many monsters on the ground they'll quickly break it."

"Isn't the smoke car's rail longer?"

"Ahaha, you're so funny Kuro-san. I can quickly repair it if it's just locomotive rails, but that's not possible with the particle accelerator."

The director turns at me with a smile of disdain.

"We can immediately start the next phase once we can successfully launch the experimental rocket to the geosynchronous orbit though. Fortunately, some of my colleagues have the Infinite Inventory, so they can carry the parts needed to the space and we don't need to launch often. This kind of things is what's nice in a fantasy world isn't it."

I'm interested in his research and it's possible to immediately start the experiment with my cooperation, but since it will obviously violate the god's taboo, I restrain myself and speak nothing.

--Why are you restraining yourself? Just do it if you want to.

I felt like I heard such devilish whispers, but I don't intend to deviate from the rule created by the creator of this world, however imperfect. At least for my sake and the sake of my close friends.

And--.

"EEEEEH! There's monsters in space too?!"

"The elves refer to them as mysterious creatures, but a lot of them are of the same class as the Great Monstrous Fish Tovkezeera."

"Y-you serious.... Damnit, God is death!"

Hearing the director's begrudging wail, I almost told him that two of them had already died, but since that's probably not the response he wants to hear, I leave it to the vice-director to console the director.

Tomiko and the others came back then.

"Director, what's wrong?"

"Looks like he's a bit shocked."

Tomiko and the others acted as our guide in place of the director who went back to his room due to feeling unwell.

The director seemed to be the only one peculiar, the others staff members were all common people such as old factory workers and exhausted middle-aged male engineers.

"--Do we want to go back to our former world?"

My question seemed to be unexpected, the people who were having a welcoming party in the dining room fell silent.

"Don't even joke about it."

"Right. I was asked the same question when I first came here, no way I'm going back to that world."

"Here, the meals are delicious, I can live in luxury, I have a house, a private car and above all, a job."

"I haven't got a bride yet, but the thought of leaving a world where beautiful diligent maids, elves whom I haven't seen yet, and girls with cat ears exist doesn't even cross my mind."

Apparently, the Weasel Empire asks the people they summoned about their will at the time of the summoning.

Most of the people here seem to be happy about their treatment, they don't seem to want to go back.

"Isn't it better to ask that question to the people who fell into the slum?"

According to a middle-aged engineer, young people who didn't have the required technical skills and ideas, and refused to even do chores are prowling around in the slum by relying on distributed food.

It seems many of the Japanese people who left this place couldn't adapt to the city life and picked that course.

"Those guys are only wallowing in self-pity, you'd be better off not getting involved with them you know?"

They told me that, but I decided to check it with my own eyes.

◇

"--God's punishment is upon us! People! Pray to God, and beg for mercy!"

That sermon reached my ears once we got to the slum.

When I turn my eyes at the source, an old weaselkin priest that looks like a dead tree is shouting out loud with fiery eyes full of madness.

It looks as if he's going to spout fire from his mouth.

"That holy mark is of God Zaikuon. If Master allows, I can take care of him."

Liza is glaring at the old priest without hiding her animosity.

The memory when she was tormented by the fat Zaikuon priest in Seryuu city might have resurfaced.

"No, there's no need for that."

I point at a direction where several government officials are running.

"Holy Master Bodrazog, it's the emperor's pawns!"

"We're changing places! O pious youths, follow after me!"

The elderly priest took about 10 young people into a back alley.

The transported people I'm looking for are among the youths who escaped with him.

Looks like they're not waiting for distributed food in the slum, but devoting themselves to their faith.

Quite an intense act.

Of course there were several transported people who didn't participate in the act, but I couldn't even connect a conversation with them since they were too lethargic, let alone asking their will, I stumbled at the first step.

If I were someone whose overflowing with the spirit of a volunteer, I probably would frequent here until they open their heart, but unfortunately, since I'm just a hypocritical ordinary person, I don't intend to take care of them more than this.

Of course, it'll be a different story if they come to me on their own.

And then, Lady Liedill visited our mansion when we returned there.

"Kuro! A summon from His Majesty the emperor! We're going to the Imperial Castle!"

Lady Liedill caught my arm and pulled it.

As always, she doesn't have consideration to an international guest, I think it's because she's been living in an isolated nation.

"Right now?"

"That's right! You can't make His Majesty wait. Your clothes fine, just come with me now."

Looks like the emperor is unexpectedly hasty.

Now then, let's have an audience with the emperor--.

15-22. Audience

Satou's here. There are people who want to settle everything by force anywhere. There's not many of them in modern Japan, however it might be unavoidable for that ratio to increase in another world.

◇

"This hallway is gorgeous isn't it."

"It's just a bad taste of the riches."

Zena-san let out a sigh of admiration while we were walking on the luxurious hallway of the Imperial Castle.

The hallway is full of carefully placed decorations made of gold, silver and ivory, it's truly showy.

Liza thinks that it's a bad taste since the culture in Shiga Kingdom is different, but I think these ornaments are quite tasteful if they're set up accordingly.

The ones here are just us three, Lady Liedill and a maid who's guiding us.

Zakuga the bodyguard got into a quarrel with Lady Liedill's comrades, the Temple Knights, and was dismissed when we arrived at the castle.

He was treated quite badly, but since he didn't particularly ask for support, I left him alone.

I was talking with Zena-san while walking between the ornamental pillars and statues when the maid suddenly made a sudden turn.

"Oy, where are you going. The audience hall is straight ahead isn't it?"

"I'm very sorry. The passage ahead is currently under renovation... therefore we cannot use it."

The maid seemed to be scared of the threatening attitude of Lady Liedill, she averted her eyes when she said that.

--Oh?

I glanced at the map since I was bored and saw that there was no renovation going on the hallway ahead.

I couldn't see anything like renovation even after spinning the 3D map, so I checked the hallway with space magic [Clairvoyance].

As the result I confirmed that the maid was lying, so I told that fact to Zena-san and Liza with [Tactic Talk] magic.

"Renovation huh.... Must be because the idiots, Gilzem and Dazlim, fought inside the castle. Good grief, those idiots are just."

Lady Liedill seemed to believe the maid's lie.

Maybe the maid averted her eyes to prevent Lady Liedill's [Dragon Eyes] from seeing through it.

I found a suspicious person behind a pillar as I was walking while being on guard.

"Yo, long ears."

A giant weaselkin carrying a 3-meter long thin sword appeared.

He's the number 2 of the Temple Knights at level 70.

If we're only looking at level, he's about as strong as the current Liza.

"Gwalba-dono.... I'm sorry, but I'm acting under the imperial command of His Majesty. Leave it for later if you want a bout."

"My business isn't with ya."

He sneered and told Lady Liedill off.

"This great me's business is with the hero's follower over there."

"Are you going to point your sword at His Majesty's guest?"

"Whaaat? Ya afraid of me, hero's follower? What a big coward ya are."

--Cheap provocations.

"Gwalba-dono! Kuro-dono is a guest of His Majesty!"

"So what! Ya think I can miss this chance to fight someone strong."

Lady Liedill's restraint was brushed off by Gwalba's fighting race's reasoning.

The people here can probably manage even if this kind of problem arise since the country is isolated.

I can see how he ends up with his personality if he grows up in such an environment.

"Ain't it better if yer' master be called 『Sissy』 rather than 『Hero』?"

"Is that a provocation?"

Liza on the back would snap if I let this go on, so I looked down at him with cold eyes.

"Hahn! A follower who doesn't fight back at insults for his master 's just garbage."

The tip of a magic spear wrapped in red light appeared before the eyes of Gwalba who seemed bored.

"W-whaaat! Just when."

Gwalba stepped backward using Flickering Movement in a panic.

I wonder if the shiny hair on his forehead from cold sweat?

"Excuse me, Master. This small fish will be dealt with quickly, please wait a minute."

Liza apologized for her indiscretion while keeping her line of sight at Gwalba.

I should have kicked Gwalba and made him faint when I sensed that she was about to snap.

"Okay. I allow you to engage. You can seriously injure him, but try not to kill him."

"Understood."

Lady Liedill seems to find my permission unexpected, she tries to stop us in a hurry.

"Wait, Kuro-dono! Gwalba-dono's personality and conducts are the lowest but there's no one but Captain who could match him in a fight among Temple Knights."

"Long ears! Don't say it like the great me's weaker than Captain."

Irritated by the two's quarrel, Liza shot a very small Magic Edge Canon between them.

"Just come at me. I will teach you your place."

"Fine by meeee, you lizard!"

Gwalba's unsheathed sword is clad in blue light.

"--Holy weapon?"

Zena-san was surprised.

She has her own holy dagger inside her bag, yet she still gets honestly surprised, it's very like Zena-san.

Zena-san's honest cutesy really is her nice point.

"This is the holy sword granted by the emperor to great me, Monofoshi Zao. An imitation magic spear made from low class monsters can't hope to rival it!"

"Close that dirty mouth. You're polluting Magic Spear Douma which Master has created."

The red pattern on the magic spear receives Liza's quiet anger, pulsing profusely.

"Here's a greeting, Slashing Steel Flash! For now, die!"

Gwalba used physical reinforcement on his body in an instant and swung down his long sword while using the Flickering Movement.

The sharp slash that looked as if it could cut air molecules sliced Liza's figure, the after wave of the attack broke the paving stone behind her.

Cloud of dust and roaring sound came flowing here from the depth of the hallway.

The expression of Gwalba who was grinning, sure of his victory, froze.

"--You're fit to be a street performer."

"I-impossible, you evaded the great me's Slashing Steel Flash?"

Liza's magic spear, clad in Magic Edge, is thrust before the neck of the groaning Gwalba, his adamantite neck guard fell down in half.

Looks like Gwalba couldn't see Liza's Flickering Movement and Ground Shrink.

"Merely leaving a decoy afterimage, every one of my companions can do that."

She pulled the magic spear while saying that and readied her stance.

"Take your stance. I will teach you how the strong fight."

Liza declared without feeling triumphant.

◇

"Thank you for waiting."

"Good work. Shall we go then. The emperor is probably tired of waiting too."

Leaving Gwalba who has been sunk into the wall behind, we urge the maid to press forward.

His pride seems to have been crushed by Liza, but it's not like he's injured enough to die, there should be no problem leaving that weasel alone.

"Y-yes!"

The maid who had an expression like her soul had came out seemed to remember her duty, she straightened herself and replied and then guided us while looking frightened.

"W-with that Gwalba-dono, to be so one sided...."

"He had probably never fought an opponent who is of the same strength or stronger than him. There were too many opening and wasteful moves."

Liza said that calmly at Lady Liedill who muttered in disbelief.

Well, on top of training with opponents of different types, Pochi and Tama everyday, Liza also sparred with me, Hikaru and even Black Dragon sometimes, so there's no surprise that she's become strong.

Being able to instantly fully recover by going back to the solitary island palace and drinking advanced magic potion and elixir no matter how injured she got might have a big effect too.

"Please wait in front of this door."

When we arrived before a door made of unknown alloy, the maid ran up to the Imperial Knights who stood guard in front of it at a quick pace.

These knights seem to be of a different affiliation than Lady Liedill's Temple Knights.

I operate the menu to obtain information about the emperor.

He's around level 40, not too high, his skills are mostly composed of governmental and negotiation type ones, the only thing we need to be wary of is the [Geass] skill which we knew already.

--No there's still more.

I found a [Special Ability] column on the emperor's status.

He has two Unique Skills, [Lucky Star] and [《Reflect Unlucky》]."

Looks like the weasel emperor is a reincarnated person.

I'm intrigued why he doesn't hide his info.

Maybe there's no point in hiding it since his Geass skill is famous.

Just in case, I put several layer of mind magic [<<Enchant Spirit Protection>>] on Liza and Zena-san.

They already have the automatic defensive items made by analyzing Raka, but I feel that this magic is stronger as a countermeasure against the emperor's [Geass].

"We will be holding your weapons custody here."

"Understood."

I hand over the magic gun on my waist to the Imperial Knights.

Zena-san and Liza are going to wait in the waiting room next to the audience hall so they get to keep their weapons.

"Shiga Kingdom emissary Kuro-dono, step forward before the presence of His Majesty the emperor."

I step into the audience hall that's deeper than Shiga Kingdom's.

There is a huge throne in the room's depth, as if showing the emperor's authority.

The weasel emperor with purple fur who's sitting in that throne is also huge.

--Mainly horizontally that is.

I've seen a lot of people fat people before, but he's a far more heavyweight even compared the real sumo wrestlers I saw in the national sumo dome, let alone Mr. Overweight.

He's at least three time the width of a normal man.

"--In other words, Shiga Kingdom is going to be the patron of that guy?"

"Affirmative. Everything is just as what's written in that letter."

After reading the Declaration of Independence, the emperor very lightly sighed in a way that couldn't be noticed by the people around him.

And he muttered in a very small voice my Attentive Ears skill couldn't pick up, "So he really picked that course", I caught from the movement of his lips.

Apparently the emperor had predicted that the crown prince would declare independence.

"What! Shiga Kingdom intends to cut off Dejima Island!"

"Those bastards, now that it's come to this, we should sortie our unrivaled airship force and raid their capital!"

"Aye! Even without utilizing the science, our victory is cemented if we deploy half of the Temple Knights even if the dragon knights that appeared in Makiwa Kingdom were to intervene."

The weasel ministers who was in the audience hall got roused when they heard about Dejima Island's independence.

Apparently, unlike the weasels people outside the country, I feel that the ones inside the empire is short tempered, or rather they're quick to blow their tops.

It's interesting how they went past Dejima Island and straight to Shiga Kingdom.

Perhaps the ministers of Weasel Empire have some complex about Shiga Kingdom.

"Call General Putepo."

With the emperor's command, a chamberlain quickly left the audience hall.

--So we can't avoid the war after all huh.

"General Putepo?"

"Are we going to leave the conquest to an incompetent person who only got his peerage from his house?"

"It might be possible to suppress Dejima Island if they're alone in this...."

Quite a harsh evaluation.

After a while, someone wearing odd disorganized ceremonial clothes who seems to be General Putepo appears.

He's a plump weaselkin who looks like a small fry.

"Your Majesty, I have come at your call."

"Dejima Island has declared independence. Your third army is fit for the subjugation."

"Crown Prince-dono rebelled! I Putepo will burn down all of Dejima Island and make it a hell where no one alive."

"No need of unnecessary killing. Arrest only the crown prince by all means, or if it's not possible--kill him."

"I've certainly accepted Your Majesty's command."

General Putepo accepted the weasel emperor's command with exaggerated gestures that reeked of acts.

""Please wait, Your Majesty!""

A lionkin and a tigerkin wearing Temple Knights ceremonial dress entered the audience hall while speaking in unison.

"Lord Gilzem and Lord Dazlim huh...."

"Those rowdy bunch. They probably come here to protest and ask for their participations."

The ministers spoke ill behind the back of the two who were wrapped in violent aura.

"Your Majesty's authority would be stained if you left it to an incompetent general."

"We will take care of it all with just our platoons if you would leave it to us."

Lionkin Gilzem and tigerkin Dazlim appealed at the emperor while showing off their muscles.

It must be a popular style in Weasel Empire.

Dear me, communication between cultures is difficult isn't it.

The weasel emperor once again muttered in a small voice that couldn't be heard by the people around, my [Attentive Ears] skill picked up, "These fools."

"I've put my trust on General Putepo. I am sure that he will do the job as I wish it to be."

Hearing the emperor, the two made sullen faces, General Putepo had a satisfied smile on his whole face.

However--[As I wish it to be] huh.

I caught a glimpse of the emperor not wanting to win the war.

"Moreover, you Temple Knights have more fitting battles waiting. Work hard to seek strength until that time."

The weasel emperor followed up at the two who looked discontent.

"We've prepared a new area in the artificial labyrinth at the suburb. Capture the labyrinth and improve yourself."

The emperor instructed and then a chamberlain presented a tray with egg-sized jewels on it at the two.

It seems those are an item called [Teleport Stone].

I'd like to learn the way to make them if they're as the name imply.

"Acknowledged!"

"I'm itching for a fight."

The two gleefully took the [Teleport Stone], bowed at the emperor and left the audience hall.

Now then, it's about time to talk with the emperor and get down to the business--.

I have to talk about the science and the taboo.

15-23. The Forbidden Science

Satou's here. There's a saying, [Understand everything from only one part], but I think one needs to [Study 1000 times, review 10000 times] in order to embody that. If you don't have a foundation on anything, you'll notice that you won't make it once you enter the society.

◇

"--Emperor, I have a slightly complicated thing to talk about. Could we talk in private if possible?"

"Very well, come several steps forward."

The emperor said some flag-raising thing, but since my Trap Detection and Crisis Perception skills aren't reacting, it should be fine.

After walking several steps ahead as instructed, the ground around the throne began to descend.

Looks like the throne and its surrounding is an elevator.

"Don't you think you're too careless?"

"There is nothing to fear. My good luck knows no adversary."

I see, it looks like the weasel emperor is absolutely confident in his Unique Skill.

This elevator seems to continue outside the map.

It probably connects to the City Core.

The descent speed is slow, so I decide to talk about the taboo while we're descending.

"--Do you know that science, particularly communication technology and railroads, violate the God's taboo?"

"Of course."

The weasel emperor nodded at me.

"Then--"

The weasel emperor raise his hand to stop me from pressing on.

"We started precisely because we've done the preparation."

"Preparation? Are you talking about your experiment with a small country? Or maybe it's about the nuclear weapons in Brains?"

The weasel emperor bursts into laughter after hearing me.

"Do you know about Kakyo?" <TLN: oversea Chinese merchants.>

The weasel emperor suddenly asked that question once he was done laughing.

He ignores my bewilderment and continues on.

"Spreading around the world, permeating their own culture on every part of the world to preserve it."

"What about it?"

I still don't understand what he means.

"That is precisely the role model. My kins have spread throughout the world, thus our culture and blood would not come to an end even if Weasel Empire were ruined by the Gods."

The weasel merchants whom I saw not only in Shiga Kingdom but the whole world flashed in my mind.

Regardless of which country they were, they did business with their own culture.

"--You're already sure of your destruction?"

"A wise ruler has to prepare many hands."

Several images floated across my mind.

"Like the parishes and Dejima Island?"

"That's right. The parishes of where only the pious believers and priests are gathered have none of the science, and Dejima Island which is estranged from our empire most likely won't be subjected to the god's wrath."

Yet he's sending a subjugation army on Dejima Island--no, that's why he assigned an incompetent general huh.

But that means he won't save even 10% of the empire.

"Are you going to sacrifice the majority of your subjects?"

"What kind of statesmen abandon their people. Those are simply insurances in case we lose to the Gods."

The weasel emperor laughed down at my critic.

"Do you think you can win?"

The emperor had a vicious smile that looks like it's cursed when he heard my question.

It appears he really intends to win against Gods.

"Chances are high that you won't win against Gods even if you use nuclear weapon y'know? Or maybe you're going to use it to threaten the Gods?"

"An anecdote from an ancient king huh. Have you read the slates in the 『Room of Truth』?"

Oh, some enigmatic words came out.

"Room of Truth?"

"It's a storage housing the records of The Sage who continues to carve the truth since an age older than the ancient times."

I see, I don't know who this [Sage] is, but that [Room of Truth] looks to be the weasel emperor's source of information.

"Everything, from the God's taboo to how the civilizations that violated the taboo were destroyed, are recorded in it."

"And yet, you're still going to fight the Gods?"

"That's right. Time is nigh for the people to be liberated from the control of God's 『Blessing』."

--Liberation huh.

Somehow, the word [Liberation] is littered in bad images ever since I came to another world.

It's probably due to the strong impact of the demon lord's believer groups, [Wings of Liberty] and [Light of Liberty].

"I'd like to ask for a shameless request. Could you let me read the slates in that

『Room of Truth』."

The things about God's taboo that I know mostly come from Corpse in Selbira Labyrinth's lower layer and the story I heard in my fight with [Dog-head Demon Lord].

Demi god-mode Aze-san said that she didn't know about when I asked her.

"Hou? You wish to know the source of our empire's power."

Hearing my request, the weasel emperor grinned gleefully.

--Looks like he's going to ask for something extravagant in exchange.

"I ask you five things as the compensations."

The weasel emperor spread his thick short fingers and said that.

That reminds me, the elevator has stopped descending in the middle of the way.

"Two of them are a sacred stone--『Philosoper's Stone』 the size of a person's head, and a Darkness Crystal big enough to free a huge rocket from the shackles of gravity."

The weasel emperor said that while folding his fingers.

"Once our fight with the gods begin, you and--Hero Nanashi and his followers--"

Fumu, he's probably going to ask for my assistance.

"--Are to stay neutral."

"Neutral? You don't wish for us to take your side?"

"That's right. People who carry God's Fragments in them cannot go against Gods."

--What the heck is that?

"First time I heard of it."

"There were cases of it happening in the past. A hero of God Parion cannot brush off the request of God Parion."

I shouldn't swallow the weasel emperor's words whole, but if the [God's

Fragment] is something similar to backdoor, it should be easy to hack it.

For example, if they can arbitrarily manipulate the information shown on my Menu, like say, adding [Possession: Demon Lord] state on someone, I will be cautious against that someone.

However--.

The [Girl in Painting] that I saw in my fight with the Dog Head passes by my mind.

--That seemingly indifferent girl doesn't seem to be the type who will go to the trouble of manipulating someone from outside.

Of course, I don't know if that girl is really God Parion since the one who said that was the Dog Head.

"I promise you our neutrality."

If the fight with Gods really starts, it seems I will need to withdraw to the solitary island palace with Arisa and Hikaru.

"What's the remaining two?"

"Once we begin our fight against the Gods, that will probably become the source of persecution. I don't care if it's only within your reach. Please protect my fellow countrymen."

"Understood."

He's quite the countryman.

I can just order all Echigoya Firm's branch offices in the whole country to shelter them.

"And lastly--"

The weasel emperor's last demand was slightly troubling.

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"--How about it?"

"Understood. I promise you that I won't do destructive acts on anything I see beyond this."

I don't know what's in the area ahead of us since it's of another map, but the tactician is probably there.

They might be hiding the third demon lord after the rat and weasel demon lords, but the only demon lord that's dangerous enough to equal the dog-head and the golden wild bear king should only be the [Goblin Demon Lord].

I'd be surprised if they had sealed God Zaikuon who is in the middle of revival, but since it's not like I have a particular attachment to the God, I think I can easily ignore it if that's the case.

"Just in case, it's not a site for human experimentation and torture is it?"

I asked just to be sure since I'm not a superman who can carefreely hold a conversation while witnessing the weak going through such thing.

Even if I won't do anything destructive, I could rescue them after all.

"I have not such an irrational hobby."

"Good then."

Once I nodded at the emperor, the elevator started to descend once again.

For some reason, the weasel emperor doesn't use his [Geass] skill on me.

It's strange when he can make things easier just by using his [Geass].

Maybe he's restraining himself from easily relying on his skill.

We continue descending while I'm thinking that.

◇

The wall on one side of the elevator became transparent at the same time my Radar notified me that I had entered a new area, a huge underground cave came into my view.

It's probably about as big as the large cave under Shiga Capital.

There's a glass cylinder that extends to the ceiling in the center of the large cave with bare bedrock.

The cylinder is filled with green liquid, a giant creature with purple white ash skin that looks like a formalin-soaked specimen is floating inside.

Looks like it's not a dead specimen, it's just sleeping.

"A giant's embryo--no, that's not it."

--It's a troll.

Its body is abnormally big, it has ox-like dark purple horns.

The tusks protruding on its menacing face looks sharp enough to penetrate even the Black Dragon's scales.

--A troll demon lord.

If I'm not mistaken, his name was mentioned during my fight with the Dog-head demon lord.

Dog head said that he snatched a useful Unique Skill from the troll demon lord or something.

"That's right. That demon lord is the one called The Sage, the record keeper of the『Room of Truth』."

The weasel emperor jerked his chin, urging me to see the demon lord's status.

AR readings show [Demon Lord] as his main title and [The Sage] and [Recorder of Truth] as his hidden titles.

His level is 109, his skills are full of magic skills.

And his Unique Skills are [Dragon Vein Connection] and [Infinite Record].

He probably records the information he gets from [Dragon Vein Connection] on something using [Infinite Record].

"Look, the next slate arises."

I shifted my sight per the weasel emperor's word and saw a light purple slate growing on the glass cylinder where the demon lord was sleeping.

That transparent cylinder seems to be made of something different than glass.

Once the slate finishes growing, it freely falls down.

I imagined that it would break on the hard ground, but its velocity decreased in the middle of the way, ending the fall with only a hard sound.

Masked men in white robes gathered there, they collected the slate, put it on a workbench-like thing and then started doing something.

"That's your source of information?"

"As you can see."

The emperor affirmed.

The source of the weasel emperor's information really seems to be that troll demon lord.

No wonder he made me promise not to [Do anything destructive no matter what I see beyond this.]

"Maybe the troll demon lord just tricking you by manipulating the information?"

When I asked that, he scornfully laughed, "Hmph."

"Do you think someone who's been entrusted with a country didn't do that much evidence gathering?"

Guess he's right, the ones at stake are not just his life after all.

"We've confirmed that the information from at least 700 years ago are recorded with no mistake."

The weasel emperor said confidently that with a triumphant look.

The elevator finally stops, a bridge made from an artificial material that looks like it's made from Force magic, is hanging between the elevator and the floor.

"--Let me take over from here."

A man wearing deep purple overcoat appeared from the opposite side of the bridge.

The [Old Man] noh mask he's wearing on his face peeks through his hood.

Indescribable discomfort and disgust arose in me the moment I saw that figure.

However that discomfort and disgust immediately abated.

Intrigued by the unnaturalness of it, I checked the log and see--

>[Anathema Mask]'s effect resisted.

--displayed.

It seems to be a mask to make him disliked.

Of course, that's not all, with normal appraisal, the only information that can be seen are that his name is [Touya], titles are [Tactician], [The Hated], and [The Isolated], and his level is 55.

The degree of concealment is even higher than the [Hide Skill] reincarnated people have.

The performance is quite high, though not as good as my [Thief God Harness].

"Tactician Touya huh."

"Right on the mark. Kuro the emissary of Shiga Kingdom--"

I could hear a boy-like voice overlapped by an old man voice.

The mask seems to camouflage his voice too.

And then, his true information is displayed besides the fake information on the AR reading as a double exposure, as if it knows that I've seen through the camouflaged voice.

His skills are [Unknown] concealed by [Hide Skill], but everything else are bare.

Surprisingly his name sounds familiar to me.

"--And your true identity is."

Tactician Touya stopped his words to put on airs.

"Hero Nanashi of Shiga Kingdom."

I can imagine the face of an elf with a triumphant look behind the noh mask.

He's probably smirking with half-open eyes.

"You've done your homework, tactician Touya."

Yes, his race is elf.

And his name is--.

"Or perhaps, I should call you Trazayuya the elf sage?"

15-24. Trazayuya

Satou's here. The scene of the detective main protagonist splendidly untying the case in a mystery series, fully loading the catharsis, is really wonderful. It's just that, the feeling of bitterness from having all of your wrong reasoning shot down is the only real flaw isn't it.

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"Hou? Well done figuring that out. Correct."

I thought he would play dumb, but he easily admitted it instead.

Tactician Touya--No, Sage Trazayuya lowers his hood and takes off the mask.

I could see flame-like swaying light in his purple eyes.

On the other hand, there's no eyebrow on his cleanly shaved head and the pointed end of his ears are smoothed over too.

That reminds me, I remember reading, "My life will run out soon", in a document I found in [Trazayuya Maze].

Wonder why he's fine?

Asking, "Didn't you die?" would be too rude, I can't do that.

"However, Touya the elf has died. I'll have you understand that the one here is Touya the tactician of Weasel Empire."

"What do you mean?"

Does he want to erase his Sage persona?

"I was saved by His Majesty when I was foolishly turning into a demon lord. Thus my life as an elf ended at that time."

Sage Trazayuya--Tactician Touya smirked as if mocking himself.

Although I can't know for sure, he probably used too much of his Unique Skills in order to create the [Maze].

Nevertheless, I'm surprised that the weasel emperor would go to such a distant place even if it was years ago.

At that time, he might have been a willful crown prince, or perhaps a prince whose succession right was low in the order.

"Did you build the empire as a repayment of the favor?"

"--Favor?"

Tactician Touya looked puzzled.

"Is it not?"

"I helped build the ideal empire because the weaselkin offered me the 『Dungeon Seed』 they found in a ruin as a compensation."

--Dungeon Seed?

I recalled the labyrinth in Seryuu City when I heard that unfamiliar term.

I wonder if that labyrinth was also created using that Dungeon Seed thing?

"Let us end the reminiscence there."

The emperor who were left behind, corrected the subject on track.

"Sorry, Tarou. I said something unnecessary."

"Add 'emperor' there. The subordinates can hear us here."

"I'll be careful, Emperor Tarou."

He's speaking familiarly with the emperor using his name even though he was calling him [His Majesty] earlier.

I still can't quite grasp the relationship between tactician Touya and the emperor.

Right, I've to confirm several thing before we get to the main subject--.

"I want to confirm some things first. Why did you do acts of terrorism in Shiga Kingdom?"

At first I didn't ask about it since I thought it was only natural for the emperor of the Weasel Empire to cause disturbances behind the back if they regarded Shiga Kingdom as their enemy, but if it was an instruction from Sage Trazayuya who should have had a favorable relationship with Shiga Kingdom, I'd like to know his intention.

"Acts of terrorism?"

Rather than feigning ignorance, it feels more like he doesn't understand what

I'm talking about.

"You guys were the one who gave the Reborn Seeds to the spies of Holy State Parion right?"

"You're not completely wrong, but it's not correct either."

Tactician Touya corrected me in a roundabout way.

"Us giving the Reborn Seeds to the spies of Holy State Parion is the truth, however we did that in order to escalate the revolt on the western part of the continent to attract the gods' attention there. We also never expected that the spies of Holy State Parion would ignore the war and do acts of terrorism in Shiga Kingdom."

I stare at tactician Touya's eyes.

There's neither wavering nor impurity there.

I see--Looks like he's not lying.

The ones behind the illicit manufacturing of the Fiend Drug in Selbira Labyrinth's underground were the demons after all.

◇

"Touya, tell him about the god's taboo."

"I do not mind, but wouldn't it better for him to check the document himself?"

"It would be impossible to read 20.000 years worth of record wouldn't it? It's not like he's connected to a search engine."

I can search just fine if I put them in my Storage, but I'd better not tell them about it.

"I'll read the document later. Please tell me the summary."

"The things that are treated as God's taboo are『Reincarnated person and transported person teaching the way to make integrated circuit (LSI)』,『Means of permanent mass transportation』,『Easy means of communication between cities』,『Mass production through factory modernization』, and lastly『Printing』."

I see, Mukuro's railroad was the second and the communication tower fell under the third huh.

Sailing boats and airships probably barely miss the second criteria.

Space magic and communications through city cores are probably in the clear since they don't meet the condition of [easily] for the third one.

But, the fourth one is a close call.

I was going to start doing that with Echigoya Firm.

However, the first one, integrated circuit should be pretty similar to the golem creation process using [Philosopher's Stones] and magic cores--no, I'm the only one who know how to do that besides the elf.

That means, revealing that technology to outside world is dangerous huh....

I feel that it should be safe since it's a magical technology, but there's no need to tread on thin ice.

--Wait, there's something amiss.

"『Treated』 as taboo?"

When I repeated tactician Touya's word, the emperor grinned an evil smile.

"That's right. The gods never distinctively said 『This is a taboo』. They simply gave Divine Punishment to a country and then they gave a notification through the oracle miko that the country had violated the taboo."

That's quite awful.

It's like executing someone and then later said that, "That's a crime so you get to be punished."

"The time difference between the time a taboo was violated until the Divine Punishment is quite wide on each case, you'll see if you read the document later. There are cases where it happened the next day at the earliest and 10 years at the longest."

That means Weasel Empire hasn't triggered the divine punishment for longer than the one in that record huh....

"Do you know what are the differences?"

Taking the tactician Touya's place, the emperor asked me.

"Is it the existence of people who have Oracle skill or perhaps holy magic skills?"

I answered while remembering the time I met Lady Liedill.

Adding up the isolation of the parishes, this answer must be right.

"Correct."

The emperor floated a carnivorous smile on his face when he heard my answer.

"We obtained the conclusive evidence by testing it in a small country."

--Oy.

"Hereditary skills (Gifts) the like of God Urion's『Eyes of Condemnation』do not appear to trigger the divine punishment. People with low level holy magic also won't reach the Gods."

From the story I heard from the captain of tank unit I captured in Makiwa Kingdom, that country wasn't destroyed even after violating the taboo, but judging from the emperor's way of talking....

"What happened to that small country?"

I couldn't help but asked even though I already knew the result.

"Of course, it was destroyed--"

Hypocritical anger is rising in me from hearing the way he calmly said it like a researcher who merely reported the result of the experiment.

The destruction of a country with no acquaintance of mine should have nothing to do with me, yet I can't help but empathize.

"Suppress your anger. The one who destroyed it was not us."

The emperor told me that the king of that country was the one who happily introduced the technology brought by his spies in the country.

He only let the spies to be caught on purpose.

"Tarou, humans cannot think as logically as weaselkin. That applies to the hero too--nay, precisely because he's a hero, he dislikes seeing the weak being unilaterally exploited."

"Fumu, either way. I'm going to annihilate any country who bares their fang on my country without leaving anyone alive you know?"

"Even in spite of that."

I take a deep breath to calm my mind while listening to tactician Touya reprimanding the emperor.

Thanks to the maxed out MND stat, calmness comes back to me as if a switch was turned.

I should feel thankful for this convenient body, but it makes me feel weird at myself somehow.

"If I must take their life anyway, giving meaning to their death is--"

"Forget about it. I don't want to break my promise."

I interrupted the emperor and unilaterally told him.

I've promised that I [won't do destructive acts] in exchange for the information after all.

"--Finding someone who can think logically is harder than searching for a star fragment in a dessert."

The emperor lamented something, so I turn at tactician Touya.

I still have something I need to ask him.

"I've heard from the crown prince. The way to oppose the gods is『something that anyone knows, therefore no one arrives at the answer』--."

"That guy is talkative, contrary to my expectation."

Tactician Touya sighed at my question.

"You've seen the rocket in development at Brains haven't you?"

I affirmed.

"The answer is space."

--Huh? That's surprisingly normal.

"The known range of the Gods of this world is from the ground to the low orbit at most. If we just build facilities that inherit the scientific technology on the back of the moon, those guys can't do anything about it."

I see--I don't think it's that simple, but it fits with the things the emperor asked me.

--Mu?

For an instant, really only an instant, the emperor's expression twitched.

I'm not saying that what these two talked about are all lies, but it seems there's more to it.

I probably won't get an answer asking them here anyway, so I'll keep it in the corner of my mind for now.

"Touya, the『Philoshoper's Stone』and the『Dark Crystal』that you want are finally available in sight."

"Excellent. Now we don't need to search for the undersea city in the souther sea whose existence itself is doubtful."

The emperor and tactician Touya had that conversation while I was pondering.

Apparently, the thing they were looking for in Nenerie the undersea city was not the floating engine in the central part of the city, but the Darkness Crystal which should be used in the core of the floating engine.

"So, when are they going to be available?"

"That's up to him."

The emperor jerked his chin at me.

"I'll give them to you now."

"--What?"

I took out a『Piloshoper's Stone』and a『Darkness Crystal』from my storage and handed them over to Touya.

"As expected of Hero. Infinite Inventory has no limit so you can carry your item at all time."

Tactician Touya muttered enviously.

According to Arisa, it seems there are some reincarnated people who have Infinite Inventory, but I've yet to meet one.

The emperor nods satisfyingly and then he calls the masked people with a bell in his hand.

"Kuro. I will fulfill my promise. You can read the slates in the storage of the Record of The Sage all you want, however you are not allowed to take them away."

After saying that, the emperor called a masked person with graceful body line.

I can't see her look but according to AR reading, she seems to be a 120cm tall female spriggan.

"Looking for tens of hundred millions slates without a guide will be painful. Follow this librarian. Use her as you like."

"Thank you."

After thanking the emperor, I follow the librarian to the slate storage.

Tactician Touya has already returned to the surface, the emperor is riding the elevator back to the audience hall.

When the librarian touched the door of the slate storage, it lit up and I could hear the sound of a key opening.

"This place is the Infinite Bookshelves."

"I can see that it's a kind of spacial expansion.... This is amazing."

I saw bookshelves that extended everywhere without limit the moment I entered the slate storage.

"Lead me to the oldest slates."

"Yes, please over here. Please do not be separated from me. People who do not wear this mask won't be able to leave once they get lost here."

The librarian told me threateningly.

I can easily get out here whenever with Unit Arrangement, but coming back here would be troublesome so I'll make sure not to get separated.

We've just walked for a few steps but I already can't see the door behind and the bookshelves around us have changed to ones that look quite old.

The fantasy sensation is quite nice.

"These are the oldest slates from approximately 20000 years ago."

"Alright."

--Now then.

Each slate only has around 128 words, but reading all of the hundreds millions slates normally would take too much time.

Guess I'll have to use my trump card here.

"I'll be reading them using a special kind of method. Make sure not to get surprised."

"Special? Please do not damage the slates--"

"Of course, I promise you that there won't even be a chip on them."

I interrupted the librarian, extended [Magic Hands] to pick around 100 slates and put them into my Storage.

"--The slate!"

The slates reappeared faster than the librarian could finish her surprise.

Of course at their original locations.

The contents of the slates stowed in the Storage are saved as picture data.

I originally wanted to use the advanced magic [Copy Storage] used to preserve old books.

Pasting them into paper would take time, but it can be done in an instant if it's into image files.

"Let's steadily go at it."

"Y-yes."

I urge the librarian and copy the slates one after another.

I wanted to quicken the pace, but copying 1000 of them at the same time was my limit so I used the Parallel Thinking skill to read the saved contents while continuing copying more.

According to the records on the slates, floating castles like the Shadow Castle in the eastern Rumooku Kingdom that were in active service 20000 years ago were the oldest.

The record began when the troll demon lord was defeated by the Dog Head Ancient King and sealed in this burial mound.

"--These are all just troll demon lord's grumbles."

For 100 years after he had been sealed, many of the records were of the troll demon lord bad mouthing Dog-head.

The next most numerous ones were complaints about the Gods and an ancient magic empire.

If the troll demon lord is to be believed, it seems the ancient magic empire at that time got the support of the God blessing and cruelly and tyrannically oppressed the vassal kingdoms on the ground.

Dog-head and troll demon lord raised a revolt against the gods for the sake of liberating the kingdoms on the ground from the ancient magic empire's rule.

However, Dog-head gradually went on rampages and started destroying the kingdoms on the ground which should have been the ones he was intending to save so the troll demon lord became hostile at the Dog-head but he was defeated and got sealed away.

There's also a record about the Dog-head and his manservant getting defeated by the gods and god apostles soon after.

Though it seems Dog-head had been reviving himself every hundreds to a thousand year using Selbira's Labyrinth as the seedbed.

Most of the demon lords stopped reviving once they revived themselves a few times, but the Dog-head was especially obstinate and continued to revive himself.

Every time that happened, ancient dragons and heavenly dragons who were easily provoked had a revenge match against the Dog-head and got themselves beaten, and then the Gods entreated the Dragon God to defeat the Dog-head.

Looking at the records, it seems there was only a few which got sealed like the troll demon lord.

Surprisingly enough, the most dangerous one, the Demon God was sealed by the Gods.

It seems the Demon God is sealed in the moon, though the source of the information is [Oracle Miko] so I don't know if I should really believe it.

Looks like the Demon God was sealed when it was exhausted from its fight against the Dragon God.

If this is all true, then while being sealed the Demon God might be--no, it's not like I have a proof that the Demon God knows about that.

Let's stop putting guesses on top of guesses.

I see that the weasel emperor spoke the truth, at least from the records I've read so far.

However, I couldn't really find any proof about how reincarnated and transported people aren't able to defy the Gods.

Indeed, there were records of some baffling behaviors like a hero who didn't act like a hero at all ending up losing his blessing and got killed by a demon lord, or a hero who suddenly assassinated a demon lord the moment he reconciled with that demon lord.

There were also cases where a demon lord who was reigning its kingdom in peace suddenly destroyed the kingdom with its own hand, and a reincarnated person who was allying himself with a hero killed the hero during the triumphal return from their demon lord subjugation, but I think those aren't enough to insist that they were manipulated by the Gods.

There were several records of reincarnated people and heroes challenging the Gods and the god's apostles, but none was victorious.

Some demon lords defeated the god's apostles, but none was able to gain victory against the Gods. Even that Dog-head was only able to end it in a draw in several occasions.

I think tactician Touya and his cohorts found the way to win against the Gods from these cases, but I couldn't understand how.

The only way to overcome Gods that I can think of is by having them fight against another God.

The only successful example of threatening the Gods was Corpse.

Other than him, every one who did was destroyed.

"--This one is finally at 600 years ago huh. Just a bit more."

I turned at the librarian who had been quiet since a while ago, she was sinking on the floor while looking like her soul had escaped her mouth.

I check the clock on the menu in a glance.

Yup, I got way too absorbed.

It's just a little bit more, I want to read all of them before going back, but she's already at her limit.

I'll go ask for another librarian.

I carry the girl and [Teleport] to the entrance with space magic.

One question appeared in my mind while I was opening the door.

--If their aim is to build a base in space, then what are they keeping the nuclear weapon for?

Judging from the documented slates, I don't think physical attacks work on Gods.

Right at that time, the ringtone from the space magic [World Phone] rang in my mind.

--From Arisa.

『Master, is it alright to call you now?』

『Yea, no problem. Is there any trouble?』

Arisa hesitated at my question.

Looking at everyone's condition on the marker column, it doesn't seem to be a life-threatening trouble.

『No, well rather than trouble, it's』

Quite an indecisive attitude for Arisa.

『W-wait, Nana. I said you can't, this isn't Tactic Talk, so your voice won't reach. 』

Looks like something is happening with Nana.

While still being connected to Arisa's call, I connect a call to Nana with [Telephone].

『Master! Affair is wrong so I tell! The only one who is allowed to call Master, Master, is me--calling familiarly is prohibited so I tell.』

<TLN: Nana calls Satou 'Masuta' for Master in Japanese. Others call him 'Goshujinsama' also for Master.> It became even more incomprehensible.

It seems Nana is talking with someone over there.

I'd better go back to the solitary island palace for now.

Family crisis over world crisis.

I open the menu and glide my finger to the Unit Arrangement.

『Ugeeh, you serious!』

Dangerous words came from Arisa.

--I can't delay anymore.

I return to the solitary island palace with Unit Arrangement.

There is--.

"Master, found!"

A little girl with snow-like white long straight hair jumped at me.

Err, who are you?

I couldn't issue that question at the girl who looked like a kitten who had found her mother.

I glanced at Arisa for help.

15-25. Dungeon's Function

Satou's here. I wonder since when was it, stories about dungeon management became as common as the stories about adventurers clearing dungeons. Personally speaking, I think it started from the fourth volume of the classic dungeon exploration RPG masterpiece.

◇

"Master! Master, Master!!"

The white haired little girl repeated the same word while hugging me.

I asked Arisa for help, but she's only scratching her cheek, not looking like she'll take any action.

"Master is my Master so I declare."

"Mwu, too close."

Nana hugs me from behind, Mia tries to separate the white-haired little girl away from me.

Due to the physical correction from her level, Mia easily pulled the little girl away.

"Aa, Master! Let me go, Masteeeeeeeer!"

The little girl who got separated panicked and struggled to desperately come back to me while crying.

Seeing that, Nana muttered "young organism" and stopped moving.

"Bullying is uncool~?"

"You shouldn't make a little girl cry nanodesu."

"Mwu."

Mia loosened her grips from Tama's and Pochi's cover fire, using that chance the white-haired little girl jumped out and clung back to my waist.

As Lulu enters bringing some tea, I sit down on the sofa and put the little girl on my lap.

Tama is looking enviously, but it doesn't seem like she'll push her aside.

"Now then, so what's with this girl?"

According to AR reading, her name is [Core Two], her race is [Homonculus].

Since her affiliation is the Dejima Island's [Phantasmal Labyrinth], she's probably the external probe unit of the Dungeon Core.

"Picked up~?"

"When Pochi was traveling to better herself in combat with Tama, she was in nude and chased by bad people nodesu."

Tama and Pochi puffed their chests with eyes full expectation, so I patted and praised them, "You two did great."

Pochi's explanation was a bit too short, but she probably meant that they found Core Two running away from bad people when they were training.

Still--.

"How did you girls know that she was my acquaintance?"

"Looking for Master~?"

"She said Master, so it's Master nanodesu."

I see, that's really like Tama and Pochi.

"Master, let's go home. It's dangerous outside the dungeon you know?"

Core Two turned her head upward while clinging to my chest.

Nana twitched whenever Core Two called me Master, but it seemed she was controlling herself, recalling the time when Core Two was crying.

"There's not many place safer than here you see."

The only place safer than here is probably only Yuika's base with her barrier.

"Not true."

Core Two shook her head. I'm not sure if she doesn't believe me, or if she can't accept it.

"Well, the labyrinth will be conquered sooner or later after all~"

"Not true!"

Core Two reflexively objected Arisa's carefree words.

"If I'm with Master it's going to be absolutely absolutely invincible!"

"W-well, if Master is there even a straw house would be invincible."

"Of cour~se?"

"If you're with Master, everywhere is wonderfully peerless nanodesu."

At Core Two's rebuttal, Arisa assented with a stunned expression, Tama anad Pochi also agreed.

Core Two inclined her head in confusion at their reactions and looked up at me.

"Would you like some snacks?"

"Snacks?"

After confirming that we had calmed down, Lulu came in with snacks.

"Choco biscuit~?"

"You put biscuit on the sooft chocolate and eat it nodesuyo."

Tama and Pochi explained the snacks today to the Core Two.

"Chocolate?"

"Young organism, you do it like this so I teach."

Nana demonstrated it to the Core Two who didn't understand.

"Tasty. Master, it's tasty."

"Thank you, don't mind me, you can eat more."

Core Two's eyes sparkled on her first bite, she turned back and offered the chocolate biscuit to me.

I bit it once and prompted her to eat the rest.

"Master, a~n."

When Arisa mimicked Core Two and offered her chocolate biscuit to me, the other girls also mimicked her and offered theirs.

I'm not too fond of sweet things, but it tastes curiously tasty today, maybe because I was investigating things for a whole day and all night.

"Kya"

When I pretended to eat Lulu's finger along with her chocolate biscuit, she got surprised with reddened face.

The effect of staying up all night might have just seeped in.

"--So, did your talk with the emperor go well?"

Arisa asked while licking the chocolate on her fingers.

"Hey, the other girls will imitate you."

While whacking Arisa's head, I get Arisa, Hikaru and the others to go to the other room to talk about my talk with the emperor.

I asked the other girls to take care of Core Two.

"Master, please don't leave me."

When I put her down from my lap, Core Two separated her hands from the chocolate biscuit and clung to me.

"I'm just going to finish my business for a bit. Once I'm done, let's go to the 『Phantasmal Labyrinth』. Until then, wait here and enjoy the snacks okay."

"U-un. I'll wait."

Core Two nodded with an anxious look.

I waved my before going out of the room to ease her anxiety even a bit.

◇

"--He's evil."

Sera who heard my story gave her impression about the weasel emperor with an indignant expression.

The ones here are Hikaru, Princess Shistina, Sera, Arisa, and me.

It seems Lady Karina is training in the desert training site with virtual golems.

I've informed Zena-san and Liza who got left behind in the Weasel Empire that I'll come back once I'm done here.

"Really? I think it's normal for a king to make his nation prosperous though?"

"B-but. For Ancestor King-sama to say such thing."

The princess put her hands on her mouth, shocked at Hikaru's statement.

"The eastern end of the continent where the weasels live is a poor land, I don't think they would have survived if they hadn't done that you know?"

"Well~ they do say that『poverty dulls the wit』, so I also agree on that part--"

"Wait, of course I do think violating the taboo is a problem okay?"

While listening to Hikaru and Arisa's conversation, I calm down Sera who seems like she can't vent out her anger.

There's no need to use mind magic. I just pat Sera's shoulder who's sitting beside me, Sera who noticed her lost of composure takes a deep breath and leans her head on my shoulder, calming down.

"And, what are you going to do Master?"

"I want to collect a bit more information from the『Room of Truth』, after that I'll pull back."

If the emperor understands that violating the taboo might mean fighting the gods, then I don't need to be noisy from outside. I don't intend to intervene on their domestic affairs.

I'm going to send some kind of surveillance though as I'd hate it if they launch the nuclear weapon here.

"You won't prevent it?"

"Yeah, even if I announce the thing about taboo to the people there, I'd only be treated like an insane madman."

In fact, I saw such activities in the Imperial Capital.

Moreover, the people of Brains and the important people of the empire are participating in it despite knowing the danger of the taboo.

"Does that mean forsaking the citizens?"

"Satou-san won't ever do such a thing. If the God's divine punishment is about to ruin the people there, he will surely cause a miracle."

The one who reacted to the princess was Sera who clung to my arm.

Arisa and Hikaru are flapping their mouths, having the position of defending me stolen from them.

As a matter of fact, there's an underground shelter under the Weasel Empire's imperial capital similar to the one in Shiga Kingdom's Royal and Duchy Capital, so they probably won't all die out even if the God's divine punishment happen.

If it looks dangerous, I'm thinking of evacuating the citizens to the sub-space with [Another World] magic.

Doing that should count as lifesaving, not intervention, so there's no problem.

"It'll be forestalled though."

"Isn't it fine? In this world there's a lot of people who don't understand what's important until the damage happens."

"Un, building Shiga Kingdom was also tough.... For Sharlick-kun and the others."

Arisa and Hikaru approved at my self-ridicule.

Even if I act preemptively, they'll most likely resent me saying, "You've gone and done unnecessary things" instead of being thankful as the result after all.

◇

"Hee, so this is the『《Dungeon Master Room》』."

"First time I'm in one."

Arisa and Hikaru are looking around the room curiously.

"What is this~?"

"It's glittering nodesu!"

"Pretty."

"A, aaa-! You can't touch that!"

The other girls are also loitering around here and there.

Pochi and Nana seem to be the type who, 'for now let's push', when they found a button, Core Two stop them whenever they're about to push something.

『Master, please don't let outsiders inside the <<Dungeon Master Room>>.』

"They're all my relatives."

『--There is no problem if they're your relatives.』

My random excuse was accepted.

Looks like Dungeon Cores are unexpectedly flexible.

"Huh? The main core calls Master by 'Goshujinsama'?"

『As a result of the analysis of the information from Core Two, that way of calling seemed to be of the majority, so it's been changed.』

Dungeon Core cordially replied Arisa's question.

While still being expressionless, Nana nodded, looking somehow satisfied.

『Master, please confirm the present situation of the labyrinth.』

A graph showing the total sum of the Dungeon Point appeared in front of me.

"Uwa~, you really use Dungeon Point (DP) to manage a labyrinth."

"So torture room and prison exist?"

Arisa and Hikaru peeked from my sides and muttered.

『Master, is this arrangement weird? Would you like to return it to the state before the previous master's customization?』

The Dungeon Core seemed to have a doubt seeing their reactions, it timidly asked me.

Apparently, the current setting was set by the weasel demon lord.

"Can you show me that temporarily?"

『Yes.』

Three gauges are displayed; the amount of magic power, the amount of miasma and the amount of souls.

These are the general numerics needed for the dungeon, and the dungeon point is a notation for them.

"Show both of them side by side."

『Yes, Master.』

After saying that, Dungeon Core changed the display.

Quite a convenient interface. The part where I don't have to rewrite the code myself is wonderful.

"Oh my--Master updated the interface."

Soft feel of something voluminous stuck on my back.

It appears she's Core Two who has become adult sized.

"Mwu, guilty."

"Geh, loli girl became a kyonyuu." <TLN: huge breasts.>

Arisa was only surprised but Mia quickly pulled away the adult Core Two.

I'd prefer if she was a bit slower.

"Hey look, Satou! This is amazing!"

"It really is."

Hikaru and the princess beckoned me while staring at a three-dimensional display.

I looked at them out of interest and saw endless stream of Chant Orb names in a column, numerical values were displayed on the right.

"Don't tell me--"

As I stared up at the 3D display, Core Two nodded.

"It's the list of item for the treasure chests with the needed dungeon point."

Come to think of it, my [Chant Orb] was found in a labyrinth.

That means I could have gotten the [Chant Orb] if I just controlled Seryuu City Dungeon Core huh.... It's just a postscript now though.

"--This is nice."

I can't make too many of them since it needs a lot of DP, but this looks usable to power up the girls and the executives of Echigoya Firm.

『Master, is it to your liking?』

"Yeah, I'll frequently come here a bit more."

Looking at the gauges earlier, I can supply the magic power and the miasma as much as needed, but I can't do anything about the soul gauge.

There's no way I'm sacrificing the adventurers who enter the dungeon just to power up my companions.

At most, I can only change a boss room into a training room for the girls and bring monsters from outside there.

There's no skill that we urgently need right now anyway, I'll just take this slowly.

"Now then, it's about time we get back."

"Master, are you going somewhere?"

『Master, the place for Dungeon Master is here.』

When I said that, Core Two became teary eyed.

The Dungeon Core also asked me with tearful voice just like Core Two.

This looks as if I've done something bad.

"Then, you can just make a permanent gate to the solitary island palace here right?"

"Yup, then Core Two-chan can go back and forth and she won't get lonely will she?"

Hearing Arisa and Hikaru, Core Two looked up at the Dungeon Core.

『I understand. I will adopt that compromise.』

We've reached an agreement somehow so I make a gate that connects to the solitary island palace.

Core Two came with us as if it was natural, I'd need to prepare a bedroom for this child.

I don't mind her sleeping together with me if she were in her little girl figure, but I can't do that with her current kyonyuu body.

A brownie appeared from inside the mansion in a hurry.

"Satou-sama, you have a call from Echigoya Firm."

Huh? I should've already told them that I was going to Weasel Empire, did something happen in Echigoya Firm to expressly call me?

I entered the gate to Echigoya Firm alone after telling the girls that I was going to the Royal Capital for a bit.

15-26. God's Breath

Satou's here. It comes assailing like a collapsing sand hill, like pulling a block of Jenga, like an avalanche of the end. You can't always prevent it even if you know it's coming beforehand, just like disaster isn't it.

◇

"Kuro-sama, you're back from Weasel Empire."

Just when I got to Echigoya Firm, the smile of Tifaliza, the bearer of an intelligent beautiful look, quickly found me.

"I got your call just when I got back. Did something happen?"

I don't think it's a pressing matter since it was not an urgent call, but Tifaliza only ever contacts me for the periodical report so it must be relatively important.

"Yes, from Makiwa Kingdom--"

The name of the country which we, disguised as dragon knights, protected appeared.

Did some problem arise regarding the refugee support and restoration?

"--Pipin contacted us."

Pipin is a former phantom thief and currently a slave who works as an intelligence operative of Echigoya Firm.

"If I'm not mistaken Pipin is...."

"Yes, he's accompanying Kei-sama and Sharururun as a backup."

Tifaliza supplemented faster than I could recall.

The former fake apostle and a reincarnated person, Kei was traveling to trace back the damages she had done with her Unique Skill due to her narrow mindedness.

"So something happened with either Kei or Sharururun?"

"Yes."

Tifaliza affirmed my question.

I looked at the two's names on the marker column while I was waiting for her answer.

It's alright, neither of them are injured.

"According to Pipin, Kei-sama is able to use holy magic."

"Hee, that's good to hear--"

I noticed the underlying problem as I indifferently congratulated.

"--is that true?"

"Yes, Pipin saw it himself."

Tifaliza gave an immediate answer.

"I'll be going to Makiwa Kingdom for a bit."

While hearing Tifaliza saying her farewell, "Please take care", and the noisy footsteps of the manager, I left Echigoya Firm behind.

◇

I moved to the base point closest to Makiwa Kingdom where Kei and the others are with Unit Arrangement, and hesitated as to whether I should change my appearance.

Satou should be more appropriate if I want to congratulate her, but appearing out of nowhere like Kuro, visiting Dasles City which is on the back region of the kingdom I've never visited before will be a problem.

--Well, whatever.

Such a trivial thing won't be a problem soon.

I change into Satou appearance with Quickdress skill and get out of the mountain hut base.

"Would be nice if the storm doesn't come--"

I muttered while looking up at the cloudy sky as if hinting the future.

I can see Dasles city below.

"It seems Kei and the others are in Zaikuon Temple near the castle."

While using Magic Essence Camouflage, I teleport to the back of Zaikuon Temple which doesn't have a sign of life.

"Glory to God Zaikuon!"

"Come come! It's a celebration today!"

"Festival! Everybody dance today!"

There's a large crowd in front of the temple, the people are deliriously praising the God.

"The believers will come back now!"

"Umu umu, we can finally repair this temple."

I heard familiar voices from among the crowd.

"--Kei."

"Sa-Satou-san?!"

Hearing my voice Kei wearing Zaikuon priest clothing turned at me in surprise.

"Is he your acquaintance Kei?"

"Yes, temple head-sama. He's Pe-Pe-Pen--err, Satou-san, a noble."

Apparently she doesn't remember my house name.

"Nice to meet you, temple head-sama. I'm Satou Pendragon. This may be trifling, but please accept my offering for the temple"

I hand over a small bag with 20 gold coins inside.

"Well well--how devout of you."

Temple head grinned widely at the glitter of the gold coins peeking from the bag's opening.

The gleeful-looking temple head led me and Kei to the temple's drawing room and served their treasured Makiwa tea.

The tea was insipid and only had the color for it, but I overcame it safely with the help of Poker Face skill.

"Temple head! We have a visitor."

"O-okay, wait for a bit."

It seems there's a lot of visitors today, there's already been many of them coming during the little time we were talking.

According to the temple head, Kei had been making use of the [Compounding] skill she learned from her foster parent to help the restoration of Dasles City and gain believers.

"Temple head-sama, they're--"

Judging from the priest's expression, looks like they can't turn down the visitors this time.

"I will take my leave soon."

"I-Is that right. I'm very sorry for not being a good host."

"Could I talk a bit more with Kei?"

"Yes, of course you can."

We left the drawing room, seen off by the grateful temple head.

"Oh my, looks like we ended up chasing the preceding visitors away."

"Oh no, we were just about to leave ourselves."

The one in the corridor, led by the priest earlier, is the current acting Marquis Dasles, Miss Shelmina Dasles.

Looks like she's overworking herself, she's hiding the dark circles under her eyes with makeup.

"Your Excellency Marquis!"

"That's incorrect. I'm only acting as a substitute until uncle comes back."

Miss Shelmina denied the surprised temple head with a sour look on her face.

Shiga Kingdom should have told Makiwa Kingdom the passing of her uncle, Dwod Dasles the pyromaniac noble, but it seems they haven't announced it to the public yet.

They're probably going to do it once Dasles Marquisdom has been restored to a degree.

"Would you be the acting marquis? I'm Satou Pendragon from Shiga Kingdom. I'm stopping by as the people here have been taking care my acquaintance."

"Shiga Kingdom's?!"

Miss Shelmina was surprised to hear my introduction, and then she introduced herself as she would to a noble of a foreign country.

She took my hand and began to talk about how grateful she was for the large airships Shiga Kingdom sent to help transporting the refugees.

"As one would expect from the country founded by Hero King Yamato-sama, even Shiga King is a noble person."

We helped them using Echigoya Firm name, but it appears she thinks it was Shiga King who unofficially sent the help.

We ended up talking while standing, so Kei and I were led back to the drawing room.

"Is the thing I heard from priest-dono earlier true?"

"Yes of course."

After she talked to me enough, miss Shelmina asked the temple head for a confirmation.

"It's true! ■ Bless"

"W-what are you--"

Kei happily stood up and chanted a holy magic spell.

Miss Shelmina's face stiffened at Kei's sudden action.

The blessing light rains down over the head of miss Shelmina the territory land lord's candidate.

--This is bad.

I jump over the table with a speed rivaling short-range teleportation and push miss Shelmina down.

The people who didn't understand the situation voiced their surprise.

>[Holy Magic: Zaikuon Belief] Skill Acquired.

So the revival is true.

"Excuse me. Please forgive my discourtesy since it was an emergency."

"I-I'm saved. Thank you for your wise decision."

The only person who understood my action in this place, miss Shelmina said that with a pale face.

"Get away! You insolent rabble!"

"Stop it! Viscount is my lifesaver."

Miss Shelmina rebuked her enraged escort knight.

"Eh, um? You don't like God's blessing?"

I lightly whack the head of Kei who looks puzzled.

There are things that you shouldn't do even if they're out of good will.

--A land lord needs to control a City Core.

However, that has several conditions, and people who have received blessing from god are against one those conditions.

Of course, there's a trick that can be used to remove God's blessing by way of a ritual magic, however it seems that needs a huge amount of cost and time to perform.

"Kei, you shouldn't bless someone without their consent. There are people who have pledged their faith to another God."

The temple head admonished Kei in an easy to understand manner in my place.

"Putting aside the mean, I certainly saw the actuation of a holy magic. That holy symbol is certainly--"

Miss Shelmina tidied her clothes, coughed once and said that.

Looks like she's not going to pursue Kei's rash action.

"--the same as the one in the temple. So God Zaikuon has really been revived."

Miss Shelmina clearly stated the words I hesitated to say out loud.

That's right, Kei already had holy magic skill from the beginning.

However, Kei couldn't use that holy magic even if she chanted the right spell.

Because the source of her holy magic, God Zaikuon had died.

And now.

Kei is able to use holy magic.

In other words, God Zaikuon the source of the holy magic has been revived.

Nevertheless--it's fast.

Once, Demi God-mode Aze-san told me.

"When they had just arrived at this world, God Zaikuon and God Garleon challenged the Dragon God and got killed, however they were revived in 1000 years."

But, if that's the truth, then God Zaikuon who was killed 30 years ago revived too fast.

"Then, we will double the amount of the current offering, in exchange please send priests to the free medical building."

"Double the amount now--"

The temple head frowned to hear miss Shelmina.

"Could you get it back to the same amount as 30 years ago at least?"

"Unfortunately, right now the restoration takes top priority."

Miss Shelmina shook her head at the temple head's entreatment.

Their financial is probably in a bad shape since the king seems to hardly assist.

I'll send some fund through Echigoya Firm at an appropriate time.

◇

"Is Viscount Pendragon staying in the temple?"

"I'm not, now that I've met Kei, I'm thinking of departing Dasles City by today's end."

I only came here to say [Congratulation] to Kei after all, and I had confirmed the revival of God Zaikuon.

There's no need to stay here for long.

--Nn? Red luminous points are reflected on the Radar.

"But! I was thinking of holding a party to welcome Viscount Pendragon...."

Miss Shelmina spoke regrettably.

Yet she's not going to forcefully detain me.

Welcoming a noble of a foreign country is probably going to hit their finance hard.

I open the map and confirm the identities of the red points while talking with miss Shelmina.

They're nothing to be afraid about.

They're level 20 small fries, the points that need special mentions are only their [Fiend Drug Overdose] states and that they're people that belong to the crime guild [Cannibal Snake].

If I'm not mistaken, [Cannibal Snake] are the bunch who led the refugees and did some terrorism at the neighboring Silga Kingdom.

"--Viscount-sama! Right, black overcoat, behind a child!"

I heard Pipin's voice from beyond the crowd.

Looks like he's warning me about the owner of the red point reflected on the radar.

"--Tch."

"Uwaaa"

A man in black overcoat who's using a kid as a shield assaults miss Shelmina with a dagger.

The guard who was going to cover miss Shelmina was rammed by another man from the flank.

It seems they slipped into the temple's crowd.

"Sharu!"

"--Did you call?"

With Kei's shout, a beauty jumped down the roof and landed on the black overcoat man's back.

She's Sharururun, a former phantom chivalrous thief, now a member of Echigoya Firm whom I, as Kuro, tasked to guard Kei.

A different man with brown overcoat behind the smashed man came assaulting while his body was transforming.

The brown overcoat man blocks Sharururun's dagger with his transformed claws

"Monster?"

"Uwaaaa, it's a monster!"

The members of [Cannibal Snake] who were hiding themselves in the crowd stirred a panic with loud voices.

--This is bad.

I pull miss Shelmina's hand to keep her away from danger and kick the small man who stealthily attacked with a dagger.

I invoke the [Calm Field] from magic column while I'm at it and stop the surroundings from panicking.

After that, I stun the [Cannibal Snake] members with the highly stealthy [Stun Hand].

It's a faulty magic that's easy to block if there's no level difference, but that's not the case if I use it.

"V-viscount Pendragon. I-I'm glad that you saved me, but could you please let your hands go now?"

Miss Shelmina appealed with a red face in my arm.

Oops, I forgot that I was still embracing her.

"Shelmina-sama! There's no mistake, this tattoo is of the『Cannibal Snake』."

"I thought uncle had annihilated them all, so there are some remains."

The guard who inspected the man defeated by Sharururun said that.

"Viscount Pendragon, and the woman over there, thank you for your assistance. I will be sure to reward you later."

"No need for thanks. I only helped Kei."

Sharururun curtly brushed off miss Shelmina.

Offended by her attitude, the guard is glaring at Shararurun.

Kei who sensed the worsening atmosphere points at the sky while looking like she realized something.

"Look look! Sunbeam!"

Kei is pointing at beautiful light streaming between the thick cloud.

"It's like the sky is also celebrating God's revival."

Kei spoke with an unnaturally bright tone to break the ice.

Lured by Kei's smile, everyone smiles.

Mysterious toll of a bell can be heard out of nowhere.

"What a beautiful sound."

I can feel the superior skill of the bell craftsman from the tone of the deep calm toll.

I wonder if I should put a bell in the solitary island palace too?

I ask miss Shelmina while thinking that.

"Is this from the castle's bell?"

"I-it's not, I've never heard such a beautiful sound either."

Yet, miss Shelmina returned a negative.

--Well now?

If she who has lived her whole life in Dasles City doesn't know, then where does this sound of bell come from?

My question is quickly answered.

In the worst possible way.

<<TAKE HEED>>

An intimidating voice descended from the sky.

It's like hearing several kinds of language at the same time.

Sounds of rustling sound and soil reached my ears.

Everybody besides me have fallen prostrates with their foreheads on the ground.

Even the land lord candidate, miss Shelmina is not an exception.

<<TAKE HEED>>

The voice descended from the sky once again.

Looks like it has begun.

15-27. Divine Punishment

Satou's here. The term Divine Punishment reminds me of the Bible, but the sayings; god's wrath, or [hit by retribution] and various allegories exist in Japan.

I've never suffered from divine punishment and god's wrath firsthand though.

◇

<<<TAKE HEED>>>

Intimidating voices descended from the sky three times.

Oracle skill was added to my Skill Column.

Apparently, those are divine messages from the Gods.

Several words--nay, a word that had several meanings reached my mind directly.

Apparently, Gods hold a conversation not through voices but by notifying a lot of people directly.

After a moment of silence, the main subject begins--.

<<<TABOO>>>

<<<TABOO>>>

<<<TABOO>>>

Not just one, several Gods seemed to announce it together.

<<<TABOO>>><<<WEASEL>>><<<TABOO>>><<<INSOLENCE>>><<<TABOO>>><<<RUINATION>>><<<TABOO>>><<<DAMNATION>>><<<TABOO>>><<<EXECUTION>>><<<DEPRAVITY>>><<<RETRIBUTION>>><<<FAITH>>><<<INCITE>>><<<PEACE>>>

How do I say this, it feels like a hysteric person who can't explain well because they're overcome by their emotion.

Or maybe it's like listening to a badly tuned crossed radio?

Voices of agony leaked from the people.

It seems the intense chains of images are tormenting them.

Yet, none stands up, every one of them is enduring the pain.

It probably means that their awe toward the Gods are just that strong.

I'm a bit intrigued as to why I am fine.

The toll of the bell stopped before long, and the torrential images that came along with the Gods' divine messages ended.

Some words I don't quite understand were mixed in but I think there's no mistake that it's generally, "Divine punishment will befall Weasel Empire that has violated the taboo."

However, the way it was told intrigues me.

The Unknown little girl I met in my fight with the Dog-head before was able to converse normally.

--Perhaps, the ones earlier were not Gods, but something that pretended to be Gods?

Many people have fainted, while the stout-hearted ones begin to stand up unsteadily.

I'm a bit hesitant to leave behind Kei, miss Shelmina and the others, but please let me off with just sprinkling healing magic here.

I move to where Liza and Zena-san are staying in Weasel Empire using Unit Arrangement.

◇

"Master!"

"Sa-Satou-san, this is terrible!"

"Oh good, you two are safe."

Liza and Zena-san who noticed me came rushing.

They seem to be fine thanks to their high levels, but all the maids in the building have fainted.

For now, I'll secure their safety first before grasping the information in Weasel Empire.

I go back to the solitary island palace with the two.

"Satou."

"Liza~?"

"Welcome back nanodesu."

The youth troupe welcomed us immediately once we got back to the solitary island palace.

"Huh? Master?"

Arisa's carefree look seems odd to me.

"Did the Gods' divine message not reach here?"

"Hoe? What's that--"

Arisa who looked dumbfounded dropped the rice cracker in her mouth midway.

Apparently it didn't.

To think it can even prevent the Gods' interference, asking Yuika to set up the barrier was the right choice.

"--Don't tell me, the divine punishment for Weasel Empire was carried out?"

Please do something about the rice cracker crumbs around your mouth before putting on your serious face.

I affirm it, wipe Arisa's mouth and take everyone to the living room.

And then, an urgent call from Echigoya Firm came.

I use [Tactic Call] to connect Manager and Tifaliza.

『I already know about the Gods' divine messages. If there's any problem in our branch offices and the areas around Shiga Kingdom, report to me through the Urgent Call at your discretion.』

『Understood, Kuro-sama.』

『Then we will begin to gather intelligence and the analysis.』

Manager asked me to hold when I was going to cut off the call.

『Kuro-sama, I have a request. I'd like to grant the right for the branch managers of Echigoya branch offices to provide the accumulated goods. Will it be alright?』

『Of course. I give you the full privilege of the whole Echigoya Firm. I'm counting on you Elterina.』

『Y-yes! Kuro-sama!! I will do my utmost to meet your expectations!』

Manager replied powerfully at my slightly irresponsible lines of leaving it all to her.

Entrusting Echigoya Firm to her and Tifaliza should be fine.

I remember one thing and reconnect to Tifaliza.

『Tifaliza, I forgot something. Record the branch offices which reported the divine messages.』

『--Acknowledged.』

Wonder what?

Am I imagining things or Tifaliza seemed a bit sullen or rather, astounded.

Well, it's probably not a big deal, I'll go see her directly when I find some time.

I cut the call and sit on one of the chair in the living room.

All regular members of the solitary island palace are already here.

Along with the irregular members, demon lord Shizuka and the brownie maids.

◇

"Somethings that seem to be Gods' divine messages came in Makiwa Kingdom earlier."

"Gods' divine messages? It's not an oracle received by Miko?"

Sera asked as I began to talk.

"Yea, voices came descending from the cloud."

Of course, I checked the cloud and above it but found no one there.

At least according to the map.

"Why is it Makiwa Kingdom? Didn't Satou-sama go to Weasel Empire?"

"I got a report saying that Kei the former fake apostle was able to use God Zaikuon's holy magic, so I went there to check on her."

I answered the princess's question.

"Wasn't God Zaikuon killed by Dragon God-sama 30 years ago? Isn't the revival too fast no matter how look at it?"

"The reason why it's so fast is unclear. I saw Kei using God Zaikuon's holy magic with my own eyes. The revival is probably true."

I look at everyone while replying Hikaru.

Is there no more question?

"And, what were the divine messages about?"

"Aa, it was not in a common spoken language, I guess it was like images accompanied by words?"

Arisa urged me to go ahead so I got back to the real issue.

I told the words I heard back then as accurately as possible to everyone.

Mainly for Sera.

"Is there any difference to when Sera-san received an oracle?"

"Besides the parts about several overlapping voices and for someone aside from Oracle Miko being able to hear it, it's mostly the same."

Sera answered after pondering a bit.

I got [Oracle] skill when those divine messages fell from the sky, but I don't plan to put skill points and activate it.

However, it looks useful when I need to negotiate with Gods in the future.

If I just grasp the God World, the sub space where they live during our conversation, it also seems possible for me to go there and talk directly.

"So the divine punishment will fall on Weasel Empire right?"

"That's probably correct."

There are other problems besides that.

I can't help but think that the [Execution], [Depravity], and [Retribution] parts in the divine messages refer to the surrounding countries that have left the Weasel Empire alone.

The [Faith], [Incite], and [Peace] after those come off as, "Peace will come if you pray to the gods begging for forgiveness."

If that's true, then it's possible there are also calamities that require, [prayers to the gods].

"Is it, my fault?"

Sera looks at me as if relying on me.

Judging from the timing, I don't think the reason is because of Sera's visit to the Weasel Empire's amusement park.

If someone with the Oracle skill can unconditionally reach the Gods, then the little girl who was already living in the slum should be the trigger instead.

"Isn't it Weasel Empire's own fault?"

"But still, for the common people to be judged together with the emperor...."

Sera shook her head at Arisa's follow up.

"It's alright. I will help the people."

Arisa and Hikaru stood up in shock to hear me.

"Wait! You're going to fight Gods?"

"That's impossible Ichirou-nii! No matter how strong you are, against god is no good."

Do I look that belligerent?

Also, Hikaru was too surprised she called my name in the solitary island palace by mistake.

"I'm not going to fight Gods okay."

Sera openly looks relieved after I said that.

Of course, that applies to Arisa and the others too.

"If the divine punishment looks like it'll mass slaughter the people, I'm going to evacuate them to the subspace using the forbidden spell."

The magic power I've stocked in the holy swords look like it'll be all used up cause I'll probably need to use a humongous amount of MP, but I can just recharge it at the Ether Vein in the Void Sky.

I've been only consuming magic power lately, the bill from neglecting to replenish the supply comes biting.

I cut off my words and look at everyone.

Now then, I've told them the situations and my plans.

"Now then, about what we're going to do here on--Sera-san."

"Yes!"

"Could Sera-san go to Tenion temple in the Duchy Capital and once again receive an oracle regarding this matter?"

"I understand. I'll go ask Head Miko-sama--apprentice miko Lili for the permission to use the Sanctuary."

I'm sending Zena-san and Lady Karina to guard Sera.

This means Zena-san would be traveling again, but she accepted it heartily.

"Princess Shistina, Hikaru and Team Pendragon are to stand by in the solitary island palace. I think the call for dispatch will come suddenly, so please relax as much as possible."

It was quite an unreasonable order, but everyone consented without complaining.

I'm planning to give Hikaru, Arisa and demon lord Shizuka a reason to stay in the palace even in this emergency.

There's the information about how people with God's Fragment are unable to go against Gods after all.

While thinking and pigeonholing myself, demon lord Shizuka ask me.

"Do I need to do something?"

"Yeah, I'm sorry but please stay here in the solitary island palace for a while."

"Fragments?"

"Yeah, that's right. I might ask you to help me like I did recently."

I asked demon lord Shizuka.

There's a lot of reincarnated people in Weasel Empire.

It's possible that there are some among them who have overused their Unique Skills and on the verge of becoming a demon lord.

In case that happens, her ability to remove Unique Skill from her familiar will be essential.

"Alright, then let's do a relaxing sea fishing contest!"

"Aye aye sir~?"

"Pochi will definitely catch parrot fish today nodesu!"

"Then I will catch some black-tailed gull."

Everyone harmoniously left the room per Arisa's command.

Arisa peeked her face on the door.

"『Protect your life』 okay!"

This time, Hikaru peeked behind Arisa.

"Don't forget about 『Don't be rash』 too okay."

I don't think there's any need to use Japanese language there, still I answer them, "Of course" and move away with Unit Arrangement.

The destination is Weasel Empire--.

In order to confirm the execution of the divine punishment and to browse the slates.

15-28. Divine Punishment (2), the Power of Science

<<<TAKE HEED>>>

Intimidating voices descended from the sky.

"It has begun at last."

"Umu, faster than predicted."

The emperor put his folded finger on his chin.

The court ladies are helping him since his hands cannot reach his fat-covered body.

And for some reason, he's wearing round glasses that reflect mysterious light on his nose.

Tactician Touya creased his eyebrows, thinking he had seen that pose somewhere.

Apparently, it reminded him of something.

"Playtime is over you know."

Tactician Touya thinks.

Perhaps the size of a reincarnated person's vessel depends on the profundity of their actions.

"Don't get your knickers in a knot."

The emperor waved his other hand that was on the handrail to end the talk and looked around the throne room.

The God's influence doesn't seem to reach here, the ministers inside the room aren't prostrating themselves despite looking anxious.

"The God-proof Barrier left behind by the ancient kingdom is quite excellent."

"This will be a solace for the people who sacrificed their lives exploring the ruin."

Tactician Touya nodded at the emperor.

Even though they couldn't find the underground sea city of the ancient magic kingdom, the Artifact they found in the underground ruin of an ancient empire on the western desert demonstrated enough power.

"How about Kuro--no, Hero Nanashi?"

"Kana the『Insightful』tried looking for him, but he has disappeared leaving his followers behind. We've sent a platoon of Temple Knights to arrest them."

Common sense in the empire would dictate that it's an excessive force just to arrest two people, but the emperor nodded with a face that looked like it was obvious.

"Matching the oracle huh... As we thought, that person is really--"

"Yeah, it's most likely true."

Tactician Touya affirmed the emperor who was speaking with a sorrowful face.

There's no one here who chides him for interrupting the emperor.

Most of the ministers are looking up at the dim rays in the sky.

"Crepuscular rays huh."

"With such a scenery. Say it more elegantly, like, it's angel's ladder or something."

The emperor criticized tactician Touya.

"That expression may be appropriate, but it's ill-omened."

Tactician Touya points at one of the dim rays and speaks.

"Look, the angel--no, the god's apostle shows itself up."

"So that's apostle.... It doesn't look like a person even if it doesn't have wings."

The apostle who looks like a silver cone calmly descends inside the dim ray.

It seems to be descending to the area near the science armory outside the imperial capital.

"Looks like it has the angel halo."

There's a blinking golden light halo formed by unlimited symbols above the cone.

"Well then, shall we begin too?"

"I give you the permission. Dispose of those who call themselves Gods."

By the emperor's command, tactician Touya puts up his bishop's staff and instruct the generals and the ministers.

"Generals, go with the special special science vehicle corps and flying corps to intercept the cone."

"Understood!"

The fully motivated weaselkin generals are rushing out of the room while shaking the decorations on their chest.

"Gather the Temple Knights in the palace."

"Tactician-dono! Give us the permission to intercept too!"

"I will not! Your opponent will personally show up."

"It can't be--"

Tactician Touya puts up his hand to stop the captain from speaking anymore and nods.

"Chief of security bureau, I entrust you the right to command soldiers inside Imperial Capital. Quickly evacuate the refugees to the nearest underground shelters."

"Acknowledged. Leave the populace's safety to us."

A male human with a villainous face salutes at tactician Touya and runs off to carry out his duty.

"Tactician-dono, would the underground be safe? Our opponents are Gods and their henchmen--"

The leaders of the house of lords came before tactician Touya.

Flattery are showing on their servile faces. The matter they have in mind is themselves--and their relatives self-protection.

"We've prepared three large airships in the Imperial Capital's airport. Ride on them with your relatives and other influential nobles and evacuate to the Saga Empire."

However, tactician Touya tells the leaders that preparation is everything.

"As expected of tactician-dono!"

"You've even foreseen that this will happen! Then Her Royal Highnesses will too?"

"They're your relatives huh. Then they can go together with you. We're racing against time. You'd do good to hurry."

He nods at the leaders who are fully eager to desert their country and urges them to hurry escape as if driving them away.

"Just how many will arrive at Saga Empire...."

"I don't care. Now the people who will obstruct our fight have disappeared."

At the knight captain's words, tactician Touya shook his head, expelling the trifle out of his mind.

"Now then, just how many of our hands would be bitten off?"

After saying that, the lips under his mask warped fearlessly.

◇

"So that's His Majesty's enemy!"

From the open hatch of a running tank, a vehicle captain scowled at the floating silver cone.

"It's shining something!"

Before the soldiers who were running on the side could finish speaking, a light resembling light magic's [Laser] shot out and mowed down one of the fort-like armory in the distant.

"Hmph, like that can break through the steel wall that's thicker than a common fortress city's--"

In the middle of the vehicle captain's talk, a roaring sound and flame arose, burning cloud of dust came up from the ground hit by the light earlier.

"W-woow, the hell was that."

The vehicle captain is looking at the scene with a dumbfounded face.

The defensive wall of the thick armory that renders even the armor of the tank he's riding on meaningless was torn off in an instant. The tank he's riding on is as good as having no armor. It can't be helped for him to lose his fighting spirit.

"Don't falter! We're invoking the Magic Eater!"

The commanding officer who was riding on parallel beside him encouraged the cowering vehicle captain.

Understanding what he meant, life returned on the vehicle captain's eyes.

"Here they come! The Magic Eater Birds!"

Twin-engine aircrafts equipped with disk-like Magic Eater Invokers appeared on the horizon.

The strange noise of the Magic Eater activation echoed together with the propellers and the engines sounds in the battlefield.

"Ooo, that cone bastard is slanting!"

The apostle who was standing still in the air began to fall.

"All vehicles stop! Prepare for bombardment, retake your aim after the first volley, fire three volleys of armor-piercing shells in succession. After that, stand by and prepare the high-explosive shells!"

The captain's voice reached every vehicle from the radio.

"Normal shell loading, complete!"

"Third special vehicle here, normal shell loading, complete!"

The radio personnel conveyed the reports he got from the loading personnels to the commanding officer.

At the same time, the apostle fell to the ground in the view of the vehicle captain who was peeking outside.

"All vehicles, start the bombardment."

"Fireeee!"

The main cannon of the special vehicles spouted fire, lead cannonballs hit the area around the apostle, raising cloud of dust.

"Correcting elevation--three to below, one to the left, a bit back to the right. Aiming complete."

"Armor piercing shells loading complete."

"Fireeeee!"

The armor piercing shells shot by the special vehicles sunk into the apostle one after another.

◇

"Who could've thought physical attacks would be this effective."

The emperor muttered while looking at the scene before his eyes.

The plan to contain the apostle with Magic Eater and tear the apostle with the special vehicles' cannons seems to be working well.

The light magicians and the space magicians from the imperial court magicians are showing the battlefield to the people in the throne room.

The imperial court magicians who usually don't get along are cooperating to capture image from outside the Magic Eater's range.

"Lead and iron have low interference against magic. Furthermore, we're using that in the special vehicle's corps' armor piercing shells."

"Hmph, fantasy against fantasy huh."

The bone of lesser dragons and the white warhead of the armor-piercing shells floated in the emperor's mind.

"His Majesty! We got a call from Magyuba City! An apostle has appeared!"

"Mogeiba City also called, they said『Appearance of a silver cone. One third of the city has become white chloride』."

Similar reports from other cities came one after another.

"His Majesty! We've confirmed the apostle invasion on the opposite side of Imperial Capital! Their number is--"

"What is it, say it."

"--12. 12 apostles have appeared!"

Hearing the communication officer's words tinged with despair, the people in the throne room gather their line of sight at the emperor and tactician Touya as if imploring them.

"Looks like the opponent is serious."

"However, we're yet to go all-out either."

Tactician talked to the king and then turned toward the anxious-looking people.

"Get out the remaining『Magic Eater Birds』. I allow the deployment of Temple Knights. Don't forget the D equipment!"

"Acknowledged."

Entrusted with the order by the tactician, the captain turns toward the emperor.

"Our loyalty to His Majesty! For the empire's victory and everlasting glory!"

The captain raised his spear and took a knightly bow to the emperor and then he left the room commanding the Temple Knights.

"How about the『Whistling Arrow of Awakening』?"

"We just got the materials. We can't possibly make it that fast."

The tactician and the emperor exchanged words in a room sparse of people.

"Hahhahha! Don't lump me together with you Tactician!"

A man with loud footsteps showed up in the throne room that was ruled by silence.

The man wearing a white robe unsuited in the palace is the director of Brains.

"Director huh? What are you here for."

"I have a report for His Majesty."

He eluded the tactician's question and stepped forward before the emperor.

"We've completed the preparation for the『Whistling Arrow of Awakening』, should we launch it as planned?"

Brains Director's frankness doesn't change even in front of the emperor.

"Of course. Push forward while there's still no obstacle."

"Okey! Prompt decision! I'm really mesmerized by that side of yours~"

Brains Director winked with a jestful expression, took out a hand radio and ordered the launch of the [Whistling Arrow of Awakening].

"What kind of magic did you use in such a short notice?"

Tactician caught the shoulder of the director who was going to pass through him and asked for his trick.

"I don't use no magic. It's human wisdom. I thought this was going to happen so I had it finished enough that we just needed to put the Darkness Crystal as the core and the Philosopher's Stone for the fuel. Working ahead of the schedule so that you don't fall into a death march is the basic of the basic."

"Is that so--"

The director shakes off the tactician's hands, and then tactician's words reach the ears of the director who's stretching his white robe to his ears while walking.

"--With this, His Majesty's plan takes a step forward."

"Hahn?"

The director stopped and asked the meaning of the tactician's words.

However, the tactician fell silent, only the words of the feverish emperor reached his ears.

"Now, go! Break the seal of the Moon's Demon God and wake the sleeping god."

◇

"This is bad! The steering golem of the Moonfaring Ship won't activate!"

"What should we do? Should we stop the launching sequence?"

"But, we can't possibly prepare a new golem now. It'll take at least three days at the latest even if we put together the『Brains』's spare."

The [Brains] members are having a violent discussion inside the control tower near the rocket's launch pad.

"Is this really the result of our all-night works everyday."

"Damn with science almighty. Weren't you always lecturing us pompously? Bring out some good idea!"

"What are we doing quarreling against ourselves! There must be something that can be done!"

An apostle, crumbling from the tank cannons, is approaching the launch pad.

The apostle is probably aiming for the armory and the rocket launch pad from the start.

If this keeps up, there's no doubt that the rocket will be destroyed before the tanks defeat the apostle.

"I'll go!"

An apprentice girl in the control tower declared that while swaying her purple ponytail.

The only one who can ride the spaceship is only her with her small build.

"Becoming an astronaut has always been my dream in my previous life."

"You can't! The Moonfaring Ship's fuel is only enough for a one-way trip. Moreover, the core will explode on arrival. You can't, absolutely."

"I don't care. I also have good luck, though it's not as good as His Majesty Emperor."

"--Sorry."

The supervisor who opposed the girl who put up a bravado yielded to the unwavering eyes of the girl and gave her the permission.

"Maintenance division! Put every food and water into the『Magic Bag』! Also stuff the oxygen cylinders there! And all of the remaining Darkness Crystal fragments! And don't you forget the gravity propeller prototype!"

The supervisor gave orders through the radio to increase the girl's chance of return even by 1%.

"What's that? ...Uh oh! Someone is clinging to the rocket."

"Priest clothing? --No way!"

One of the people in the control tower gave a warning, and the supervisor screamed after looking at it through the binoculars.

◇

"Patriarch-sama, just another step. It's our duty as God Zaikuon believers to crush the scheme of the demon lord's adherents. I'll accomplish mine soon."

A young man with long purple hair wearing priest clothing muttered in delirium.

He was the only one who arrived here among his allies who invaded the rocket launch pad during the chaos.

"Kuhi, kuhihihhi. Hand, my hand is trembling... I've to take the god's medicine."

The man took a small bottle from his breast pocket, but he couldn't open it with his trembling hands, he finally used his teeth to open the cap.

He drank the liquid inside the bottle, but he couldn't swallow it well because of his trembling hand, it was spilling out around his mouth.

"Kuhi, kuhihihihhi. kuhi, KUHIHHHIkuhiHIHI"

The man stopped trembling, but some strange noises that didn't sound human were mixed among his voice.

"You over there! Stop!"

A soldier carrying a gun stopped him, the man turned around with eyes clad in purple light.

"gunJJJgGUGGGGUUUNNNNN"

"M-monster!"

Before the soldier could even pull his gun's trigger, the blood from the remaining lower part of his body scattered in that place.

It was caused by the blade that extended from the man's purplish shadow.

"s-sOONpatriarchSASASAMAMAAAMMMM"

The back of the man who had began to climb the rocket was burbling as if it was a different creature.

◇

"D-demon lord--"

One of the men wearing priest clothing on top of a hill muttered when he saw a purple giant that appeared on the rocket's launch pad.

The rocket broke easily, the launch pad and the falling control tower became submerged in fire.

"Priest Bebenbe, that's wrong. He is a holy king devoted to the great God Zaikuon. A holy warrior who has come to purify this land smeared in taboo."

"Patriarch-sama."

The patriarch who sent the fanatic man to his death said some made-up story.

No one besides his mistress knows that he secretly despises reincarnated people with their purple hair.

"We have our own role to fulfill. Let us go."

"Yes, Patriarch-sama."

The fanatics go down the stair toward a narrow underground ritual site behind the hill.

"Gentlemen, my gratitude for following me until today."

"""Patriarch-sama."""

"We will now hold the last ritual. For the glory of God Zaikuon."

"""For the glory of God Zaikuon."""

The fanatics are chanting the most secret art that's only been handed down to the priest king of the God Zaikuon Country destroyed in the past.

--<<Invoke Deity>>.

An art to descend the great God into a body.

Even if the art is successful, the life and souls, everything of the people who chanted them will be annihilated, it's a forbidden ritual magic.

No one knows whether the secret art will be successful since the success rate up until now is exceedingly rare.

However, if it's successful--.

Another crisis would befall Weasel Empire.

15-29. Divine Punishment (3), Satou's Identity

Satou's here. I remember reading a mystery novel where the protagonist was the culprit all along in the past, but I recalled throwing the book away due to the forced outcome. I really think the author should have foreshadowed it to the readers, so they could understand.

◇

"Huh? There are traces of people searching the house."

When I came to the doghouse which only had its frame remaining using Unit Arrangement, the guest house we were staying at looked as if it was pillaged by burglars.

Our dummy traveling bags are cut, the content inside have been scattered on the floor.

The doghouse where I came out of is also broken in a corner of the room.

It seems the people who searched here were quite violent.

For some reason, there's a holy symbol of God Zaikuon painted on a wall with a cross mark on top of it.

I don't quite understand what it is about, but I see that they hate God Zaikuon.

"For now, let's read the rest of the slates--"

I opened the Map while muttering alone and realized that it was not the time to do that.

There's a luminous point showing [UNKNOWN] on the Map. My Crisis Perception isn't kicking in so it's probably the god's apostle.

Apparently, the situation has changed since I got back to the solitary island palace.

I checked just in case, but I don't see them in Makiwa Kingdom and the neighboring countries.

Of course, the same with Shiga Kingdom where my acquaintances are.

They're not in Saga Empire either, I should just leave the countries I'm not too involved in alone.

"--For now, they seem to be on equal ground."

I closed the Map and checked the battlefield with the space magic's [Remote View], a magic to see afar.

It seems there are some casualties among the military personnels, but I don't plan to be overprotective toward professional soldiers.

Nevertheless, I never thought that the apostle would look like a strange silver cone.

How the apostle look wasn't described in the slates you see.

Moreover, there were lots of blurred words and inadequate depictions since it seems Troll Demon Lord wasn't an author in his previous life.

『--Steel Cutting Slash!』

I saw a familiar knight in the Remote View.

It seems they've invoked the Magic Eater, they're not fighting with magic but with cannonballs and physical attacks.

The apostle that was hurt by the cannonballs and the Temple Knights' white swords restored itself like rewinding a video.

The Weasel Empire's Magic Eaters probably don't have enough power to interfere with the magic power inside the apostle's body.

『This will finish you off! Pentagram Tearing Slash!』

『Stop, Liedill! Techniques that use magic power are unusable!』

Lady Liedill who was going to use her finisher was hit by the apostle's feeler and got knocked down.

She seemed sturdier than I imagined, she evaded the second feeler while unsteadily getting up.

Lady Liedill is an airhead like always.

I sent a cheer for her in my mind.

"Oops, forget about that."

I muttered alone and got right back on track.

Then I opened my Map and checked on the surrounding cities, turned out other apostles had appeared there too.

The Imperial Capital's populace have evacuated to the underground shelters so they're probably going to be fine even if I leave them alone, but the opponent is a god's apostle.

There's a possibility that they have the same attack power as the [Demon God's Offshoots] I encountered in Shiga Kingdom's capital.

I take a holy sword that works as a magic power reserve out of my Storage and use [Another World].

Similar to what I did in the Dejima Island's Labyrinth before, I copy the underground shelters and abduct the people into it.

I'm sorry for doing it without asking their approvals, but please regard it as an emergency evacuation.

I'll put them back once the turmoil is over.

"Wonder if the magic power is enough to evacuate all the cities in Weasel Empire?"

The Magic Crystal Pillar I got during the incident with Demon Lord Shin floated in my mind.

"Looks like I can finish this without using the magic power in the Magic Crystal Pillar I'm keeping as an insurance."

Now then, let's go to the next city.

◇

"There are more god's apostles now."

When I had finished evacuating the Weasel Empire's populace and got back to the capital, the apostle had increased from one to 13.

I was able to evacuate most people but a smoke car used by the wealthy to flee in one of the cities had been turned into a salt object, and most of the cities' defense forces were already annihilated; there were a lot of people I couldn't save too.

It's impossible to completely save them all, and in the first place, my heart isn't going to ache even if professional soldiers and the statesmen who abandoned the people they should have protected die.

Several airplanes and large passenger planes were attacked by Rocket Trees and flying monsters.

I also caught sight of monsters who should have been controlled by screws gaining freedom and rebelling at some cities' lines of defense.

I couldn't exactly neglect that so I helped them dealing with the monsters a bit.

"Oops, I probably shouldn't leave that one alone."

A separated apostle is approaching a rocket launch pad where there are civilians.

I close the Map and exit the mansion to prevent that.

There's a pillar of purple light beside the rocket.

"Geh, there's even a demon lord."

--This is way too chaotic, Weasel Empire's Imperial Capital.

Using space magic forbidden spell <<Aport an Object>>, I retrieve the people in the rocket launch pad and the control room.

"W-where is this?"

"W-who are you?"

"Hero Nanashi."

I only explained that much to the confused people.

"H-hero?!"

"Why is a pawn of God Parion here!"

Oops, looks like hero's worth is at an all time low in Weasel Empire.

No, Hero Hayato was welcomed in Dejima Island, there's a possibility that it's just a part of people in the Imperial Capital who keep that perception.

"Now then, I have no time to chat. Take shelter together with the capital's people."

I open the gate to the sub-space and throw them one by one inside using

[Magic Hand].

I left only the purple haired girl since she was in a critical state as her body was covered in purple light.

I absorb the surplus magic power from her, maximize the Spirit Light and tear off the miasma that binds her.

Contrary to what I thought, it was just an initial symptom, so I neutralized it easily.

"I don't have to remove her Unique Skill at this rate."

I send the girl to the same place as the people earlier and close the gate.

Now then, the critical situation continues, but since they're doing better than I thought, it doesn't seem like I need to intervene.

For now I'll go read the slates to collect information and see the emperor later.

◇

"--Here he is."

The moment I showed up in the room where the emperor was after I had finished gathering information, some unwelcoming words hit me.

With a wave of his hand, tactician Touya made the Temple Knights and officials who were in the room to withdraw.

Ignoring the sarcastic gaze of tactician Touya, I ask the emperor.

"I have two things to ask of you before we get to the main subject."

"Say it. You will have your answer if it's something I can tell."

Is it just my imagination or is his tone pricklier than yesterday.

"Have you read slates from recent times--about 100 years ago?"

"Of course."

"With your own eyes?"

"I can read ancient language from the age of gods just fine."

Fumu, in that case he should know the same thing as me if he's directly read it.

"Then, about his identity too?"

I asked the emperor while looking at tactician Touya.

"I do not know which identities you're referring to, but yes I know about both of them."

--Then I guess it's fine.

"Is that all?"

"Yeah, if you're not being deceived then it's fine."

After all, there are demon lords in my faction too.

"Then we will be asking ours."

After saying that, the emperor urged tactician Touya with his eyes.

"If you've already read the recent slates, then you can already guess what I am going to ask don't you?"

It's probably about me.

The recent slates were choke full of me.

For some reason the matter in sub-space starting from the solitary island palace, the events in the Dragon Valley and Elven Homes that are protected by barrier, and the things in void sky weren't recorded, but my activities as Nanashi were written profusely.

However, there was nothing about the fact that Satou and Nanashi are the same person.

I can easily imagine that he, with his intellect, should already realize that they're the same person.

Even so, there's no need for me to reveal it myself.

"What are you trying to say?"

"Playing dumb is futile. Viscount Satou Pendragon--"

I'm ignoring his questioning without relying on Poker Face skill.

"--Or perhaps, I should say it like this?"

Tactician Touya stops, takes off his mask and scowls at me as if he's instigating me.

Guessing that he's going to call me God Slayer, I put up a defense in my mind.

"One who challenges Dragon God--"

Just as I thought huh.

"--No matter how many times he was killed--"

Huh?

The turn of events seems strange somehow.

"--One who continues to challenge. The eternal challenger--"

Not understanding what tactician Touya's intention is, I match my line of sight with his to probe for information.

"--One of the seven Gods that arrived from another world together with the World Trees--"

Challenging dark purple light leaks from the depth of his eyes.

Since that's a symptom of demon lord-fication, shouldn't you better calm down a bit?

I missed his words because I was thinking that.

"--Eh? What?"

Thanks to that, I replied like I were a deaf-type protagonist.

He apparently thought I was making fun of his decisive lines, color of anger were mixed in tactician Touya's eyes.

"I'll say it no matter how many times until you can no longer hide it."

Tactician Touya's eyeteeth begins to lengthen like fangs.

Un, sorry about it. That's why, calm down.

"One who surpasses all principles, an existence outside of this world--"

Tactician Touyaa threw his arm inside the mantle, flipping it up and vigorously pointed his finger at me as if it was going to pierce my heart.

"--God Zaikuon! That's your true identity."

15-30. Divine Punishment (4) Basis

Satou's here. There are people who, "know themselves worst.", and people who, "Know themselves best."

But, aren't the most numerous ones the people who make use of either case depending on the situation?

◇

"What's wrong? Don't tell me you never thought that your true identity would be found out."

Tactician Touya is pointing at me with a triumphant look on his face.

"I'm not a God--You won't believe me even if I tell you that right?"

"Of course!"

Tactician Touya is full of confidence.

"Could you tell me what's your basis for thinking that I'm a God?"

After I said that, tactician Touya grins and begins to talk.

"There are too many mysteries surrounding you."

Tactician Touya calmly speaks as if he's a stage actor.

However, I'd like to be spared from his slightly narcissistic strange pose.

I somehow feel that his preferences will match with Doghead's.

"The first entry about you in the slates is about your fight with the black greater demon in Seryuu city."

That's certainly the case.

Of course, I'm written as [Silver Masked Hero] in the slates.

"Someone with a single-digit level couldn't have possibly won against a greater demon."

Un, I forgot to change my level in the Exchange Column at that time.

"You must be possessing some kind of concealment-type artifact. Or so we thought, thus we had to investigate your identity."

After saying that, tactician Touya peers into my eyes as if checking my reaction.

"However, even the most skilled people couldn't find any trace about you before you appeared in Seryuu City. Yes, so perfect we couldn't help but thought it was as if you suddenly came together with the『Stars Fall』."

No no, I think I was transported at that time, so the suddenly appearing part is true.

"We played it safe and absolutely made sure to chase your whereabouts to prevent contact. And with each reports, we couldn't help but question the sanity of our informer."

Tactician Touya slowly shakes his head with his finger on his forehead.

That gesture pisses me off somehow.

"Slaughtering senior greater demons one after another, and even easily beating the Golden Wild Boar King whose strength was famous among successive generations and the great monstrous fish Tovkezeera."

The one who defeated Tovkezeera was Hero Nanashi, there was no information about me being the same person as Hero Nanashi in the slates.

"Let alone them, you even defeated the strongest『Ancient King Dog Head』-dono who was called the evil god and the offshoots of Demon God-sama."

--Nn? What's this?

I sensed something odd just now.

That sense of oddness disappeared before I could say it, but another question appeared instead.

"Isn't it said that no one besides Dragon God and Demon God have ever defeated Doghead?"

When I pointed that out, tactician Touya looked a bit disgruntled.

Looks like he vaguely noticed that too.

"Hmph, it's most likely because it happened right after『Ancient King Dog-Head』-dono had just revived so he was in a weakened state."

The Doghead beating was written humorously in the slates, but the detail as to how I actually defeated him wasn't depicted, and mysteriously, the little girl who intruded in my fight with the dog-head wasn't written at all.

"And, even though you had the power to defeat Doghead-dono, as weakened as he was, you bafflingly hid all of your achievements and continued your journey as a common man. You could have gained any kind of glory and fame if you just made it public, yet you only repeated your pleasure jaunts and philanthropic works."

Cause my main purpose is going on trips in another world.

"We racked our brains at your mysterious acts. However, everything came to light once we confirmed a certain phenomenon."

Tactician Touya's reasoning feels familiar to me somehow.

A deja vu of having your conjecture proven wrong.

"And? What is that phenomenon?"

I know that he's surely mistaken, but laughing at him would be too sad so I urged him to continue.

This is not because I pity him as a fellow sufferer of mistakes. Absolutely not.

"You can chantlessly teleport an impossible amount of things to an impossible distance away. However, that's fine and all. We thought that you were just hiding such a Unique Skill."

Is he talking about Unit Arrangement?

Since I can teleport considerably far away with space magic, wonder which one is it?

"However, it doesn't seem like you pay the compensation for it. Not magic power, not your soul, nothing!"

He shouldn't be able to know my magic power consumption, maybe he's referring to me teleporting way outside the limit without replenishment?

"Such a thing is not possible for someone who's been given god's fragment, someone who is just given a portion of the authority. Someone that can freely command such an absurdity at will is an existence outside the principle. In other words, only a God."

I see, so Unit Arrangement is that much of an absurd ability.

Come to think of it, when I experimented to see the limit, I could repeat it ad infinitum it stopped being funny, and I was also able to escape from the center of gravity many times.

"We also have other basis."

"And that is?"

Might as well listen to it all.

"--30 years."

What?

Did I miss him speaking again?

"Are you still playing dumb? It has only been 30 years since you were defeated and killed by Dragon God!"

Tactician Touya shouted irritatedly.

His fangs are about to reach a dangerous level, please calm down.

He seems to refer to God Zaikuon reviving even though it has only been 30 years since his dead.

"It's certainly strange. Please tell me the reason if you know why."

"Hmph, you're not going to admit that you're God Zaikuon until the end huh."

I mean, that's wrong.

"There's a true meaning in you not only piling up achievements as a fake hero but also hiding your philanthropic works."

With a [zubi] sound effect, tactician Touya points his finger at me while taking a pose like he's leaning his back.

I almost impulsively shouted, "What'd you say!" out loud, but I held back.

I had a feeling that he'd snap and turn into demon lord if I teased him like that.

"I have a proper hero title y'know?"

I let him to cool down by pointing out his mistake a bit.

"Yes, a true meaning!"

Tactician Touya completely ignored me and continued on.

Can't be helped, I'll hear it till the end without doing unnecessary interruptions.

"What kind?"

"I'll only be preaching to the choir, but very well I'll have you hear it."

For now, I urged him to continue.

"The period of revival for a god that has died is fixed."

The weasel emperor is calmly glaring at me to not miss any of my gestures.

Unlike tactician Touya, it doesn't seem like he's entirely convinced that I'm God Zaikuon.

"However, there's also a way to shorten that."

Judging from the oracle I heard before going here, is it prayers?

"In order to shorten that, the most effective way is people's genuine prayers and devout piety. Awe and reverence can also shorten the revival period but it is not as effective."

Such a detailed explanation isn't written on the slates.

Looks like tactician Touya has another source of information besides the slates.

"You should understand that playing dumb after this far is meaningless!"

Thin purple hair begins to grow on the bald head of tactician Touya.

Apparently, he only shaved his head.

"In summary, what you want to say is--I gathered prayers and piety from the people by acting as Satou and Nanashi in order to hasten God Zaikuon's revival?"

"That's right!"

Swoosh, tactician Touya's hair lengthened into a straight long hair to his waist.

"You are the mortal frame of God Zaikuon. A split Mitama!"

I begin to think that my identity might really be God Zaikuon after this much of a grand declaration.

Of course that's a misdirected wrong deduction.

If what he said is the truth, then that means a split Mitama of God Zaikuon that's not even the main body defeated Doghead and the Demon God's offshoots.

It doesn't seem like I can get any more useful information, guess I'll stop keeping his nonsense company and leave here?

◇

"Or perhaps you don't remember?"

Tactician Touya spoke with a slightly different mood when I was waiting for the right timing to leave.

He might have sensed that I didn't believe his deduction.

His tone somehow changes into that of a persuasion.

"Have you ever thought that your memories are inconsistent? Did it get cut off?"

--Mu.

I can't deny that.

My memories were interrupted between the time I fell asleep and awoke in younger body in the [Dragon's Valley].

The reason for my rejuvenation is unknown, who was the one who teleported me is also unknown.

"Don't you ever feel that your thought is being manipulated by someone?"

--Mumumu.

....Not never.

Although I can't confidently say that it has, I can't really recall the time when Hikaru disappeared.

Why did I think that her disappearance at the time was not a problem, and how I didn't think of Hikaru let alone worry about her until our reunion was also strange.

"Have you ever forgotten things that you intended to do before you realized?"

After being reunited with Hikaru I forgot to pursue that doubt further in spite of having it in my mind.

"Looks like I've hit the nail on the head."

Tactician's Touya triumphant look is infuriating.

However, the more I denied that impossibility, the more I doubt that maybe even that thought is an influence from an outside force.

Tactician Touya pursues further at my shaken heart.

"Admit it! Split Mitama of God Zaikuon!"

--Impossible.

However, my heart is swaying, unable to intelligently deny like earlier.

The thought of my own memories and thought being manipulated brings anxiety and stress that have never arisen before in my heart.

Maybe.

Just maybe.

Is that--really the case?

『There's no way that's true isn't it?』

I heard a familiar voice in my ears.

That obviously disgusted-sounding voice had the power to blow away my worry in an instant.

『Calm down. My hero.』

"You're--"

Two small hands hug my neck together with a fleeting light snowfall-like sensation.

Those of the little girl who was in the painting.

◇

--The little girl in the painting.

A mysterious being who appeared in the painting inside Duke Oyugock's castle and when I was being misled by Doghead Demon Lord.

Doghead Demon Lord called her [God Parion], she's shown as [UNKNOWN] like the Demon God's Offshoots on my AR reading.

"Who are you?"

『Me? I'm your princess. You're my hero. We're two birds who share a body and a pair of wings walking the eternity together--』 <TLN: An expression for 'a happily married couple'.>

Her clear comfortable voice similar to Lulu almost robs me of my consciousness.

I forgot how she evaded my question and ended up immersing myself in the sound of her words.

"Who are you talking to?"

"--Eh?"

Tactician Touya looks around at the surroundings suspiciously.

It seems the other people can't see her existence.

Since Doghead demon lord could, she seems to be able to choose who can see her.

"Did you manipulate my--"

She puts her little finger on my mouth midway.

『I only do what you desire. I will be there as you wish. If you cannot remember it, that means it's something the current you don't need. It will be naturally released when you really need it.』

Normally those sounded unbelievable, but for some reason, I felt like believing her without a doubt.

『Are you convinced?』

"--Yea."

I nodded back at the girl.

The smiling little girl's body is becoming transparent.

Right, maybe she knows about it.

"Do you know the reason why God Zaikoun revived faster?"

I asked her that while feeling slightly impatient.

『Reason? Maybe the kids who didn't want the civilization to advance united? Because Divine Punishment can't happen unless all the seven Gods who arrived riding on the world trees assembled.』

--Huh? I felt something odd again.

『Look, my hero.』

A yellow light is spreading at the ground where the little girl pointed at.

That was the place where a demon lord was fighting an apostle.

『A big battle-loving idiot has appeared.』

The yellow light becomes a huge person shape.

I think it's at least 100 meter tall?

The information of the person shape shown on my AR is the same as the little girl's--[UNKNOWN].

The same as the apostle, but it's clearly different.

Warnings from Crisis Perception is alarming enough to tighten my heart even though it's so far apart.

"That's, don't tell me--"

『It is. You can tell the other big idiots over there too.』

The little girl who was looking at the yellow person shape turned at me.

『Tell them, that's the Zaikuon you seek.』

"That's, God Zaikuon?"

"W-what'd you say!"

Tactician Touya heard my muttering.

"What do you want me to do?"

『--Nothing.』

The little girl gently smiles.

Her expression is like a mother, unsuited for her age.

『Do as you like, my hero. Do anything you like anytime you want.』

After saying that, the little girl disappeared in the air.

Her parting words sounded like an invitation from a devil or a dark god, but I felt a deep affection for me in them.

I think that she's probably the one who summoned me to the [Dragon's Valley].

◇

"Say it! Who was here! No, what was here!"

Tactician Touya grasped my shoulder and forcibly turned me around.

And just when I was soaking in the lingering sensation, what a cruel guy.

"An unknown little girl."

"Little girl? --God Parion!"

Like I said, unknown.

"Touya. Whether he's a split body of God Zaikuon or not is trivial now."

The emperor pointed at the yellow person shape--God Zaikuon with his line of sight.

"My fragments given by God are aching. There's no mistake that's a God--"

Is it just my imagination or is the weasel emperor swelling.

"--Our enemy."

The yellow light that makes up God Zaikuon is pulsing.

<<<DIVINE PUNISHMENT>>>

Heavy sense along with awe arrived directly in my brain.

The Imperial Capital and the special tank corps outside turned into salt, swallowed by white tsunami and disappeared.

"The Imperial Capital is turning white?"

"That's the divine punishment."

The Imperial Capital is turning white starting from the edge of the city.

Several purple pillars of light appeared in the slums.

Looks like several reincarnated people had turned into demon lords.

Even though I should have carried all the reincarnated people and [Brains] when I kidnapped the capital's people earlier, just where were they hiding....

"It seems demon lords don't turn into salt."

"Of course. That only works on the『Being with Predestined Live (Mortal)』. It has no effect on the followers of Demon God, demon lords who are『Immortal Beings』."

The weasel emperor looks at me.

"Hero Nanashi, it appears God's power is mightier than we expected. It is very likely that the people won't be protected from the divine punishment by merely hiding underground. Please carry them out if you have a shred of sympathy for our people."

"I left the people in the imperial castle, but I've saved the populace already."

"Is that right.... My gratitude, Hero Nanashi."

The emperor looked relieved when I told him that.

"What are you two going to do?"

Perhaps because of I saw that, I asked the weasel emperor and tactician Touya such a thing.

"It's good as long as the people are safe. However, I want to protect the underground burial mound. Protect it from the Gods' hands."

"Okay. I'll blockade it with a strong barrier."

It's not because I'm asked by martyr-like clear eyes.

I'm going to protect it since it's an important facility for me too.

"We will defeat the God."

The emperor who's wrapped in purple light easily stands up from the throne.

"As the great demon lord of this generation, I will challenge and slaughter the

God."

The emperor presses both his hands on the ground and transforms into a purple beast.

"If I become a beast who's lost his reasoning after destroying the God, I'd like you to kill me with that anomalous strength of yours."

Looks like the emperor's determination is firm.

"Understood."

"Thank you. Hero Nanashi."

The emperor who has turned into a beast becomes huge and breaks through the tall ceiling of the throne room.

"We will defeat the God."

"I see."

Without cheering or stopping him, I see the emperor off.

"Are you not going?"

"My turn will be for the last. The role of this body is to raise the final big firework called Imperial Castle."

Tactician Touya replied me with some antique words midway.

He probably wants to draw a line for the rise of standard in their revolt against Gods.

"Explosion is romance. And there is no bigger romance than an explosion that drags a God with it don't you think?"

That reminds me, he's this kind of guy.

"You're right."

"Yeah, damn I am."

While looking at the fight between demon lords and the yellow person shape in the distant, tactician Touya laughs like he's yawning.

I felt insanity in his dark expression, sending chill down my spine.

There should be no need for me to see it until the end.

I should just come again once everything is over.

The bureaucrats and the court ladies who had stayed in the castle seemed to have left the capital using an escape VTOL.

The Temple Knights and soldiers are still fighting against the apostles even now.

"--Farewell."

Muttering a good bye word that's unlike me, I go toward the seal of the burial mound.

I, who have finished all of my roles, leave the whitening dying Imperial Capital behind.

15-31. The Golden Knights' Deployment, Preparation (1)

Satou's here. I've seen manga that inform the readers with [This is ●●] as the title on the first page. I wonder if there would be people who mistook it for another work if that wasn't written?

◇

"Master, so intense! At this rate I'll break."

Slender legs are wrapped around my waist, voluptuous hills are pushed on my face.

"Co-Core Two."

"Master, Master, Master."

I pat Core Two who seeks me maddeningly.

"""GUILTY"""

Arisa and Mia separate Core Two away from me.

"Master, Master, Master."

Core Two is frantically stretching her arms toward me even while being pinned by Hikaru and Lulu.

I stare back at her bewilderingly.

I received Core Two's intense hug the moment I got back to the Solitary Island Palace with Unit Arrangement, thus I don't know why she's like this.

"What's wrong, Core Two?"

"Master, Master, Master."

Since she can't give any meaningful reply, I ask the girls for the situation while grasping her hand.

"Do you know what this is about?"

"Well? We had just gathered here after pausing the sea fishing contest because the brownies told us that Core Two seemed strange, so we don't really know."

"Maybe something's happening at Dejima's Dungeon?"

Following Arisa, Hikaru gave a reasonable opinion.

"Right, I'll go see it for a bit."

I use Unit Arrangement to move to the <<Dungeon Room>> of Dejima's Labyrinth.

"--What?"

The Dungeon Core is flickering intensely, the room is basked in red and blue light.

"Report the current situation!"

『Master, someone, is.』

The Core answered intermittently.

『From outside, i-invading, m-me.』

Apparently, the dungeon is getting hacked.

The hologram window displayed by the Core shows the current information of the labyrinth.

"It's trying to make the monsters go on a Stampede outside the labyrinth huh."

I'm guessing so from the displayed information.

"Oh no~?"

"It's a pinch-pench nanodesu."

When I looked at the direction of the familiar voices, I saw Tama and Pochi looking up at me from my shadow.

When their eyes met mine, they sank down into the shadow until around the eyes with a [We got found out] expression.

Looks like Tama followed me here with Shadow Ferry.

--Right then.

"Private Tama, Private Pochi! This is an emergency mission!"

"Aye!"

"Nanodesu!"

When I said that, the two jumped out of the shadow and waited with shupin poses.

"Annihilate the monsters overflowing from the labyrinth's entrance!"

"Aye aye Sir~?"

"Roger nanodesu."

I move the two to a small shrine near the labyrinth's entrance with Unit Arrangement.

The labyrinth and the labyrinth island are under my rule, so moving on them is an easy task.

Alright, now the monsters have been taken care of.

『Mas, ter, su-support, pl-easesese』

"Got it."

I touch the Dungeon Core and directly connects to the Core's consciousness.

『<<<OBEY>>>--contradict with Master's orders.』

The state of someone's will fighting against Core flew to me.

It seems it's [Master] instead of [Goshujin-sama] inside Core's mind.

『<<<OBEY>>><<<PROVIDENCE>>><<<OBEY>>>--I-I won't ob-ey.』

Just as Core's said, the Dungeon Core seems to be under a heavy load.

"Core, turn the one connecting from outside over to me."

『<<<OBEY>>><<<SUPERIOR>>><<<OBEY>>>--Yes Master.』

After a light headache, the arrogant voices reached my mind directly.

A choice, [Requested by a being of higher-order. Do you want to obey?] and YES/NO, appeared in the edge of my vision.

Of course it'd be no, but I'm not going to choose just yet.

This comes from some manga or anime--

『Only people who are prepared to get hacked hack.』

--Or so.

It might be a bit different, but it mostly sounds like that I think.

I trace back the faint Magic Essence that flows in the Dragon Vein.

It's quite far.

After going through several Magic Clumps, Miasma Caverns, and Sources, it's even further than those.

It's like a cracker that attacks through several network servers.

『<<<INSOLENCE>>><<<OBEY>>><<<TABOO>>>』

It seems the other side sensed that they were being traced back, threatening will streamed from the source of the interference.

It feels like the divine messages I heard in Makiwa Kingdom.

If I have to say it insolently, it [stinks of Gods].

"Irritating."

The unpleasant noise-like feeling in my mind was wiped out by that single word, and then I continue the trace with my cleared mind.

--Selbira's Labyrinth?

No, it's still even further.

When I pursue that further--.

◇

"It fled huh."

The line was abruptly disconnected.

The trace I pursued completely disappeared there.

The Dragon Vein or Source it used to connect was probably physically destroyed.

『Master, thank you for your aid.』

"Nah, this much is nothing."

At this rate, there's a high chance that the other labyrinths are going to be forced into doing Stampede.

"Core, with my authority as the Dungeon Master, cut off the connection to the Dragon Vein. You're prohibited from reconnecting until I give you the permission."

『The connection has been cut off. 16 days remaining until Magic Essence is exhausted.』

Fumu, I thought Core would reject me, but it's expectedly obedient.

"What happens when you run out of the Magic Essence?"

『The Dungeon Core will enter Sleep Mode, all activities of the labyrinth will stop. This includes the volcanic restraint.』

That reminds me, the labyrinth here does that eh.

『It is possible to extend the active time to 721 days if the volcanic restraint is suspended. Would you like to suspend the volcanic restraint?』

"No don't."

If the volcanic activities resumed, the labyrinth island will become uninhabitable, and it should have a big effect on the crops and fishing industry of the the nearby Dejima Island.

I ponder a bit--.

"I'll bring Magic Essence from another place with Space Magic. It's a bit thick, and the flow rate is strong, but endure it."

『Yes Master』

Please, stop mixing shyness in your thought when you have that synthetic voice.

I connect to the Magic Essence convergent in the Elemental Stone Refinery in the Void Sky with space magic and pour it to the Dungeon Core straight.

『Master, amazing, Master, Master, be gentler, Master, I'm breaking, Master.』

When I heard the entreating coquettish voice of Core, I understood that Core and Core Two have the same personality.

The voice stir up my sadistic side, but I'd feel bad bullying it so I suppress the rate of flow to half.

While I'm at it, I also charge the holy swords used for magic storages that I've been neglecting.

The amount of Magic Essence is plentiful in exchange of the slower flow rate, so I charge 100 holy swords at once.

It has become much more easier to do it than when I was charging with my own hands.

Thanks to that I forgot to recharge though.

"Finished~?"

"Mission Complete nanodesu."

Tama and Pochi came back just when I started the magic charging.

"Little meat~?"

"The monsters here are all kananomo, it's no joy nodesu."

Kananomo? Did she mean Kanamono (metal utensils)?

Certainly, most of them are golems and monsters with no substances, there's only a few that are edible.

"Salamander~?"

"Pochi caught a Dungeon Crocodile nodesu."

Pochi and Tama fill the room with bodies of monsters on the floor and look up at me with a "praise me" face.

"What a big catch. Should I make hamburg steak of Dungeon Crocodile and Salamander for the lunch today?"

"Great~?"

"Pochi is very very happy nodesu!"

When I suggested that while patting their heads, the two jumped up in joy.

I've made it so that Core can cut the charging connection through space magic itself, so I can leave it to charge by itself.

"Core, cut the connection once you've charged enough magic power."

『Y-yes, Master, ah, Master, haahaa, Master.』

Core's reply was amorous somehow.

"Don't forget to contact Core Two when your magic power has been depleted to half."

『Yes Masteeer』

Will it really be alright....

I've set a method for safety just in case.

I suspect that Core would try to charge magic power until it broke somehow.

◇

"Welcome back, Satou."

"Sera has requested her return from Duchy Capital."

When I got back to the solitary island palace, the girls welcomed me with complicated faces.

Arisa reported in a business-like manner while averting her eyes from the object on the floor.

Lulu's and Liza's faces are red.

When I look at Princess Shistina, she averts her eyes with reddened face.

It was probably because they saw the antics of the object on the floor, Core Two who's lightly breathing with an expression like she's just done it.

She must have been connected to the Dungeon Core and directly received the sensation from over there.

It seems a woman with such an appearance is still within the limit for Demon Lord Shizuka, her loose lips are just slightly loosened.

I'd like to believe that she doesn't have any strange thought for the girls here.

"Mwu?"

I pat the head of Mia who's nursing Core Two while looking like she doesn't really understand and bring everyone besides Core Two to the living room.

I'll leave Core Two to the experienced married brownies.

"How was over there?"

"Wait, before that, I'll call Sera-san and the others back here first."

After confirming with Sera, I called the three dispatched to the Duchy Capital back here with Unit Arrangement.

"We're back."

"Good work."

I wait for the three to sit on the sofa and continue the talk.

"Please report your situation first."

"Yes, allow me to tell you the conclusion first of all. The Gods are 『Giving the divine punishment to Weasel Empire, and for the surrounding nations' sins of being negligent to monitor Weasel Empire--"

Arisa and Hikaru began to boo when Sera got to the [sins of being negligent to monitor].

I agree with them, but we can't continue like this so I silence them.

"Will be given similar punishment』, so it's said. When I asked what kind of punishment it would be, another oracle descended, 『The effect of the Blessing that holds back the monsters in one place will be annulled』."

"What is 『Blessing that holds back the monsters』, so I ask."

Nana who had the same question as me asked.

"It's a Blessing that keeps monsters from coming out of the Monster Dominions and Labyrinths through God's authority."

"Is that a Blessing?"

"Yes, it is not commonly known, but we're taught that in the Temples."

Sera replied Arisa's question with the face of a clergywoman.

"Isn't the Miasma density the reason why monsters don't come out of their dominions and labyrinths?"

"Un, the scholars from my time also postulated such thesis."

Princess Shistina and Hikaru raised an objection at the temple's common sense.

"T-that shouldn't be--"

Denied of her doctrine, Sera immediately reacted and stood up.

"Calm down, Sera-san. I don't think Sera-san is telling a lie."

"Satou-san."

I calm Sera down and make her sit again.

"I think the fact that monsters prefer places with high miasma concentration is true. However, populated areas, slums and graveyards are also places with high enough miasma concentration."

I learned this after getting Miasma Sight skill, there were stagnated places that resembled the inside of a labyrinth.

"Places with high miasma concentration does not always equal places with monsters, though I can't say that it's certain since undeads sometimes do appear in graveyards."

I wait for everyone to chew the words before continuing.

Excluding Tama, Pochi and Lady Karina who looked sleepy from all the difficult talk, the other girls seemed to understand.

"In other words, I think a power that attract monsters to labyrinths and magic lumps does exist."

Leaving aside as to whether that's a God's Blessings or not--

"And, if the Gods have some kind of mean to erase that power, there's a high chance that Stampedes will happen in various places."

--Stampedes are certain to happen in various places.

However, I can't confirm whether the ones who hack Dungeon Cores to cause the Stampedes are the Gods.

It's very gray.

"Oh no!"

"Nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi reacted to the word Stampede and stood up on the sofa.

When Liza made a "Zip your mouth" gesture at them, the two quietly sat back on the sofa at the same time.

For some reason, they're taking the [Shellfish pose] by hugging their knees and rounding up.

"Of course Golden Knights will deploy right?"

"Of course."

"Alrightt!"

When I affirmed Arisa's question, she stood up on the sofa like Tama and Pochi earlier and raised her fist to the sky.

"--Arisa."

"Nay nein."

Losing to Lulu's sad line of sight, Arisa took the shellfish pose beside Tama and Pochi to reflect on her action.

Lady Karina looks like she wants to join in too somehow, but please hold yourself back because that's not a pose a young lady should take.

"Now then, before the Golden Knights deployment, I want to talk about the Weasel Empire I saw."

After I said that, everyone straightened themselves with a serious face.

Of course, that included the three who had become shellfish.

15-32. The Golden Knights' Deployment, Preparation (2)

Satou's here. I think ending something without a fight is the best. However, I do think that's not the same as not resisting at all. It's necessary to take the appropriate actions against an opponent who invades further the more you yield.

◇

"First, let's start from the most important matter. I have saved most of the general populace, reincarnated and transported people of Weasel Kingom."

"Thank God...."

Sera who looked worried sighed in relief.

"As expected of my--"

"Mwu."

"--our Master, right."

Arisa changed her praise slightly due to Mia's dissatisfied mutter.

Many soldiers and the privileged class who abandoned the people and escaped the cities lost their lives, but since no one asked about it, I didn't mention it.

"All the cities in Weasel Empire besides the capital and Dejima Island have been turned into white salt by the God's Apostles, becoming ruins with no one left."

"You kiddin' me--"

Except for Tama and Pochi who don't really understand, everyone becomes pale.

Only Arisa is composed enough to joke.

"And, only the Temple Knights and Science Corps in the empire's capital have any kind of success in repulsing them."

Sera reproached the people opposing God's Apostles, muttering in a low voice, "How impious....", but I decided to pretend that I didn't hear it since it was something that couldn't be helped for religious people.

"In addition, demon lords manifested near the imperial capital and barged into the battle."

"But why?"

"--Who knows?"

Arisa's question is natural, but I too don't know the reason why.

There were some reincarnated people at the places where the demon lords manifested, so I couldn't help but think that maybe they were forced to turn into demon lords by the God's Apostles.

They probably didn't drink Demon Lord Orb like Shin boy did in Shiga Capital when he turned into a demon lord.

"And mysteriously, even God Zaikuon participated in that three-pronged melee."

"Haaaaa? But why!"

"I didn't ask the reason--"

I shake my head while soothing the peevish Arisa.

"--A wise man does not court danger, you see."

God Zaikuon might tell me if I interviewed him directly, but it felt like I would raise a battle flag if I made some strange connection with him.

"--That's quite true. Better not step on a tiger's tail."

It seemed Arisa remembered the thing she said to me when I went to Weasel Empire, she nodded in consent.

"For God Zaikuon to descend and personally deliver the Divine Punishment.... Unbelievable."

"You're right. My old friends said that the cost for a God to descend was extremely big, so they absolutely won't descend."

Hikaru affirmed Sera's muttering.

"Yes, even in the history of the temples, excepting the Invoke Deity ritual magic, the only record of the advent was 20.000 years ago during the war against the Dog-head Evil God."

God Zaikuon should be killed by the Dragon God 30 years ago, did he not manifest in the world at that time?

Or is it merely because it's not written in the [History of Temples]?

It bothers me a bit, think I'll ask about it to Aze-san when I visit Boruenan Forest later.

The one who told me that was the female intelligence agent in Selbira the labyrinth city, but since she got the information from Zaikuon God's priest who in turn learned it from an oracle granted to a miko of another God, she probably doesn't know much more even if I ask her.

"Then, there was probably a priest that could perform the ritual magic."

The old Zaikuon priest I saw in the slum quarters flash on my mind.

If I'm not mistaken, the reincarnated person who was with him called him Patriarch Bodrazog or something.

I checked and found that him and his sympathizers weren't among the empire people I rescued.

--God's damnation is near! People! Pray to God, ask for mercy!

The old priest Bodrazog was giving that sermon with flaming madness in his eyes.

That fanatic seemed like he was capable of sacrificing his and his followers' lives as the compensation for the God's advent.

Well, whatever.

Guessing won't tell me if it's right or not, and the person concerned is already dead even if I know anyway.

I put the subject back on track.

"And, the weasel emperor became a demon lord and challenged God Zaikuon in order to have the final duel against the God who destroyed his country."

I doubt that weasel emperor would fight from the front.

He's probably going to fight by throwing all the resources he has in hands and do all kinds of craftiness.

"The emperor became a demon lord and battled God Zaikuon huh.... Can he win?"

"I think it's probably impossible."

I shook my head at Arisa's question.

In the first place, the Unique Skills of the emperor who became a demon lord aren't suited for battle.

Even if he uses it with all his wisdom, damaging the God is probably the best he could do.

The [Self Destruct System] that the tactician prepared is probably their last hope.

"That's the situation right now. I don't intend to interfere as long as the God doesn't target here."

There's neither merit nor duty for me to go against the God and jeopardize my friends.

I omitted the matter about my identity being found out by the tactician and the weasel emperor, and the true identity of Tactician Touya as Elf Sage Trazayuya.

I can just tell them about those matters during a chat over some tea later.

◇

"Now then, let's decide on the deployment of the Golden Knights."

I clapped my hands to reset everyone's consciousness, and began to talk about the way to prevent the Monster Stampede calamity news that Sera brought with her.

"I'm thinking of dispatching people to Selbira City and Seryuu City which have labyrinths ahead of time, other than those places, the rescue squad will be deployed whenever we get a report from the branch offices of Echigoya Firm."

I tell and look at the girls.

No one seems to object.

"Sa-Satou-san--Me too."

"Of course, I want Zena-san to go to Seryuu city. Pochi will go with you with her Dragon Steed, Lyuryu, so you should be fine even if a greater demon and dungeon master come attacking."

There are Echigoya Golem units and Zena-san's little brother, Chevalier Marientail over there, and they've thinned the labyrinth's monsters quite a bit, so deploying there a bit late should be alright.

"I'd like to entrust Labyrinth City Selbira to Nana and Mia."

We've also thinned the monsters there and there's a lot of combat forces like the guildmaster and the explorers.

There should be no real problem with Nana's defensive power and Mia's spirit magic.

"U-um, what about Yowok Kingdom's labyrinth?"

Lulu asked timidly.

There's a revived labyrinth in the hometown of Lulu and Arisa that was invaded by Yowok Kingdom.

Even though she probably doesn't have many good memories about the place, she probably would hate it if her hometown is infringed by monsters.

"Right. Someone should go there too. Lulu, could you go?"

"Y-yes!"

"Then, I also--"

"You can't Arisa, I have another duty for you."

The duty thing is a lie.

Arisa and Hikaru can't be deployed outside since I've acquired the information, [People who hold God's Fragment cannot go against God], in the Weasel Empire.

I don't know whether that's true or not, but looking at the abnormal rate of demon lord occurrence in the Weasel Empire, I feel that it's not necessarily wrong.

I'd like to believe that they should be fine with the anti-mind attack items I made for them, but even it's fine against God's Apostles, I feel that it won't quite suffice against God.

Besides, Lulu should be fine alone.

Lulu demonstrates the strongest firepower at long range, but she also has the next strongest defensive equipment after Nana, can use Force Magic up until the advanced level, and has refined her self-defense skill enough to completely handle a Shiga Eight Sword.

She's not standing out due to her shy nature, but she's the all rounder who can fight at multiple range among Team Pendragon.

She's probably going to be fine alone as long as the opponent isn't a demon lord class.

Of course, I'll be sending some brownies and accompanying Golem units with her as a support though.

"Hikaru, please ask Tenryuu to exterminate Monster Stampede if she finds one near Fujisan Mountains later."

I can open a gate that connects to the Heavenly Dragon Shrine and let her talk with Tenryuu from there.

Or maybe I should ask Arisa to connect them with her [<<World Phone Neo>>]?

"Okay! So Arisa and me are in the house-sitting team?"

"Yeah, sorry, but your turn will come a bit later."

Tenryuu and the other dragons should be able to cover the vast [Monster Domain] area along Fujisan Mountains.

"Shizuka too--"

"Okay okay, let's wait for our turn while playing cards here."

Demon lord Shizuka has the important role of extracting the [God's Fragment] from the demon lords that have occurred in various places, so she has to stay here regardless of the reason.

The remaining ones are Liza, Tama, Lady Karina, Sera and the princess.

"Let's change the plan for a bit--"

At first I planned for us to wait in the Solitary Island Palace until we get a report from Echigoya Firm, but since each of them is probably worried about their hometown and places they're related to, I've decided to dispatch them to each of those places.

I can bring them back to this palace with Unit Arrangement anytime anyway, I'll ask Tama and Liza to be the emergency dispatch units.

"--Karina-sama will be going to Muno Earldom which has many『Monster Domains』neighboring it."

"I-I understand! I will protect Muno Earldom with all my might."

Lady Karina pushed her fist on her breast and accepted the order.

The demonic breasts are transforming, I feel like they're shooting a dangerous level of charm wave.

『We will not forget to protect Satou-dono's and Liza-dono's posts either.』

"Thank you, Raka."

An attentive [<<Intelligent Item>>] is wonderful.

"Sera-san, please go to the Duchy Capital where the ruin of a labyrinth sleeps."

"Yes, this time I will protect Duchy Capital and its people whom Satou-san has saved before."

Sera stares at me with eyes full of determination.

I feel like she's going to work hard alone, so I tell her not to forget to contact me before things get dangerous.

I'm going to give [Small Light Ship] to the two to assist their movement.

It's a high speed dimensional airship. I leave the steering to the brownie flying squadrons.

"Am I going to the Royal Capital?"

"Yes, due to the frequent disasters in Shiga Kingdom, the populace are most likely anxious. Therefore, please parade around the capital with strong looking Golem Knights to encourage the people."

I can't let her go to the front line after all.

"Echigoya Firm will prepare the prototype <<Hundred Throne>> that can operate a maximum of 1024 non-combative search type drone golems, please use it during the parade."

"My! It's the magic tool for control that Arisa back then jokingly said to appear in『Manga』isn't it! How very wonderful!"

The princess who isn't really pleased with jewels and dresses gets into magic books and this kind of romance hard.

The prototype is quite big, so a small airship will carry it.

Since the princess's room is big and the floor is sturdy, it should be able to hold the throne.

In addition, I asked her to search for enemies around the capital after the parade.

"What about Tama~?"

Tama asked with a worried look.

"Tama will wait with Liza for now okay."

"Aye~"

I pat the disappointed Tama's head and nod at Liza.

"Don't worry, Your turn will come soon enough."

"Aye!"

"Yes, Master."

I went to Boruenan Forest while everyone was preparing for their dispatch.

◇

"Aze, long time no see."

"Satou"

Having come to the tree house in Boruenan Forest, I felt happy when I saw my beloved.

I gently embrace her and get healed by her warmth.

"Satou-san. Please reserve such a shameful act for when you've gained divinity."

"Hello Lua-san."

If it comes to this, I should've left it at that when Tactician Touya accused me of being God Zaikuon.

--Wait, I can't.

It'll just get found out immediately.

I separate myself and then Aze-san stares at me as if she's steeled herself.

"I really shouldn't tell you this, but just a little while ago we got a notice from Gods during the Sacred Tree Meeting."

Sacred Tree meeting is a meeting where the representative high elves from each World Trees in the world gather.

"It was a notice about the execution of Divine Punishment toward Weaselkin Empire and.... and the absolvement of Demon God's blessings in the monster domains and the labyrinths in the whole world. And we were warned not to tell this and not to give support to the king of every country....."

I see, so that's why there wasn't any contact from Boruenan Forest to the Solitary Island Palace at all.

"Dispatching Light Ships too, giving information too, everything has been banned."

"Then, should I return the Brownies dispatched at the Solitary Island Palace too?"

"No, only the elves were prohibited. We can't put up words for you, but spriggans and leprechauns who are good at fight, and also trolls--"

I put a finger on Aze-san's lip.

I'd be happy for reinforcement, but I want to avoid worsening Aze-san's position.

It seems she's barely ever interacted with Gods, but they're still acquaintances for hundreds millions of years after all.

"Having the brownies there are quite enough."

"But, those children are not good at fighting."

"Fighting isn't the only thing needed. The girls can fight with all their power on the front line precisely because of the brownies' support."

It'll troublesome in various ways if the brownies aren't there.

Putting aside cooking, we've left the brownies to do washing, bedmaking and taking care of the garden after all.

◇

"I'm not sure if Aze knows--"

I asked about the information I heard from the female intelligence agent of Selbira City, "God Zaikuon incurred the Dragon God's anger and was killed 30 years ago."

"Yes, that's the truth."

"Do you know where he was killed?"

"It's probably at the Dragon's Valley or a Sanctuary somewhere?"

Looks like Aze-san doesn't know where he was killed either.

"By Sanctuary, do you mean the same place as the one in the Duchy Capital's Tenion Temple?"

"It's a place made from a torn part of the God World where the seven pillar Gods are living. I think it's similar to the『Another World (Sub-space)』Satou showed me before? I have never been there but from what I heard from high elves who had visited there, it was a wonderful place filled with pure air and thick divinity."

I see, so they fought in an <<Instant Battlefield>>-like place similar to the temporary battle area in games.

It must be a place where they can fight with full power without affecting other places.

Right, lastly I have to tell them about Trazayuya-shi.

I ask them to call Mia's mother, which is also Trazayuya-shi's daughter, Lilinatoa-san.

"It's been a while Satou-san. Been awhile! Is Mia healthy? She must healthy right."

"Yes, she's very healthy."

I greet Lilinatoa-san who's in contrast with the taciturn Mia and then get to the subject once I clear my throat with some tea.

"--Toya was?"

"Yes, he was living as the tactician of Weasel Empire known as Touya."

"....I see."

Lilinatoa-san casted her eyes down while talking in a short sentence similar to Mia.

She probably also knows that Divine Punishment has befallen Weasel Empire.

"Thank you for telling me. My gratitude for you."

Her smile looks forced, but I'll leave the consoling role to her husband, Lamisauya-shi.

"Have you told Giril and Dohar?"

"No, I have yet to."

"Then I'll go tell Giril who's in Boruenan Forest myself."

I thanked Aze-san for the offer and left Boruenan forest.

I also have to tell Elder Dohar in Bolhart city, but they probably don't have the leeway to have a reminiscent talk right now either, I'll talk to him later.

When I got back to the Solitary Island Palace, a report from Echigoya Firm informed us of the Monster Stampedes.

"It's growing tense."

"You're right--"

I ponder for a bit.

"--Everyone, listen to me."

It might be difficult to keep the secret while fighting this time.

Although there's no need to actively proclaim it, you don't need to worry about getting found out.

So I tell the girls.

"Is that alright?"

"Yea, if you worry about it and end up forsaking a life you could have saved, you'll be regretting it forever right?"

"Un, that's true but--"

Arisa probably wants to say that it'll make the sightseeing tour harder.

"It's alright. We can use illusion during the tour and we can visit anywhere without problem by disguising ourselves."

It's been proven when we visited Weasel Empire in animal costumes.

I look at everyone and say.

"Now, it's time for the Golden Knights' deployment."

I send the girls clad in silver and golden glittering armors one after another to the battlefields.

At this time, even though I had noticed the contradiction between, the thing little girl in painting told me, "Divine Punishment can't happen unless all the seven Gods who arrived riding on the world trees assembled." and the story about Divine Punishment I learned from the weasel emperor and the slates--I didn't realize the significance of that--.

I only learned about that a little bit later.

--At the day Weasel Empire disappeared from this continent.

15-33. The Golden Knights' Deployment (1)

※It's not from Satou's POV this time

"Ou, ye finished too?"

"Yaaas, got me some ee-edamame, gonna share 'em with others later."

"Thank ye. Got some smoked cheese in our home, take 'em with ya."

"Lookin' forward to 'em."

The villagers are having a carefree conversation.

This place is one of the mountains north of Shiga Kingdom that goes to the Fujisan Mountains, in the territory of Earl Muno.

One of the villages governed by Viceroy Brighton of Muno Earldom.

"Imma go to the city to sell some cheese, you selling too?"

"Gonna sell some dried fig. Ther' popular cos they said the viceroy's wife likes it."

"Lina-sama ain't the wife of viceroy-sama they said y'know."

"Was that a'ight? Ain't she gonna marry him once she got old enough?"

"Ya, she's pretty 'fter all, an' they said she's a daughter of some upper noble-sama."

Since Viceroy Brighton is often absent, the daughter of Viscount Emline, Lina Emlin is working as a magistrate in viceroy's place.

At first she was just a figurehead, but now she's shown her quick-wittedness, she can govern as a viceroy with no problem.

It's a pity that this fact is rarely passed on to the viceroy, Viscount Pendragon.

Their carefree life was disturbed by the God's Divine Messages.

Monsters that rarely show themselves began to attack the villages one after another.

However, there is no damage to the villagers and the domestic animals.

"Dog God-sama, thank yee."

"Cat God-sama too, thank ya."

The golems protecting the villages took care of the coming monsters, many villages held meat festivals for revering.

The people call and worship the golems as Gods, and the viceroy as Great God.

The Gods are seeking prayers by way of Divine Punishment, but it seems the people in this territory are far detached from that.

◇

"KARI--err, KUNGFU KIIIIIIIICK!"

The kungfu kick of a silver knight sank into the torso of a Hydra that attacked Muno City.

A four headed snake attacks the silver knight who's stopped moving.

Looks like she has successfully sealed her original technique name, [Karina Kick], thanks to the repeated special trainings.

"Impertinent, desuwa!"

The silver knight jumps off the torso and then does a rotating kick with her hands on the ground, mowing down the snake heads.

Another head grew back on the stump of the cut neck.

"Pochi and Tama would be happy if they're here desuwa."

She's sure that they would happily say, "Unlimited meat~?", "All you can eat nanodesu."

『Silver Kungfu! Don't let your guard down! The tail is coming.』

The deadly poisonous tail attacked the Silver Knight like a spear, but a scale-like light appeared in front of the knight right before it hit and stopped the tail.

It was an act that would expose the identity of Silver Knight Kungfu if there were people who saw it, but her special characteristic in the form of her breasts are already too pressing obvious, it just feels too little too late instead.

"Kungfu Spiral Punch!"

Whirlpool of blue light appears on Silver Knight Kungfu's arms, every time her fists gouge the hydra's torso, its tissue is destroyed such that its regeneration can't keep up.

The huge hydra used up all its strength before long, becoming a corpse in front of Muno City's gate.

The army of Muno Earldom is favorably fighting against the other monsters.

While no small feats were attributed to Chevalier Zotol for reorganizing the territorial army and the vice-captain Chevalier Hauto's commands, it's mostly thanks to the magic cannons and improved fire wands supplied by Echigoya Firm and the upgraded equipment and magic swords the soldiers carry.

"Next, it's just cleaning up the remnants right?"

A small dimensional airship that looks like a miniaturized light ship appears from the gap in space in front of the muttering Silver Knight Kungfu.

"Good work. Silver Kungfu-sama. We're going to the next battlefield, so please get on."

A small pilot peeking from the hatch prompted Silver Knight Kungfu.

The pilot is a brownie wearing futuristic-looking flight uniform.

◇

"Good work, Karina-sama."

"T-thank you, desuwa."

In front of the Silver Knight Kungfu--Karina who was resting in the living room of the Solitary Island Palace, her loved one presented her with some sweet yellow orange juice.

"How was Muno City?"

"Y-Yes, I defeated them with no problem."

Satou's line of sight was directed toward the silver ornament she wore.

『The city suffers no big damage. Karina-dono defeated some slightly strong Hydras. We didn't meet any master of dominion class of monsters.』

The one replying was the ornament--[<<Intelligent Item>>] Raka.

Raka's master, Karina is prioritizing the resupply of sugar content.

Her bracelet made a ringing sound when he had her fill.

"Looks like we've arrived at the next battlefield desuwa."

"I'll prepare many things for dinner, please be careful not to get too late okay."

"Yes, I'm looking forward to it!"

While departing triumphantly, the thing in Karina's mind was probably not Satou but the dinner dishes.

It seems love affair still hasn't become her priority yet.

◇

"Monsters! It's a dead-end here so I inform!"

"As expected of Nana ane-san!"

"Wrong so I deny. Refer to me as Golden Knight White so I recommend."

Golden Knight White is holding back the overflowing monsters of Selbira Labyrinth by herself.

By all means, she's not Nana of Team Pendragon.

"Eh, but, that way of talking is Nana nee-san's 'rite?"

The muttering explorer was elbowed by his friend on the side.

"Idiot. Read the mood! --Go for it! Golden Knight White."

"Ain't that right-- yer' awesome! Golden Knight White."

It appears the explorers here have come to a tacit understanding.

And then, the explorers began to attack the stopped monsters like a surging wave.

And, on top of a spire of the western guild--.

"Mia-sama! Large monsters have crossed over the mountain from the Blue Territory."

"Mwu, Golden Knight Green."

"Pardon me, Mia-sama. No, Golden Knight Green-sama."

Boys of various fairykins gave their report while pointing at the southern mountain to the small Golden Knight Green who has confirmed another monster invasion besides the labyrinth's one.

"This is bad. Nagas and Colored Moles are coming from the northern mountain too!"

"Mwu, perplexity."

North and south.

The fairykin boys are looking pale at the prospect of a pincer attack by monsters.

"Nn, decided--"

Since her colleague is fully displaying her defensive capabilities below, Golden Knight Green activates a facility to assist the spirit creation while thinking that being found out poses no problem.

"--Activate, 『Fairy Hill』"

With Golden Knight Green at the center, rainbow colored Spirit Light is released.

It's the same Spirit Light her beloved emits.

"Spirit Enchantment. ■■■■■■...."

Golden Knight Green begins to chant while smiling satisfyingly.

It's the secret art of Spirit Magic--Spirit Creation spell whose use is restricted only for High Elves.

People who have Spirit Seer skill might shed tears if they saw the unfolding scene.

The spire was colored by such beautiful dances of Spirit Light and Spirits.

".... ■ ■ Magic Dragon King Creation <<Create Tiamat>>"

Tiamat that looks as if it's composed of light flies in the sky.

"Annihilate the monsters."

By Golden Knight Green's order, Tiamat who's circling in the sky shoots out two breaths, annihilating the monsters at each ridges of the mountains afar.

From the excessive ridiculous power, cold sweat stream down on the cheeks of the girl under the helmet.

"Overkill?"

Golden Knight Green decides not to use it on the ground and hurriedly deport Tiamat back.

The battles on the ground still continue on, but Golden Knight Green who has judged that there is no turn for her begins to play a tune that rouses fighting spirit after drinking a honey-flavored magic recovery potion.

Encouraged by the heroic music, the explorers and the labyrinth army are determined to fight the monsters.

◇

"It's really peaceful."

"Y-yes-s, Lulu-sama."

"It really is, isn't it."

Golden Knight Black, Lulu Watari is looking at the peaceful town and the revived labyrinth below.

For some reason, the brownies accompanying her are behaving strangely.

"E-Echigoya Firm has confirmed that there's no sign of monster appearing from the labyrinth."

"The monsters there are drying up in the first place, it might be better for us to be vigilant of the monster domains instead of the revived labyrinth."

The brownies who came with her on an airship disclosed the newly acquired information beside Lulu.

"Monsters-san aren't coming are they."

Silence rules the place for a while.

I wonder what's wrong, Lulu cutely tilts her head.

After looking at each others, one of the brownie begins to talk after readying itself.

"No no no, that's cause Lulu-sama shot them all down even before they came into view!"

Since awhile ago, Lulu has been tepidly sniping down every wyverns and serpents who showed themselves from behind the mountain with her Accelerated Gun.

She did it so naturally one might have misunderstood, but frankly speaking, it's pretty much a superhuman feat.

The pace is so high even the 20 gargoyles working to gather the dropped materials can't keep up with it.

Lulu contemplated for a while, but unable to quite comprehend the issue, she repeats the same words from earlier.

"It's really peaceful."

"Yes, you're absolutely right."

It must be can't be helped for the brownies' tones to sound slightly stiff.

◇

"Invitation to a tea party?"

"Yes, there is not much time until the time your highness has promised Meltina-sama and Bontenyu-sama."

When Princess Shistina came to her private room in Shiga Kingdom's Capital from the Solitary Island Palace, a court lady who looked relieved caught her.

Princess Shistina pondered for a bit, and then she remembered that she had accepted an invitation to a tea party from her sister of different mother and the second queen.

Usually Princess Shistina would have declined such an invitation, she was confounded why she accepted this one, but then she remembered that they asked her to appraise a rare magic book as a pretext so she couldn't refuse it.

The court lady asked her if she wished to change, she said I'm fine like this and then walked to the salon where the tea party was held.

Court ladies and maids hurriedly chased after princess Shistina.

"Shistina-sama, Sir Pendragon has not returned yet?"

"Yes, unfortunately, Satou won't come back until after he visited the countries along the course."

Princess Shistina replied with an answer she had prepared at the expected question.

"It's really an unusual magic book isn't it? I wonder if this is ancient language?"

"Yes, that appears to be the case. Perhaps the knowledgeable Sir Pendragon could read it?"

Princess Shistina gave an evasive answer, "Well, I wonder about that? I won't know before showing this to him", even while thinking, "Satou who can even read language from the Age of Gods must be able to read this."

Even if she can't read it, she memorizes the characters on the title and decides to check it later.

"Slaying a demon lord is an achievement ranking next to Ancestor King Yamato-sama."

"Yes, it's a great deed done without God Parion's blessing and talisman like Hero Hayato-sama's followers. "

"Shistina-sama has really make a wonderful gentleman hers."

The girls who sneered at her behind her back when they heard her getting engaged to Sir Pendragon, "She's getting late married to some upstart viscount", completely ignored their own shortcoming and looked at Princess Shistina enviously.

"Was that dress given by Sir Pendragon too?"

"It's so wonderful, it looks like Jade Silk, but it's even more supple and--has more mystical luster to it."

"It's like.... the Fairy Silk in the fairy tale."

Princess Shistina's dress is a rare article made from Fairy Silk that only appears in fairy tales, it's the meticulous work of the forest fairy, elves and the house fairy, brownies.

No matter how great an authority one holds, it's something that cannot be obtained unless one prepares to part with wealth enough to buy a country.

Just when the envious stares of the queen and the princess became unpleasant, a retainer came with a bad news informing the arrival of a crowd of monsters on the mountain.

She was going to use this chance to escape the tea party, but unfortunately, her turn never came.

Her golem army didn't even need to fight the monsters, Liza and Tama who got the information from Echigoya Firm--Golden Knight Orange and Golden Knight Pink destroyed them instead.

The traces of destruction at the actual site didn't look like they were made by people, and with many pools of blood left at it.

Mysteriously, not even one body of the monsters remained.

Princess Shistina who got the information from her reconnaissance Drone Golems thought, now that we got the meat, we're having meat dishes at dinner tonight.

◇

"Sera, are you feeling unwell?"

"Head Miko--No, Lily-sama. It's nothing."

The two are facing each other in the Sanctuary of Tenion Temple in Duchy Capital.

Being inside the tranquil sanctuary is enough to heal your heart.

However, according to the story she heard from her beloved, there's a high chance to establish a conversation with God Tenion here.

She can't talk carelessly here.

"What do Gods expect from people?"

Thus, she spun words with a safe content.

『Gods expect for people's devoted prayers and gratitudes for their happy life--however, they have even forgotten to do such trivial things.』

"Lily-sama--"

Sera was going to call Lily who suddenly spoke, but then she immediately perceived that it was the words of God Tenion through Lily and stopped herself.

『And then, they seek greater prosperity each days, be envious of others, and finally become a slave of their desire.』

Sensing sublime divinity from Lily, Sera's thought is filled with awe changing to revere, she couldn't even blink.

『Why are the taboo taboo. Why do Gods who love people conduct such a merciless act. My dear Miko, gentle girl, ask your own heart, seek the answer.』

Before long the divinity that had filled the sanctuary lapses, and she can finally regain control of her unmovable paralyzed-like body.

"Tenion-sama--"

While hugging the unconscious Lily, Sera held deep gratitude at the God who had personally given her troubled self a pointer.

15-34. Golden Knights' Deployment (2), Seryuu City's Boy Knight

※ Not from Satou's point of view this time

"What's wrong Yuni?"

"Martha-san, would Seryuu city be alright?"

"Priest-sama said the bad ones are the weaselkin right? Nothing to do with us."

The maid little girl and the inn lady's daughter are having such conversations at the Gate Inn of Seryuu City.

Even the people who gathered at the temples to seek salvation right after the God's Divine Messages have returned to their daily life.

Outwardly at least--.

◇

"Get out of Seryuu City demi-humans!"

"Go away!"

An act of barbarism that would make any sensible person frowns is being carried out in one of the vacant lands inside the city.

Brats dressed in good clothes are throwing stones at demi-human children.

Many stones missed their target, but several of the ones thrown by older boys hit theirs.

"P-pleass, sthop"

"I'm sohryy"

"Plese"

Neither the fast dogkin, the agile catkin, nor the smart weaselkin could defy the [Don't move from there] order of their master, asking for mercy was all they could do.

It's an ugly scene that would make decent human beings feel sick, but it appears to be a pleasant entertainment for the humans here.

Of course, not all the people in Seryuu City regards this is an entertainment.

"What are you doing! Cease at once!"

A beautiful girl showed herself up from a carriage parked at the side of the road.

With her long blond hair, her strong-willed blue eyes filled with dignity of a noble are glaring at the people participating in the ugly festival in the park.

"The woman over there, are you a government official? Earl Seryuu should have given a direction not to abuse beast people pointlessly."

The earl has prohibited owners of beastkin slaves inside the city from abusing them because he has a dealing with the influential Viscount Pendragon who has beastkin slaves.

It seems the fact that Viscount Pendragon's cooperation is crucial in order to put the management of Seryuu City's labyrinth on track is not divulged to the low class government officials.

"This is a filthy place. It's not a place some great priestess-sama should come."

For the female official who's aware of her declining beauty, a fresh young girl accompanied by a handsome knight is an object of envy.

Due to her uncontrollable envy, the female government official spout out words to drive the girl away.

"Do you mean to say that you don't intend to obey Earl Seryuu's decree?"

"Did you hear otherwise?"

The girl raised her brows in anger at that answer.

Because that was equivalent to rebelling against the lord.

It'd be a different story if she were one of the ignorant populace, but it's absolutely intolerable for someone who gets their payroll from the lord.

"Sir Marientail, cut down this official. I have confirmed that she's clearly rebelling against the earl."

The girl gave a merciless order to her accompanying boy knight.

A slight anguish floated on the boy knight's face that looks similar to his big sister's, Zena Marientail.

"Auna-sama, are you sure about this?"

"It doesn't matter. A fool who can't abide her lord cannot be anything but harm."

A cold smile shows up on the beautiful girl's face, she mutters, "This is my mercy."

It seems there is no one here who's aware that Auna is the name of Earl Seryuu's daughter.

"Besides, if we arrest her here, her whole family will be executed."

The boy who knows the depth of the girl's compassion and her inflexible nobility draws his sword.

Pale blue light twinkles on the sword's surface.

"Be at ease, it will be painless. Are the people over there your friends? I've to execute them along with you if they are?"

"N-no, I'm not."

"Me neither."

"M-me too, I'm not."

The boy knight let the scurrying men in the vacant lot go, but he acted when the boys who were throwing stones tried to do the same.

"Whoops there, I can't let you kids go just like that."

The boy knight goes around and cut in in front of the children using Flickering Movement and then he drops his fist on them.

The person himself intended it to be a light punishment, but due to his tempered body from the level ups in short term, his version of [light] didn't seem to be light at all.

The kids are groaning in agony on top of the grass in the vacant land.

The boy knight looked a bit awkward at first, but then he turned serious when his ears caught the shrill noise from the [Bone Conduction Alarm].

"Auna-sama!"

"Looks like it has begun."

"Yes."

Auna understood that an unprecedented crisis has befallen Seryuu City from the short exchange with the boy.

"It cannot be helped. We will have to end our tryst."

"T-tryst?"

The boy knight's face reddened at Auna's joke.

It's an innocent scene between a boy and a girl, but it appears the Gods of this world aren't kind enough to allow that.

Black particles extending to the sky can be seen at the direction of the labyrinth.

"It seems the labyrinth monsters are overflowing outside. Go Knight Marientail. As for me, I will accomplish the role that's been assigned to me."

"Yes, Auna-sama!"

The boy runs through alleys with speed of wind.

Was there anyone who noticed that he looked like her big sister during the initial appearance of the labyrinth?

"I wish to City Core. With my Authority as the nobility of Seryuu, cancel the contracts of these people."

『Confirmed the qualification as the nobility of Seryuu to cancel the contract.』

When Auna spoke to the ring she took from her chest, a voice could be heard out of nowhere.

『Canceling the contracts.』

At the same time of that voice, blue light flows from Auna's ring and wraps the beastkin children.

"Your healing will be at Parion Temple. Get into the carriage."

"Buf, canf move"

"Ordee, been"

"I've already released your slave contracts. We don't have much time, quickly move."

The beastkin inadvertently obeyed Auna who was used to giving command, and then they raised shouts of joy when they found out the pain didn't come even though they moved.

At the vacant lot left by the carriage and the beastkin children, the female official who narrowly escaped death timidly lifts her head.

"She totally forgot about me.... Good grief, just who does she think--"

The female official couldn't finish her cursing.

The last thing reflected on her sinking dark eyes were a gigantic camel cricket and a brutal claw that looked like the grim reaper's scythe stuck on her chest.

◇

"Are you guys alright!"

"Marientail-sama! The labyrinth blockade has failed."

A soldier of the territorial army with wounds all over his body answered the boy knight.

"At first the blockade was working...."

A part of the territorial army composed of nobles who thought the monsters coming out of the labyrinth looked weak undid a part of the blockade as they tried to score meritorious deed for themselves.

"What happened to those guys."

"Their bones are over there."

One soldier laughed with a gloomy face.

"Marientail-sama! I'm sorry for being late. We will help the blockade here. Marientail-sama, please exterminate the monsters who have scattered in the city!"

"Understood. I'll leave here to you."

The branch manager of Echigoya Firm appeared with a group of golems and was left to take care of the labyrinth's blockade.

"Platoon commander Allison, I will entrust the command here to you. Leave the direct battles to the golems, please don't let any monster that crosses the blockade alive."

"Where are you going company commander?"

"I'm going to dispose of the monsters scattered in the city."

Those sounded like he was abandoning his duty as a commander, but there was a reason for that.

The boy knight's level is higher than anyone here, but his actual battle experience is shorter than anyone here.

Thus he decided to secede the command to the experienced platoon commander Allison, and went to do a sweeping outside.

"Platoon Marientail will be divided into four groups. I give the right to command the groups to the noncommissioned officers. Hunt every monster you see while waiting for the reinforcement from territorial army to arrive."

"""Yes, commander!"""

The four military units went on to slaughter the monsters that attacked the citizens.

Among them--.

"Amazing, he defeated a monster that could even defend against great axe in one blow!"

"Uwaah, look at that! He defeated another one."

"Awesome, didn't know there was a knight that strong besides Kigori-sama."

"Oh! How nimble! He kicked the wall to get to the roof!"

The citizens who saw the boy knight's deeds shouted as if they were watching an action movie before their eyes.

"But y'know, the sword of that knight-sama earlier--"

"You saw it too?"

"It really was shining blue wasn't it?"

Such conversations continue to repeat and spread inside the city, the notion that, "Boy Knight Marentail's true identity is the『Silver Masked Hero』" seemed as if it was true by the time the monster number had decreased.

And then they lived happily ever after--.

◇

--Would have been nice if it ended like that.

"The holy sword would cry y'know? I advise." <TLN: It refers to itself using Wagahai (I).>

The boy knight is facing off against a jet black demon in the open space in front of the castle.

Moreover, two camel crickets bigger than houses are accompanying the demon on its sides.

"One who attacked Seryuu City before--Jet Black Greater Demon."

"Pleasantly correct. I delighted." <TLN: The line is just as awkward in Japanese. That's just how the demon talks.>

The greater demon draws a dark red great sword out of thin air.

"Now let's fight. I battle."

At the northern end of Shiga Kingdom, the boy knight's battle against despair has just begun.

15-35. Golden Knights' Deployment (3), Little Hero

※Not from Satou's perspective

"『Physical Reinforcement』, 『Herculean Strength』, 『Agility』, 『Concentration』"

Boy Knight Marientail buffed himself using his Skills.

The boy knight was being wary of the greater demon as they faced against each other, but the demon only looked at the boy knight gleefully, as if it had no intention to attack at all.

"I don't know what you're planning, but you'll regret that carelessness!"

『Are you ready now? I boredom.』

The boy knight used Flickering Movement and changed his course perpendicularly when he got close to the greater demon.

However, the greater demon is unaffected by the feint, it keeps its gaze at the boy knight.

The boy knight who had gotten right beside the greater demon recited the Command Word [Quick Increase], the holy sword in his hand shined and the boy's running speed increased fivefold.

The greater demon slightly smiled at the boy's actions.

For a greater demon, this much speed is as good as standing still.

The corner of the greater demon's mouth disgustingly lifted at the imagination of the boy's last moment.

"Acceleration Formation."

A light ring appeared in front of the boy knight, and then he explosively accelerated when he passed through it.

It was such a speed that made even the greater demon's kinetic vision lost him.

Moreover, the boy knight was not aiming to attack with a powerful large slash, but a stabbing technique that made use of his speed to its fullest.

But yet--.

『A simple acceleration equaling constant speed? I ridicule.』

--The boy knight which attacked at a speed that even made his outline looked blurred was intercepted by the greater demon's mere instinct.

The boy knight was blown away by its jet black tail, bouncing while breaking the stone pavements and crashed into the bookshelves of a bookstore, stopped moving.

The boy knight is hidden by the broken bookshelves and piles of old books.

『Now, entertain me more, I expect.』

Normally, one wouldn't have lived through a counterattack of a greater demon.

Even if they did, they'd probably be critically injured.

Even though that's the common sense, the greater demon's line of sight is unshakably fixed at the bookstore where the boy knight disappeared into.

Sure enough--a blue light jumped out of the white dust.

"WOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Responding to the boy knight's war cry, the holy sword he holds shines blue.

The greater demon doesn't counter the second attack and blocks him with its dark red great sword, the clash scatters blue and red sparks around.

『Lonesome struggle, I pity.』

Looking down at the boy knight who's wielding the holy sword with both his hand, the greater demon's free hand swings down.

Its poisonous claws are wet with abominable radiance.

"--He ain't alone!"

A good looking man who ran past the open space with Flickering Movement slashes the greater demon with trailing red light of Magic Edge.

The greater demon's tail counter attacks were all handled skilfully by the blond haired good looking man.

"Kigori-sama!"

"Yo, Marientail. Kept ya waiting!"

The one who has appeared as the boy knight's reinforcement is the strongest level 40 knight, pride of Seryuu City.

And--.

A huge lightning attacks the greater demon.

"Hehe, thanks to you buying time, Lightning Geezer got to launch a serious blow."

"This is Rindolf-sama's Ruin Thunder."

The thunderbolt cast by the chief magician Rindolf-shi known as Lightning Geezer made the greater demon stopped moving.

『Numbing surprise, I delighted.』

When the greater demon threw out its chest, its burnt skin scattered, and flawless skin appeared.

Even a surprise attack with advanced lightning magic is not effective against a greater demon.

『Quickly returning the favor, I swift attack.』

Jet black lightning released from the greater demon's horn extends toward Lightning Geezer who's on top of the castle's spire.

However, a wall of light that appears before the castle blocks the magic.

--It's a defensive wall created by the City Core.

The greater demon gleefully looks at the wall of light without minding about its attack getting blocked.

There are soldiers with magic cannons and fully equipped knights beyond the wall of light.

『Amusing toys, I call.』

The greater demon roared once and then a jet black circle was produced below it.

"That looks bad, let's stop him Sir Marientail."

"Yes!"

The two assaulted the greater demon while leaving blue and red trails of light.

◇

"D-damn! It can also use its scales along with tail!"

"Marientail! Evade them!"

The scales on the greater demon's body transform, attacking the boy knight's abdomen.

The blond man cut in there.

"Kigori-sama!"

"I can block this much with Vajra Body. Don't stop your hand, stop him no matter what it takes!"

The scales gouge the good looking man's armor and body, he's coughing blood from his mouth.

"Yes!"

The boy knight's effort at swinging holy swords while enduring his tears, and the desperate backing from the castle turn fruitless before long.

『Now, succumb to despair. I recommend.』

Various grotesque demons appeared from below the greater demon.

Countless lesser demons and insect rider mid demons riding insect monsters are arising from the magic circle that has expanded in the open space.

Lesser demons with wings fly in the sky and play around by crashing down on houses.

"It's like the gate to hell's opened."

While spilling blood from his lips, the good looking man's dark eyes are looking at the surroundings.

As a top level person in the territorial army, he understands that there is no force in Seryuu Earldom that can oppose this large of an army.

"W-we can't give up yet! Even if it's for a blink or an instant. We have to buy a bit of time!"

The boy knight encourages the good looking man.

The demons are looking at the scene while smirking and laughing as if it's an interesting show.

"--After that what then. Reinforcement from the royal family won't come. Even if they did, everything woulda been destroyed already."

"Wake up Kigori!"

A hot unyielding fist shakes the resigning good looking man up.

"It's not the kingdom's--Kuro-dono will come. Ane-sama will definitely make him move."

A small bit of hope burns inside the good-looking man's heart with those words.

"Kuro--the hero's follower eh."

And then, the round two of the despairing act between demons and knights began.

◇

"Martha-san, I wonder if the children at the orphanage are safe."

"It's alright, that place is as sturdy as a castle, knight Son-sama told me."

In a corner of the shelter under the inn, the maid little girl, Yuni and the daughter of the innlady, Martha are diverting their anxiety with little voices.

The neighboring people including the inn's guests are taking shelter here.

An especially loud thunderous sound resounds auspiciously.

After that, the outside becomes quiet.

"Maybe they've repelled the monsters?"

"Let's see for a bit."

"Oy! Stop!"

"I'm just gonna take a peek."

One of the evacuated men shakes off the people who try to stop him, he opens the basement door and peeks outside.

"Oy, how is it outside?"

The man who tried to stop him seemed to be worried about outside too, he asked the man who stopped talking.

However, the man kept silent and then something fell down from above.

"Ouch. What's this? It's sticky--UWAAAAAAAA"

When the man realized that the thing he held in hands was the head of the man who peeked outside, he screamed and threw it away.

The corpse of the man who lost his head fell down while spraying blood.

An even more menace comes to the basement that was dominated by scream and bellow.

With crunching sounds, the ceiling--the inn's floor is torn off, sunlight pour in.

Inside that light, somethings peek in, two black rods--no, they're the feelers of a huge insect.

The instant the feeler touched one of the men, the eye of a huge camel cricket appears in the torn ceiling and perceives everyone.

The feeler coils around Yuni and Martha who were in the corner of the room.

"GYAAAAAAA, help me father, mother, help help help help."

"H-help--Satou-san."

Martha and Yuni screamed, but only the inn couple dared to challenge the feeler.

Their desperate resistances end with them falling victims to another feeler.

"Let go of Yuni, nanodesu!"

A ball of light shining blue flying from afar pierces through the two feelers.

And then a white shadow that comes after the light ball catches the four people who were released from the feelers in the air.

"Lyuryu! Take care of Yuni and the others nodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU.

A small knight clad in golden armor jumped off the white dragon.

"Sure Kill Magic Edge (Vorpala)--"

In the middle of speaking the technique's name, the golden knight attacks the camel cricket's black body.

The camel cricket's defensive wall that was shining dark red was broken in an instant, the body that was harder than steel was pierced through like it was made of paper.

"Punishment, nanodesu!"

The golden knight's sword that burst out in the sky is emitting blue light.

"H-hero-sama?"

"It's a little hero-sama."

The people who came out of the inn spoke that unanimously when they saw the golden knight.

--LYURYURYUUU.

The white dragon circling in the sky informed that there were new enemies closing in.

"Lyuryu! Drop off Yuni and the others below nodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU.

As instructed by the golden knight, the white dragon that's holding the inn family and the maid in its hand drop them down.

It was a soft gentle descent.

"Are you not injured nanodesu?"

"Y-yes, thank you--nanodesu? B-by any chance."

Yuni was going to guess correctly, but she stopped as the golden knight made a mouth zipper gesture.

Of course, Yuni didn't know a gesture from Japan's showa era, but she sensitively interpreted that it was, "Keep it a secret" and stopped talking.

"Hero-sama, please tell us your name."

"Pochi's name is Golden Knight Yellow nanodesu!"

"Golden Knight Yellow-sama! Thank you for saving us!"

Even though Yuni was intensely retorting inside her mind, "You said it! You said it, Pochi-chan!", she endured by smiling wryly in cold sweat.

And then, she spread the golden knight's false name, "Golden Knight Yellow" at the surrounding with an especially loud voice.

She's quiet the worrywart little girl.

"Did the others not come?"

"Zena went to the labyrinth nodesu. Pochi will go over there with Lyuryu to defeat the demon nodesuyo."

"So you've come to defeat the demon! Golden Knight Yellow-sama!"

Even while having headache at her friend's verbal slip, she conveyed the golden knight's actions to the surrounding people.

The admirable effort of Yuni who was gasping for breath didn't reach the natural airhead golden knight, it was over with her tilting her head cutely.

"Then, here it goes! Pochi will bring the souvenirs when she comes with Master nodesu!"

Yuni waves back at her friend who left while waving.

"Thank you for your covering, Yuni-chan."

"Eh, Satou--"

She looked at the familiar voice, but the one over there was an unfamiliar face.

However, the gentle pat on Yuni's head is of his from her memories.

"Yes, please stay normally next time."

"Right. We'll definitely do that."

That mysterious person gathered the people, created an underground shelter with earth magic and put up a powerful barrier.

It was such a splendid barrier whose sturdiness could be perceived even by untrained eyes that they could believe him when he guaranteed that even demon lords couldn't break it.

◇

『Is it over? I dissatisfied.』

The holy sword held by the rough breathing boy knight has lost its blue luster, the female magic soldiers he's protecting behind him have also used up all their magic power they can't even move.

The only one that can use magic now is a female wind magician.

The good looking knight Kigori who fought together with him has also left the stage with big injury, Garleon temple head Nebinen is desperately trying to save his life with healing magic behind a destroyed house.

".... ■■■■ Air Hammer"

The wind magic shot by the girl who has prepared to die vanishes without even reaching the greater demon.

『Composition too soft. I grading.』

The greater demon is looking down at the despairing girl, who puts both her hands on the ground, with eyes filled with joy.

People's despair and fear are a feast for demons like them.

In order to enjoy that, they continuously torment their opponents while leaving them alive.

".... ■■ Air Hammer"

A silver knight appearing in the sky casted a chant-shortened accelerated wind magic.

The magic that should have resulted the same like earlier reached the greater demon, showing enough power to make it step back several steps.

"<<DANCE>> Wind Stiletto!"

Receiving the same Holy Verse as the holy sword of kingdom's defense Claiomh Solais, seven stilettos released from the silver knight's hands are dancing in the sky while letting off clear sounds.

They attack the greater demon like birds of prey while creating blue trails of light.

『Are you a pupil of Ancestor King Yamato? I delighted.』

The greater demon gleefully handles every blades which attack like a skilled swordsman each.

"<<CLAD>> Wind Stiletto!"

『Two Holy Verses? I astonished.』

Holy Verse is one per one.

That's an absolute rule that even applies to the divine gift holy swords.

However, the black haired boy who made the stiletto will laugh it off if he hears that.

That difficulty is only a matter of putting several circuits in parallel.

The invisible vacuum blades spread on the stilettos are gradually cornering the greater demon.

Yet, even so, the differences between humans and demons are obvious.

Even though the holy swords dancing in the sky keep making many wounds, the decisive blow is still far away.

The silver knight begins to chant an attack magic to recover from the hopeless situation.

『Kukakakaka, suffer by the poison in the black blood. I pleased.』

The soldiers who inhaled the scattered blood of the greater demon are lying on the stone pavement while coughing blood.

Seeing that, the silver knight bites her lips under the helmet.

She holds down her feeling to save her coworkers by using ranged healing wind magic with her willpower.

The thing that she should do now is to repulse the greater demon.

And then she completed the spell up to right before the verse for the invocation.

The silver knight makes her next move before before chanting the last invoking verse.

"<<APPEASE>> Wind Stiletto!"

Receiving the third Holy Verse, the seven stilettos shined brightly--they burst open from inside and turned into blue particles.

『It couldn't endure it? I ridicule.』

"Tempest"

Without minding the ridiculing greater demon, the silver knight recited the last invoking verse of the advanced wind magic that she had reserved.

Tempest-like wind rages with the greater demon in the center, golden trails of light appearing inside the wind shuts the greater demon inside the tempest like a cage.

Even the continuous attacks of its jet black arms from the inside only warped the golden cage, failing to break it.

It's a magic made by engrafting the secret technique of spirit magic Garuda into wind magic, a magic especially made for her.

『Kuhahaha! I pleased.』

The vacuum blades appearing inside the golden cage inside the tempest excruciate the greater demon.

Even with that much attacks, humans' magic isn't enough to defeat a greater demon. Normally that is--.

Twinkling blue sparkles can be seen inside the tempest.

The tempest changes before long, evolving into a different magic glistening with blue sparkles.

『You sacrificed a divine gift holy sword to defeat me! I commend.』

The greater demon shaved by the holy swords' grains disappeared into mist inside the tempest.

"It's thanks to magic and tools Satou-san gave me."

The silver knight mutters at the tempest without anyone to hear her.

A golden knight riding on a silver lesser dragon arrived beside her.

"Zena--not, nodesu. Err, err."

"It's Silver Knight Air remember. Golden Knight Yellow-san."

"That's right nodesu! Pochi wanted to say that nodesuyo!"

The silver knight hit her forehead with her hand, having the same feeling as Yuni earlier, but she quickly pulled herself together and heal the surrounding people with advanced wind magic.

"Pochi and Lyuryu defeated all the other demon people nodesu."

"As expected."

She said it lightly, but there aren't many people in the vast Shiga Kingdom that can defeat multiple flying mid demons in a short amount of time.

"Demon lord hasn't appeared yet nodesu?"

The golden knight made a dangerous remark while cutely tilting her head.

"Yes, it should be over with this."

If they appear that easily, people probably won't be able to live a peaceful life.

The two who have finished emergency measures by using magic descend to the ground.

"You've worked hard. Yukel."

"Ne, Ane-sama?"

"I'm a follower of Hero Nanashi, Silver Knight Air. I'm not your elder sister. Understand?"

"Yes! Ane--no, Air-dono."

The golden knight's ear twitches as she gazes at the conversation between siblings.

"--Someone is calling nodesu."

"Yellow?"

"Pochi will be going for a bit nodesu."

The golden knight rides on the white dragon and flies in the sky.

And she went to a backyard of a temple in Seryuu City.

◇

『Here you are--little hero.』

A little girl with honey colored hair is knitting corolla in the middle of a flower garden in the backyard.

The little girl smiles unsuitably of her age.

"Pochi is Golden Knight Yellow nanodesu. Hero is Master nanodesuyo?"

『No, you're a [True Hero]. Everyone just keeps it a secret.』

"Really nanodesu?"

The honest golden knight who doesn't understand doubt looks as if she comprehends the little girl while tilting her head.

『Yes, really nanodesu. That's why, I want you as hero to defeat the demon lord.』

"Bad demon lord nanodesu? Master told Pochi not to defeat good demon lords nodesu?"

The battle inside the underground labyrinth with her master floated in the golden knight's mind.

『It's a really bad weasel demon lord, so it's alright. Master will praise you if you defeat it.』

"Then Pochi will do her best nodesu! Pochi will call Zena now nodesu."

『No, you won't make it in time then. My hero is almost getting killed by the bad demon lord over there.』

"That's bad nanodesu."

After saying that, the golden knights stands on her Dragon Steed's, the little girl smiles satisfyingly.

A smile that would have made the golden knight's friends to prepare for battle against the little girl had they were here.

『You're going right away right?』

"Yes, nanodesu."

However, the pure golden knight who doesn't understand to doubt readily consents the little girl's request.

『I'll open the gate to the battlefield.』

A gate that looks similar to the temple's gate is opened before the golden knight and the white dragon.

A huge ruin dyed in white can be seen beyond the torn space.

『Go little hero. And save my hero.』

"Yes nanodesu! Pochi will work hard nodesuyo!"

The golden knight replied cheerfully and turned toward the battlefield together with the white dragon.

15-36. Divine Punishment (5), The Forbidden Knights

※Not in Satou's point of view

"A giant of light--so the God has manifested itself!"

When I turned toward the captain, I saw a yellow giant near the place where apostles and demon lords were fighting.

"Liedill, evade it!"

At the vice captain's shout, I leap forward without checking the surrounding and wrap myself in the mantle created from the rat demon lord's pelt.

"GUWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA"

I could hear the scream of a colleague behind me.

The city in front of me is bathed in yellow light, turning into white salt.

"T-the Magic Eater Birds!"

I heard Dazlim the tigerkin knight screaming.

The flying [Magic Eater Birds] are falling apart while leaving trails of white salt.

"Divine punishment of the Gods huh...."

"That kind of cursed god, just call it evil god."

I've never been able to get along with vice-captain who always butted head with me at every occasion, but I agree with him this time.

Crisis Perception that didn't act until a while ago is ringing an alarming warning.

"--What's that shining thing?"

From between the light peeking through the clouds, countless shining objects showed themselves up.

Although the outlines are vague, they look like cubes.

"Familiars of the evil god are they!"

They must have appeared to help the evil god.

"They're comin' here too!"

"It appears they've deemed us as God's enemies--All members of『Temple Knights』, let's show them evil god our real strength."

"""OU!"""

Responding to the captain's order, everyone goes to challenge the cubes.

"Magic swords ain't working on them eh?"

"My great holy sword Monofoshi Zao ain't doing good either."

Just as my friends have said, my cherished sword feels like it's cutting water.

These cubes seem to be a kind of apostle too.

"All members, I allow the use of the white sword for fighting apostles!"

The white swords coated in dragon fang powder is restricted in their use.

The captain was preserving it until the fight against evil god, but he probably judged that it would have no point if we died fighting the cubes before that.

"It's working! It's working!"

"Of course! They're the secret plan of His Majesty the Emperor and Tactician-dono."

As long as we have the weapons, defeating the cubes that are only fast but bad at cooperating is easy.

We defeated the cubes one after another.

Our only concern is the remaining coating of the white swords--.

◇

"Liedill! Come!"

Lion knight Gizlem called me.

"Sir Gizlem?"

"The captain has ordered for some Temple Knights to gather."

"But we can't leave this place...."

"Shut it! This is an order! Leave those cubes to Vice Captain Gwalba."

Lion knight Gizlem caught my arm and dragged me to the gathering place.

--The Imperial Palace?

I was taken to the palace in the center of the whitened imperial capital.

There are 13 Temple Knights including me in front of the palace gate.

"Captain! At this situation--."

Just when the bespectacled rat knight Mobitt was going to flare up at the captain, right at that time.

"--Wha."

A huge purple beast broke through the palace and showed itself up. It looks like a grotesque-looking wild weasel beast.

The beast turned its eyes at us.

--Scary.

A terror enough to make me want to run away from this place immediately grasps my heart.

"D-demon lord...."

When I muttered that, the other knights besides the captain drew their swords.

A lot of the swords have already lost their white luster.

"Restrain yourselves! You are before His Majesty's presence!"

I can't digest the captain's words.

"--Do you not understand?"

"Tactician--dono?"

A reincarnated person who looked similar to Tactician-dono showed himself up from the palace.

That smooth bald Tactician-dono shouldn't be able to grow such long purple hair.

"That is His Majesty. He has casted away his weaselkin body in order to challenge the God."

There are certainly light of wisdom in its grotesque eyes.

"Hear me! You have the tenacity not to lose yourself in battles."

Urged by Tactician-dono, the captain straightened his posture and shouted out.

"Therefore, we grant you these."

There are several twisted dark purple horns that give off dull light on a floating plate beside the captain.

"T-this is?"

"Entrusted by His Majesty, the ancient artifacts--Twisted Demon Horns."

I can feel terrible miasma and curse from the Twisted Demon Horn.

"If you use the Twisted Demon Horn, you can fight against the God and obtain a power that exceeds even a hero."

Hearing that, my colleagues show a daring smile and gather in front of the twisted horns.

"However!"

The captain continued his words as if stopping my colleagues whose hands were reaching toward the Twisted Demonic Horns.

"However, it requires a great compensation."

The captain looks up at His Majesty who has turned into a beast.

『Noble knights who seek freedom.』

A voice tingled with mysterious reverberations are echoing in front of the palace.

『For the freedom of people.』

It's unmistakably the voice of our respected Majesty.

『To liberate mankind from its rulers.』

His words are filled with determination and sorrow.

『I expect you to abandon everything as a man.』

After saying that, His Majesty turns toward the yellow giant.

"We will not force you."

The captain said that and took a nearby twisted horn without hesitation.

Seeing that, my friends also scrambled for one.

The last remaining Twisted Demonic Horn.

Pressured by everyone's stare, I took the last one.

After ascertaining that, the captain pushes the Twisted Demonic Horn onto his forehead.

"For our desire for freedom!"

After shouting that, the captain's white fur undulate, changing into a grotesque with bubbling sounds.

Even after seeing such a terrifying transformation, my friends only drew their breath and pushed the Twisted Demonic Horn onto their foreheads.

"""For our desire for freedom!"""

My friends are turning into grotesques.

They lost their figures as people, losing even their sense, my friends roared like a beast.

Crunching and clanking sounds that are unthinkable coming from people reach my ears.

Repulsed by the excessive dread, it seemed I had dropped the Twisted Demonic Horn.

I reach my hand at the horn in a hurry.

However, a hand covered in white fur appearing from behind me picked up the Twisted Demonic Horn.

"Vice Captain!"

The owner of the white hand was the vice captain Gwalba.

"This is mine. It's too early for you--"

Gwalba's mouth forms a crescent shape and then he shouts, "For our desire for freedom!" out loud.

I had a feeling that Gwalba who had changed into a grotesque muttered faintly,

"--You just stay there."

"Go! Greater demons! Army of liberty who serve under Demon God!"

Tactician shouted at my friends who had changed into grotesques.

"Now is the time to break the chains and shackles called blessing of the foolish Gods!"

The laughing Tactician looked like a devil who entices people into depravity.

◇

『My good luck to them!』

With His Majesty's blessing, light purple light rain down on my grotesque friends who have gathered around His Majesty.

His Majesty turns his face at me.

『Liedill, my knight. Make sure to watch the last battle of our empire until the end, and bequeath it to the future generations.』

"--Your Majesty?"

His Majesty's line of sight moves to the Tactician.

『Tactician. My gratitude for all your work so far. Return to your master.』

His Majesty and Tactician are staring at each other.

--Your master?

His Majesty's words are as if--.

"Is that so, then I will hand over the last firework (romance) to her."

After showing a priest staff with red protuberance to His Majesty, Tactician presented it to me.

The thing I spontaneously received should be the magic device for [Self-Destruct] that His Majesty spoke of before.

I reflexively accepted it but as I have to protect His Majesty's life, there is no way I activate this self-destruct device.

"Farewell, Tarou. Building the empire with you was truly fun. I will await for good news in a faraway land."

Tactician who had said his farewell was turning vague like a haze and then he disappeared like he was dissolved in the air.

Being at a loss, I can only look at the self-destruct magic device in my hand.

『March on, my loyal knights! We will kill Zaikuon!』

His Majesty led my grotesque friends toward the battlefield.

I watch over their fight from the white imperial palace that has no one remaining.

The beautiful imperial capital gets destroyed by the storm raged from the battles, disappearing into white sandstorm.

The empire with all its dream, hope and glory disappeared like a short-lived dream.

Even after turning into grotesque beasts, even after devoting their loyalty to His Majesty my friends are disappearing into white mist every time they touch the yellow giant.

Alone, by myself again.

"Aah, please don't leave me...."

There is no way anyone hears that mutter, the yellow giant is walking step by step toward the palace.

It's as if there's something that the yellow giant seeks in this palace--.

※Next, "15-37. Divine Punishment (6), Hero VS" is scheduled for 12/25.

15-37. Divine Punishment (6), Hero Meiko

※ This is not from Satou's perspective

"Geez, just when I came to this backwater country to punish the weasels, the God had gone ahead and dropped the divine punishment, what's the meaning of this."

Hero Meiko Kaname is grumbling in the noble outlook room inside the Saga Empire's battleship.

Handsome knights and priests who look like characters of otome games are serving around her.

It was originally a fleet of seven battleships that were going to attack Weasel Empire's capital, but they got the God's oracle along the way and five of the ships had gone back to Saga Empire.

"There is nothing we can do, Gods' will are beyond what us mortals can fathom."

"Hmph. Since we have those phone-like『Talisman』, they could have sent a mail or something. Geez, they can't even hourensou us even though they've lived so long."

The handsome priests had a cramp on his face hearing the hero's blasphemous remark.

By the way, the hero who was a junior high school student in her original world doesn't know that hourensou is an abbreviation of houkoku (report), renraku (contact) and soudan (consultation). She only somehow knows the nuance.

"I want to ride that spaceship-like silver ship, not this dingy uncomfortable ship."

"We're deeply sorry. Hero-sama's guards are only good at disappointing and troubling hero-sama."

A handsome official who looks like a puppy apologized to the hero.

The hero's exclusive ship, [Sub-Dimensional Battleship Jules Verne] was attacked by the black greater demon, and got partially destroyed together with its maintenance dock.

"But it's not your fault."

She casually flapped her hand toward the apologizing official, telling him not to mind it.

"I'd rather push this checking the divine punishment execution job to those accompanying aunties."

A longearkin man began to play the hero's favorite tune with his lute in order to pacify the complaining hero's boredom.

No one beside the hero knew that it was the opening of an idol anime for girls.

◇

"Your Highness Maryest, the investigation unit has returned."

In the noble room inside another battleship accompanying the hero's, Imperial Princess Maryest who was Hero Hayato's attendant was receiving report from the captain.

"Regarding the fallen airship that we discovered earlier--"

Princess Maryest creased her forehead as she listened to the captain carefully.

"I see... So there's no survivor either this time."

"Yes, since the bodies had all turned into salt, we couldn't retrieve their bodies nor their memento."

"I understand. You can withdraw."

"Please excuse me."

Princess Maryest let out a heavy sigh after confirming that the captain had gone.

They had found many wreckages of fallen big airships and cities that had turned into salt on their way along the Weasel Empire's territory.

And, they found no survivor in every one of them.

"Have a drink, Mary."

"Rin."

Ringrande offered a glass with red wine to her depressed-looking friend.

Princess Maryest inclined the glass in a disorderly manner without even enjoying the fragrance and drank the bitter red liquid in one gulp.

"You should savor it more, it's a good wine."

"--You're right."

Princess Maryest finally had a smile on her face when Ringrande chided her while smiling wryly.

After a slight recess, they got a report of the fleet arrival at the neighborhood of the Weasel Empire's capital and the two went to the bridge.

◇

"It's white.... It's as if we're still inside the cloud."

Princess Maryest muttered blankly while overlooking the capital that had turned white from the divine punishment.

"Mary! That!"

"Are those demon lords? And so many of them...."

"Something in the center, I don't know what that is, is fighting the demon lords. I wonder if that's the God's apostle?"

"It's like the Armageddon, the last battle between God and Devil, that Hayato mentioned."

A yellow giant is fighting the demon lords clad in purple light.

Princess Maryest and Ringrande are in awe with the yellow giant who puts up a good fight against the demon lords these girls and Hayato desperately fought.

"Your Highness, should we stay on the course?"

"No. If we just charge on ahead as is, we will only lose the hero and the fleet fruitlessly--"

Princess Maryest shook her head at the asking captain.

"--Retreat. It's impossible for us to intervene the fight between God and Demons."

She implicitly says that it's suicidal for humans to plunge into that battle.

"Mary! The flagship the hero rides on!"

Ringrande who was looking outside the window shouted.

"Light signals from Hero-sama's ship! 『Demon lords in sight, we will go on ahead』 it said."

"--That idiot!"

Ringrande cursed hearing the signal officer.

It was an extremely disrespectful act against the hero, but the people in the bridge wisely chose to keep silent.

"Maryest, you and the others retreat! I'll bring back that idiot with a rope on her neck."

"Wait!"

Ringrande who was going to rush out of the bridge looked back at the door.

"Mary, go to Shiga Kingdom! Seek Hero Nanashi and Satou's cooperation!"

After saying that, she passed through the corridor with loud footsteps and jumped out of the emergency hatch riding on a flying wooden horse.

"We could have called that frivolous hero back if only God Parion's talisman had been restored."

That complaint was erased by the wind, reaching no one's ears.

◇

--GRRWLLOMAOOOO!

One of the demon lords roared, invisible sound waves hit God Zaikuon.

Even though it was an advanced wind magic, God Zaikuon only staggered, it didn't seem like he was damaged much.

--ZAZZZZZAYEEE.

On the other hand, the greater demons surrounding the God lost their limbs every time they touched the yellow light wrapping the God.

It was very much a one sided battle, but thanks to the protection of the [Good Luck] given to them by the emperor, it was not a fatal wound as their limbs regenerated themselves.

Although, even though the yellow light has that much power, it doesn't seem to be able to encroach the purple light that wraps the demon lords.

There are five demon lords including the Great Weasel Demon Lord in this place; a foxkin demon lord with swords as his arms, a snakehead demon lord with octopus-like lower half, a tigerkin demon lord with wings on his back, and a human-shaped demon lord with ox horns.

However, the demon lords are fighting God Zaikuon erratically, there is no coordination between them.

Only Sword Demon Lord appears to follow the Great Demon Lord's orders.

--ZAZZZZZAYEEE.

The God's yellow light twinkles and then countless light arrows appear, attacking the roaring demon lords.

The light arrows pierced through the demon lords' purple light, but most of them evaded the succeeding arrows.

--NWOLLWYWEEEEE!

The Great Weasel Demon Lord roared, then violet light wrapped the other demon lords.

He's using [Good Luck] Unique Skill.

In response to that, the demon lords activated their own Unique Skills.

With each other Unique Skills, the demon lords that are already strong by themselves become even stronger.

The Great Weasel Demon Lord suddenly looked up.

『How boorish....』

Saga Empire's battleship appeared breaking the cloud over there.

Apparently, the Great Weasel Demon Lord still retains his individuality even now.

『Temple Knights, get rid of them. Yet, if they break through them, you go.』

『--ATYOURcommand, At yourCOMmandegozaru.』

Sword Demon Lord nodded at the Great Demon Lord's order.

It seems he's losing his self after using too much Unique Skills.

◇

"Why!"

Hero Meiko shouted in anger inside the shaking ship and explosions sounds.

From the shaking that's clearly different from the ones up until now, fear is mixed in Hero Meiko's confident attitude.

"The Magic Furnace at the starboard is blown! Losing propulsion!"

"Intruders on the starboard! It's the Temple Knights of Weasel Empire!"

The bridge crews shouted out the report frantically.

"That means they're defying Saga Empire's hero aren't they."

Hero Meiko smiled ferociously as if shaking off her fear.

"How impertinent for mere weasels."

Hero Meiko slapped her own cheeks and stood up full of fighting spirits.

As if matching that timing, the bridge's door was blown up from outside.

Four Temple Knights broke through the smoke, entering the bridge.

"Leave this to us!"

"We have to show our good side to Meiko-sama."

The hero's followers draw their swords and point them at the Temple Knights.

However--their number is the only superiority.

The leading Temple Knight with four arms cut up the followers' holy armor and magic armor like papers with his white sword.

The remaining Temple Knights infringe upon the shaking blood-vomiting followers.

"Geez, how embarrassing. Are you guys only good for your faces?"

While being disappointed at the cowardliness of her struggling retainers, Hero Meiko wraps herself in blue light.

It's the sign of the activation of Hero Meiko's Unique Skills.

The first Unique Skill, [Unrivaled Mobility (Cannot be hit)] can evade every attacks.

"This hero is of evasion type!"

"Fire a barrage with no space for evading!"

It seems there were betrayers in Saga Empire, the Temple Knights seem to be aware of Hero Meiko's Unique Skills.

The temple knights took the magic devices on their waists and fired a rain of fire bullets from the submachine-gun-like fire wands.

Hero Meiko is wrapped in blue holy light once again.

The second Unique Skill, [Foresight], accurately predicts 10 seconds to the future.

"Useless! You can't run anywhere even if you try to predict it!"

One of the Temple Knights shouted triumphantly.

Just as he's planned, it's a solid barrage with no place to escape. There's no space even on the port.

The third Unique Skill [Infinite Arsenal (Inexhaustible Swords)] is activated, a holy sword appears out of thin air.

It closely resembled the holy sword the previous hero Hayato had, Arondight.

The Temple Knights wondered if she intended to cut the barrage with the holy sword.

"Don't make light of herooooooooooooo!"

Hero Meiko shouted a spirited yell.

The barrage shot from the fire wands changed its trajectory as if it was changing it on its own.

It must be a miracle from Hero Meiko's Unique Skill, [Unrivaled Mobility (Cannot be hit)].

"Impossible!"

"Meiko Kaname, that's the name of the one that defeats you."

Wrapped in holy light, Hero Meiko cut the Temple Knight along with his holy sword he used to defend against her in two.

Her last Unique Skill, [Strongest Katana (Nothing cannot be Cut)] cuts everything in existence.

The second and third Temple Knights thrust their magic swords at Hero Meiko, prepared to die together.

"W, what?"

"Impossible...."

The two's magic swords slipped through Meiko's body.

Betraying the Temple Knights who thought that she had changed place with an illusion, the Hero Meiko they hit cut both of them with the holy sword in her hand.

There's not even the slightest hesitation nor mercy at the tip of her sword.

"Hee, you're good."

Hero Meiko muttered in admiration.

After cutting the third one, a person who could block her sword finally appeared.

It's the four-armed Temple Knight who holds the white sword.

Hero Meiko seemed to be satisfied after exchanging blows several times, she struck her holy sword at the white sword.

Blue and white light filled the deck, both swords broke with a clear sound.

"You have no chance of victory now that you've lost your holy sword."

"Aren't you the same, your prided white sword's broken too isn't it."

The Temple Knight picks up the holy sword and magic swords of his cohorts below him.

"It might be not as good as Dragon Fang powder, but absurdity also dwells in this concentrated dragoon blood."

While speaking some cryptic things, he drips red liquid in a bottle on the three swords in his hands.

"Hmmm. Then me too."

A new holy sword appears from the thin air of the Infinite Arsenal.

The holy sword this time resembles the strongest holy sword that Hero Nanashi carries, Excalibur.

"It's such a waste that there's no eject function on this warehouse."

The grumbling hero's holy sword exchanges blows with the three swords.

Red and blue light dyed the bridge, broken machinery parts grazed by the light scatter around.

"There should be no level difference."

The temple knight's arms has decreased by one.

"My sword skill is also several classes above--"

Decreased by two, and three now.

"--And yet, why?"

The Temple Knight who had lost one of his legs muttered frustratingly on the floor.

"There's no way the ally of justice blessed by God Parion's protection could lose to bad guys siding with demon lords!"

--Hero is an embodiment of absurdity.

He recalled what Tactician Touya once said.

"Regrettably, this is it."

He pushes the small magic depth charge switch he got from Tactician Touya.

He doesn't know the meaning of the black fan shapes on yellow background mark.

"Wha, nuke?"

With a flash from the tactical nuke, the battleship vanishes.

One person jumped out of the mushroom cloud.

The hero Meiko.

She was able to survive from the point blank hit of an unbelievably huge explosion.

Although her armor is broken, her clothes are mercilessly torn, only cloths that protect her dignity as a girl remain.

"Suicide bombing is the worss!"

While grumbling, Hero Meiko took out a new flying shoes from her Infinite Inventory and stood mid-air, she healed her wounds using the stocked-up magic potions.

"Or rather, it hurr too much. I thought I was gonn die."

Normal humans would have died if they were hit by a tactical nuke at point blank.

The only one that could survive from one such attack is probably Viscount Pendragon.

That is if you can put him in the same category as [Normal Humans].

It appears she was able to narrowly escape by using her Unique Skill, [Unrivaled Mobility] in overlaps.

Was her articulations off because of her fear, or perhaps--.

"Now then, let's quickly beat all the demon lords. I'll rank up to the『True Hero』by just defeating one of the small fries, it should be easy afterwards, and expanding the difference between me and them would be the best--"

Innumerable light balls assaulted her.

"--Here it comes."

Apparently, the second round has begun.

◇◆◇ Extra ◇◆◇

"--Tsunami at Ganika Marquisdom's sea?"

"Yes, we've got a report from the branch office of Raragi Kingdom at the south sea."

That emergency call greeted me when I had gone back to the Solitary Island Palace from Seryuu City.

This Raragi Kingdom is the biggest sugar producing area at the south sea, moreover, they're raising the superb cows that feed on sugarcanes, so I want to protect it at all cost.

I open the menu to move to Echigoya Branch of Raragi Kingdom with Unit Arrangement.

Right at that time--.

"Wawanwaawawan, wawanwaawawan, wanwanwawan."

<Or alternatively, "Wowoofwooofwowoof, wowoofwooofwowoof, woofwoofwowoof."> --Pochi?

I got the alarm through the dragon vein from the Raka Clone installed on Pochi's Golden Armor.

This voice is of the second degree, the light one.

If it's not life-threatening, then I should save the countries that were about to be destroyed by the tsunami first.

"Waarning~?"

"It's the alarm!"

"Arisa! Check out what's happening to Pochi!"

"Okaay!"

I asked Arisa to follow up and executed the Unit Arrangement.

If it's a situation where it's dangerous without me, Arisa will contact me with [World Phone].

First, I have to erase the tsunami.

The too flashy, [<<Continental Guard>>] is the last resort, but I will use it with no hesitation if Pochi looks to be in danger.

The dragon veins nearby will be in shortage of magic power for a bit though, so I don't want to use it thoughtlessly you see.

※ The next update is planned for 1/1, but it might be postponed to 1/8 depending on the new year progress.

※ This will be the last update this year.

For my good readers, have a good new year~

15-38. Divine Punishment (7), Hero Vs Demon Lord

※ This is not from Satou's viewpoint

"Here comes one, demon lord."

Hero Meiko looks over below.

『kiLL degozaru』

A fox demon lord with swords as its arms makes an imposing pose while spreading its sickle-like arms.

<TLN: Typo'd as weasel in the previous chapter. Fox is the correct one.> --KILLKILLKILL !

With the demon lord's roar, its chest split apart and a bright red ball of light is shot toward Hero Meiko.

"Shoot out 100 times that if you want to hit me!"

Hero Meiko easily evaded it but the light ball suddenly turned around and pursued her sky orbit.

The fallen light ball hit the ground and created a white crater with a huge sound.

"Fuhn, that's some power. But--"

The hero's sword cuts the demon lord's sword arm.

"There's no point if it doesn't hit."

Hero Meiko smirks, it seems she's satisfied to be able to say a line from a famous anime.

--KILRKILLKIRL !

Hero Meiko wounds the rampaging demon lord one sidedly.

"Your demon lordness is just all show isn't it. You're totally weak."

——KIRLKILRKIRR !

The demon lord's body is wrapped in purple light.

"Unique Skill now of all time? You should've used it from the start, this isn't a game you know."

The demon lord attacked without reacting to the hero.

While leaving game-like blur effect--afterimage body doubles.

"Geh, gross."

Hero Meiko, with her limited vocabulary, backed away, and then she held her holy sword upward to counter it.

It's as if she's saying that this is the way to hold Holy Sword Excalibur.

The purple haired little girl house-sitting in the solitary island palace would have agreed with her if she were here.

--Dazzling holy light surrounds the hero once again.

Far stronger light than when she used her Unique Skill up until now.

There's a jewel like blue crest of light on the surface of her skin if you look closely.

"It'll be the same no matter how many times you try!"

Just like before, she randomly evades the attack and counters by swinging her holy sword down.

Yet--.

"Guha"

Hero Meiko rolled on the ground while screaming unbecoming of a girl.

"Ouch, what're you doing to a girl."

Blood is dripping from the huge wound on the back of Hero Meiko who's standing up unsteadily.

"This time, it's my--"

She's cut on the back once again, Hero Meiko fell on the ground while raising smoke of white salt.

Hero Meiko was literally applying salt on her wound in agony.

The holy light that envelopes her is flickering like a broken electric spark.

『seEmsYoucan'tEVadeATTacksoutsIDeofcognizanceDEEgozaruNA』

Sword arm demon lord laughed loudly, saying 'it seems you can't evade attacks outside of cognizance'.

"You spoiled it! I won't fall for the same trap."

Hero Meiko stood up while taking an acceleration magic potion.

Hero Meiko suddenly got close to the demon lord with Flickering Movement and unleashed a slashing attack.

However, it seemed she assessed something, she pulled back her sword and rolled to the side.

『ForeSIGht DEgozarukA?　ormaYYYYYYBe just good intuitionDEgozarukA』

It seems Hero Meiko had anticipated the reverberation of the space magic the sword arm demon lord was going to use.

It's the same technique the red-body demon skillfully used against Hero Nanashi once.

『evading WIthout AttacKINg YourE CORNERed DAAEgozaru』

The hero who evaded the demon lord's sword arm was kicked by a fox leg clad in purple light from her blind spot.

Hero Meiko spat out saliva mixed with salt, standing up unsteadily.

"I have to create some distance--If I can't defeat you at close distance, I'll do it from afar."

Hero Meiko retreated back using Flickering movement and took out countless magic cannons from her [Infinite Arsenal (Inexhaustible Swords)].

sure of her victory the hero grinned, then suddenly her view was blurred and the demon lord appeared right in front of her.

"Wha--"

The demon lord speaks to Hero Meiko who couldn't react to the abrupt development.

『pULLed, DAAEgozaru.』

"Ahahaha, this, can't be real right?"

Her hand that was going to grasp the magic cannons grasps upon empty air.

No wonder, as the magic cannons that have been taken out are left behind far away.

"Geha."

Receiving an overhead blow from behind, Hero Meiko's upper body was buried in the white salt ground.

Her legs above ground aren't moving at all.

The holy light enveloping Hero Meiko finally loses its light and disappears.

『theEND, DAAAAZEgozaru』

The demon lord swings its sword arm.

"....■■■■■■ Explosion!"

Clear sounds resounded in the battlefield, an explosion wrapped up the demon lord.

It's a special spell of the previous hero's follower, Ringrande.

"Even like that, she's still a Saga Empire's hero. I can't let you easily kill her."

Her armor is broken, half of her beautiful silver hair is dirtied by red blood.

No one knows how she could escape the nuclear explosion, but she's by no mean only slightly wounded.

"DAAAAZEdegozaru"

The sword arm demon lord clad in dark purple light showed up, cutting the explosion apart.

The sword demon lord has already lost its ability to speak recognizably.

Ringrande continously shot [Quick Burst] that could be chanted quickly at the attacking Sword Demon Lord, but none of it hit the demon lord.

--DAAEGWOOOZAAAALW.

She could barely protect Hero Meiko from one of its attack, let alone counterattacking.

She changed to space magic midway and rolled under the smoke from the explosion she created herself while carrying Hero Meiko toward the imperial capital.

◇

"Aryarya? Where is this nanodesu?"

Suddenly appearing in the sky of the Weasel Empire's capital.

A master and her servant came from a gate that no one noticed.

Golden Knight Yellow and her Beast Steed, lesser dragon Lyuryu.

"Somehow, it doesn't seem like Seryuu City nanodesuyo?"

Golden Knight Yellow tilted her head in puzzlement.

She never thought that she would be led to a different place by the little girl.

--LYURYURYUUU.

"Somehow, there's a lot of enemies nodesu."

The white dragon inclined its wing toward the enemies.

"Lyuryu there's a big meat over there nodesu! So many wonderful sukiyaki and hamburg steak, Pochi doesn't know what to do nodesu."

Even when she saw the huge Great Weasel Demon Lord, the Golden Knight Yellow naught uttered fear nor awe, but appetite.

Is she a big-shot or is she just a glutton, no one can judge for sure.

『--Connection Lost. GPS Signal Lost.』

"Armor person is saying some difficult things nodesu."

The Raka Clone installed in the golden armor reported the lost of the connection to the Solitary Island Palace.

"Aryarya? It doesn't connect to Master nodesuyo?"

Since she didn't understand the situation, Golden Knight Yellow tried to contact her Master, but she was at a loss when it was impossible to make a call.

She hurriedly turned back, but the door she came out of had already disappeared.

"Pochi is in trouble nodesu. But Master or Tama should quickly notice and come here nanodesuyo."

Golden Knight Yellow muttered as if she was convincing herself.

--LYURYURYUUU.

The white dragon reported an explosion on the ground to its master.

There, Ringrande was protecting Hero Meiko behind her back with her broken sword pointed toward the demon lord.

"Some girls are being bullied by a purple monster nodesu!"

--LYURYURYUUU.

"Armor person! Please nanodesu!

『Yes My Girl. Dimension Catapult Activate.』

One flickering silver board appeared in front of each of them.

"Lyuryu!"

--LYURYURYUUU.

The moment both of them touched the board, they got accelerated to faster than speed of sound.

The two of them arrived before the sword arm demon lord and the girls, and scooped out Hero Meiko and Ringrande.

Normally it was a speed that should be unbearable for a normal man, but it was made possible due to her master's scheme and magic knowledge, and above all, the tempered steel body of Golden Knight Yellow who played around with a lesser dragon without any equipment.

"D-dragon?"

"It's Ringraden person nanodesu."

Golden Knight Yellow called her name wrong, but Ringrande whose consciousness was hazy didn't notice it.

『puLL, DAAEgozaru.』

The Golden Knight Yellow who was flying in the sky above was teleported before the sword arm demon lord.

"That was surprising nanodesu."

Golden Knight Yellow blocked the swinging attack of the sword arm demon lord with her holy sword.

Blue and purple light crossed, the flash and the spark burn the surroundings.

Cliiiink, an ear-splitting sound reverberated, Golden Knight Yellow's ears under her helmet flopped down.

Another sword of the sword demon lord was coming behind her.

◇

"Such attacks won't work on Pochi nodesu."

Golden Knight Yellow turned around and blocked the attack that was coming from her blind side with the second holy sword.

The sword she used to block it is Holy Sword Pochi--contrary to its very cute appearance with its paw-shaped guard, it's the latest original holy sword comparable to the [Divine Gift Holy Sword].

Looks like she's still hiding her strongest fang.

『attackOUTsideCOGnizanceWhYCOuldEvaDEgozaruna』

Sword arm demon lord was surprised to see Golden Knight Yellow blocking its attack when her attention was robbed by the first attack.

"It's the most basic of basic to fight against space magicians nanodesu."

Golden Knight Yellow is looking at the sword arm demon lord with a triumphant look under her helmet.

Of course, even a demon lord that could freely manipulate space magic was not almighty enough to see the face under the helmet.

Wary of the Golden Knight Yellow, the Sword Arm Demon Lord jumped back with a short-range warp, taking some distance away from her.

"If Pochi can't do that much, Arisa will take all her desert and puddings nodesu. In this world all Yakiniku meal set is delicious nodesu."

She said some nonsensical things midway, but Golden Knight Yellow said that quite seriously.

--LYURYURYUUU.

The white dragon looks anxiously at the two people it's carrying.

"Alright nodesu. Pochi wants Lyuryu to take the two to a safe place nodesu."

"W-wait. That's a demon lord. You absolutely can't win alone."

Hero Meiko interrupted as she was instructing the white dragon.

"Demon lord nanodesu? That's bad nodesu. Pochi thought that was a monster nodesuyo."

"I'm amazed that you survived. I guess I should say as expected of a Dragon Knight?"

Golden Knight Yellow didn't listen to Hero Meiko.

"Is demon lord-san a bad demon lord nanodesu? Pochi was told not to fight the good demon lord nodesu."

"A-are you stupid? Of course all demon lords are bad you know?"

"The one who says stupid is the real stupid one nodesuyo?"

Sword Arm Demon Lord is staring at their carefree dialogue curiously.

It seems there is no one here who is aware about the violation of a mutual non-interference verbal contract between the Weasel Emperor and the Golden Knight Yellow's master.

After all, Golden Knight Yellow was sleeping when that was talked about, and her master didn't tell her about it after she woke up.

However, a God not her master is couldn't possibly guess that she, who doesn't have the mean to teleport, would be moved to the weasel empire on a far away side of the continent when he wasn't looking.

In reality though, the weasel emperor had already broken the contract when he asked her master to help his citizens.

"Didn't it attack just now! Only a bad demon lord comes attacking!"

"Is that true nanodesu?"

Golden Knight Yellow nods at the sword demon lord.

"Can't be helped nodesu. The way of sword is smeared with blood nodesu."

Golden Knight Yellow muttered seriously while looking at the glittering gauntlet of her golden armor.

"I'm going to help. I'm still a hero of Saga Empire. I won't fall behind a native hero who hasn't been given God's Authority."

"Then here's a healing magic potion for you nodesu."

Hero Meiko drank the the magic potion she got from Golden Knight Yellow without any question.

She's a typical careless modern Japanese person who hasn't gotten accustomed to another world.

"W-what's this?"

Glitter effects wrap Hero Meiko, all of her wounds are healed.

Forget about that, even her broken articulation was restored.

"Blood Elixir Rev. nanodesu. Any wound will be healed as long as you haven't died nodesuyo."

"What's with that doubtful-sounding name."

"Don't mind, we're in a battle nanodesu."

Hearing Golden Knight Yellow said that, suddenly realizing it Hero Meiko turned around.

The sword arm demon lord is still waiting.

『dragonUTeeeeDEGOZARU』

Apparently, the sword arm demo lord is preoccupied with the white dragon.

"Lyuryu, take Ringraden person to a safe place nodesu."

--LYURYURYUUU.

The white dragon soars away with Ringrande in its hand.

The sword demon lord who likes dragons doesn't seem like it's going to obstruct the white dragon's flight.

"Then, let's go nodesuyo."

『coming DWEEDgozaru』

Blue light envelops the whole body of Golden Knight Yellow.

"Eh? A Native Hero's Unique Skill?"

Hero Meiko seems to be misunderstanding it, but the light just now is not from the usage of Unique Skill.

"Armor person, please nanodesu."

『Yes My Girl. Dimension Catapult Activate.』

A flickering silver board appeared in front of Golden Knight Yellow.

The same acceleration board like earlier.

"Body double technique nanodesu!"

『Physical Mirror Image.』

Golden Knight Yellow split into 64 bodies at three axis.

Frighteningly enough, the majority of them have mass and magic power.

The sword demon lord who's also a space magician lies in wait for Golden Knight Yellow's attack with traps in ambush.

"Today's sure fire technique Magic Edge Spiral Strike (Vorpal Strike) Exerion, stand by nanodesu!"

『Yes My Girl. Extra Mode Activate.』

Various reinforcement magic envelop Golden Knight Yellow.

The original name was [Extra Mode] but Golden Knight Yellow is convinced that it's [Exerion] due to a purple haired little girl's scheme.

The Raka Clone installed in the Golden Armor interpreted that the request was for [Extra Mode] with its fuzzy function.

"W-what's with this reinforcement magic? Unbelievable.... How did my status became three times as high? T-this is like raising your level for several times."

It appears Raka Clone had judged her as a comrade, Hero Meiko also got the effect of Extra Mode.

At the surprised Hero Meiko, Golden Knight Yellow only tilted her head and that was it.

She probably doesn't really understand what she is surprised about.

"Let's go nodesuyo!"

The 64 Golden Knight Yellow who jumped to the silver board with Flickering Movement appeared before the sword demon lord in an instant.

"Ah, stupid!"

Golden Knight Yellow jumped into the distorted space trap that Hero Meiko evaded in the nick of time earlier.

The figure of Golden Knight Yellow getting stabbed by her own holy swords flashed in Hero Meiko's mind.

The dark purple light released by the demon lord and the blue light released by Golden Knight Yellow dye the battlefield blindingly.

※ Next, [15-39. Divine Punishment (8), Dog Hero Pochi] is planned for 1/8.

※ I'd like to have Satou's turn soon.

15-39. Divine Punishment (8), Dog Hero Pochi

※This time it's not from Satou's perspective

"Choiyaa, nanodesu!"

Blue and purple sparks dyed the battlefield.

Breaking through the reverberation of the distorted space, numerous holy swords assail the demon lord's sword arms.

Golden Knight Yellow and her split bodies unleashed a single blow on the sword demon lord, landing behind it.

『whyDWEEDgozaru』

The sword demon lord sets up the reverberation traps using Space Magic that Pochi and her split bodies ignored like a trick in front of them once again.

Her split bodies might have decreased, but there's still 47 of them remaining.

"This much is nothing nanodesu!"

Pochi and her split bodies accurately see through the space traps and annihilate them with their holy swords.

『hoWWEEDgozaru』

"It's father bought the sacrifice of 72 pudding-sans nodesuyo."

Pochi probably mistook [Chichikawareta (father bought)] for [Tsuchikawareta (As a result of)].

If this were a web novel, there's no doubt that comments correcting the typo would pour in like rain.

The desperate struggle against the purple haired girl, Arisa and her [Game of Tag] flashed in Pochi's mind.

Every time she lost a fight, her snacks and puddings were mercilessly taken.

"direct match DWEEDgozaru."

The sword demon lord's arms increased to six, each arms held a different weapon.

"Yes, nanodesu."

Together with the 47 split bodies, she shifts to close combat against the sword demon lord.

It's a high speed battle that no ordinary human can see.

The split bodies disappear one after another, but each of them damaged the sword demon lord.

"Uwaa, I can't move well."

Hero Meiko also wanted to participate in the battle, but she couldn't get used to her tripled stats and fell to the ground many times.

"Ugege, watch out you."

Hero Meiko futilely shouted while evading the raining Magic Edge Cannons and the sword demon lord's flame bullets with her Unique Skill, [Unrivaled Mobility].

◇

"Uwawa, nanodesu."

"emperor DWEEDgozaru."

The Great Demon Lord who had lost its lower body was blown to between the two who were fighting fiercely.

"The big meat-san came nodesu."

Pochi who had lost a lot of calorie from the high speed battle licked her lip under the helmet.

The blown salt disappeared, the intellectual eyes of the Great Weasel Demon Lord look at Pochi from below.

"Golden armor...."

"Meat-san talked nodesu!"

Pochi was surprised.

"Are you an attendant of Hero Nanashi?"

"Yes nanodesu! Pochi is Master's sword, Golden Knight Yellow nanodesu!"

"Is that right."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord partly closed his eyes after hearing Pochi's answer.

"WOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Hero Meiko wrapped in blue light is about to cut the Great Weasel Demon Lord.

A clear sound echoed in the battlefield, purple and blue light shined on the Great Demon Lord's body.

The sword demon lord intercepted her holy sword.

"Tsk, you glittering little thing over there! Hold back the sword demon lord properly!"

"Pochi is troubled if you tell her that nodesu. Please wait a bit nodesuyo."

The troubled Pochi's ears flopped down under the helmet at Hero Meiko's unreasonable demand.

"Mou, you're useless!"

"eliminateDWEEDgozaru."

Receiving fierce attacks from the sword demon lord, Hero Meiko separates away from Pochi.

"Is weasel-san a demon lord person nodesu?"

"Umu, I'm the Great Weasel Demon Lord."

"Are you a bad demon lord nanodesu? Master told Pochi not to fight good demon lords nodesu."

"Like I said! Bad demon lord's friends are all bad people!"

Hero Meiko who had come nearby interfered Pochi's question.

"It's as that girl has said, demon lords are evil from Gods and Heroes's perspective."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord addressed Pochi's question with a quiet voice.

"However, good and evil depend on your viewpoint. From the perspective of people who rebel against the Gods that restrain people's growth and happiness, we are the light of hope."

"Hahn! No matter how many sophism you spin, you're the bad one here for breaking the rule of this world!"

Hero Meiko shouted while fighting the sword demon lord.

It's as if this is an anime or manga, but her ears probably also got improved from the tripled stats.

"killDWEEDgozaru."

"YOUUUUU!"

The sword demon lord caught up with her, and they parted away from the two again.

"Pochi doesn't really understand if it's too difficult nodesu."

"I see--."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord closed his eyes while regenerating his lower body.

"Then let me say this. I bear no hostility towards Hero Nanashi. Although we cannot be called friends, we're like acquaintances."

"You know Master nodesu? Then Pochi won't fight nodesu."

"Is that right, that is most excellent--it's about time."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord turns his head.

His eyes were looking at the last demon lord that was blown away to the horizon as the yellow giant arrived at the center of the palace.

The yellow giant that arrived at the ruined palace repeatedly hit the ground with both its arms.

"It's like a child throwing a tantrum."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord that has finished regenerating his lower body stands up.

"What's the yellow person doing nodesu?"

"There is something that guy seeks below that place."

"A big meat nanodesu?"

The Great Weasel Demon Lord pleasantly laughed at Pochi's words full of her appetite.

"That guy wants only one thing. Depriving the『Dragon's Vein Connection』that Troll Demon Lord has."

"Dragon's Vein, nanodesu?"

Pochi tilts her head, she's heard the words somewhere before.

....Unfortunately, it seems she can't recall it.

"It's an authority that the Dragon God had only ever given to one god; the Demon God once."

"That's amazing nodesu."

The Great Demon Lord talked while putting up a mysterious air, but Pochi responded randomly with a low tension voice.

Getting whatever response after especially talking about the secret like that, the Great Demon Lord tasted the feeling of letdown.

If his subordinates were to saw his slightly pitiful face, they would likely think that it was rare.

A flash-like small light wraps the yellow giant.

"It's coming--if you have a way to defend yourself, use it. If you don't, hide behind my body."

"Why nanodesu?"

The Great Weasel Demon Lord moves to cover Pochi behind his back.

Apparently, he's taken a liking to the pure Pochi.

"Explosions that will shake the earth are coming."

"That's terrible nanodesu!"

It's as if Pochi's surprise was the switch as several flashes ran through center of the yellow giant--God Zaikuon, thunderous roars erased the surrounding sounds.

Most of the forces and the explosions were directed right above the yellow giant, but they were strong enough to blow away every salt buildings around.

"--GWUOOOO"

White pebbles broke through the purple light defending the Great Weasel Demon Lord, Pochi who was being covered behind him jumped to his side.

"Weasel person is in danger nodesu! 『Phalanxusu~』」

Pochi climbed on the giant body of the Great Weasel Demon Lord, and then she stretched her short arms and spread open the disposable defensive shield, Phalanx.

Even only for a short time, this can actualize the same defensive power as the later model of Castle that Golden Knight White Nana has.

"Auch, nanodesu."

However, the white pebbles broke through that impregnable defense.

It's the same white splinters that pierced through the Great Weasel Demon Lord.

Pochi who slipped off the Great Weasel Demon Lord, flicked away a white splinter that pierced through the demon lord with holy sword Durandal.

"Awawa, the holy sword broke nodesu."

"Conceal yourself behind my body obediently, there's only a few of them but those are the splinters of Dragon Fangs--the ultimate weapon that pierces even God."

While saying that, the Great Weasel Demon Lord increased the thickness of his purple aura.

Intermittent sounds of explosions are still continuing even now, the white Imperial Capital seen from behind the Great Weasel Demon Lord is hidden by horrible salt and soil smoke.

"Alright then nanodesu!"

Pochi hit on a good idea hearing the Great Weasel Demon Lord, she dropped the holy sword and put her hand inside the Golden Armor's storing pocket.

A white splinter that pierced through the Great Weasel Demon Lord's body was flicked away by the white sword that Pochi took out.

"This time Pochi will protect you nodesu!"

The Phalanx that has lost its effect disappears in front of Pochi who goes around in front of the Great Weasel Demon Lord.

With a speed that can't be seen with naked eyes, Pochi intercepts the white buckshots that are coming flying faster than the speed of sound.

"Don't tell me that's a Dragon Fang Sword--"

The Great Weasel Demon Lord muttered.

It's as he's guessed, the sword Pochi uses, Dragon Fang Sword--is a sword made from a lesser dragon fang created by the Ancient Dragon using Primeval Magic.

It can be said to be the completed form of the swords used by the Empire's Temple Knights.

"Uoryaa, nanodesu."

With spirited yells, Pochi intercepted all the shots.

◇

"It didn't die even after getting hit by that directly huh...."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord is looking at the yellow giant bending down on the ground of the imperial palace's remain.

Even though the yellow light has weakened like it's going to disappear, it continues to pulse as if asserting its life force.

"We'd probably win if we had several more shots of that, but I cannot ask for too much."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord stands up while bleeding out.

"You shouldn't move nanodesu! You're hurt all over nodesuyo!"

Seeing the gushing blood, Pochi rummages through the Golden Armor's pocket in panic.

She finally found the health recovery magic potion and generously use it on the Great Weasel Demon Lord's wounds.

The magic potion showed its effect before long, the bleeding stopped.

"Thank you. Little hero."

"Yes nanodesu. But, Pochi is not a hero, she's Golden Knight Yellow nodesuyo?"

"Is that so, pure one. I will carve that name on my soul, Golden Knight Yellow, Pochi."

Pochi panicked when she heard that.

"Pochi's name is a secret nanodesu! Being known is bad nanodesuyo."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord laughs happily.

"Then I will keep that name a secret. I vow to never speak of it to anyone."

"Thank you nanodesu."

『DAAAAZEgozaru.』

The sword demon lord who's bleeding all over landed beside the Great Weasel Demon Lord.

Only one of its six arms remains.

"There's blood all over nanodesu.... But, there's no more magic potion nodesu."

Pochi shoved her hand in the Golden Armor Pocket and got flustered.

Her figure looks like a certain panic-prone cat robot.

"Don't worry, the bleeding has already stopped."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord puts his giant paw on top of Pochi who's on the verge of tears.

"Besides, I only need to give the decisive blow on that guy next."

The gentle eyes of the Great Weasel Demon Lord sharply changed the moment they turned at the yellow giant, like he was a different person.

"Wa it! De mon, lord...."

Pushing through the salt ground, Hero Meiko who looked like a ghost stood up.

Apparently, she also survived the attack earlier by continuously using her

Unique Skill, [Unrivaled Mobility].

However, that required a great compensation--.

"The hero girl is in tatter nanodesu!"

--Blue lines emerge on Hero Meiko's body, blue lights are leaking from her mouth and eyes, just like how she was before drinking Pochi's potion.

"de, mon lord..... DEMONLOOOOOOOOORD"

Hero Meiko screamed and then blue light are emitting furiously from the lines and holes on her body.

"Fallen hero huh--how pitiful."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord quietly muttered.

"Awawa, something's bad with hero girl nanodesu."

Pochi doesn't know what to do, and the fact that she can't ask help from her master Satou and her comrades makes her restless.

Even though she knows how to fight, she's still a little child who lacks experience, so it's understandable.

"Parion's heroes won't become demon lords even if their Soul Vessel is broken."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord gave a signal to the sword demon lord to lead Hero Meiko to the other side of the battlefield.

"The vessel of a fallen hero is completely broken, they change into a hunting machine that will continue to hunt demon lords until they breathe their last. Any kind of healing magic no longer works on them."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord is looking at Hero Meiko who's destroying the sword demon lord without being afraid of getting injured.

Pochi looks at the rampaging Hero Meiko while crying and shouting.

"Pochi, Pochi couldn't do anything at all nodesu."

She's exhausted all her medicines, and she can't communicate with her master and comrades.

Pochi was at a loss.

That cannot be helped.

In a world where it's common to lose your life to the unreasonable violences, her master prioritized to make her learn the way to survive.

Even though that sacrificed everything else, the fact that she's able to survive in a battlefield where demon lords and God are rampaging in just less than two years is a proof of the success of that objective.

If we're talking game-like, I guess it's the result of putting all growth points toward combat-oriented abilities?

"If you can't do anything, then do not ever forget that chagrin."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord who's overlooking Pochi gives an advice.

"And learn."

With tears in the corners of her eyes, Pochi looks up at the Great Weasel Demon Lord.

"In order to catch up with your ideal self someday...."

"Yes nanodesu."

One feeling buds inside Pochi who's clenching her fists.

Whether that withers or grows into a great tree depends on her own will and supports from her surroundings.

Pochi is looking up at the Great Weasel Demon Lord with eyes full of determination.

And then--.

As if waiting for that, the space beside Pochi broke like it was made of glass.

And the one who emerged from there was--.

※ Next update is planned for 1/15.

15-40. Divine Punishment (9), Reinforcements

※The viewpoint will change to the later part of Weasel Empire on ◇, please take note.

Satou's here. I've always been scolded by my parents since I was small.

I got scolded for disobeying my parents, like playing at a dangerous river, going to a mountain and making a secret hideout, not tidying up my room, or not taking a bath quickly.

For me who have been scolded overwhelmingly more than I scold someone, whenever I recall those days, I ponder really hard why was I that unruly.

I might be oblivious of it, but the current me is probably thanks to my parents and teachers who patiently kept on scolding me of those days.

◇

"--Geh, the country would be destroyed before the tsunami came."

I was shocked at the points shown on my radar when I teleported to the magic kingdom Raragi with Unit Arrangement.

On top of dozens of level 30-50 krakens, there's a peculiar super huge level 92 kraken called [Sea King] that covers half of the island.

Moreover, it seems this [Sea King] is a familiar of the [Dog-Head Demon Lord].

I have to exterminate them fast--huh?

For some reason, Pochi's marker is at the Weasel Empire.

I left her alone since there was no more considerable threats around Seryuu City, just how the heck did she end up getting to that place....

She probably fell into a trap of a third party, but more than that, I'm surprised that there's someone else that can move that far besides me and Arisa.

"For now, let's bring her back with Unit Arrangement."

I open the map and check Pochi's surroundings.

For some reason, Pochi and her white dragon Lyuryu are not the only ones there, Lady Ringrande, Sera's big sister and Hero Meiko, Saga Empire's hero are there too.

Furthermore, it seems a big airship that carries Princess Maryest has landed slightly away from them.

Since there are demon lords near them, Pochi was probably sent in to help Hero Meiko and Lady Ringrande.

Judging from the situation, God Parion is the most suspicious.

I was going to confirm the situation with space magic, but then the roof of Echigoya Firm got blown away.

"I've got to quickly clean up this side too."

Since my skill, [Threaded Think], only splits my thinking by multi-threading instead of like having several brains at once--in short, it's only at the level of an [expert of dividing works], it's not possible for me to do several things with a large burden like searching the map and using advanced magic at once.

『Master! It seems Pochi is outside Seryuu City!』

Arisa reached me with [World Phone].

She's like a windfall, I tell her the situation.

Meanwhile, I transform to Hero Nanashi figure and fly in the sky.

I lock on the krakens that come into my field of view with advanced force magic [<<Multiple Javelins>>], but the processing time is a bit slower than usual.

『Open a gate near Pochi, and bring Liza and Tama with you to retrieve Pochi and everyone around!!』

『Okay, I got it!』

Arisa willingly consented my instruction.

I recalled my worry hearing her somewhat high spirited voice, so I give her a warning.

『Arisa, I think you understand already--』

『Of course! It's fine, leave it to me.』

The Sea King's giant sea spear came flying during that time, so I smashed it with [Break Magic].

--Ge geh.

The [Giant Sea Spear] that got its structure destroyed changes into a mass of ocean water and pours down to the ground.

I frantically stretch [Magic Hand] and store the ocean water into my storage.

Arisa cut off the communication during that time.

I'm a bit worried if she's going to be okay, but let's trust Arisa here.

I release [<<Multiple Javelin>>] that have finished locking-on.

Now all the enemy besides the Seas King should have died off.

Since there's a tanned girl and a white skinned girl stuck on the Sea King's forehead, I can't eliminate it before rescuing them.

It seems a level 82 monster called [Flame King] has invaded the neighboring country while a Roc called [Sky King] is raiding the islands of sugar road.

These Flame King and Sky King seem to be familiars of [Dog-head Demon Lord] just like the Sea King below me.

Good grief, please don't leave these kinds of troublesome legacies behind.

While evading the train-sized arms of the Sea King, I go in to save the girls on its forehead.

The tanned girl is of an unusual race called [Half-Ghost], while the white skinned one seems to be a [Homonculus] like Nana.

I hurry on to save them while averting my eyes from the demonic breasts of the tanned girl that can even compare to Lady Karina's.

◇Weasel Empire◇

"Ja-jaan! Arisa-chan arrives!"

The one who appeared from the crack in space is a little girl donning golden armor with a red mantle.

It seems she doesn't have any intention of using her temporary name, Golden Knight Red.

"Arisa! Nanodesu!"

"We've come to pick Pochi up!"

The shock absorber installed on Arisa's golden armor softly received the full body hug of Pochi.

"--Arara? The situation seems chaotic isn't it?"

Arisa who's hugging Pochi knitted her brow looking at the surroundings.

"Forgive me, Nanashi--"

The Great Weasel Demon Lord who saw Arisa muttered in his mouth.

"Little girl, look at the eastern ground."

The Great Weasel Demon Lord pointed at the shining yellow giant.

"--T-that's!"

When Arisa saw the shining yellow giant, fighting spirit boiled from within her.

Even though she's not using her Unique Skill, her golden armor is tinged with purple phosphoresce.

"DEMONLOOOOOOOOOOORD"

Hero Meiko is going to attack Arisa who's overflowing with purple aura.

"Nin nin~?"

Golden Knight Pink, Ninja Tama appeared from Arisa's shadow and evaded Hero Meiko's slashing attack with cast-off no jutsu.

No one in this place questioned the origin of the slashed large tree.

"It appears you are a hero, but if you're going to harm Golden Knight Red, we will keep you company."

Golden Knight Orange Liza who appeared after Ninja Tama said that while taking a stance with her white dragon spear.

It seems the girls who have teleported to the Weasel Empire are equipped with the highest level of equipment that they've been bestowed.

"Liza-san, please take care of that rampaging hero. I'll be that guy's opponent."

"--Arisa?"

"That guy's an enemy! I absolutely must defeat it!!"

Arisa who was pointing at the yellow giant--God Zaikuon, raised her visor and shouted.

"However, master ordered us to go back once we retrieved Pochi--"

"DEMONLOOOOOOORD."

The two's conversation was cut off by the assaulting Hero Meiko.

"He might be wounded all over and dying, but that guy (God Zaikuon) is strong y'know? Even demon lords banding together weren't a match for him."

"How cowardly. Leave that guy to me."

Arisa grins and laughs.

A smile unsuited for the jovial Arisa.

"Sorry--"

"It's fine, it's fine. I also remember a promise I made when I was reincarnated."

It appears some kind of sealed memory resurfaced after she saw God Zaikuon.

"I'll show you the things made by our cheat Master when he goes all-out."

After saying that, Arisa flies in the sky with the support of her golden armor.

"Storage Dimension Release! Deploy Staff Warship!"

『Yes My Lady. Dimension Lock Release.』

The armor responded to Arisa and then the space behind her cracked.

From there, a golden staff in the shape of a spaceship appeared.

"Main Staff, boarding."

『Yes My Lady. Open Canopy.』

After Arisa said that while taking a strange pose, she disappeared before the Great Weasel Demon Lord and got on board the whole upper part of the Staff Warship that acts as a cockpit.

"Chanting support mode, set the power to the maximum."

『Aye Aye Ma'am. Transform Staff Ship.』

The bow separates, changing the ship's shape to look like a catamaran.

The 1024 Sacred Tree Stone Furnaces inside the ship go into full operation all at once, the warship's bow gets clad in blue light.

The yellow giant afar rises and looks at the airship, it seems that it has sensed the enormous magic power.

"You're far too late to notice now--『Over Boost』"

Arisa's body is wrapped in purple aura, that light also covers the whole Staff Warship.

"Because! My cheat isn't only the equipment! <<First Aria>>!"

Responding to Arisa's shout, one magic circle materializes on the warship's bow.

Apparently, she used an advanced space magic chantlessly.

Normally, [Over Boost] is a Unique Skill that makes the user put all their magic power into the next magic and make them helpless after the use, but with the Staff Warship taking over that burden, that risk has been canceled off.

The Sacred Tree Stone Furnaces that have used up its Sacred Tree Stones all at once are loaded up with the next rounds of Sacred Tree Stones.

Arisa uses [Over Boost] once again.

"<<Second Aria>>!"

The second magic circle materializes, the blue magic circle turns into purple.

"I've still got more, <<Third Aria>>! <<Fourth Aria>>!"

She chants advanced space magic one after another while overlapping them with her Unique Skill.

The Staff Warship is wrapped in purple aura.

"GWUOOOOOO"

Due to the excessive overuse of many [Over Boost], an unusual phenomenon happened to Arisa's body under her armor.

Arisa's double teeth grow a little, purple gem-shaped lines begin to surface on her body.

Raka Clone that detected the state of emergency is trying to send an emergency call, but that fails to transpire in this space where communication is obstructed.

The yellow giant who sensed the danger stepped forward staggeringly.

"N-not yet! Arisa-chan won't lose to this little pain! <<Fifth Aria>>, <<Sixth Aria>>--"

The beastkin girls who are fighting the rampaging Hero Meiko look up at the Staff Warship Arisa is riding worryingly.

The three beastkin girls are clearly stronger than Hero Meiko, but honoring their master's non-killing policy, they're unable to settle the match.

"--<<Seventh Aria>>, Merge Magic"

Arisa uttered that while having a dark laugh, and then the seven magic circles merge into one.

It appears she made chantlessly casting forbidden spell that should have been impossible to become a reality by chantlessly casting seven parts of advanced space magic spells.

"Now, die once again--"

The yellow giant creates multi layers of light shields in front of it.

Shields that it didn't use in its fight against the demon lord.

It shows how dangerous Arisa's attack is.

And then, the third purple light flows.

--Never Give Up.

A Unique Skill for the sake of defeating a superior enemy.

"Forbidden spell of space magic--『Mythology Down』"

A torrent of purple golden light are shot from the Staff Warship's bow.

"WOOOOOOOOOOOO!"

Arisa fires the magic while enduring the enormous magic power flowing in her body.

The distorted purple golden light reaches God Zaikuon while erasing everything in its path.

The yellow and purple golden lights clashed for an instant before the shields of yellow light were broken.

The light not only overruns the Material Plane but also the surrounding Ethereal Plane, and finally arrives at the sub-space where the God's substance rests.

--ZAZZZZZAYEEE.

The God's scream echoes in the whitened earth.

The God's arms break, its legs are blown off and fall to the ground.

"A-a lone human winning against God!!!"

Seeing that scene, the Great Weasel Demon Lord shouted in surprise.

"A-Arisa--"

Liza was looking at the Staff Warship whose first half has melted and ceased functioning.

Still, thanks to the overprotective design of the girls' master, the cockpit where Arisa resides is completely flawless.

Arisa who's safe inside the cockpit stares up at the sky while leaning her body on the cockpit's seat without confirming the result of her attack.

"The sky is--"

The scene of clouds getting parted and a ring of light appearing from there are reflected on Arisa's eyes.

"--I'd only take wanko soba for the second helping please."

Arisa's hidden muttering reached no one's ear.

◇

Even after receiving the barrage of dragon's fangs land mine and the anti-god magic, [Mythology Down] that Arisa used, the yellow giant, God Zaikuon still survives.

The yellow giant wrapped in light is flickering like it's at the end of its life.

Were it received several more attacks of the same scale, even a God would probably perish.

But the ring of light that broke through the cloudy sky overturned that.

Six multi-colored orbs of light are floating on the ring of light, a belt of light that materializes from that ring pulls the body of God Zaikuon to itself like the tractor beam from science fiction.

Several of the surviving demon lords tried to attack God Zaikuon with long-ranged attacks, but the cocoon-like light covering God Zaikuon thwarted them all.

God Zaikuon that arrived at the ring turned into an orb of light.

The seven orbs of light slowly begin to rotate on the ring, and then, the surrounding clouds are dyed with richly colored lights.

"As I thought, those light orbs are Gods--"

The Great Weasel Demon Lord couldn't finish his muttering.

A pillar of light released by the whirlpool of light turns the Weasel Empire into a deep deep crater, that forces spreads unstoppably to the whole of Weasel Empire, changing everything into a wasteland.

That day, the weasel empire was erased from the continent.

※The next update is scheduled for 1/22.

15-41. Divine Punishment (10), End

Satou's here. I love plain and simple foreign Hollywood movies. There are many things to retort if you think hard about it, but I just can't get enough of the easy-to-understand series of hardships and the catharsis afterward. Happy End really is the best after all.

◇

"Phew, most of the tsunami have been taken care of now I think?"

I saved the two girls from the Sea King, eliminated the Dog-head familiars, an islet-sized size roc [Sky King], and a tyrannosaur-like creature clad in fire [Flame King], and then I flew about to the south sea and took care of the tsunamis.

I even had to eradicate a fleet of ancient undeads and ghosts on an emerging floating island in the middle of the way, it was troublesome.

How do I say this, the south seas are hellish.

A marker window popped up in my vision when I was grumbling.

--Red alert?

"Geh, this is bad!"

I get back to the solitary island palace with Unit Arrangement.

"Hikaru! Please take care of the rest of the Ganika Marquisdom."

"Un, I got it--"

After saying that to Hikaru who was standing by in the island palace, I teleported to the Weasel Empire with space magic.

Frankly, I don't want to let Hikaru go out but Arisa is in a dangerous situation right now.

Since Hikaru has blessing from her Patron God, [Ama no Mizuhana-hime] besides the one from God Parion, I believe she will be fine.

At the other side of the teleport gate, there are Arisa's half-melted Staff Warship doing emergency landing, the beast girls and the Weasel Emperor who's turned into a demon lord around the ship, and Hero Meiko who's spreading blue light around, looking dangerous.

Lyuryu and Lady Ringrande seem to be at the large airship in the distant.

I looked up at the sky and saw seven light orbs floating.

Since their indications show, [UNKNOWN], they're probably either the Gods or the God's familiars.

The ring of light turns into a rich colored whirlpool.

--Crisis perception.

That one's dangerous.

I extend [Magic Hand] toward everyone it can reach.

While the crisis perception was striking my back, I somehow--got them.

--This is bad.

Something falls from the sky.

--Dangerous, dangerous, dangerous.

I hit the Unit Arrangement by a hair's breadth.

The moment right before the light falling from the sky touched us--it activated in time somehow.

◇

"Phew, I hadn't panicked in a long time."

After we moved to my personal desert space, I sighed a breath of relief.

--Oops, not yet!

Next, I teleport again to save Lyuryu and the others.

--LYURYURYUUU.

Seeing me, the white dragon let out a voice of joy and jumped at me like Pochi.

--Geh.

Behind Lyuryu, beyond the crashed large airship, I saw a tsunami of white light coming.

It's probably the residual wave of the light that fell unto us.

"Oy, oy, this place is the halfway point to the neighboring city, far from the capital y'know--"

While muttering in astonishment, I caught Lyuryu and the large warship with [Magic Hand] and took them to the same place as earlier.

"Master! Please save the hero girl nodesu."

Pochi who found us jumped and asked me.

Certainly, the rampaging Hero Meiko who's leaking blue light from her mouth and eyes looks like she's on the verge of ruin.

I quickly bind Hero Meiko with shadow magic and hand over a Blood Elixir to Pochi.

"Try to let her drink this."

"Yes nanodesu!"

I hope this will cure her, but if that's not possible then I have to make her drink the forbidden [Nectar].

I can't leave the [Nectar] in other's hands since it has many problems.

However, I can't care for Hero Meiko more than this.

I need to do something about the tsunami of white light before Hero Meiko. If I leave that alone, the parishes and Dejima Island would be swallowed up.

Resolving the great disaster comes first before an acquaintance I met once.

"Arisa, strange."

I heard Tama shouting on top of the partially destroyed Staff Warship's cockpit.

I rush into the ship's cockpit with Flash Drive before I even think about it.

The preparation to use Unit Arrangement toward Dejima Island ended up being canceled, but at this time, that didn't reach my mind.

"Arisa! Are you alright!!"

"I'm fiNE."

Arisa replied with a strange accent with her head still covered in the helmet's visor.

Violet phosphoresce is leaking from the gaps of her golden armor.

--Demon lord.

That was added on Arisa's titles.

I activate Soul Seer, Magic Seer, Miasma Seer, Spirit Seer and hide Menu's indications to make the throughput even a bit more efficient.

The inside of my eyes feel painful, perhaps I'm overdoing it.

However, I don't care about that right now.

I see that magic power is leaking out from Arisa's cracked Soul Vessel, while miasma is widening that crack.

It's like some kind of purple thing is overflowing from the Vessel's crack.

--Calm down, Satou.

I frantically suppress my flustered heart.

"It's alright, Arisa. It's alright."

While murmuring as if I was convincing myself, I tore off the miasma and gently fixed the broken Soul Vessel to its original shape.

"Alright, just a bit more--"

I purged Arisa's golden armor with the Master Key.

"Don't look."

Arisa hides her lips with her hands and curls up in the cockpit's seat.

"Don't worry, I won't hate you just because your appearance changed a bit."

"Really?"

"Yeah, of course I am."

I murmur to ease Arisa and lift her head.

"Drink this. While your Soul Vessel still retains its shape."

"Un, okay."

I made Arisa drank the [Nectar].

Among my belongings, only this and Blood Elixir Rev. are capable of healing damage on a Soul Vessel.

However, the healing from Blood Elixir Rev. is only temporary.

When the Soul Vessel is damaged this much, the vessel probably won't ultimately be restored unless she drinks the [Nectar].

"--Ah, Master is entering me."

Arisa is Arisa even at a time like this.

Ignoring her nonsense, I keep watch of her Soul Vessel's restoration.

Before long, after what felt like an eternity, Arisa's Soul Vessel is restored.

"--Phew, good."

"I'm sorry."

I pat the apologizing Arisa's head.

Since it seems that she's reflected enough, I'll decide her punishment after I've heard the reason why she overdid it.

"Don't be that rash ever again okay?"

"Un, if anything happened, tell me everything about it--"

When we were staring at each other, another emergency was displayed on the AR reading.

Come to think of it, Dejima Island and the parishes were in trouble weren't they.

◇

"--Made it in time."

I the place closest to the Imperial Capital, Dejima Island that still have survivors, with Unit Arrangement

Lete City was about to be swallowed up by the tsunami of white light before my eyes.

I recalled the moment when the catear-kin reincarnated person was using her

Unique Skill to try to delete my memory.

I've sheltered those girls with other reincarnated people, I should go see them when I have time.

"Now then, gotta do something about that."

I choose the advanced earth magic [Great Wall] on the Magic List.

"Guess this is more like the rise of Mountain Range of Nanashi instead of Great Wall of China?"

A tall wall higher than mountains rise up on several hundreds kilometers long range.

It looks quite showy, but compared to the [<<Continental Guard>>], this magic is simpler and more cost efficient.

"Now then, let's briskly clean this up."

I connect the [Great Wall] while moving with Unit Arrangement.

My magic power was used up halfway through, but since I had several fully charged holy swords on hand, I got my refill from them.

"Who would have thought that it would almost reach the Ratkin territory at the northern side."

This disaster-grade tsunami of white light must be the real Divine Punishment.

Turning several cities into white salt was probably the Divine Punishment from the apostles and one God, while the white light earlier was probably the large-scale Divine Punishment from the seven Gods.

No wonder the conditions for the Divine Punishment changes depending on who you ask.

◇

"Fumu, these crater and the spiral-shaped grooves are terrible."

After confirming that it was safe with space magic's [Senrigan (Extra Clairvoyance)], I moved to the Weasel Empire using teleport magic.

It seems the Gods are satisfied after dropping the Divine Punishment, they've disappeared from the sky.

I put back the [Room of Truth] where the Troll demon lord was sealed from my protected sub-space to its original place.

Since I had put an absurdly strong barrier on the original place, I don't think they noticed it.

It seems that barrier has disappeared by the Gods' Divine Punishment.

It's probably not the barrier itself that disappeared, but the bedrock where the barrier was placed.

"Wonder what's that warped space?"

I saw a mirage-like phenomenon in the corner of my view.

Is it an evacuation capsule in the sub-space?

It's cracked, and a survivor--is there.

"It's a miracle that she survived."

I pull out the familiar face buried in salt.

--Uwaa.

Her lower body and one of her arms have become salt and fallen apart.

It's a miracle that vital parts like her head and heart are safe.

I moved to the research laboratory in the solitary island palace with Unit Arrangement while wrapping her in Fixture magic.

"Guess no need for cleaning and such."

While muttering that, I put Lady Liedill the temple knight inside a bio-tank for Nana.

"Although it's a different story for limb loss, I guess it's not possible to regenerate organs?"

Since the [Nectar] is too dangerous, I fill the bio-tank with Blood Elixir Rev.

Afterward, the self-regeneration mode of the Bio Tank should take care of the rest.

◇

"What should we do about the hero?"

"Right. I'll ask Echigoya Firm to nurse Hero Meiko and her cohorts. We can just deliver them to Saga Empire once they're able to move about."

Perhaps I should return Lady Ringrande to her parent's house, but for now it's probably better for her to stay in Echigoya Firm's guest room.

She's probably going to be fine since I've asked Sera to care for her.

Since Hero Meiko fell into critical condition while spewing blood when I let her drank the [Nectar] for some reason, I only gave her the Blood Elixir Rev. to return her from the rampaging state as the treatment.

I stripped off the blue lines on her skin with surgery and healed her with a high magic potion afterward.

--Later, after asking Beriunan and Burainan Clans who like to research things to investigate the line, I learned that its composition is similar to crystallized blue liquid.

Back then, when I put too much magic power into Liza's [Black Spear of Cricket], evolving it to [Magic Spear Douma], crystal lines that looked similar to magic liquid also appeared on the surface of the spear, it was probably a similar phenomenon.

"Does this mean the Divine Punishment is over now?"

"Un, probably. It seems the Stampedes in the labyrinths and many monster domains have also stopped."

I affirmed Hikaru's question.

I'm thinking of leaving the care for the stricken areas to each countries.

If they request Shiga King for assistances, I'm planning to release the preserved foods and medicinal supplies I've hoarded in large quantities.

◇

"Master, Pochi is a bad kid nanodesu."

When I was done with some works, Pochi entered my face with a serious face.

Liza and Tama are with her.

"Please give punishment to Pochi nodesu."

"Does Pochi understand what bad things she did?"

"Pochi left her post without telling Master nodesu."

It's true that she violated her order, but my responsibility is heavier for postponing things even though I was aware that something happened to Pochi.

Abstaining from nightlife for one month is too light, I should ask Hikaru to think up of something later.

Now then, putting aside my reflection, right now it's about Pochi.

"Why did you leave your post?"

"Pochi was called by a little girl nodesu."

I couldn't really understand from Pochi's explanation, but looking at the rough image from the Battle Recorder installed in the golden armor, it was a girl that looked similar to the little girl in painting.

"Did she give her name?"

"She didn't nodesu. But, she said Pochi was a『True Hero』nodesu."

Fumu, the ones who know that are only us--no, Pochi becoming a hero was recorded on a certain slate written by the [Troll Demon Lord].

Since the fact that Pochi defeated the rat demon lord was also written, authorized people of Weasel Empire should be aware about it even if they're not the Gods themselves.

But well, there's a good chance that it was God Parion.

On this continent, the only people capable of opening a gate from Seryuu City to the Weasel Empire's capital are me, Arisa and the high elves.

It'd be a different story if a reincarnated person with teleportation unique skill appeared in Shiga Kingdom but making an assumption about such an irregular situation like that is too conspiracy theory-like.

"And then?"

"The girl said that『My hero is going to be killed by a bad demon lord, help』nodesu."

I see, [My Hero] huh--chronologically speaking, it's unlikely for her to be the

[Little girl in painting].

It's probably safe to regard that the [God Parion (Temp)] who set Pochi up is a different being than her.

Next, I listened to the things that happened in the Weasel Empire from Pochi.

"Then I will be announcing the punishment for Private Pochi."

"Aye."

Hearing me, Pochi straightened herself.

"The crime of leaving one's post and endangering one's self is not light."

"Aye."

"Therefore, 10 days of meals without meat should be proper."

Pochi's ears flopped down, she looked downward.

Liza and Tama who are next to her are looking pale like their blood run cold after hearing the severe punishment of [10 days of meals without meat].

"However--"

Pochi's ears twitch.

"--In light of Pochi's courage and kindness for rushing in to save the life of a girl in danger, the meals without meat is decreased by three days."

Pochi raises her head.

"Furthermore, appreciating your prudence of not thoughtlessly engaging the demon lords you encountered but instead properly judging as to whether they're evil or not, the meals without meat is decreased again by three days."

Pochi's ears returned to their positions.

"And, extolling your achievements of healing the injured Hero Meiko and Weasel Empire, and saving Lady Ringrande, the meals without meat is decreased again by three days."

This would probably turns up more to plus if this were the story of a super popular magic school, but completely giving a positive here is bad.

"That's why, the meal without meat is only for today. Be careful not to repeat what you did okay."

"Yes, nanodesu! Pochi wants to learn many more things nodesu!"

"Yup, you're great Pochi."

I'm glad that Pochi is interested in things other than battles, meals and her hobby, writing stories.

I pat Pochi's head hard.

"Tama will learn too~?"

Since Tama also came declaring and hugging me on the opposite side, I also praised her, "You're also great Tama."

Looks like Tama is already affected by Pochi.

◇

"--Master."

When I got back after finishing some business, Arisa was waiting in the dark office.

"Arisa, at least turn on the light while you're waiting."

"Welcome back. Were you at Aze's place?"

"Nah, I was just disciplining the troublesome guys who set Pochi up."

I told her that first while rebuking her.

After the beast girls left, I checked on Tactician Touya and found out he was at an unexpected place.

I ascertained the real identity of the [Majesty] guy when I invaded with Mana Camouflage on, so I threatened them by imitating the story of the Sword of Damocles.

They probably won't ever try to meddle with us again if they still have nerves.

"As expected of Master. You're quick--"

It's a meek tone that's unlike the usual Arisa.

"--I have something I need to talk to Master about."

I was a bit surprised at the fact Arisa spoke of falteringly--her memory was sealed and sighting the descended God was the trigger--but the content itself was within the range of the assumption I thought up after seeing the Weasel Emperor's state.

"The God who let Arisa reincarnated said that 『If you meet other Gods besides me, kill them』?"

"Un, that God said that they will attack anyone who's been given that God's power for sure if they find one, even though meeting one seldom ever happens."

That's strange.

I'm sure Gods have seen reincarnated people including Arisa for many times through the oracle Miko.

More importantly--.

"So the God who let you reincarnate was the 『Demon God』 after all?"

"I don't know. Judging from the circumstances, there's a high chance that's the case, but that God never directly said it."

That makes sense, from what she said earlier, her memory might have been sealed.

Would the trigger happen regardless of which Gods she encountered, or would it have to be God Zaikuon first, the discussion will change depending on that.

However, there's a high possibility that the Demon God who produces demons is sending reincarnated people to this world as the [Eggs] to mass produce demon lords.

I don't know why he didn't just embed the fragments in the people who live in this world though.

Good grief, the objective of Gods bringing forth reincarnated people is still unclear even now, it's depressing.

If we go by my deduction that has never been right with detective novels, it's "Reincarnated people will spread their knowledge, violate the God's Taboo, and then the Divine Punishment will befall them and the God who will nonchalantly appear will torment the reincarnated people who turn into demon lords" I guess?

--Nay.

It's full of holes if I think about it a bit more, and it's really inefficient.

"--By the way, have you seen your status after I healed you?"

"Un, I have."

Arisa answers with a serious tone.

"Don't forget to always equip the『Thief God Harness』when you're going out okay."

"Yes, dear."

I lightly whack Arisa's head.

"Owie."

She should be fine now if she can crack jokes.

After fighting God Zaikuon, Arisa has gotten several titles.

First, [Demon Lord] that I saw.

In addition, [One who Rebels], [One who Challenges God], for some reason [Hero], and--.

I look at Arisa's status displayed on the AR twice.

Looks like it's not a mistake after all.

Over there--[Satou's Familiar] has been added.

※ The next update is scheduled for 1/29

※ The decisive scene against the mastermind is planned for the next chapter.

※ Kazeboy : Seems I am gonna leave this at a clifhanger :D

15-Intermission: Hero's Break

"N-no way! It's curry riceeeeeee!"

The moment the hero saw the curry set lined up on the table, he stood up and shouted out loud.

He vigorously turned around toward me, so I nodded and told him, "It's the real thing."

We're in the annex of the inn reserved for the hero so there's no problem, but I wish he turns down the voice a bit.

"Let's eat!"

The hero put the spoon with curry rice into his mouth while choking full with tears of gratitude.

He's too overenthusiastic I was afraid that he'd scatter the curry rice everywhere but it appears to be an imaginary fear.

"So gooooooooooooooood"

The hero shouted once and then he gulped down the curry rice sloppily.

"Curry really is a drink."

"No no, that's wrong."

I objected Arisa's remark, and offered the dishes to the hero's followers.

"The stew has some peculiar smell doesn't it?"

"It's spicy, but tasty y'know."

"I'm not good with spicy things."

"Ara? Even though it's this good."

Miss Wiyaryi the longearkin (booch) archer and Rusus the tiger ear-kin were happily eating the curry, but Fifi the wolf ear-kin sniffed the scent and backed away from the plate.

Loreiya the priestess is elegantly eating the curry while combing her hair upward.

"Give it to me if you're not eating them."

The hero moved Fifi aside and quickly snatched her plate.

Wait now, stop that, you can have seconds all you want.

"Ah, so this is the legendary curry!"

"It's the phantom dish of which the founder hero sought all his life."

Sera's big sister, Lady Ringrande the [Sky-tearing Witch] and Princess Maryest the [Witch] are trembling from being deeply moved, they don't seem to be able to put the curry on the spoon.

Come to think of it, Hikaru and Lady Karina also reacted similarly when I served them curry.

"Fifi-san, please try this one if you don't like spicy food."

"Oh, that smells nice."

When I offered her a normal omelette rice, Fifi's wolf ears twitch and then she peeks at the plate.

"Hee? An egg dish? It looks like the omelette in Saga Empire."

"Omelette! I-is this red sauce carrot?"

Seina the scout and Nono the secretary who were eating the curry behind the hero came and peered at Fifi's plate from both sides with great speed.

"T-this is mine!"

Fifi, worried about the two's enthusiasm, hides the omelette rice like she's hugging it.

"Fifi, let me have a bite."

"I want to eat it too!"

Nono and Seina pestered Fifi.

"I can't trust your 'a bite'"

"How rude! Unlike Seina, my mouthful is cute."

"Hey, mine is cute too!"

"Thank you for waiting~?"

"Additional dishes nanodesu."

I wanted to see the three's bargaining a bit more, but since Tama and Pochi showed bringing additional dishes, I decided to put an end to the dispute.

"It seems more omelette rice have come, would you two like to taste it?"

"Yay!"

"Sir Pendragon is a bully."

Seina immediately got into the omellete rice, Nono put the omellette rice into his mouth while glaring at me.

"It's not, carrot? What sauce is this?"

"Toumatoo~?"

"Kechup nanodesu!"

"Tomato kechup sauce is it?"

Nono combined Tama's strangely good pronunciation and Pochi's Japanese pronunciation together.

"The sauce is ketchup made from tomato. It's a product from Ringrande-sama's hometown, Oyugock Dukedom."

Lady Ringrande reacted to my explanation.

"Satou? I've never seen that sauce though?"

"Nn, Satou."

"Master developed it, so I refer."

"Hee, as one would expect from the『Miracle Chef』."

Explained by Mia and Nana, Lady Ringrande called me with a nostlagic title.

Then, Lulu and Liza come into the room pushing a trolley with a big sukiyaki pot on it.

"Sorry to keep you waiting. This is Oumi beef sukiyaki."

"Sukiyaki!"

The hero who had asked for his fifth helping turned toward Lulu while having his yellowed mouth wiped by Priestess Loreiya.

"Yes, it's a dish from Hero-sama's country."

Lulu doesn't act differently even though the other party is the hero.

She probably thinks people who eat her dishes with relish are the same as our girls.

"Would you like to have raw eggs?"

"Ou, I do!"

On the contrary Liza who's acting unusually tense handed a plate with raw eggs.

I'm praying that her trembling hands aren't because of warrior's excitement.

"Me-meat."

"Meat nanodesu. But Pochi has to wait since right now it's 『Wait』 nodesu."

Tama and Pochi are staring at the beef inside sukiyaki while drooling.

--Huh? I never ordered them as such though?

"I thought of letting Hayato and the others to eat first."

"You did huh. However, there's no need to worry, I've prepared enough for us all."

It seems Arisa is the culprit.

This time, I obtained the meat by imitating Weasel Empire way to increase meat production.

Since I harvested the transformation of Oumi cow when it reached level 50, the <<Great Mad Buffalo>>, I was able to get more than 100 ton beef.

It doesn't taste as good as the highest grade Oumi beef, but it should not taste that different for the part used in Sukiyaki.

"I've also asked Lulu to make another dish, it should be here soon I think?"

As if matching Arisa's words, brownie maids open the door and carry hamburg steaks and karaage inside.

"Hamburgu~?"

"It is the time for the hamburg steak sensei to appear nanodesu!"

Tama and Pochi turn their, "Can I eat it?", faces at me so I nod to give them the permission.

"Wa~y?"

"Pochi's battle has just begun nanodesu!"

Not only Tama and Pochi, the other girls also begin to eat.

"Is that good?"

"Of coursee~?"

"Gimme one too."

"Of course nanodesu! Hamburg-sensei is big hearted nodesuyo!"

Fifi and Rusus who had finished eating omelette rice and curry joined the subjugation quest for the mountain of hamburg steaks.

It seems the yakitori battlefield which Liza is challenging are joined by Miss Wiyaryi and Miss Loreiya who has secured a bottle of Dragon Spring Liquor.

While watching the peaceful exchange of the girls and hero's followers, I accept a wine cup that Lady Ringrande offered.

It seems there's Saga Empire whiskey inside.

"Satou, thank you. I didn't think that Hayato would be able to laugh that cheerfully until we defeated the demon lord."

"Yes, the atmosphere of torment around him has disappeared neatly. You're the best reinforcement we can ever hope."

I replied Lady Ringrande and Maryest who were awfully flattering with, "It's an honor", toasted and drank the whiskey.

--Oops.

I immediately regret once I drank it.

I should have tasted it more.

"This is a nice whiskey."

"Yes, it's a special whiskey bestowed with the name『Saga』that can only be drunk by the imperial family."

"Is it alright to give such a precious whiskey to me?"

"Yes, it's nothing compared to the Dragon Spring Liquor which Loreiya monopolizes."

It's true that you can't get ahold of Dragon Spring Liquor no matter how much money you throw.

"I also have various others--"

Saying that, I took out three small bottles with different kinds of Dragon Spring Liquor inside.

In addition to the Ancient Dragon's and the Black Dragon's liquor, there's also one created with my Dragon Language Magic.

"I smelled some delicious liquor."

Soft mass and sexy drunk voice descend upon my back.

When I turn around, there's Miss Loreiya with flushed face at close proximity.

Her arms are reaching the liquor bottles over my shoulders so my back feels really blissful.

"Loreiya, calm down a bit."

"Look, Satou is troubled."

Princess Maryest reproved, Lady Ringrande pulled my hand to save me from Miss Loreiya's assault.

"Ara?"

"Kyaa."

Perhaps it's a blessing from Lucky Lewd God, I ended up diving into Lady Ringrande's lap together with Miss Loreiya.

Of course it was possible for me to evade it with all my might, but this time I decided to respect the god's will and enjoyed the softness. The impregnable fortress pair is busy treating the hero after all.

◇

Now then, right at this time the hero is--.

"So many loli maids?! I-Is this heaven!"

Staring at the brownie maids with the best smile he's ever had, choke full of tears of gratitude.

I think his reaction is even greater than the time with the curry, but pointing that out would be boorish of me.

"Hero-sama."

"P-Princess Arisa, this is a misunderstanding."

The hero was shaken by Arisa's word.

After this, as to what he would do after knowing that the loli maids are [Legal Loli], there is no way of knowing that for I am not a god.

I'm certain that his soul is surely the embodiment of [YES! Lolita, NO! Touch.]

◇

Thus the night grows late, and the party transitions to drinking time, I let the girls to go back to their room and switch to adult social time.

"Satou, you think we can win?"

"I have no doubt that Hayato-sama will win."

Tomorrow is going to be the end of the demon lord, so I'll make him win no matter what.

Moreover, judging from the demon lord's level, he should have been able to win easily if there was no intervention from the [Dungeon Master].

"That so! I feel like I will certainly win when you said so!"

"Yes, that's what it means to be the『Hero of Saga Empire』."

"Yea, damn right!"

The hero's cheerful laughter echoes in the party hall, his friends who see him like that seem to have relaxed too.

Subjugating the demon lord should be easy now.